

What Can We Learn from John Hussey's Armour?

Teachers' Notes

Certainly	Possibly	No Evidence to suggest
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bullets could pierce armour John Hussey, a cavalry captain, was wearing infantry armour John Hussey was killed by a bullet John Hussey was wearing a collection of different kinds of equipment. Even rich people did not always have the equipment they needed to fight in a war. John Hussey's buffcoat was thin and old fashioned Battles were dangerous John Hussey was wearing an old-fashioned helmet Armour did not always save your life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Hussey was shot face on John Hussey was shot from below. John Hussey was shot at close range John Hussey was shot from above John Hussey fought bravely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> John Hussey ran away from the battle. John Hussey's armour was of poor quality John Hussey was a good soldier John Hussey was a Royalist

Summary

Historians can use this object as a source of information about the civil-war battlefield.

Certainties

Despite being from a wealthy and locally important family, John Hussey was clearly not wearing the best, most up-to-date equipment. This highlights the challenges of adequately equipping soldiers to face the dangers of battle. Hussey's helmet is old fashioned. His buffcoat is thin and not of military quality. He is wearing the kind of breastplate more usually seen worn by a pikeman, with tassets to cover his legs, that must have been cumbersome on horseback. A bullet has clearly pierced this armour at the edge of the breastplate, where it is thinnest. The children may notice that there is no evidence of an exit wound, suggesting that the bullet was still inside Hussey's body.

Possibilities

It is hard to determine by looking at this object exactly how Hussey was shot. If they have completed 1.4 'Fight The Battle of Gainsborough', the children will have learned what happened during the battle. They know that the Parliamentary army charged uphill, through difficult terrain, before they faced their opponents on the hilltop. It is very difficult to determine when Hussey was shot. It may have been, as some have suggested, from below, when the Parliamentarians were shooting as they charged uphill. However, it is equally likely that he was shot when the Parliamentary army charged on top of the hill. He may even have been unhorsed and shot as he lay on the ground.

No Evidence to suggest

Since the bullet hole is on the armour's breastplate, there is no evidence that he was running away from the battle. There is also no evidence that this armour was of poor quality. The bullet hit the weakest part of the breastplate near the edge. We can't really tell how good a soldier Hussey was, since experienced and skilled soldiers were killed. It is also important to point out that there is no way of determining on which side of the war soldiers were fighting simply by looking at their armour or clothing. Uniforms were not worn until the formation of the New Model Army and both sides used similar equipment.