



On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of August 1513, a Scottish army numbering some 50,000, led by King James IV, crossed the border at Coldstream and invaded England in support of the French, who were being attacked by Henry VIII of England.

Anticipating the Scottish move, Henry had appointed Thomas Howard, Earl of Surrey, as Lieutenant General of the North.

On learning of the Scottish invasion Surrey sent out a call-to-arms in the Northern Counties. Richard Assheton and his contingent of Middleton archers made their way to Hornby Castle, near Lancaster, to rendezvous with Sir William Molyneux of Sefton, a Captain in Sir Edward Stanley's division of Lancashire and Cheshire archers and billmen.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of September Surrey arrived at Alnwick with an army of 26,000 hastily-summoned men, 20 small-bore cannons, 1,500 border cavalry and 1,000 armed sailors. On the 5<sup>th</sup> of September he marshalled his army in battle formation. Although James had agreed to fight on the level ground of Millfield plain by September 9<sup>th</sup>, at the latest, he occupied the high ground of Flodden Edge on the 7<sup>th</sup>, and refused to move.

The English had problems, for rations were failing, and on the day of the battle many men had not eaten for four days. It was essential to get James off Flodden Edge as soon as possible and, with this in mind, on the 8<sup>th</sup> of September Surrey marched his army to the north-east of James and camped for the night in Barmoor Wood. James had observed the English move and, fearing trickery, he turned his army round and occupied Branxton Edge a mile and half further north. At dawn on the 9<sup>th</sup>



the English marched due west for several miles and then turned southwards, in the face of driving rain.

## THE BATTLE

Around 4pm the two armies came face-to-face. The large Scottish cannons opened fire, but the missiles went over the heads of the English, whose small cannons responded, causing horrific injuries in the tightly-packed ranks of the Scottish pikemen, who moved downhill, smashing into the English right flank. The Scots continued to pour downhill and, on emerging from the gully between the two armies, were met with an arrowstorm from the English archers. The intense fighting around Surrey's position continued for two hours, when it became clear that the Scots were losing the battle. Gathering his household troops around him, James made a last desperate attack on Surrey's position, but was killed less than twenty feet from Surrey's banners.

Meanwhile, Sir Edward Stanley, in reserve, had observed 5,000 Highlanders on Branxton Edge preparing to move downhill to assist King James. Dividing his 1,200 archers into a semi-circle of three groups, he led his men up Branxton Edge, the Middleton archers removing their boots to get a better grip on the almost vertical east face. Reaching the top, the archers loosed off an arrowstorm amongst the unsuspecting Highlanders, who fled in panic. Stanley then moved downhill to attack the Scottish flanks. His prompt action had assured an English victory for, if the Highlanders had joined their King, the English, near exhaustion, would have been defeated. Richard Assheton was in the thick of the fighting around Surrey's banners, capturing Sir John Forman, Knight and Sergeant Porter to King James and Alexander Barrett, the High Sheriff of Aberdeen. Assheton was amongst forty men knighted for valour on the battlefield.

## THE AFTERMATH

And what of the Scots, that brave and hardy race? Their losses were appalling, with 8,000 dead and thousands wounded, many of whom would die from loss of blood before reaching their distant homes. The aristocracy and administrative classes were almost wiped out. Every notable family and town in Scotland lost someone at Flodden. At Selkirk, for instance, of the 80 men who had marched out of the town 4 weeks previously, only one man, named Fletcher, returned.

A statue of him is to be seen in the town square, on the plinth is the poignant inscription O FLODDEN FIELD!

Truly, Friday the 9<sup>th</sup> of September 1513 was the saddest day in Scottish history.

English losses were around 3,000 dead.



Issued by the Friends of Middleton Parish Church, Manchester

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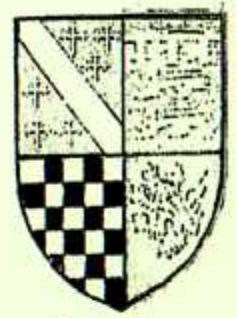


Detail from the Flodden window, installed in 1515.

# The Battle of Flodden

# THE BATTLE OF FLODDEN 9TH SEPTEMBER 1513. SHOWING THE PART PLAYED BY THE MIDDLETON ARCHERS

Issued by Colin Gilbert 0161 643 3747



SURREY



STANLEY



MOLYNEUX

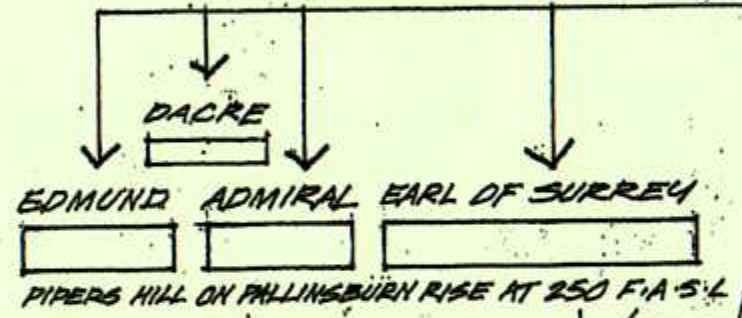


ASSHETON



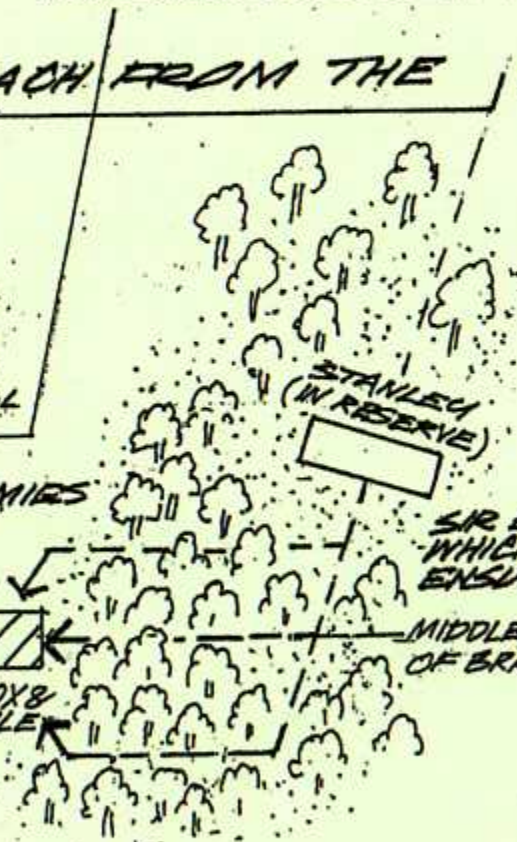
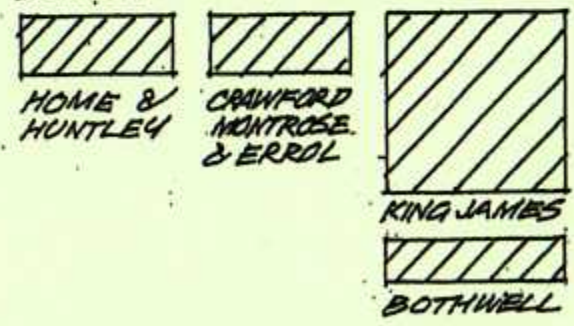
APPROXIMATE POSITION OF RICHARD ASSHETON'S CAPTURE OF SIR JOHN FORMAN AND ALEXANDER BARRETT, THE HIGH SHERIFF OF ABERDEEN.

## ENGLISH APPROACH FROM THE NORTH



BOG AND GULLEY BETWEEN THE ARMIES (UNNOTICED BY THE SCOTS)

BRANXTON EDGE AT 350 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL



SIR EDWARD STANLEY'S 'PINCHER MOVE' WHICH ROUTED THE SCOTTISH RESERVE ENSURING THE ENGLISH VICTORY.

MIDDLETON ARCHERS ASCEND EAST FLANK OF BRANXTON EDGE.

SCOTS FACING THE NORTH.

ALTHOUGH CORRECT IN CONTENT THIS SKETCH-MAP HAS BEEN DRAWN TO FIT THE PROPORTIONS OF THIS PAGE