

Queen Margaret's Camp: A Myth?¹

 <p>The Battle of Tewkesbury, May 1471, confirmed the Yorkist victory as King Edward IV died in 1483.</p> <p>"Queen Margaret's Camp", long valued by residents as an open area, is protected from development as a Scheduled Ancient Monument. The moated site is believed locally to be where the Queen camped on the eve of the Battle, 4 May 1471. Never subject to an archaeological survey, it is thought to be the remnant of a moated farm building, abandoned by the 15th Century.</p>	 <p>HERITAGE TEWKESBURY AN EXTRAORDINARY RIVERSIDE TOWN</p> <p>THE BATTLE TRAIL WALK</p> <p>WAWC INFORMATION INFO THE BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY ON 4 MAY 1471 1471</p> <p>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Title: John Dixon, Dr. A. Crowther, PPNP, S. Pocock, TBS, S. Goodchild, C. Montellier</p>	 <h2>QUEEN MARGARET'S CAMP</h2> <p>"QUEEN MARGARET'S" CAMP</p> <p>Having returned to England, only to find the Earl of Warwick had been killed at the Battle of Barnet, Margaret and Edward headed north to meet up with Jasper Tudor, who had been gathering troops in Wales.</p> <p>Hoping to meet Jasper at Gloucester, Margaret found the city gates closed to her. With no choice but to march on, along the River Severn, on the evening of 3rd May Margaret reached Tewkesbury. With the Yorkist army led by King Edward IV so close, she knew they had no choice but to camp and fight next day.</p> <p>This moated site, with its complex drainage system feeding a pond downhill, once contained a homestead, which had probably disappeared by 1471.</p> <p>The old track system from Cheltenham came through the modern Stonehills Estate, dividing with the direct route towards Tewkesbury and the other towards the River Severn at Lower Lode.</p>	 <h2>QUEEN MARGARET OF ANJOU</h2> <p>Margaret of Anjou was 15 when she married King Henry VI in 1445. The arranged marriage was unpopular in England as the province of Maine was lost to the French.</p> <p>With strong family female role-models, Margaret acted as regent, for the mentally and politically weak Henry.</p> <p>The Great Council, summoned by Margaret and Henry in 1455 to address the problem of succession, is thought to have triggered the Wars of the Roses.</p> <p>Fleeing to France with her son in 1461 as Edward IV deposed Henry, Margaret aimed to rescue the crown for her son. The Battle of Tewkesbury ended her hopes: Edward, Prince of Wales was killed and Margaret was captured and imprisoned until ransomed by Louis XI of France in 1475. She lived out her years in France, dying in 1482, aged only 52.</p>	 <h2>QUIRKY FACTS</h2> <p>The Middle Ages' gruesome or chivalrous? Leaders were "beheaded every one" but "without any dismembering" and "licensed to be buried" in the Abbey.</p> <h2>THE BATTLE 4 MAY 1471</h2> <p>From here, you have a panoramic view of the battlefield, on either side of the Gupshill and of this site.</p> <p>The Duke of Somerset was in overall command of the Lancastrian army, with parts commanded by the Earl of Devon and Lord Wenlock with Prince Edward</p> <p>King Edward commanded the Yorkist army, with Lord Hastings and Richard, Duke of Gloucester. The battle opened with gun fire across the fields, to the west. A Lancastrian force passed secretly along Lincoln Green Lane, behind the fields, and charged into the Yorkist rear, down the hillock visible to the south-west.</p> <p>This attack was repulsed by the Yorkist left flank, assisted by 200 knights charging down from Tewkesbury Park.</p> <p>The whole Yorkist army then advanced, through this site, to attack the Lancastrians. Their ranks broke and they fled town-wards. Prince Edward was killed in the retreat.</p>
Column 1		Column 2	Column 3	Column 4

C6: Living in History in the Modern Era: Priors Park Street Names

In working with the PPNP History working group on a project concerning their "Wonderful Childhood in Priors Park", Steve Pocock had very happy memories of the area being a welcome adventure playground. In preparation of Bonfire night, he recalls meticulous preparations for building the bonfire in the area – and some older boys standing guard overnight to prevent other groups from spoiling it!

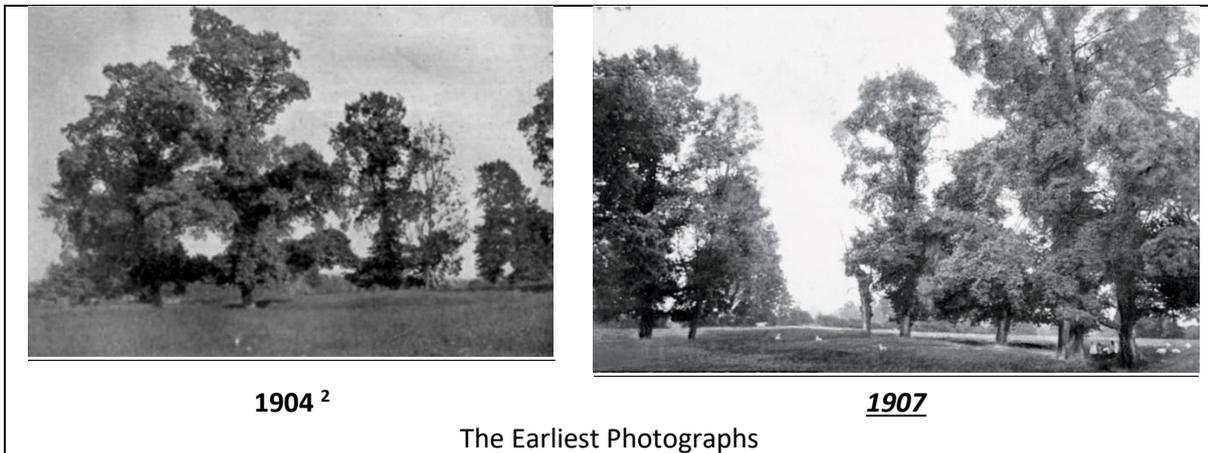
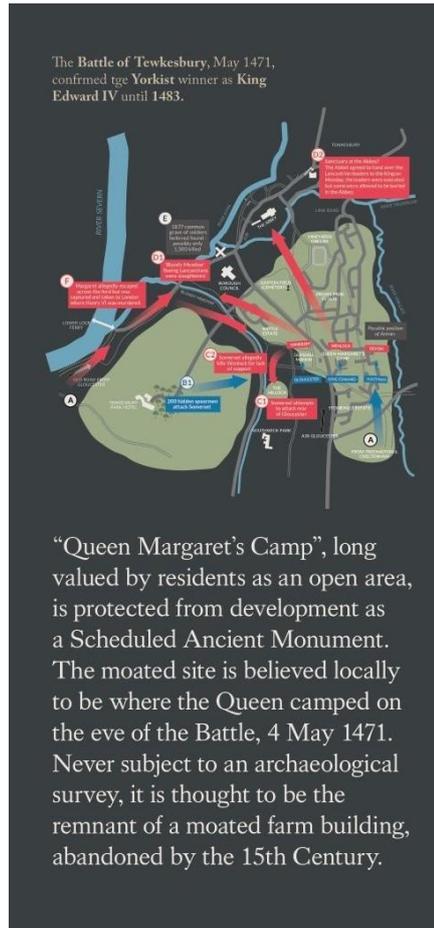
- Edited by **John Dixon**, [THS] for **PPNP** [James Baker]
- Assisted by **Steve Pocock** and Members of **PPNP History Group**.
- Proofread by **Dr. Andrew Crowther** [THS]
- Advised by **Steve Goodchild & Clive Montellier**, **Battle Society**
- Encouraged by **Clr. Cate Cody**
- Supported by **Georgia Smith** [HSAZ]
- **Anonymous Designers** [TBC]

	<p>The post war generation used the Camp for preparation for Bon Fire Night [S. Pocock, far right, born 1956]</p>
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¹ This website history is written by **John Dixon**, who is not a specialist in Medieval History, but who approached as a history teacher reading as many secondary books as possible and then writing my summary. Any objections should be sent to presidentths@gmail.com. We look forward to the publication of **Steve Goodchild's** forthcoming book which will follow up from his Museum Talk, 2-4-24. It is not for sale to the public.

The Sign for *Queen Margaret's Camp*

The Context of the Battle in Priors' Park [C1]



This moated site, with its complex drainage system feeding a pond at the foot of the slope, once contained a homestead, which had probably disappeared by 1400. Bennett suggests that the rectangular moat belonged to a House named the ‘*Vinyard*’ occupied by the **Read** family from 1553-1608 and then 1824-1828 by the **Wintle** family. Then it disappeared.

The photographs probably date from the **Sale of Property of Late Henry Hone: *Queen Margaret's Camp: Part of Stonehouse Farm Sold to James Villa, Architect of Cheltenham for £4,500****.³

² Cheltenham Graphic & 1907 via S. Pocock

³ *Tewkesbury Register* 14/06/1902 p1/6; p in 2021 valued at **£519,700**.

The Sign for *Queen Margaret's Camp*

Queen Margaret's Camp? [C2]

	<p>“QUEEN MARGARET’S” CAMP</p> <p>Having returned to England, only to find the Earl of Warwick had been killed at the Battle of Barnet, Margaret and Edward headed north to meet up with Jasper Tudor, who had been gathering troops in Wales.</p> <p>Hoping to meet Jasper at Gloucester, Margaret found the city gates closed to her. With no choice but to march on, along the River Severn, on the evening of 3rd May Margaret reached Tewkesbury. With the Yorkist army led by King Edward IV so close, she knew they had no choice but to camp and fight next day.</p>
<p>A Photograph of Today</p>	

The Abbey Chronicle writes that the **Lancastrian army** encamped in the very much larger area of the *Gaston Fields* and local tradition says that **Queen Margaret** spent the night here before the Battle in 1471. This is unlikely since it is believed that the **Lancastrian army** comprised c6,000 men.

James Bennett agrees to some extent, suggesting that it could have been a convenient advanced post for her and her generals. He uses quotations from *Shakespeare's King Henry VI Part III*:

Why, courage then! what cannot be avoided,
’Twere childish weakness to lament, or fear.
Great lords, wise men ne’er sit and wail their loss,
But chearly seek how to redress their harms:

Dr. Anthea Jones using information from the *1540 Leland Visitation* as the Monastery was dissolved also states that “**Margaret** could well have occupied the moated house” and “it would have been a convenient advanced post for her and her commanders”.⁴

A Historian, J. H. Ramsay in his *Battle of Tewkesbury*, written in 1892, however, would disagree as he pitches the right **Yorkist** wing of Hastings starting the battle at the Camp with the **opposing Lancastrian army** much nearer the Abbey.

A more recent historian, Steven Goodchild, in his 2005 book: “an earthwork believed to be the remains of an early medieval, moated house, probably demolished long before the battle. This high land provides a good view of the southern part of the battlefield”.⁵ He suggests it was likely to have been “a defensive outpost for a few men, which would have had no tactical advantage” and would have constituted a “suicidal mission”. Rather than **Lancastrian generals**, the **Yorkist front line** was nearby.

The old road system from the Cheltenham and Tredington direction came through what is now the *Stonehills Estate* and divided at the corner of the site, with the direct route into Tewkesbury passing along the eastern boundary via *Priors Park* to the *Iron Bridge* over the *Swilgate*. The route towards the River Severn was from the south and past the Gupshill, near what was later named ‘**Bloody Meadow**’.

⁴ Dr, A Jones, *Tewkesbury* [Phillimore, 1978] p41-44

⁵ Steven Goodchild, *Tewkesbury 1471: Eclipse of the House of Lancaster- 1471*, 2005 p78.

The Sign for *Queen Margaret's Camp*

Queen Margaret – the *She-Wolf*? [C3]



[Wikicommons]

QUEEN MARGARET OF ANJOU

Margaret of Anjou was 15 when she married King Henry VI in 1445. The arranged marriage was unpopular in England as the province of Maine was lost to the French.

With strong family female role-models, Margaret acted as regent, for the mentally and politically weak Henry.

The Great Council, summoned by Margaret and Henry in 1455 to address the problem of succession, is thought to have triggered the Wars of the Roses.

Fleeing to France with her son in 1461 as Edward IV deposed Henry, Margaret aimed to rescue the crown for her son. The Battle of Tewkesbury ended her hopes: Edward, Prince of Wales was killed and Margaret, was captured and imprisoned until ransomed by Louis XI of France in 1475. She lived out her years in France, dying in 1482, aged only 52.

The Sign for Queen Margaret's Camp

Queen Margaret of the Camp



"Queen Margaret sometime Spouse to King Henry VI" in a stained-glass depiction 1890-1905 by Charles E Kempe, an Anglo-Catholic, at Mucklestone Church, scene of a Lancastrian defeat in 1459. [<https://www.queens.cam.ac.uk/>]



Margaret wife of King Henry VI 1790 attributed to Joseph Freeman, a portrait copyist, at Queen's College of St Margaret and St Bernard, Cambridge in 1448. [<https://www.queens.cam.ac.uk/>]

Queen Margaret of Anjou appeals to the modern audience as a strong woman, who took on the task of her deposed husband, **King Henry VI**, to rescue militarily the crown for her **Lancastrian** family. However, she lost her son, a promising young soldier, at the battle and, with his death, she lost the dynastic future. Her husband was murdered by the victorious **Yorkists** and Margaret was taken prisoner. She was ransomed in 1476 by her cousin, **King Louis XI of France**, and went to live in France as a poor relation of the French king, and she died there. In Goodchild's summary: *"She died without servants, kinless and friendless, on threadbare sheets, of old age"*. She was only 52.⁶ In her lifetime she earned the reputation of **"She-Wolf"**, which is used today in her biography's title, by contemporary historian, Arman.⁷

Margaret was born on 23 March 1430 in France, daughter of the **Count of Anjou and Duchess of Lorraine**.

The King of France negotiated Margaret's marriage, possibly aged just 14, to **King Henry VI**, who was besotted by a miniature portrait. This was part of a treaty to give control of Anjou back to France and provided for an unpopular peace between England and France. Margaret was crowned at Westminster Abbey after the marriage of 1445; *the Hundred Years' War* was temporarily suspended – but England lost all its French possessions except Calais.

In 1453, **Henry** was taken ill - allegedly with insanity - and **Richard, Duke of York**, again became protector. **Margaret**, however, had given birth to a son, **Edward**, aged 23 in 1453, thus ending the **Yorkist** right to rule. After **Henry** recovered in 1454, Margaret became involved in **Lancastrian** politics, defending her son's claim as the rightful heir. **Thus began "The Wars of the Roses"**. In 1460 she escaped to Scotland, allegedly promising to cede Berwick to Scots which also undermined her reputation.⁸ The Battles of *Wakefield and Towton* were lost, and she fled to France to live in poverty with her son.

Margaret returned to England on 14 April 1471. Less than a month later in May, Margaret **and her supporters** were defeated at the **Battle of Tewkesbury**, where she was taken prisoner and her son, **Edward**, was killed. Soon afterward her husband, **Henry VI**, was presumably murdered in the Tower of London. [Ironically **Prince Edward** had been married to Anne Neville who, as a widow, married **King Richard III**]

Margaret was imprisoned in England for five years. In 1476, the king of France paid a ransom to England for her, and she returned to France, where she lived in poverty until her death in 1482, in her native county of Anjou.

⁶ Goodchild, above p106-109

⁷ Arman, Joanna: *Margaret of Anjou – She-Wolf of France, Twice Queen of England*, (Amberley, 2023): p113

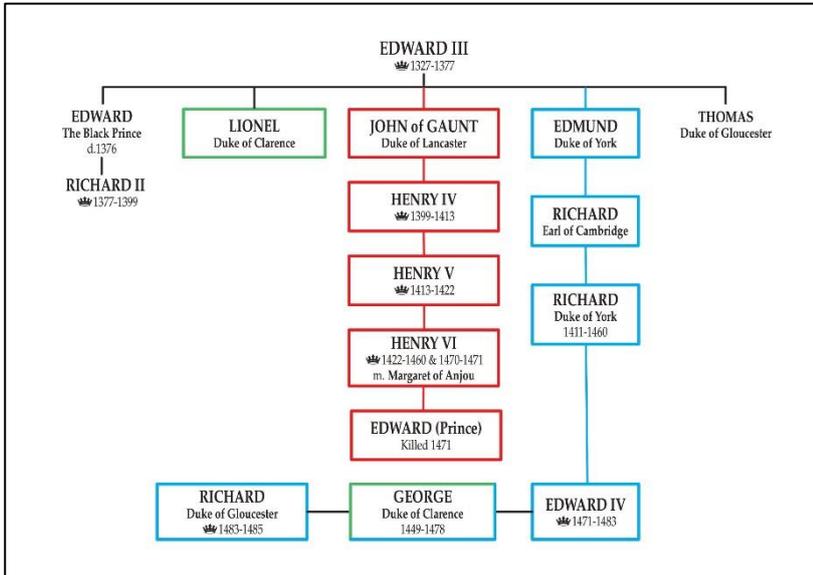
⁸ Arman p191

The Sign for Queen Margaret's Camp

Why was there a War[s] of the Roses, 1455-1471 [1485]?

Why did the Battle take place in Tewkesbury in 1471?

The Wars of the Roses was a series of battles to determine which noble family should be Kings of England and it started with the death of **King Edward III**⁹



Edward III was a strong King, but he left too many sons. The eldest always succeeded in theory but the excellent soldier, the **Black Prince** in 1376 was killed fighting the French and left a 10-year-old son, **Richard II [1377-1399]**, who was an unsuccessful king and was murdered by the then **Henry IV, the Duke of Lancaster**. He was son of **John of Gaunt, [1340-1399], the 3rd son of Edward III** whose own son became **King Henry IV [1399-1413]**. He suffered bad health and died leaving a son **Henry V [1413-1422]**.

This successful soldier defeated the

French at **Agincourt** in 1415 but he died of dysentery, fighting in France. He had a son -but he was only 9 months old. He became **King Henry VI**.

And this is where the trouble started over which family should rule England. **Henry VI's** weak rule was challenged by **Richard of York [1411-1460]**, a descendent of **Edward III's 2nd son, Lionel**, via a **great-granddaughter's daughter**. **Henry VI** married **Margaret of Anjou**, who had "an **uncanny ability to cause discontent**"¹⁰ and whose marriage settlement lost territories in France to the Kingdom of France. Worse, in 1453, **Henry VI "lost his reason"** and the **Duke of York** became **Lord Protector** - but this status was undermined by the birth of **Henry's son, Prince Edward [1453-1471]**, now the heir to the throne.

The fighting then started. In 1460 the **Yorkists** captured **Henry VI**, but **Richard of York** was killed in battle in 1460. He was succeeded by his son **Edward IV** from **1461** after the **Battle of Towton**.

However, 'the waters were muddied' further by the intervention of **Richard Neville, the 16th Earl of Warwick** known as the "**King-Maker**" who encouraged the disloyalty of the **Duke of Clarence, Edward's younger brother**. The French king supported the **Lancastrians** and the **Duke of Burgundy [now Belgium & Holland]** supported the **Yorkists**. **Henry VI became King again in 1470** but **Edward** returned and defeated the **Lancastrians** and killed **Warwick** at the **Battle of Barnet on 14 April 1471**. **Edward IV was King again**.

He could not enjoy his reign because **Margaret** returned from France with an avenging army, landing at **Weymouth on 14 April 1471** - bad timing! It would only be 21 days before the **Battle at Tewkesbury**.

Tewkesbury found itself - unwittingly - in the path of two Armies 4-5 May 1471

⁹ Diagram adapted by Rick Talbot

¹⁰ Goodchild, above p7

The Sign for Queen Margaret's Camp

The next day, **5 May 1471**, Tewkesbury was to become famous.

The Arrivall of the Yorkists¹³

Edward IV and his army had no intention of fighting at Tewkesbury either – he had been following the **Lancastrians** awaiting his chance to attack – **which happened at Tewkesbury!**

Edward IV, a descendant of the 4th son of King Edward III, had seized the throne from the ailing **King Henry VI** in 1461 at the age of only 19. An ally of London merchants, he was a natural soldier and leader - but only became King after his father, the **Duke of York** was killed in 1461 at the **Battle of Wakefield**. The **Lancastrians** were then comprehensively beaten at the **Battle of Towton, 1461**.

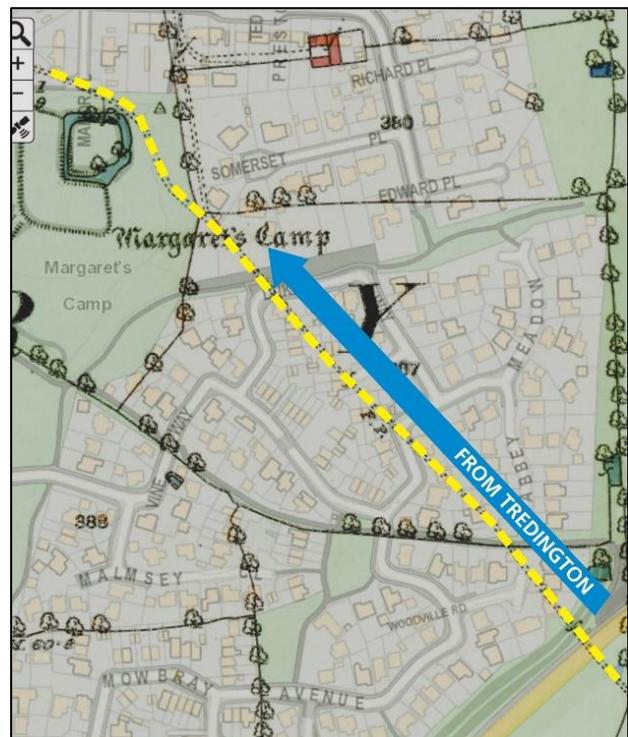
The next decade was turbulent - thanks for the work of *Warwick the King-Maker* who allied with the **King of France** and **Margaret**. **Edward** was forced to flee to Flanders [Belgium] ruled by his brother-in-Law, the **Duke of Burgundy**. With his support, **Edward** invaded again and beat the **Lancastrians** and killed **Warwick** at **Barnet** on **14 April 1471**.

Armed with “*artillery...gonns and other in gret plentye*” - thanks to wealthy London merchants - he slowly moved west awaiting **Margaret's** intentions – indeed, on **2 May** the two sides almost fought at **Sodbury**.

Margaret escaped north-west and **Edward** guessed that she would try to meet up with **Jasper Tudor** with a **Severn** crossing. He shadowed the **Lancastrians** by travelling in parallel via the **Cotswold** “*Champagne*” country - it was easier for his amies and enjoyed woollen wealth. Guessing that **Margaret** would try and bridge the **Severn** at **Gloucester**, he sent messengers to ensure that the gates were closed. He continued towards the village of **Cheltenham**, while the exhausted **Lancastrian** army struggled on by night.

At **Cheltenham**, **Edward** paused for “*a little refreshment*” and then moved north in a more leisurely fashion via Bishops Cleeve and Stoke Orchard. On **3 May 1471**, they camped at Tredington within three miles of Tewkesbury - where he guessed an exhausted **Margaret** would make a stand.

The **Yorkists**, therefore, had a relatively easy march refreshed from rest at Tredington, following a clear ancient trackway, known as the **Rudgeway**, 3 miles towards Tewkesbury, and arrived by the modern **Stonehills residential** estate ready for battle.



The Map of the Yorkists' Arrival Route

[Devised by S. Pocock, designed by R. Talbot]

¹³ The *Arrivall* was written by a **Yorkist** correspondent who recorded the whole progress from Flanders [Belgium] to Tewkesbury and beyond. “*Compiled and put in this forme suinge, by a servaunt of the Kyngs, that presently saw in effect a great parte of his exploytes*” [Goodchild, above25 & Museum Talk 2-4-24]

The Sign for Queen Margaret's Camp

C4: The Battle

THE BATTLE 4 MAY 1471

From here, you have a panoramic view of the battlefield, on either side of the Gupshill and of this site.

The Duke of Somerset was in overall command of the Lancastrian army, with parts commanded by the Earl of Devon and Lord Wenlock with Prince Edward

King Edward commanded the Yorkist army, with Lord Hastings and Richard, Duke of Gloucester. The battle opened with gun fire across the fields to the west. A Lancastrian force passed secretly along Lincoln Green Lane, behind the fields, and charged into the Yorkist rear, down the hillock visible to the south-west.

This attack was repulsed by the Yorkist left flank, assisted by 200 knights charging down from Tewkesbury Park.

The whole Yorkist army then advanced, through this site, to attack the Lancastrians. Their ranks broke and they fled town-wards. Prince Edward was killed in the retreat.

The details of the battle are complicated to explain and is perhaps best understood with Rick Talbot's map.

- A. It was logical that the **Lancastrians'** three armies awaited the **Yorkist's** arrival from Tredington, by forming up their three armies on the higher ground to the north of the **Camp**. It is thought the **Yorkists** started at a disadvantage on lower ground and had the Lancastrians held their ground they might have won.

However, the more modern Yorkists had the use of cannon, whose shots impelled the enemy to wish to capture them by attacking downhill.

- C1. The choice was for the **Duke of Somerset** to attack behind the enemy by capturing a **Hillock** by surprise;
- B1. This failed and the **Duke of Gloucester** had secreted **200 mounted spearmen** in the trees at the top of modern Tewkesbury Park. They attacked Somerset on his flank and cause the Lancastrians to panic and this spread to the main formations, who started to flee the advantageous battlefield.
- C2. Famously, **Somerset** blamed **Lord Wenlock**, his fellow commander, for not supporting his attack and allegedly killed him by a blow to the head.
- D. The panicking Lancastrians sought to escape in two directions
- i. to regain **Lower Lode** and attempt for ford the River Severn there [it was then much shallower] and meet up with their allies with **Jasper Tudor**. However, the pursuing Yorkists attacked them from the rear in the boggy **Bloody Meadow [D1]**, where there was carnage - and where it is believed **Prince Edward** was slain.
 - ii. to reach the **Abbey** and find traditional **Sanctuary** where, in medieval thinking, they would be protected from the King troops. However, to reach there, they had to cross the **River Swilgate** where encumbered soldiers were trapped and killed.
- D2. The **Abbot** faced an agonising dilemma: to offer **sanctuary** or to defy the lawful **King**. At long last, it is believed he compromised and refused entry to the King's troops - but handed the Lancastrian leaders over to the King's justice. However, the modern view, in line with ultimately victorious **Tudor** propaganda, was that *"The victorious Yorkists, led by **King Edward IV**, forced their way into the abbey; the resulting bloodshed caused the building to be closed for a month until it could be purified and re-consecrated"*.¹⁴

¹⁴ Wikipedia 2024; the Tudors were ultimately victorious after the **Battle of Bosworth in 1485** when **Yorkist King Richard III** was killed and replaced as King by **Henry VII**. Winners usually write the subsequent history.

The Sign for Queen Margaret's Camp

It is believed there followed a Christian Sunday of prayer, after which on Monday the defeated **Lancastrian leaders** were executed by the victorious **King** near the modern Cross.

E. Little is known about the consequences for the defeated humble soldiers. It was traditional for them to be stripped of all of value and hastily buried. In 1877, during the building of a public health works, a common grave of the slain (maybe of both sides) was discovered. Modern historians estimate that perhaps **only 1,500 soldiers had been killed**.

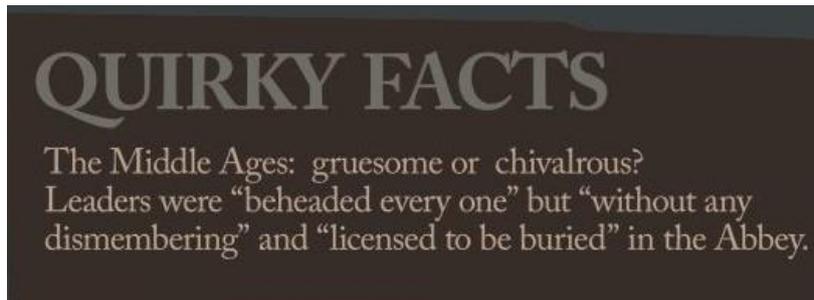
F. The fate of **Queen Margaret** is debated. Some say she logically watched the battle from the **Abbey Tower** – some nearby **Gupshill Manor**! It is now believed that some monks helped her escape across the **Severn at Lower Lode** after which she spent the night at nearby **Payne's Place**, [and maybe then **Little Malvern Priory**]¹⁵ before being captured by Royal troops and taken to London. Her husband was then allegedly murdered there.

The **House of Lancaster** had, therefore, been eclipsed at the Battle of Tewkesbury and the **Yorkist King Edward IV** was virtually unchallenged - as it turned out **for only 14 years until 1485**.



¹⁵ Goodchild 'Myths'

Quirky Fact? [C5]



More an **ironic** fact was that the Medieval period has a **gruesome** reputation, but the **Yorkist** leaders would be granted the title of **Chivalrous**. It is true that the defeated leaders were executed - but the normal practice was also to “draw and quarter” the body and then subject them to an “**Act of Attainder**: *an act passed by parliament against a person for a crime, or supposed crime, usually treason*”. It was a way to punish or even sentence someone to death for a crime without them actually standing trial¹⁶, and also to deprive their family of its wealth after forbidding a Christian burial. After the **Battle of Tewkesbury**, the leaders did have a form of trial and many of them were buried as a Christian and even in the Abbey: some examples were:

Prince Edward: buried underneath the Bell Tower in the Chancel but beneath the **emblem of the Sun of York**; “*cruelly slain whilst but a youth Anno Domine 1471, May fourth. Alas, the savagery of men. Thou art the sole light of thy Mother, and the last hope of thy race*”.¹⁷



Edmund Beaufort, 4th Duke of Somerset Commander of a Battle
John, Earl of Devonshire, and his Kinsmen **Sir Hugh and Walter Courtenay** “*who gave their lives at Tewkesbury.*

in the cause of the Red Rose May 1471 and are buried near this place”.

Edmund and John de Beaufort

Sir Humphrey Audley

¹⁶ The leaders were “brought before the King's brother the Duke off Gloucester and Constable of England, and the Duke of Norfolk, Marshal of England, their judges”. [Goodchild: ‘Myths’]

¹⁷ The plaque was installed by Sir Gilbert Scott in the late 19th century.