

The site of the battle today.

The Battle of Bosworth

The Battle of Bosworth is one of the most important battles in British history. The outcome shaped the future of the English monarchy and the country. It was the final major battle in the Wars of the Roses.

The Background

In 1455, war broke out between two major noble houses in England over the claim for the English throne: the House of York and the House of Lancaster. The heads of both houses were descendants of Edward III and both claimed to be the rightful king.

The wars were later named after the roses that were the symbols of each house.



- The House of York, represented by a white rose, was the current ruler of England.



- The House of Lancaster, represented by a red rose, was led by the Tudor family.

Over 30 years, war raged in many battles, finally coming to a head at Bosworth in 1485.



History enthusiasts recreate the Battle of Bosworth.

The Armies

In 1483, Richard III of the House of York was crowned king about three months after the sudden death of his brother, Edward IV, and the disappearance of Edward's sons. It is debated whether Richard ordered his nephews' murders so as to become king.

In August 1485, Henry Tudor (who had previously been exiled in France), landed in southern Wales with his troops.



They marched through Wales recruiting others to fight against the King. Henry's stepfather, Lord Stanley, gave him money to support his cause, despite officially being a York supporter.

Richard's army was made of between 10,000 and 15,000 men as well as some cannon whereas Henry's army numbered about 5000. Lord Stanley and his brother, Sir William Stanley, also had an army of about 6000 men; neither side could count on their support.

The Battle

The three armies met on 22nd August. Originally, it was believed that the battle was staged on top of a hill near the town of Market Bosworth, Leicestershire. Archaeological evidence suggests that it was nearer the villages of Dadlington and Stoke Golding.

The battle lasted about two hours and many men died. Richard decided to order a charge aimed at Henry to try and seal victory. However, after charging on horseback across the battlefield, Richard found himself surrounded by the enemy, fell from his horse and continued to fight on foot. He was eventually killed.



The Victory

After his death, Richard's troops fled and Henry, along with the House of Lancaster, was victorious. Henry went to a nearby hill where Lord Stanley placed Richard's crown onto Henry's head.

Richard's body was taken to Leicester as proof of his death and he was buried there.

After the Battle

In order to keep the peace between Yorkists and Lancastrians, Henry married Elizabeth of York, the niece of Richard III. This created a new emblem – the Tudor rose – made up of the red and white roses of both families.



The Battle of Bosworth led to the coronation of Henry Tudor as King Henry VII, the first of the Tudor monarchs.

Richard was the last English monarch ever to be killed in battle.

Fascinating Fact

The remains of Richard III were discovered in 2012 under a car park in Leicester. In 2015, they were placed in a tomb in Leicester Cathedral.

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