

= Battle of Barnet =

The Battle of Barnet was a decisive engagement in the Wars of the Roses , a dynastic conflict of 15th @-@ century England . The military action , along with the subsequent Battle of Tewkesbury , secured the throne for Edward IV . On 14 April 1471 near Barnet , then a small Hertfordshire town north of London , Edward led the House of York in a fight against the House of Lancaster , which backed Henry VI for the throne . Leading the Lancastrian army was Richard Neville , 16th Earl of Warwick , who played a crucial role in the fate of each king . Historians regard the battle as one of the most important clashes in the Wars of the Roses , since it brought about a decisive turn in the fortunes of the two houses . Edward 's victory was followed by fourteen years of Yorkist rule over England .

Formerly a key figure in the Yorkist cause , Warwick defected to the Lancastrians over disagreements about Edward 's nepotism , secret marriage , and foreign policy . Leading a Lancastrian army , the earl defeated his former allies , forcing Edward to flee to Burgundy . The Yorkist king persuaded his host , Charles the Bold , to help him regain the English throne . Leading an army raised with Burgundian money , Edward launched his invasion of England , which culminated at the fields north of Barnet . Under cover of darkness , the Yorkists moved close to the Lancastrians , and clashed in a thick fog at dawn . As both armies fought , the Earl of Oxford on the Lancastrian right routed the Yorkists opposite under Lord Hastings , chasing them back to Barnet . On their return to the battlefield , Oxford 's men were erroneously shot at by the Lancastrian centre commanded by Lord Montague . As cries of treason (always a possibility in that chaotic period) spread through their line , Lancastrian morale was disrupted and many abandoned the fight . While retreating , Warwick was killed by Yorkist soldiers .

Warwick had been such an influential figure in 15th @-@ century English politics that , on his death , no one matched him in terms of power and popularity . Deprived of Warwick 's support , the Lancastrians suffered their final defeat at the Battle of Tewkesbury on 4 May 1471 , which marked the downfall of the House of Lancaster and the ascendancy of the House of York . Three centuries after the Battle of Barnet , a stone obelisk was raised on the spot where Warwick purportedly died .

= = Background = =

The Wars of the Roses were a series of conflicts between various English lords and nobles in support of two different royal families . In 1461 , the conflict reached a milestone when the House of York supplanted its rival , the House of Lancaster , as the ruling royal house in England . Edward IV , leader of the Yorkists , seized the throne from the Lancastrian king , Henry VI , who was captured in 1465 and imprisoned in the Tower of London . The Lancastrian queen , Margaret of Anjou , and her son , Edward of Lancaster , fled to Scotland and organised resistance . Edward IV crushed the uprisings , and pressured the Scottish government to force Margaret out ; the House of Lancaster went into exile in France . As the Yorkists tightened their hold over England , Edward rewarded his supporters , including his chief adviser , Richard Neville , 16th Earl of Warwick , elevating them to higher titles and awarding them land confiscated from their defeated foes . The Earl grew to disapprove of the King 's rule , however , and their relationship later became strained .

Warwick had planned for Edward to marry a French princess ? Bona of Savoy ? to create an alliance between the two countries . The young king , however , favoured ties with Burgundy , and , in 1464 , further angered the Earl by secretly marrying Elizabeth Woodville ; as an impoverished Lancastrian widow , she was regarded by the Yorkists as an unsuitable queen . At her request , Edward bestowed gifts of land and titles on her relations and arranged marriages to rich and powerful families . Eligible bachelors were paired with the Woodville females , narrowing the marriage prospects for Warwick 's daughters . Furthermore , the Earl was offended by two matches involving his kin . The first was the marriage of his aunt , Lady Katherine Neville , over 60 years old , to Elizabeth 's 20 @-@ year @-@ old brother , John Woodville , a pairing considered outside of normal wedlock by many people . The other was his nephew 's fiancée , the daughter of Henry Holland , 3rd Duke of Exeter , who was taken as a bride by the Queen 's son , Thomas Grey , with

Edward 's approval . Exasperated by these acts , Warwick decided the Woodvilles were a malignant influence on his liege . He felt marginalized : his influence over the young king was failing , and he decided to take drastic action to force Edward 's compliance . Warwick 's alternative plan was to replace the King with his fellow conspirator , the Duke of Clarence , Edward 's younger brother .

Instigating several rebellions in the north , Warwick lured the King away from his main bastion of support in the south . Edward found himself outnumbered ; while retreating , he learned that Warwick and Clarence had called for open support of the rebellion . After winning the Battle of Edgecote Moor on 26 July 1469 , the Earl found the Yorkist king deserted by his followers , and brought him to Warwick Castle for " protection " . Lancastrian supporters took advantage of Edward 's imprisonment to stage uprisings . Because most Yorkist @-@ aligned warlords refused to rally to Warwick 's call , the Earl was pressured to release the King . Back in power , Edward did not openly pursue Warwick 's transgressions against him , but the Earl suspected that the King held a grudge . Warwick engineered another rebellion , this time to replace Edward with Clarence . The two conspirators , however , had to flee to France when Edward crushed the uprising ? the Battle of Losecoat Field ? on 12 March 1470 . Through letters in the rebels ' possession and confessions from the leaders , the King uncovered the Earl 's betrayal . In a deal brokered by the French king , Louis XI , the Earl agreed to serve Margaret and the Lancastrian cause . Warwick invaded England at the head of a Lancastrian army and , in October 1470 , forced Edward to seek refuge in Burgundy , then ruled by the King 's brother @-@ in @-@ law Charles the Bold . The throne of England was temporarily restored to Henry VI ; on 14 March 1471 , Edward brought an army back across the English Channel , precipitating the Battle of Barnet a month later .

= = Commanders = =

= = = Yorkist = = =

Edward IV was normally at the forefront of his armies . Standing 6 ft 3 in (1 @.@ 91 m) , he was an inspiring figure in combat , attacking foes while wearing a suit of gilded armour . Medieval texts describe the King as handsome , finely muscled and with a broad chest . He was personable and charismatic , easily winning people to his cause . Edward was a capable tactician and leader in battles . He frequently spotted and exploited defensive frailties in enemy lines , often with decisive results . By 1471 , the young king was a highly respected field commander . He received some criticism , however ; after winning the throne in 1461 , he proved indecisive about putting down rebellions . Historian Charles Ross praises Edward 's leadership and skill in close combat rather than his strategies and tactics . With his good looks and capable leadership , Edward was popular among the common people , especially compared to Henry VI . His trade policies , which aimed to expand and protect markets for English commerce , pleased local merchants , who were also won over by the Yorkist king 's personality . By 1469 , Edward 's groundswell of popular support had eroded away . The euphoria of a change in government had ebbed and the people blamed Edward for failing to " bring the realm of England in [to] great popularity and rest " and allowing Yorkist nobles to go unpunished for abuses . When Edward invaded England in 1471 , not many common people openly celebrated his return .

Edward was joined at Barnet by his brothers , Richard , Duke of Gloucester , and George , Duke of Clarence . Unlike his eldest brother , Gloucester was slender and seemingly delicate . He was 18 years old at the Battle of Barnet , his first major engagement . His military prowess , however , was well respected ; many historians judge him a capable warrior and military leader . Clarence was not as well regarded as his brothers , especially in matters of loyalty . When Edward became king , Clarence was chosen as his heir ; however , the births of Elizabeth of York (1466) and Edward V (1470) displaced the Duke in the line of succession to the throne . Hence , Clarence participated in Warwick 's schemes , marrying the Earl 's daughter Isabella , believing he could gain his brother 's throne . Clarence lost faith in the Earl when Warwick defected to the Lancastrians and married off his other daughter , Anne , to their prince in order to cement his new allegiance . When Edward

launched his campaign to retake England , Clarence accepted his brother 's offer of pardon and rejoined the Yorkists at Coventry on 2 April 1471 . The last of the Yorkist commanders was William , Lord Hastings , a loyal subject since the start of the wars . Hastings had accompanied the young king in exile and supported his return . The courtier was rewarded for his faithfulness , gaining the lieutenancy of Calais in 1471 , and becoming Edward 's lord chamberlain and primary confidant .

= = = Lancastrian = = =

Warwick had fought for the House of York since the early stages of the Wars of the Roses and alongside his cousin , Edward IV , in many of the battles . His years of loyalty earned him the trust of the Yorkists , and his victories ? both political and military ? and popularity with the common people made him an important figure . He had powerful influence over the line of succession , earning him the nickname " the Kingmaker " . Early historians described him as a military genius , but by the 20th century his tactical acumen was reconsidered ; Philip Haigh suspects that the Earl largely owed some of his victories , such as the First Battle of St Albans , to being in the right place at the right time . Christopher Gravett believes the Earl was too defensive and lacked mental flexibility .

John Neville , 1st Marquess of Montagu , was less ambitious than his brother Warwick , but a more capable warrior and tactician . In 1464 , he commanded a Yorkist force that turned the tables on a Lancastrian ambush at the Battle of Hedgeley Moor , and launched a surprise attack at the Battle of Hexham . These victories capped Neville 's extensive service in the north , and Edward rewarded him with the Earldom of Northumberland , which bore substantial income . The gift was particularly gratifying for Neville ; his family had experienced a deep feud with the former earls of Northumberland , the Percys , who supported the House of Lancaster . However , in March 1470 , Edward , trying to win over the Percys ' support , reinstated Henry Percy to the earldom . As recompense , Neville received the grander title of Marquess of Montagu ; however , the lands accompanying this rank were much poorer than the estate he had lost . The new marquess saw it as an insult ? an insubstantial title that was inadequate recognition for his years of faithful service . Montagu did not immediately join Warwick 's rebellion , however ; he defected later in the year when his brother invaded England .

Not much is known about the early history of John de Vere , 13th Earl of Oxford , another Lancastrian commander ; the chronicles mention little about him until the Battle of Losecoat Field . His father , the previous earl and a loyal Lancastrian , was executed for a failed plot to assassinate Edward IV . The Yorkist king tried to secure the loyalty of Oxford by knighting him and pardoning his transgressions . This tactic failed ; Oxford remained true to the Lancastrian crown and participated in Warwick 's effort to dethrone Edward . Historians describe the young Oxford as a decent military leader , exemplified by his conduct in the Battle of Barnet .

Although Henry Holland , 3rd Duke of Exeter , was of royal blood , he was commonly viewed as a criminal , prone to violence and stupidity . A proven enemy of the Nevilles , Exeter bore a grudge particularly against Warwick for displacing him from his hereditary role of Lord High Admiral in 1457 . Nonetheless , when Warwick joined the Lancastrians , Exeter obeyed Margaret and served under the Earl during the invasion of England . Although he supported the Lancastrian cause , Exeter had family ties to the House of York ; he was husband to Anne of York , Edward 's sister .

Edmund Beaufort , 4th Duke of Somerset , was a prominent Lancastrian and one of Margaret 's trusted men . Interactions between Somerset and Warwick were less than cordial ; the Nevilles and Beauforts had been feuding over estates since the early 1450s . Adding to their animosity was the death of Somerset 's father , the 2nd Duke , at the First Battle of St Albans . The Yorkists won the engagement , after Warwick slipped his force past the Lancastrian defence and attacked from behind . The Beauforts largely blamed the Earl for the Duke 's death . Somerset is listed in early chronicles as a participant in the Battle of Barnet ; however , this has been disputed . When the Lancastrians retook England , Warwick ordered the duke to watch over Henry VI in London . Several historians , such as Ross and Anthony Goodman , agree that Somerset left London to welcome Margaret in the south . Michael Jones points out that the Duke is recorded as having been in Salisbury on the day of the battle , trying to recruit townsmen for the Lancastrian cause . Trevor

Royle suggests that due to Somerset 's distrust of Warwick , the Duke would rather await his queen and her army than voluntarily aid the Earl . Therefore , it is unlikely that he fought at Barnet .

= = Prelude = =

On 14 March 1471 , Edward 's army landed at Ravenspurn . Gathering more men as they went , the Yorkists moved inland towards York . Edward 's march was unopposed at the beginning because he was moving through lands that belonged to the Percys , and the Earl of Northumberland was indebted to the Yorkist king for the return of his northern territory . Furthermore , Edward announced that he was returning only to claim his father 's title of Duke of York and not to contest the English crown . The ruse was successful : Montagu , who was monitoring Edward 's march , could not convince his men to move against the Yorkist king .

Once Edward 's force had gathered sufficient strength , he dropped the ruse and headed south towards London . Fighting off Exeter 's and Oxford 's attacks , he besieged Warwick at Coventry , hoping to engage the earl in battle . Although Warwick 's force had more men than Edward 's army , the earl refused the challenge . He was waiting for the arrival of Clarence , who wanted to use their combined strength to overwhelm the Yorkists . When he learned of this , Edward sent Gloucester to entreat Clarence to return to the House of York , an offer that Clarence readily accepted . Reconciled , the royal brothers moved towards Coventry , and Clarence urged Warwick 's surrender . Infuriated with his son @-@ in @-@ law 's treachery , Warwick refused to speak to Clarence . Unable to fight the earl at this time , Edward turned again towards London .

Reinforced by Montagu , Oxford , and Exeter a few days later , Warwick followed the Yorkists ' trail . He hoped that London , under Somerset 's control , would close its gates to Edward , allowing him to catch the Yorkist army in the open . The city , however , welcomed Edward warmly ; Somerset had left the city , and the London populace preferred the young Yorkist king to Henry VI . The old king greeted his usurper warmly and offered himself into custody , trusting " [his] life to be in no danger in [Edward 's] hands . " Lancastrian scouts probed Barnet , which lay 19 kilometres (12 mi) north of London , but were beaten off . On 13 April their main army took up positions on a ridge of high ground north of Barnet to prepare for battle the next day . Warwick arrayed his army in a line from east to west , on either side of the Great North Road running through Barnet . Oxford held the right flank and Exeter the left . Montagu commanded the centre , and Warwick readied himself to command from among the reserves . The earl displaced his entire line slightly to the west ; a depression at the rear of his left flank could impede Exeter 's group if they had to fall back .

Warwick 's army heavily outnumbered Edward 's , although sources differ on exact numbers . Lancastrian strength ranges from 10 @,@ 000 to 30 @,@ 000 men , with 7 @,@ 000 to 15 @,@ 000 on the Yorkist side . Facing this disadvantage , Edward hurried to meet the Lancastrians with a surprise attack . He brought Henry VI along to prevent the Lancastrians from retaking their king . Edward reached Barnet in the evening , and without knowing the precise location of his foes , prepared the battle line . The Yorkist king deployed Hastings on the left and entrusted Gloucester to lead the right flank . Clarence would fight alongside Edward in the centre , although this was not due to faith in his ability ? it was easier for the Yorkists to keep an eye on their twice @-@ defected prince there . A contingent of reserves was kept at the rear , ready to deploy at Edward 's call . As night fell , Edward put his plan for surprise morning attack in motion . Under a strict order of silence , the Yorkist army crept closer to the Lancastrians . During the night , neither commander spotted the opposing army , an event that proved crucial in the battle the next day .

During the night , Warwick ordered his cannons to continually bombard the estimated position of the Yorkists ' encampment . The Yorkists , however , had sneaked in close , and the Lancastrian artillery overshot their enemies . The Yorkist cannon , meanwhile , kept quiet to avoid betraying their location . As the armies settled down to rest , Montagu approached his brother and advised him of the troops ' low morale . He suggested that , as the highest @-@ ranking commanders , the brothers should fight on foot throughout the battle instead of riding on horse . The soldiers believed that mounted commanders tended to abandon them when the situation deteriorated . By staying on foot , the Nevilles would show that they were prepared to fight to the death with the men , inspiring

the troops to stand and fight harder . Warwick agreed and the horses were tethered to the rear , near Wrotham Wood .

= = Fighting in the mist = =

On 14 April 1471 , at around 4 o'clock in the morning , both armies woke . Edward had planned for an early attack , however , and quickly roused his men to engage the Lancastrians . Both sides fired their cannon and arrows before laying into each other with polearms . The morning fog was thick and the night movements of the two forces had displaced them laterally with each other . Neither group was facing the other ; each was offset slightly to the right . This displacement meant that the right end of either army could outflank the other by wrapping around the opposing left end . The Lancastrians were the first to exploit this advantage ; Oxford 's group quickly overwhelmed Hastings ' . Yorkist soldiers fled towards Barnet , chased by the Lancastrians . Some of Hastings ' men even reached London , spreading tales of the fall of York and a Lancastrian victory . Oxford 's group disintegrated as they split off to loot the fallen enemies and plunder Barnet . Yelling and chasing after his men , Oxford rallied 800 of them and led them back to the battle .

Due to the fog , visibility was low and the two main forces failed to notice Oxford 's victory over Hastings . As such , the collapse of the Yorkist left wing had little (if any) effect on morale of either side . The fighting between Montagu 's and Edward 's groups was evenly matched and intense . The Lancastrian left wing , however , was suffering treatment similar to that Oxford had inflicted on its counterpart ; Gloucester exploited the misaligned forces and beat Exeter back . Progress for Edward 's brother was slow because his group was fighting up a slight slope . Nonetheless , the pressure he exerted on the Lancastrian left wing rotated the entire battle line . Warwick , seeing the shift , ordered most of his reserves to help ease the pressure on Exeter , and took the rest into fighting at the centre . Gradually , the battle line settled to an orientation that slanted north @-@ east to south @-@ west .

Oxford retraced his steps through the fog back to the fight . His group arrived , unexpectedly , at Montagu 's rear . Obscured by the fog , Oxford 's " star with rays " badge was mistaken by Montagu 's men , who believed it was Edward 's " sun in splendour " . They assumed their allies were Edward 's reserves and unleashed a volley of arrows . Oxford and his men immediately cried treachery ; as staunch Lancastrians , they were wary of Montagu 's recent defection . They struck back and began withdrawing from the battle . Their shouts of treason were taken up and spread quickly throughout the Lancastrian line , breaking it apart as men fled in anger , panic , and confusion . As the fog started to dissipate , Edward saw the Lancastrian centre in disarray and sent in his reserves , hastening its collapse . Cries of Exeter 's demise from a Yorkist axe resounded across the battlefield from the Lancastrian left , and amidst the confusion , Montagu was struck in his back and killed by either a Yorkist or one of Oxford 's men .

Witnessing his brother 's death , Warwick knew the battle was lost . He made for the horses in an attempt to retreat . Edward recognised his victory was at hand , and ? deciding that Warwick was more valuable alive than dead ? sent the order and dispatched his guards to bring back the earl alive . Several chroniclers have suggested that the king thought Warwick would again be a valuable ally if persuaded back to the Yorkist cause . Historian Michael Hicks , on the other hand , suggests that Edward wanted to capture the earl for public execution , rather than as a gesture of mercy . Regardless of the king 's intent , Warwick died in the Lancastrian rout . A miniature model reproduction of the Battle of Barnet can be found at the Battle 's natural interpretive centre , The Barnet Museum .

= = Post @-@ battle = =

The battle lasted from two to three hours , and was over by the time the fog lifted in the early morning . As usual in most battles of the time , the routed army suffered the most casualties ; fleeing men were cut down from behind . Contemporary sources give various casualty figures ; the ' Great Chronicle of London ' reports 1 @,@ 500 dead , whereas ' Warkworth 's Chronicle ' states 4 @,@

000 . Edward Hall and Raphael Holinshed , both 16th century chroniclers , say that at least 10 000 men died in the battle . The Yorkists suffered half as many casualties as the Lancastrians . Royle favours the recorded approximate figures of 500 Yorkists and 1 000 Lancastrians dead .

The bodies of the two Neville brothers were brought back to London . They did not suffer the customary fate accorded to traitors ? quartering and display at the city gates . Edward exhibited the brothers ' naked corpses in St. Paul 's Cathedral for three days to quell any rumours that they had survived , before allowing them to be laid to rest in the family vault at Bisham Abbey .

Although he had defeated the Neville brothers , Edward had little time to rest ; Margaret landed at Weymouth on the day of the battle . She feigned a march to London while augmenting her army with recruits from Wales and the Welsh Marches . The Lancastrian queen was disheartened by the news of Warwick 's demise , but Somerset suggested that they were better off without the earl . Despite the defeat at Barnet , Lancastrians who fled from the battle looked to the queen to restore their house to the throne . Alerted by his spies to the Lancastrians ' true route , Edward intercepted and defeated them at the Battle of Tewkesbury on 4 May 1471 . Gloucester , Clarence , and Hastings again fought to defend the Yorkist crown .

Exeter had been stripped of his armour and left for dead on the battlefield at Barnet , but he was alive ? though gravely injured . His followers found him and took him to Westminster Abbey . On his recovery , he was imprisoned in the Tower of London for four years before submitting to Edward 's rule . Exeter did not participate in the later battles of the Wars of the Roses . Edward sent him on a Yorkist expedition to France in 1475 , and the duke was reported to have fallen overboard and drowned without any witnesses .

After withdrawing from the battle , Oxford fled to France and participated in piracy of English ships , continuing his campaign against Yorkist reign . He was eventually captured in 1473 after conquering St Michael 's Mount , an island off the south -west coast of England . Twelve years later , Oxford escaped from prison and joined Henry Tudor 's fight against the Yorkists , commanding the Lancastrian army at the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 .

= = Legacy = =

The Battle of Barnet was an important engagement in the Wars of the Roses : it brought about the death of a prominent figure and secured the throne for another . Despite its importance to history , contemporary records about the battle are rare . The sole chronicle based on an eyewitness account ? The Arrivall of Edward IV ? was written by someone within Edward 's council , which presents a biased account of the battle . Another first -hand observation was found in the Paston Letters , written by the Lancastrian Sir John Paston . Other records , such as The Warkworth Chronicle , offer only bits and pieces about the battle . Therefore , deficits in historical understanding must be filled through field research and discoveries of mediaeval documents .

Historians theorise that had Warwick 's force joined Margaret 's before challenging Edward , the combined Lancastrian army would have overwhelmed the Yorkists . Instead , Warwick 's defeat gave the Yorkists a victory so decisive that it , along with the Battle of Tewkesbury , secured the English throne for Edward IV . Historian Colin Richmond believes that Edward 's return to power was assured at Barnet ? Tewkesbury was " merely an epilogue " . Without having to contend with Warwick 's popularity and political influence , the young Yorkist king could fully exert his will and rule the land unchallenged . Ballads composed during Edward 's reign celebrated his victory as sanctioned by God : " Man proposes , oftymes in veyn , But God disposes , the boke telleth pleyne " . Barnet was a disaster for the Nevilles ; their lands given away and their offices reduced . The family never again reached the prominence in English politics that they had enjoyed before the battle .

= = = Shakespearian dramatisation = = =

The battle is alluded to in William Shakespeare 's Henry VI , Part 3 (1595) . The end of Act V , scene one depicts the events leading up to the battle ; scenes two and three portray the conclusion ,

in which the characters discuss the combat and the fates of its participants . Shakespeare uses few details reported by contemporary chroniclers and ignores notable incidents , such as the confusion over Oxford 's and Edward 's badges . His play is based mostly on poetic and dramatic sources . In the play , Montagu is killed while trying to save his brother (Shakespeare 's source material included Hall 's 1548 The Union of the Two Noble and Illustrate Famelies of Lancastre and Yorke) , and Warwick is dragged in by Edward IV and left to speak his dying words to Oxford and Somerset . Warwick 's death dominates the scenes , reflecting Hall 's vivid portrayal of the earl 's passing as a valiant death . Furthermore , whereas several chronicles mention Edward 's desire to capture Warwick , Shakespeare has the Yorkist king lustily demand Warwick 's skin .

Shakespeare presents the Nevilles as brothers who are willing to die for each other , whereas the three sons of York ? Edward , Gloucester , and Clarence ? are slowly driven apart by their own goals and ideas . Professor of English John Cox suggests that Shakespeare did not share the impression given in post battle ballads that Edward 's triumph was divinely ordained . He argues that Shakespeare 's placement of Clarence 's last act of betrayal immediately before the battle suggests that Edward 's rule stems from his military aggression , luck , and " policy " . Shakespeare also explicitly excludes Edward from action sequences , a departure from Hall 's depictions .

= = = Battlefield = = =

English Heritage , a government body in charge of conservation of historic sites , roughly locates the battlefield in an area 800 to 1600 metres (0 .5 to 1 .0 mile) north of the town of Barnet . Over the centuries , much of the terrain has changed , and records of the town 's boundaries and geography are not detailed enough for English Heritage or historians to conclude the exact location of the battle . Geographical features corresponding to contemporary descriptions allow approximations of where the fighting took place .

English Heritage suggests that a 15th century letter from a Hanseatic merchant , Gerhard von Wessel , helps to identify the battlefield via geological features . It mentions a " broad green " which corresponds to Hadley Green , and the marsh on the right flank of the Yorkist line is likely to be in the valley of the Monken Mead brook . The letter also mentions St Albans road , which has remained largely the same , winding through the fields . Urbanisation over the 18th and 19th centuries , however , has populated much of the area with buildings . By the 20th century , the suburb of Monken Hadley covered part of the fields where the Battle of Barnet was fought . A hedge in the local golf course , as suggested by Lieutenant Colonel Alfred H. Burne , is likely the row of shrubs behind which Oxford 's men lined up and took cover .

In 1740 , Sir Jeremy Sambroke erected an obelisk to commemorate the battle about 200 metres (660 ft) south of the junction between the Great North Road and Kitts End Road . It was later moved just north of the junction on the grass between the two roads . Known as Hadley Highstone , it stands 5 .5 metres (18 ft) tall and marks its location with the inscription :

" Here was fought the Famous Battle Between Edward the 4th and the Earl of Warwick April the 14th ANNO 1471 in which the Earl was Defeated And Slain . "

The battle is referred to in the coat of arms of the London Borough of Barnet which display a red and a silver rose in the top of the shield and two crossed swords in the crest .