

It may be that its position, on the road halfway between Banbury and Oxford, with a road leading west to another garrison at Enstone, made it vulnerable to plundering from all three and from any armies going west to Chipping Norton. Again, a local historian's knowledge would help to find evidence of the hand of Prince Rupert here.

The final village with a Duke of Cumberland villain is different again from all the rest. Wooburn lies thirty miles to the east and south of Oxford, just off the London to Oxford Road. As such it was always under parliamentary control, but was still subjected to raids. For example, on 14th June 1643, Prince Rupert led a raid out of Oxford. He rode right through the middle of the Parliamentary Army, killed or captured 170 dragoons, almost captured the army's pay chest, fought a battle and returned through the enemy's ranks to Oxford with his prisoners, all inside 24 hours and with a loss of only twelve men. On that occasion the Prince was five miles from Wooburn, but in the following weeks the Prince and his commanders carried out more and more raids, so that "the citizens of London itself were suffering from these raids which denied them the produce of much of the surrounding countryside".¹³ One such raid on 25th June, by Col. Hurry, sacked Wycombe, just three miles from Wooburn.

There is another Prince Rupert connection with Wooburn, albeit a little convoluted. Wooburn was, during the Civil War, the home of Philip, 4th Baron Wharton, radical Parliamentarian and committed puritan. At the start of the war he commanded a regiment of foot and a troop of horse at the Battle of Edgehill. These may have been raised on his own lands: the extensive family estates in Lancashire and Yorkshire, as well as his large holdings in Buckinghamshire. Whatever their composition, they were "ignominiously swept off the field by Prince Rupert's impetuous charge. Reporting to Parliament Wharton stated, 'Before there was any near excuse three or four of our regiments fairly ran away – Sir William Fairfax's, Sir Henry Cholmley's, my Lord Kimbolton's and, to say the plain truth, my own.' Consequently Wharton was himself accused of cowardice – not merely running away but hiding in a sawpit. In his official report of the engagement to Parliament he accused Prince Rupert of wanton cruelty after the battle was won. In reply Rupert published a pamphlet with the sawpit accusation. Thus started the unpleasant nickname – Sawpit Wharton – which provided his enemies with a taunt

¹³ As footnote 8, *Prince Rupert*, p.129.