

The Battle of Barnet

Battle of Three Kings and the Kingmaker



BARNET & MUSEUM **LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**



The mission of Barnet Museum and Local History Society for over 80 years (and as the only museum of its kind in the borough of Barnet), has been to conserve, present and promote the history of the area of Chipping Barnet. The Museum collection covers many aspects of Barnet life from prehistory onwards. It includes displays relating to medieval life, shops, pubs, sport, leisure, costume, childhood, religion, health, both World Wars and of course, that major event which was hugely significant in the history of the Nation, the Battle of Barnet.

Barnet Museum has been in the forefront of promoting knowledge of the Battle and in educating the local community and the wider public. The Museum leads in attempts to locate the battlefield itself, through archaeological investigation (theories abound and are much debated by local people). The latest report on the findings of Professor Glenn Foard and his team are due soon and we hope to follow this up with in depth analysis of the probable battlefield site.

The Battle of Barnet Project (2016-2018), funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), was led by Barnet Museum in partnership with The Battlefields Trust and the Barnet Society. The project was successful in fulfilling its stated aims by launching a Medieval Festival in 2018 as well as producing historically accurate replica banners of Battle participants, developing guided walks and an information film, putting on lectures, encouraging art works, positioning information boards around the town as well as promoting educational activities (including a schools Loan Box) for adults and children.

Furthermore, Barnet Museum has on display the artefacts from the battle and battle-period that have so far come to light. These include cannonballs, coins, spurs, jews' harps, a strap-end and a purse bar. Later this year, we are expecting to have, on long term loan from the archives of the British Museum, 6 arrowheads and a seal of Warwick the Kingmaker.

On our link, you will be able to see some of the resources that have been produced by Barnet Museum as part of the project. We hope these add to your knowledge, understanding and interest in this extremely important and significant battle during the Wars of the Roses.

1. A film introduced from the Museum by Julian Humphrys. This introduces the environs of the Barnet and gives an idea of where the battle was fought.
2. A power point presentation setting the battle in its context of the Wars of the Roses with a voiceover by the curator of the Museum, Mike Noronha
3. Pictures of the banners produced by the Barnet Museum volunteer team. They were meticulously researched by Geoffrey Wheeler. (Cards in packs of 4 are available to purchase).
4. The final report to the HLF on the Battle of Barnet Project.



Just in case you need a quick refresher about the importance of the battle, here are some highlights of the events of Easter Day, 14th April 1471.

- The presence of 3 kings, the Lancastrian former king, Henry VI as a hostage, the Yorkist king, Edward IV, and his brother the 18-year-old future king, Richard III.
- The atmosphere of betrayal, intrigue and suspicion surrounding the loyalties of many of the key participants, including Edward's other brother George, Duke of Clarence.
- The unlikely alliance between Warwick and Margaret of Anjou and her subsequent failure to arrive from France in time to shore up the Lancastrian cause.
- The death of the pre-eminent noble of his day Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (the Kingmaker) and his brother Marquis Montagu (afterwards displayed naked on the steps of St Paul's Cathedral as proof of death).
- The foggy conditions and mistakes in the battle formations which crucially affected the outcome – literally the "fog of war"!
- Edward IV won the day and on receiving news of the arrival of Margaret's forces from France on the same day, he set off to march west to engage them, leading to the Battle of Tewkesbury on 4th May 1471.