

## A Famous Battle.

In 1408, the Battle of Bramham Moor raged across the land just to the north of Headley. This contest was essentially between Henry IV and the powerful Percy family, Earls of Northumberland and lords of Tadcaster. They had very soon regretted helping Henry to overthrow and subsequently murder the rightful but wilful king Richard II, and rebelled. As early as 1403, the family was led by the Earl's son Henry, usually known as Harry Hotspur, who was so admired in the north that the Northumbrian 'burr' is said to have originated in the local people imitating his speech defect. He was killed by the King's forces in a major battle at Shrewsbury in 1403, so it was left to his elderly father to continue the rebellion.

It was not until five years later that old Northumberland was able to move south with a large but poorly armed force which included many Scots. At Thirsk he and Lord Bardolph issued a proclamation saying that they had come "to comfort the nation and relieve the kingdom" and then continued south. The king set out to meet them but Sir Thomas Rokeby, the High Sheriff of Yorkshire, secured the bridge at Knaresborough and this persuaded the rebels to turn aside to Wetherby.

On Bramham Moor Northumberland "set out his men so as they might be ready to do battle" and did not have long to wait. Rokeby appeared with the banner of St. George and many well-armed gentry and yeomanry; there were no chivalrous preliminaries but a furious and

bloody battle immediately the two sides met. It was 19th February 1408, The old earl was killed (some accounts say he expired in a local barn), his head was severed and carried on a spear in procession through the towns en route to London, where it was exhibited on the bridge as a "monument to divine Justice". Lord Bardolph was captured but fortunately died on the battlefield from his wounds; his head, along with those of sixteen prisoners who had been hanged, drawn and quartered, was also sent to London. Many executions and fines followed Henry IV's arrival in York and there were no further threats to his throne.

Some years ago human remains were found during renovations to Headley Hall and it was generally assumed then. that these were refugees from the battle, but little investigation or recording. seems to have taken place and it is now juSt hearsay, Although Camp Hill near Spen is said to recall the site of the battle this now seems to be a much earlier site. The memorial cross was in the middle of fields to the north of York Road, on Oglethorpe land, until the nineteen thirties when it was moved to its present position at the edge of the Black Wood on the Bramham to Tadcaster road. The battle most likely spread across that whole area, which was then wild uncultivated moorland. The site marked on maps does have earthworks but these are of indeterminate date and are built as a defence against an attack from the north, the opposite of that in 1408.