

Battle of Shrewsbury 1403

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The battle of Shrewsbury was fought on 21st July 1403 just north of Shrewsbury, at a place now called "Battlefield" and close to the church later built on the site of the battle. This page gives a brief summary of the battle, with links to more detailed discussions of the various aspects of the battle.



a) Causes of the battle.

When King Edward III died in 1377, he was succeeded by his ten-year-old grandson Richard II. In 1399, King Richard was persuaded to abdicate and died in 1400. The next King was the Lancastrian Henry IV, and the Percy family from Northumberland were among his chief supporters. By 1403, they had become disaffected and in the summer of 1403, Henry Percy ("Hotspur"), when raising troop in Chester, publicly proclaimed that he was doing so on behalf of Richard II. This indicated rebellion against King Henry.

b) Events leading up to the battle.

Hotspur then marched south to Shrewsbury, possibly expecting to meet Owen Glendower, who was already in revolt in Wales, and possibly expecting that his brother would persuade Prince Hal to join them and bring his troops from Shrewsbury. In fact, neither of these expectations was realised - Glendower continued his progress through South Wales and Prince Hal remained inside Shrewsbury and used his troops to hold the town against Hotspur. Meanwhile King Henry, moving more swiftly and decisively than expected, arrived from the east and threatened Hotspur's army. Since the opposing army was now too close for Hotspur to get away, either west across the river Severn into Wales or north to Chester, he chose the best position open to him - a slight ridge to the west of the road north from Shrewsbury to

