

# Earl of Northumberland Memorial

## Black Wood Hollow

The stump of the memorial to the first Earl of Northumberland , killed in battle on Bramham Moor on the 19th February 1408 , lies in its third position , in Black Wood Hollow. Originally shown on old maps as having been situated in Pear Tree field , opposite [ perhaps this was where he fell ] , it was then moved into the hedge next to the Toulston road --- pointed out here by the Chambers brothers , Arthur [ right ] and William. Later still it was moved to its present position on the orders of Major Lipscombe , then the Bramham Park Estate Manager.



Remains of cross. Probably late medieval. Magnesian limestone. Base approx. 1 metre square and  $\frac{1}{2}$  metre high, the upper part brought to an octagon by broad chamfers, the remaining corners of the lower part raised as if for finials or short pinnacles. In the centre of the base, a stump of the shaft, octagonal, with chamfer stops at the bottom of the diagonal sides.

ROUND THE YORKSHIRE BATTLEFIELDS WITH ALFRED TAYLOR: No. 6

# Bramham Moor sealed the rebels' doom

**T**HE long-handled bill with which Mark Hayton, of Bramham, was trimming farmer C. Hardcastle's hedges was the sort of crude implement peasant levies carried to war in the campaigns of long ago.

With the weapon across his shoulder and wearing a different suit Mark might well have been one of those ancient and often reluctant warriors, for Pear Tree Field, the 21-acre enclosure he was cutting round, was where the Battle of Bramham Moor was fought in 1408.

## BLACK WOOD

The field stands about a mile from the village on the left of the Bramham-Tadcaster road at a point where it soars up a gentle slope.

On the crest at the right, in a copse called Black Wood, is the base and stump of an ancient cross. Pear Tree Field, with a wooden barn in the corner, lies opposite.

The cross was supposed to mark where the Earl of Northumberland fell in the battle—"Never to rise again until rough hands stripped off his mail, and held him for the butcher's work of headsman's axe and knife."

But the cross has been moved from its original site on the south side of a shallow saucer-like depression in Pear Tree Field, about 100 yards from the road and 20 yards from the western boundary.

Long ago a farmer hauled it out of the ground because it interfered with ploughing. He broke the shaft in the process and most of it has been lost.

## Smashed by vandals

For a long time the broken pieces stood in the hedgerow half way down the field, until about 16 years ago Major W. T. Lipscomb, then agent for the Bramham Park Estate, had the cross removed to Black Wood.

"It was completely hidden in the hedge and I thought people would appreciate having it on view near the road." Major Lipscomb told me. "I even had a brief history of the cross framed too. It seemed a good idea, but the framed notice was soon smashed by vandals and the cross has been so defaced I have rather altered my opinion."



The cross in Black Wood.



*Handwritten note:* Cross base

# Family of Hotspur and Falstaff

By David Graves

THE House of Percy, the line of the Dukes of Northumberland, is one of the grandest, most powerful, headstrong and scheming of English families.

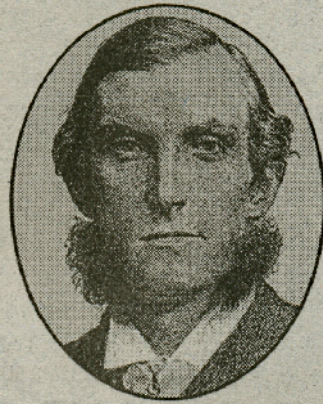
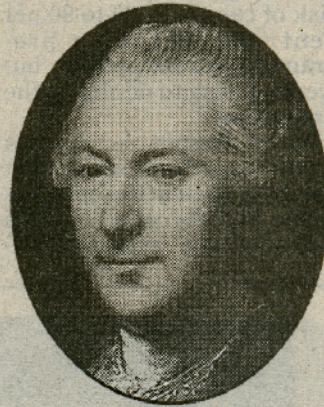
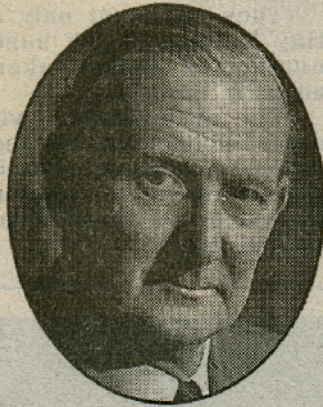
William de Perci of Normandy arrived a year after the Battle of Hastings and settled in England.

Nicknamed *Als-germons* — “with the whiskers” — he was domineering and superstitious, yet, according to the definitive history of the family, “drew the starving, wild-eyed English out of their lurking-places, filled their mouths with food and found work suited to their weakness”.

Originally the family settled in Yorkshire, but moved to Northumberland during the early 14th century after buying Alnwick Castle. It gave protection from invading raiders in the days of the Border Wars and became the seat of the Percy family.

In 1377 Henry de Percy officiated at the coronation of Richard II and was rewarded with the earldom of Northumberland. He promptly began a series of political machinations, abetted by his son, the soldier and statesman Henry “Hotspur” Percy, who was born at Alnwick in 1366 and immortalised by Shakespeare in *Henry IV*.

Shakespeare made use of the family’s predilection for plotting, in which Hotspur



10th Duke (above left),  
1st Duke (top right),  
and 7th Duke (left)

first supported the monarch and then turned violently against him. Largely at their instigation, Richard was deposed and succeeded by Henry IV, who in turn suffered a revolt led by Hotspur that ended at the Battle of Shrewsbury.

The fifth Earl, known as “Henry the Magnificent”, had 166 people listed in his household book, including 11 priests and 17 chanters and musicians.

Under the Tudors, the 7th earl was beheaded for

supporting Mary Queen of Scots.

Henry, the 8th Earl (1572-1585), discarded his Catholicism “like a cloak which had served its turn” when Elizabeth I ascended the throne.

He married the eldest daughter of Lord Latimer, whose riotousness and debauchery inspired Shakespeare’s Falstaff, but he fell victim to the accusation “once a Catholic, always a Catholic”, and was sent to the Tower of

London. The 10th Earl also spent some 16 years in the Tower after the Gunpowder Plot. Later he helped to organise Cromwell’s New Model Army, but also led the opposition to the impeachment of Charles I.

The dukedom was created in 1766 for Sir Hugh Smithson, who was actually a usurper and took the name when he married a Percy daughter. He became a confidential adviser to George III and was appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. His illegitimate son James Smithson founded the Smithsonian Institution in Washington with a \$508,000 legacy to the people of the United States.

In the American War of Independence, the 2nd Duke commanded the 5th Regiment of Foot, later designated the Royal Northumberland Fusiliers.

The present Duke of Northumberland, the 12th, assumed the title in 1995 after the death of his brother Harry, at the age of 42. He had been managing the family’s estates for some years, consisting of 80,000 acres around Alnwick Castle, 150 acres of Syon Park in West London and 3,000 acres in Surrey.

Within the two houses is a collection of art treasures valued at £200 million.

Only eight years ago a “forgotten” Raphael was discovered on the wall of a corridor at Alnwick and valued by experts at up to £30 million.

It was Henry de Percy , first Earl of Northumberland and father of Harry Hotspur of Shakespearian fame , who was killed at Bramham Moor. According to custom , his body was quartered before being displayed around the kingdom “ pour encourager les autres “ !

































