

*“the Duke of Norfolk would haue ffled;
with 20000 in his companye
he went vp to a wind mill,
& stood vpon a hill soe hye,*

*there he met Sir Iohn Savage, a valiant Knight;
with him a worthy companye:
to the death the duke was dight,
& his sonne, prisoner taken was hee.”*

(from The Song of the Lady Bessiye)

Battle Report

10th March, 2018

Richard drew up his line with Richard Brackenbury on the far right with John Howard, Duke of Norfolk's, company to Brackenbury's left. The Yorkist Mainward, under Richard himself, was behind the line in the centre. The Yorkist Rearward, extended from the road southward. William Catesby's company was on the right and Henry Percy, Duke of Northumberland's, company was on the left. The two gones were placed one in front of each of the two Rearward companies.

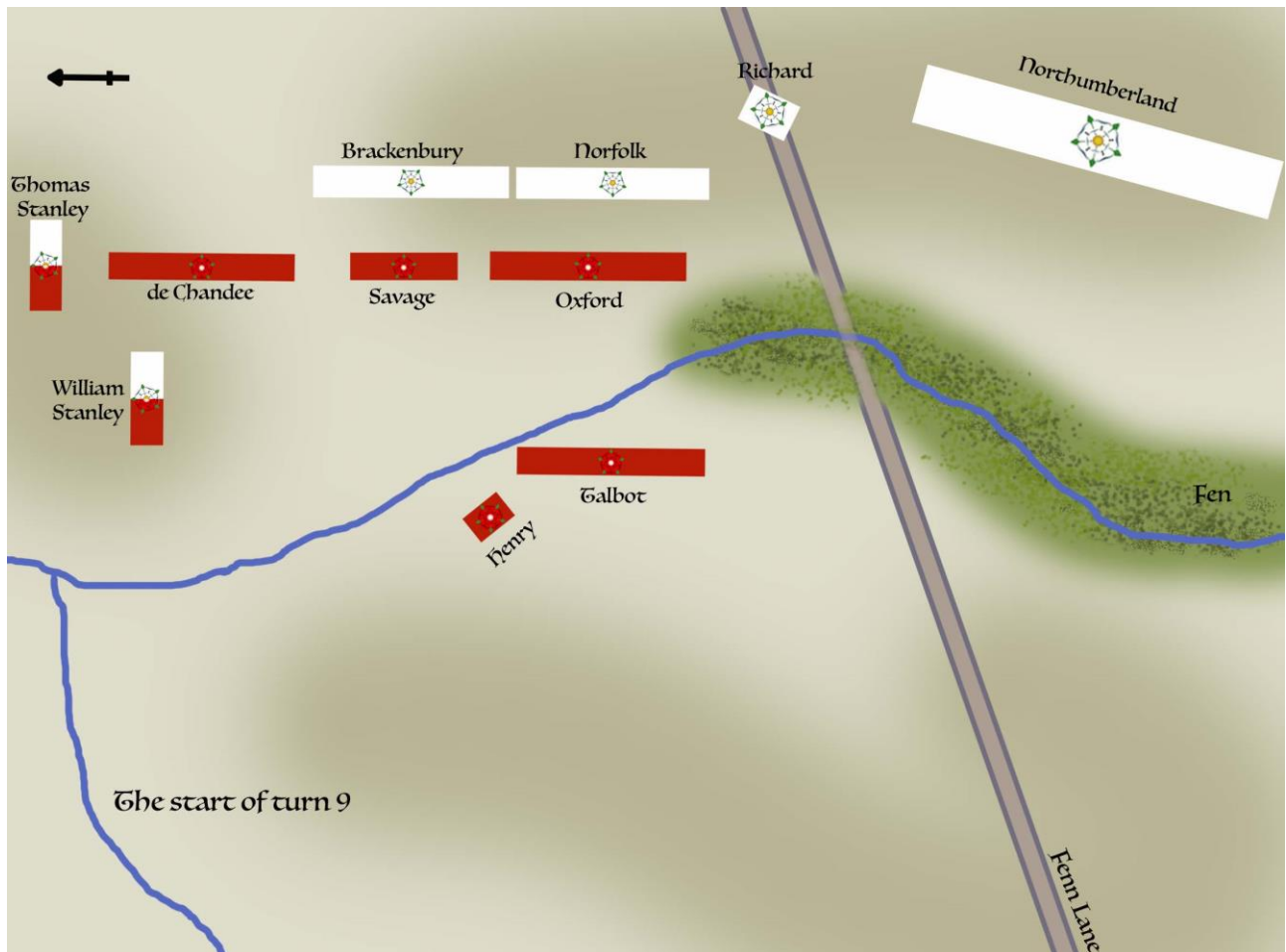
The Earl of Oxford deployed the Lancastrian Mainward at variance with history. He placed Talbot's company on the right; his own next; then John Savage's; with Philibert de Chandee's mercenaries on the left. Henry Tudor's Reserve ward followed in the wake of Oxford's company. The single gone was placed by Oxford on the road.

When Henry ordered his host to advance they inclined towards the left to attempt to clear the fen. While his line moved towards the Yorkists the opposing gones exchanged fire. Talbot's company lost a casualty and Henry's a courage to the Yorkist gones while Henry's weapons made no impression on Northumberland's ward.

Richard responded to Oxford's advance by moving the Yorkist Vanward to the right into the open ground north of the road to better confront Oxford when he passed the marsh and by moving the Mainward forward into the gap created. When Oxford came within bow range his ward halted and he exchanged bowshot with Norfolk's men. Oxford's fire was ineffective save causing Norfolk's company to lose a courage. Norfolk, who concentrated his fire on John Savage's small company, had more success and that company lost two bands.

Oxford's march to the left miscarried somewhat when his three left companies cleared the fen but Talbot's company did not. In the following turns Talbot was obliged to file to the left to clear the fen. This placed his company some distance behind Oxford's company when the two sides came to handstrokes.

When the two opposing lines closed to within short range of each other Thomas Stanley became active. Thomas directed his brother William to become to join Henry. William's company was the Stanley Vanguard and so on the right of Stanley's line. When he activated Oxford's ward had moved passed his position and this placed William's ward behind the Lancastrian line.



The pivotal event of the battle then occurred; Northumberland's Rearward activated. This triggered a series of events that turned the battle. First William Stanley's ward, which had only moved forward into the space behind Philibert de Chandee's company on the Lancastrian far right, lost a courage and changed sides. Chandee's company was beyond their reach so William simply moved his company forward towards Henry and Talbot's companies in the centre of the field. At the same moment Thomas Stanley's ward also changed sides. His men charged into Chandee's left flank but in the ensuing handstokes the cunning Frenchman staved off disaster and was able to turn his company to face Thomas Stanley's men.

While Oxford had moved his three advanced companies forward he allowed them to separate and significant gaps appeared in his line. When Brackenbury charged he only made contact with John Savage's reduced company. The resulting handstokes exchange was catastrophic for Savage; his entire company was made casualties. The proximity of Henry's company and an absence of any fugitives to pursue resulted in Brackenbury's men simply occupying the ground Savage had held.

In the centre Oxford and Norfolk's company clashed. Oxford's men overthrew Norfolk and the Yorkist company routed from the field. Oxford did not pursue because of the proximity of Richard's cavalry to his front and Brackenbury's company on his flank. Before Oxford could react Richard charged his cavalry into the right end of Oxford's line while Brackenbury's company wheeled and moved into contact with Oxford's left. The contest was a near run thing till a Happenstance card changed the Yorkist card selection. In the following handstrokes re-calculation Oxford suffered four casualties and his company routed.

By this time Talbot had cleared the fen and formed a front some distance behind Oxford's company. When this company routed Talbot's presence caused both Richard and Brackenbury to cut short their pursuit. Talbot's men had no time to act though as Richard again led his cavalry forward. Talbot was caught with his bowmen in the front rank and so offered little resistance to Richard's thundering horse. Talbot's men turned and ran. Richard did not pursue. This time it was the presence of Henry's company to their right front. Henry had come forward to a position behind Talbot's left when Oxford routed. In that position his angled line faced both William Stanley, closing from his left, and Brackenbury, who after the rout of Oxford had wheeled his line to the right to face Henry.

The final act saw the destruction of Henry's company and the dashing of all his hopes. Brackenbury charged Henry's front; William Stanley his left front; and Richard, at the head of his triumphant cavalry, struck his right flank. Henry's men were cut down in droves and the survivors fled. Henry was taken in the pursuit and the ever-vengeful Richard had him dispatched forthwith.

During all of this mayhem the Yorkist Rearward had remained relatively passive. They had been able to loose off some long range arrow and gonne fire against the closest target, Talbot's company, but without effect. When Northumberland attempted to move his men did not respond. (Being an amateur he had drawn a Danger and had pulled Confused.) Only when Henry's company was surrounded was he able to start to move his men to the right.

On the north end of the field the sole remaining Lancastrian company, that of Philibert de Chandee, still remained on the field. They had battled Thomas Stanley's small ward for a number of turns without either gaining the upper hand, but with the death their leader, and surrounded by victorious Yorkists the Frenchman cried quarter and was granted it.

Commanders

Yorkists

Vanward

John Howard, Duke of Norfolk

Wayne Hobbs

Mainward,
Richard III

Andrew Toms

Rearward

Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland

Andrew Toms

Lancastrians

Mainward,

John de Vere, Earl of Oxford

Les Hunt

Reserve Ward

Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond
Wayne Hobbs

Phil Rowe

The Stanleys

Vanward

William Stanley

Darren Pollard

Rearward

Thomas Stanley

Darren Pollard

Umpire

John Savage