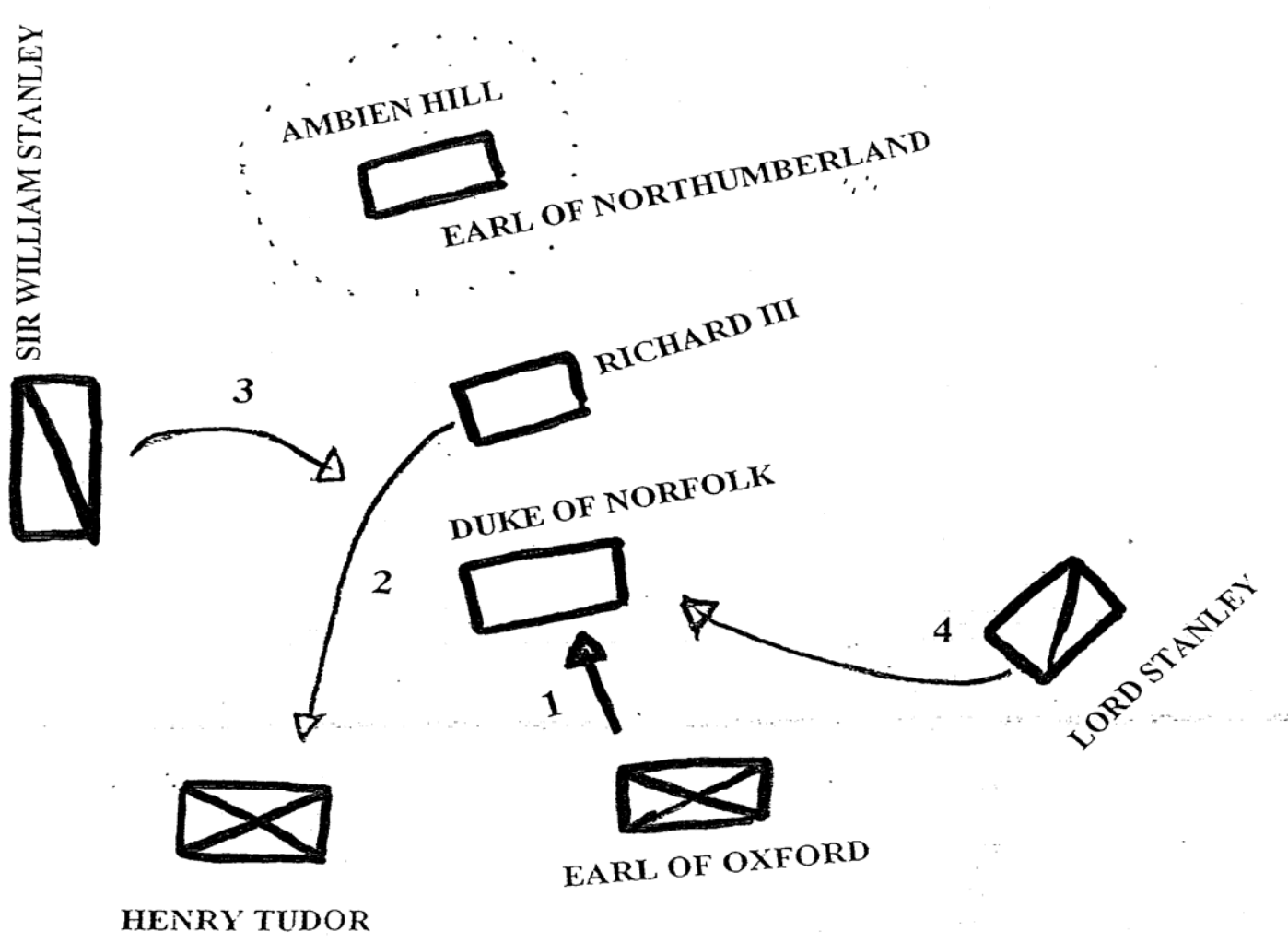





THE BATTLE OF BOSWORTH FIELD. 22ND AUGUST 1485

- 1: **Henry Tudor** landed at **Milford Haven** on 7th August 1485. He had with him 2,000 French mercenaries and a handful of Lancastrian lords and knights.
- 2: Henry marched through Wales and by the time he reached **Market Bosworth** in Leicestershire, his army had grown to around **5,000 strong**.
- 3: **Richard's** army was around **15,500 strong**, but 6,500 of his troops were commanded by the Stanley brothers.
- 4: The **weather** was **good**. The battle lasted only **two hours**.
- 5: **Northumberland refuses** to take part in the battle although he was on Richard's side. (3,000 men)
- 6: **Lord Stanley** (on Richard's left flank) and **Sir William Stanley** (on Richard's right flank) wait on the sides to see how the battle develops. This was despite the fact that Richard has taken Lord Stanley's son as a hostage. Lord Stanley was also Henry Tudor's stepfather!
- 7: Richard had the better position with his troops placed on **Ambien Hill**.
- 8: When Henry finally was ready, his men used cannon and arrows to force Richard to come down from his hilltop
- 9: **Richard** was **hesitant** at first and did not take advantage by attacking Oxford whilst he was deploying his troops.
- 10: This allowed **Oxford** to launch the first **attack on Norfolk**, who is soon killed. Surrey takes command but Richard is losing men fast.
- 11: For the **first hour** the fighting is **evenly matched**.
- 12: With a stalemate to his front, Henry (accompanied by a bodyguard of about 200 knights) decided to ride across to the Stanleys and see if he could persuade them to enter into the fray on his side. Richard observed Henry's dragon banner moving across the battlefield to his right and saw an opportunity to end the battle at one fell stroke.
- 13: **Richard unsure** of the **loyalty** of the **Stanleys** decides to attack. Leaving his infantry on the hill, **Richard and 1000 cavalry attack** Henry Tudor's position.
- 14: **Richard killed William Brandon**, Henry Tudor's standard-bearer. Throwing away his broken lance and drawing his sword, Richard tried to hack his way through and wounded John Cheney, his bodyguard.
- 15: Some of Henry Tudor's pikemen form a schiltrons around Henry.
- 16: **William Stanley's** 4,000 red jacketed horsemen now entered the battle on the Lancastrian side, attacking Richard's right flank. They are shortly followed by **Lord Stanley's** troops.
- 17: **Northumberland** still **refuses** to bring in Richard's **reserves**. He later surrenders.
- 18: **Richard was unhorsed** but refused a remount and returned to the fight wielding his battle-hammer. Richard was now surrounded by enemy soldiers. Sir Percy Thirlwall (the King's standard bearer) was gallantly still holding Richard's banner aloft, even though both his legs had been cut off.

- 18: King Richard died alone, fighting bravely against a horde of men-at-arms. **Richard** was cut down by a Welsh soldier armed with a halberd and most of his horsemen are trampled to death. **Treachery** had won the day for Henry Tudor.
- 19: **Richard's infantry fled** the field and Lord Stanley crowns Henry king with Richard's crown.
- 20: **Richard's body** was stripped, thrown over his horse (White Surrey) and taken to Leicester where it was buried three days later at the Friary of Grey Friars in an **unmarked grave**.



-  YORKISTS
-  LANCASTRIANS
-  NEUTRAL BUT LATER LANCASTRIAN

Why did Henry VII win (or why did Richard III lose) the Battle of Bosworth Field (Redemore) 1485?

Weather was good. No chance of weather affecting outcome such as at Barnet where fog has caused confusion and led to 'blue on blues casualties.

Tactics

It was difficult for any commander to be certain about his tactics. Throughout the Wars of the Roses when battles had begun, commanders were never quite sure who was going to fight on their side.

Richard's advantages

1. More military experience. Had fought in several battles (Barnet 1471) during the Wars of the Roses. Regarded as a competent commander.
2. Richard had every reason to believe that he had sufficient manpower to deal with Henry's army. At the start he anticipated having a larger army of 12,000 compared to 5,000.
3. Placed his army on Ambien Hill. Had advantage of ground position. 150m height, clear of trees (good vision), marshy at bottom.

Why Richard Lost

1. Richard's left wing, under Northumberland, (3000) refused to fight. He wanted to see who would fight for who!
2. Lord Stanley (2,500 mounted cavalry) and Sir William Stanley (4,000 footsoldiers) were pledged to Richard's cause, but they had secretly agreed to support Henry. When the decisive moment in the battle came, their men joined in on Henry Tudor's side and Richard's fate was sealed.
3. Richard was hesitant at first and did not attack Oxford whilst he was deploying his troops. Lost vital initiative. Maybe Richard had an inkling about the loyalty of the Stanleys.
4. This allowed the earl of Oxford to launch the first attack on Norfolk, who was soon killed. Oxford showed some tactical brilliance.
5. Richard's suicidal charge to kill Henry Tudor very nearly succeeded but its failure left Richard stranded and surrounded by his enemies who wasted no time in killing him.

Whatever else has been said of him (most of it negative propaganda by later Tudor "historians") no one can accuse Richard III of cowardice. He fought bravely to the end, and was eventually killed on the field, deserted by his friends and allies.

As **Charles Oman** in *The Art of War in the Middle Ages* (1923) dismissed Bosworth saying "this can hardly be taken for serious military study - since it was not settled by strategy or tactics, but by mere treachery".

Weapons and Tactics of Richard III



Archers (1,200)

Firing longbows. This was one of the last battles in which the longbow was used. The increasing cost of hiring longbowmen had reduced their affordability, and with the development of firearms, their day was near an end.

Men at arms (1,600)



Dismounted men at arms Trained knights who dismounted from their horses and fought with polearms. These were pole about 2 metres long with various weapons attached to their end. Such weapons included, the following:

Halberd



Lochibar



Bill Hook



Pitchfork



Pole Cleaver



Guisarme



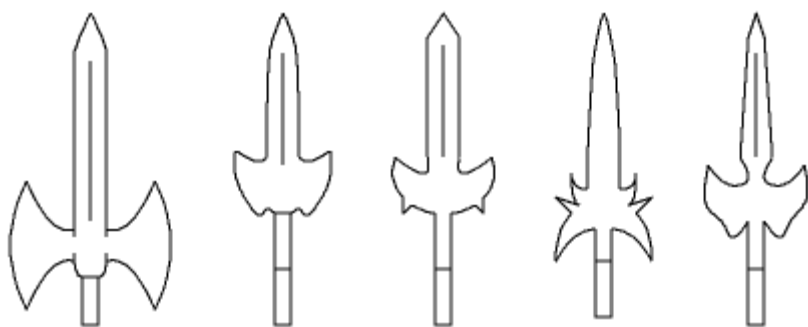
Ranseur



Glaives



Partisans



Footsoldiers (5,000)



Many of Richard III's men used pikes. These were between 10-15 feet long, with a sharp metal point. used by infantry principally as a counter-measure against cavalry assaults.. The extreme length of this weapon requires a strong wood such as ash for the pole, which is often reinforced with two strips of steel running down the sides. The steel tip was fairly long compared to the shaft, making the weapon most unwieldy in close combat. This meant that pikemen were often equipped with a sword, for close encounters

Cavalry (2,500)

Mounted knights armed with lances, swords, maces and flails. They charged at the enemy hoping either to force them from the battlefield, ride over them or kill them with their weapons.

Flail



Maces



Richard kills Henry Tudor's standard bearer



Oxford v Norfolk



Tactics

Very little respect or chivalry was shown to enemies during the Wars of the Roses. There was no hostage taking for ransom. Fighting was to the death and important captives were executed. Unfortunately for Richard III he was unable to use what we think were his original tactics. Had things gone to plan, Richard planned to remain on Ambien Hill with his army. Using his bowmen he would fire at advancing cavalry and footsoldiers. His pikemen and men at arms would deal with any enemy who got through. When Henry Tudor's forces were sufficiently weakened he would sent his troops in for the kill.



Henry Tudor's troops and tactics.

Henry had archers (900) men at arms and cavalry much like Richard III. However he had to other weapons at hand

The handgun of the period was primitive, it's user both feared and pitied as the weapon occasionally exploded in the firer's face, causing serious injury. In England during this period its use appears to be very limited and was used by mercenaries only.

Cannon.

Like the hand gun still very primitive. Dangerous to the users as it was prone to exploding. Limited range, manoeuvrability and accuracy.

Henry's Tactics

Henry wanted to force Richard off Ambien Hill, and in order to do so he fired his cannon and arrows at Richard. Having forced Richard down from the hill, the Stanleys would join him in surrounding Richard's troops. However, desertions forced Richard to charge Henry and played into Henry's hands.