THE WARS OF THE ROSES
COMPILATION

91 Pages of WotR articles from the pages
of Wargames Illustrated magazine
There are a number of reasons why the period still attracts me. First, all the troops look great. By the 15th Century, knightly armour had reached its apotheosis. Fully equipped men-at-arms are spectacular in their fluted Gothic or smooth Milanese plate armour and elegant sallet helmets. And, as they did not carry shields and rarely wore surcoats, you do not have to worry about painting lots of complicated coats of arms. Their retainers, archers and billmen, also look great in their jacks, brigandines, bits and pieces of plate armour, and the livery jackets of their lords. Second, there is playability. The intricate politics of the period, where rival noble families vied for power, changing sides if it suited their purpose, make a fantastic basis for a wargames campaign. You can set one up based on the major protagonists or build something around the bloody rivalries between the various noble families.

Then there is the attraction of gaming a transitional period of warfare as the medieval world moved into the renaissance. The Wars of the Roses retained many medieval features, such as knights in armour and massed longbowmen, but pikemen, handgunners, and field artillery came to dominate the battlefield. If there is a downside, it is the lack of cavalry action. Although most men of rank and many retainers rode to battle, they typically dismounted to fight. Prior to battle, horses were sent to the rear, only being mounted again to pursue a routing enemy. Occasionally an army may have had a very small wing of mounted men, but these were usually lightly armed ‘scourers’ or ‘prickers’ rather than fully armoured men-at-arms. Such wings rarely numbered more than a couple of hundred men, however, out of an army of tens of thousands.

Everyone has their reasons as to why they become interested in wargaming a particular period. Over the years, I have been inspired to embark on a project simply because I liked the look of some figures, but usually there is a stronger pull, often linking back to early influences. This is certainly the case for me with the Wars of the Roses. I can still remember the excitement I felt as a youngster in the 1960s when I got my first Britains Swoppet Wars of the Roses knights. Later, rather than studying for exams or writing papers, I spent many an evening satisfying my Machiavellian instincts over a game of Kingmaker with friends at the pub.
WARFARE IN THE WARS OF THE ROSES

In many ways, the Wars of the Roses resembled a huge family squabble turned violent. Death in battle was always a risk but, as the cycle of revenge spiraled on, being on the losing side of a battle would often result in execution. It was not only the heads of families who lost their lives; seventeen year-old Edmund, Earl of Rutland, was murdered by Lord Clifford after the battle of Wakefield in 1460, and the young Prince of Wales was killed after the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471. While the noble families were happily murdering each other, life for ordinary people went on with relatively little impact when compared to the devastation wreaked on France during the Hundred Years War. With few exceptions, such as the depredations of Margaret of Anjou’s army of northerners and Scots on their march south in 1461, the countryside was not ravaged and towns were rarely sacked. Even in battle, the common soldiers were usually spared while little mercy was given to the nobles.

When a man’s life and his family fortunes depended on backing the winning side, as in the Wars of the Roses, treachery was a common feature. Throughout the course of the wars, families changed allegiances to suit their own purposes. Warwick, ‘the kingmaker’, for example, famously changed from being the foremost Yorkist to supporting the Lancastrians. Several battles were won because someone changed sides even as the battle was raging, as when the defection of the veteran Andrew Trollope with the veteran Andrew Trollope with the

A LITTLE LOCAL DIFFICULTY

A BRIEF BACKGROUND TO THE WARS OF THE ROSES. BY NEIL SMITH

The Wars of the Roses is the name given to a series of short but violent military campaigns that took place in late 15th Century England. From 1455 to 1487, kings, pretenders, and their attendants, fought some of the most vicious battles in English history. From 1455 to 1487, kings, pretenders, and their attendants, fought some of the most vicious battles in English history. From 1455 to 1487, kings, pretenders, and their attendants, fought some of the most vicious battles in English history. From 1455 to 1487, kings, pretenders, and their attendants, fought some of the most vicious battles in English history. From 1455 to 1487, kings, pretenders, and their attendants, fought some of the most vicious battles in English history. From 1455 to 1487, kings, pretenders, and their attendants, fought some of the most vicious battles in English history. From 1455 to 1487, kings, pretenders, and their attendants, fought some of the most vicious battles in English history. 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and billmen. Armies formed up in three divisions or ‘battles’; the vanward, mainward, and rearward. Sometimes, a small force might be held in reserve and occasionally a contingent of mounted men were posted off to one flank. Archers were usually deployed in front of the billmen and opened the battle with an archery duel. Although this was rarely decisive because both sides tended to cancel each other out, it was said that after the first few ‘draws of the bow’ an experienced archer would know if the battle was won or lost. Thus, archers did not win battles on their own, but winning the archery duel could force an opponent to do something he preferred not to. This most famously happened at the Battle of Towton in 1461 when the effective Yorkist archery forced the Lancastrians out of their defensive positions. When it became clear that one side could not win the archery duel, the billmen and men-at-arms moved through their archers to advance on the enemy and settle matters. When the lines closed, battle degenerated into a vicious slogging match that could go on for hours before one side or the other turned and ran. A flank charge or new enemy appearing from elsewhere often settled the matter.

On a side note, artillery was still in its infancy during this period, but the Wars of the Roses saw increased deployment of guns in the field rather than just in sieges. In most cases, guns played only a minor role in the outcomes of battles, but against an inexperienced force they could be decisive. At the Battle of Losecote Field in 1470, a barrage from the Yorkist artillery caused the enemy levies to break and run before anyone actually came to blows. There is also new archeological evidence that artillery may have played a more important role at Bosworth than previously thought.

**RAISING ARMIES**

As surprising as it may seem now, English kings in the 15th Century had very few troops under their immediate command, and there was no standing English army other than the small Calais garrison. Rather, nobles coming together and bringing their retainers with them formed armies. To hold onto his throne, therefore, the king depended on the support of his powerful nobles. Lose that support, as Edward IV did when he fell out with Warwick, and he could lose his crown. The retainers and followers of the nobles were the mainstay of armies in the Wars of the Roses. In return for service with bill or bow, the retainer wore the livery badge and colours of his lord, who in turn provided food, shelter, wages, and security. The number of men a nobleman could raise depended on his wealth, lands, and prestige; the most powerful raised large forces, numbering in the high hundreds or even thousands. Each of Edward IV’s brothers, for example, commanded over 1,000 men for an expedition to France in 1475. Even an ordinary knight could have quite a large following. Sir Walter Strickland, for example, provided 150 billmen and 140 archers for the service of his lord, half of whom were mounted and wearing armour.

The other source of manpower was through the royal commissions of array. This enabled the king, through his appointed commissioners, to raise men from the towns and shires. Technically every able-bodied man was liable for
service and large numbers of troops were raised in this way. The men provided their own equipment, for the most part a helmet, jack, sword and buckler, in addition to bow or bill. The proportion of bows to bills is a matter of conjecture. This is complicated by the fact that non-noble soldiers were often referred to as ‘archers’ whether they carried a bow or not. For example, the Duke of Gloucester’s contingent of 10 knights and 1,000 archers in 1475 does not necessarily mean that archers could outnumber other troops by as much as 100:1. It is more likely that the archers included all the common soldiers who came armed with a mix of bills and bows. Where actual arms are specified, the ratio of bows to bills seems much more even. A proficient archer required a great deal of training, whereas almost anyone could use a bill. Therefore, the proportion of bills to bows may have been higher amongst those troops raised through commissions of array than semi-professional liveried retainers. Of the 85 men levied from Ewelme in Oxfordshire, for example, only 17 were archers.

CROSSING THE RUBICON

Events in the first half of the 1450s broke the back of the English body politic. Economically, England had not yet fully recovered from the Black Death. The demographic collapse caused by the plague created widespread opportunities for land-grabbing and corruption. Squeezed to breaking point, the commons finally rose in 1450 under the leadership of Jack Cade. The rebellion failed to properly ignite, but Richard, Duke of York was not slow to latch onto popular discontent as a tool against his enemies at court. He received little noble support for the moment - they were too busy feuding amongst themselves - and found himself imprisoned for much of the next couple of years.

The war in France meanwhile, lurched towards a disastrous close before ending in ignominious defeat at the Battle of Castillon in 1453. That left the port of Calais as the last English stronghold on the continent. The political consequences were two-fold. First, a new crop of aggrieved nobles set up their stalls in England, having lost everything in France. Second, and much more serious, King Henry VI fell into a catatonic state, forcing a debate on who was to rule and how. In that regard, Somerset had little credibility and Margaret was a non-starter for most of the nobility. That opened the door for Richard to deal a Council of Regency as Lord Protector. His hated enemy, Somerset, soon occupied a cell in the Tower of London, while Margaret bided her time. Across the country, noble allegiances and patronage shifted. For the next three decades, they would do so again and again.

Henry recovered in 1455 as quickly as he had collapsed. Margaret now acted, ensuring Somerset’s release and squeezing out York from the court. Richard did not believe it would stop there; however, and feared a charge of treason. Without any other apparent option, he gathered his allies and marched on London. Henry’s response was to march out with his army to meet York, which they did at St Albans on 22 May 1455. York’s forces won the ensuing battle in which Somerset died and Henry once more suffered an ‘episode’. Richard resumed his role as Protector, but his resort to combat set a precedent for the resolution of future disputes, and Richard himself would pay a high price.

THE GAME OF THRONES

At this stage, Richard did not covet the throne, and the nobles were quite happy to fabricate a justification for York’s actions. Rather, Richard expected to inherit the crown on Henry’s death, while Margaret promised a sword and nail fight if her son Edward was disinherited. Henry recovered again in 1456 and York once more lost his supervisory role. Margaret and Henry moved the king’s court to Coventry and issued orders for Richard to return to his lieutenantcy in Ireland, while a new Duke of Somerset nestled into the royal viper’s nest. Elsewhere, noble disputes further divided the Nevilles and Percys tore apart the north of England, while in London, Richard’s ally the Earl of Warwick, also a Neville and soon to be known as the ‘kingmaker’, emerged as a new favourite of London’s Pickering faction. Despite an effort at rapprochement in March 1458, swords on both sides would not remain in scabbards for long.

War broke out again in 1459, this time when the still suspicious York, along with Warwick and the Earl of Salisbury, refused a summons to Henry’s court at Coventry. Instead, they mustered their forces at Richard’s Ludlow Castle. At the Battle of Blore Heath, a Lancastrian army failed to stop Salisbury arriving from Yorkshire. Fortunes turned quickly, as they so often did in the Wars of the Roses, when a bigger Lancastrian army aided by the defection of one of Warwick’s lieutenants crushed the Yorkists at Ludford Bridge. Richard fled to Ireland and the others fled to Calais, where Warwick was captain of the town and the garrison was loyal to him. The wheel of fortune spun again the following year when Warwick and Salisbury landed in Kent to popular acclaim. Henry sallied out with an army to meet the invaders while his queen and son rode north into friendlier territory. On 10 July at Northampton, the two sides met in battle with Warwick triumphant and King Henry once again grasping unsuccessfully to hold on to his sanity. Warwick took the king prisoner and entered London in triumph. Richard arrived soon after, this time to claim the throne. His timing was off, however, because no one other than York wanted to depose Henry. After much wrangling, the nobles in parliament struck a deal to keep Henry enthroned, but Richard would now become his rightful heir. Richard, restored as Protector, readily agreed. There was, however, the thorny problem of Henry’s wife and child, currently on the loose in Scotland.

Margaret needed an army. Fortunately for the Lancastrian cause, Mary of Gueldres, regent of Scotland, needed a dynastic marriage for her son and she wanted the town of Berwick. Margaret signed the deal, but without any money her new army would have to be paid in booty. Without a moment to lose, Margaret called for Henry’s supporters to muster at York while she began her march south. Richard in response brought his army north to Sandal Castle near Wakefield. When the Lancastrian army arrived, Margaret promptly sallied forth with his smaller forces only to get crushed. Richard, Duke of York, Protector of the Realm, heir apparent, died fighting; his son...
Foreign mercenaries and allies also played a part in the Wars of the Roses, but not in huge numbers. At various times the Lancastrians drew support from the French, Scots, and Welsh, while the Burgundians generally supported York. French mercenaries, for example, together with some Scots and a large Welsh contingent, made up the core of Henry Tudor’s army in 1485; Edward IV had 500 Flemish handgunners with him in 1471; the Earl of Lincoln’s army contained contingents of Germans and Irish at Stoke Field in 1487; and French and Scots supported Margaret of Anjou in the 1460s. Most of those mercenaries were probably pikemen, with some handgunners and possibly a few crossbowmen.

WARGAMING THE WARS OF THE ROSES

To get the most out of wargaming any period, you need to use rules that are specifically designed to capture the flavour of that warfare. It is of course possible to play a Wars of the Roses game using a generic set of ancient and medieval rules, but you lose some of the colour and much of the fun. I have tried to keep a period-specific flavour to all my games since first publishing *Comitatus* in the late 1980s for wargames in the Dark Ages. I had always intended to take the basic *Comitatus* mechanisms and expand them backwards in time to cover classical ancient warfare and forwards to the later medieval period, but was unable to do so until recently. Earlier this year, I finally managed to complete both projects, completing *Civitates Bellantes* for the classical Greek and Roman period and *The Tree of Battles* for late medieval warfare in western Europe. *The Tree of Battles* takes its title from *L’Arbre des Batailles*, a treatise on war and the laws of war written at the end of the 14th Century by Honoré de Bouvet.

In brief, a good set of Wars of the Roses rules should:

- Reflect the characteristics of the historical troop types.
- Allow armies to be organised like the historical originals.
- Have rules that make it possible that some commanders may not obey their orders and may even stoop to treachery.
- Simulate the effect of the archery duel.
- Give players limited command options once the battle has started.

Above all, mechanisms must be simple to follow and implement. This partially reflects my own bias towards simplicity and the desire to play the game from the commander’s point of view rather than that of a section leader. But, because warfare in the Wars of the Roses was a relatively simple affair between relatively similar forces, I also think the rules should mirror that to some degree.

TROOP TYPES

Using simplicity as my guiding principle, I decided that I did not need to represent many variations in troop types for the Wars of the Roses. For the native English troops, you have a very small number of men-at-arms (usually dismounted), billmen, archers, artillery, and possibly a few light horse (scourers). Mercenaries could add pikemen, handgunners, maybe crossbowmen, and some light
infantry. Many medieval rules go into great detail differentiating between various types of weapons and levels of armour protection. I am not sure this is necessary. A substantial number of historical contingents wore jacks and bits and pieces of armour, with some less well equipped, all led by a couple of men-at-arms. So for the most part, levels of armour were similar with only the immediate retinues of kings or great lords in full harness and some hastily raised militia or Celtic mercenaries wearing less armour.

To represent adequately the formations used in the Wars of the Roses, I needed to make provision for units of mixed troop types. It seems that archers and billmen of the same contingent would usually remain together as a single company - the archers formed in front, advanced a few paces at the start of the battle to engage their opponents, then fell in behind the billmen to support them in hand-to-hand combat. To represent that, I created mechanisms that allow a unit to contain a mix of different troop types and to exchange ranks. I do not allow archers to shoot overhead. Instead, as the billmen go into combat, the archers provide support by adding depth to the formation - the assumption being that they have downed bows and drawn their swords and bucklers. Incidentally, the rules for mixed units also made it possible to represent effectively the Swiss pike and halberd formations or crossbows/handgunners and pavisiers; though not necessary for the Wars of the Roses, they are handy if you want to take your troops to fight for Burgundy.

For field artillery, I again opted for simplicity. Rather than trying to represent all the different types of guns available, I decided that, as they did not play a decisive role, I would lump them all together in a single category. You could argue that this is not realistic, after all a heavy bombard would have a different effect than a fowler, culverine, or serpentine. However, while their characteristics perhaps need to be differentiated in a siege game, I did not feel they merited any additional complication for a field battle.

died too, begging for mercy. Salisbury also died in the disaster, and a triumphant Margaret of Anjou ordered their heads displayed on spikes over York’s gates.

Historians tend to like their history neat and tidy and decisive battles make wonderful denouements for exciting narratives. With the story of the Wars of the Roses, however, loose ends keep poking out. After the Battle of Wakefield, a quick count of Yorkist heads showed someone missing, Richard’s eldest son, Edward, Earl of March. Under the recent accord, he was now the heir presumptive when Henry died, and as Margaret was about to find out he would not indulge her with any suicidal charges into her army’s massed ranks.

Margaret advanced south after Wakefield determined to free her husband and restore him to the throne. Warwick established a strong but static defensive line at St Albans, complete with cannons and mercenary handgunners. Warwick, however, was betrayed - get used to that word if you study the Wars of the Roses - and his position revealed.

The Lancastrians accordingly stepped deftly around the Yorkist defences during the night of 16 February 1460 and attacked from the southwest, pouring through the town and into the desperately scrambling rear of Warwick’s army. The Yorkist commander in the end did well to extricate most of his army and drew away into Oxfordshire. Once more, a victorious army found a mentally enfeebled King Henry on a battlefield, this time much to Margaret’s jubilation. Her joy, however, would be short lived.

Two weeks before Margaret’s victory, her ally Owen Tudor had attempted to bring an army from Wales to her support. The young Edward intercepted him at Mortimer’s Cross and, inspired by the omen of three “suns in splendour” in the morning sky, scattered the Lancastrians across the fields. Tudor was captured and died under the axe, but his son Jasper escaped to become another loose end. Margaret now paid the price for her army’s rapacious advance south. Their depredations terrified the good people of London who made it clear she was not welcome. Moreover, many in Margaret’s army, glutted on loot and booty, slinked off home to enjoy their earnings, reducing her fighting capacity. The queen, though victorious in battle, was forced to withdraw to Dunstable, and it was Edward and Warwick, who for the moment seemed to enjoy the spoils of war. Indeed, Edward’s arrival in London met with rousing cheers and calls for him to be crowned. He duly was, becoming King Edward IV. He too could not long bask in his glory, for out there, in the wilds of Yorkshire near a village called Trowton, stood the full Lancastrian army and Edward’s destiny.

**WARS OF THE ROSES CAST LIST**

As the credits roll on the introduction to our Wars of the Roses theme we thought we would give you a handy guide to who fought for who during the wars.

**LANCASTRIANS**

- Henry IV
- Henry V
- Henry VI
- Margaret of Anjou (queen of Henry VI)
- Edward, Prince of Wales
- Edmund Beaufort, 2nd Duke of Somerset
- Owen Tudor
- Jasper Tudor, 1st Earl of Pembroke (son of Owen)
- Lord Clifford, 9th Baron de Clifford
- Henry Percy, 3rd Earl of Northumberland
- Sir Andrew Trellope (formerly Yorkist)

**YORKISTS**

- Richard Plantagenet, 3rd Duke of York
- Richard Neville, 16th Earl of Warwick “Kingmaker” ( later switched to Lancastrians)
- Richard Neville, 5th Earl of Salisbury (father of Warwick)
- Edward IV, 7th Earl of March, 4th Duke of York
- Sir John de Mowbray, 3rd Duke of Norfolk
- William Neville, Lord Fauconberg, 1st Earl of Kent (formerly Lancastrian)
- John Radcliffe, Lord Fitzwalter
ORGANISATION

The organisation of armies in the Wars of the Roses was pretty simple. Contingents following their various lords joined together in up to three battles - the vanward, mainward and rearward. Once joined, these battles moved and acted as a single body rather than as a loose collection of units. I felt it was important to represent this. Therefore my command and movement rules encourage the player to move and fight the battle as a single entity. Once an individual contingent is separated from its battle and commander it is likely that it will not do what the player might wish. As well as the standard three battle organisation I make provisions for the addition of small wings of mounted troops and a reserve.

It may be that in continental armies more complex army organisations were used. For example Charles the Bold of Burgundy apparently formed his army into eight battles in 1476. However, every two battles were possibly grouped under a single senior captain so in reality the organisation may not have been that dissimilar from the traditional. In any case, seemingly more complex organisations and formations were probably not used in the Wars of the Roses.

TREACHERY

No Wars of the Roses game would be complete without the possibility of treachery. In my first draft of The Tree of Battles, I made it possible for any unit to disobey its orders or even switch sides. That produced a number of amusing incidents in the first few trial games and I soon realised that such mechanisms were impractical for a larger battle and could end a game almost before it began. Therefore, I decided to separate the possible misinterpretation of orders (whether deliberately or not) and downright treachery. I ended up making it scenario-specific to determine whether a captain leading a battle was ‘potentially treacherous’. For example, the Stanleys in Richard III’s army at Bosworth would be liable to commit treachery, but players should not know that until Stanley loyalty is tested during the game. If found treacherous, the traitor cannot advance his troops against the enemy and there is a chance he may switch sides. If faced with treachery, however, there is a chance for a superior leader to influence the traitor back to loyalty by offering sufficient inducement or killing him and replacing him with a loyal subordinate. Mercenaries are immune from treachery.

At the beginning of the game, when initial orders are given, or whenever new orders are issued, I have all the receiving captains roll a die to see how they will interpret the orders for their battle or whether they will even deliberately disobey them. There is a possibility that the captain will not allow his troops to move, or he may advance without orders to do so, or he may simply vacillate while he makes up his mind. That could create the sort of situation in which Somerset found himself at the Battle of Tewkesbury when not supported by Wenlock.

THE ARCHERY DUEL

Getting the archery duel right is critical. For my rules, I wanted it to feel like an arrow storm, but at the same time I did not want it to be so devastating that it would win battles in its own right. The result I looked for was to cause one player to realise that he was not going to outshoot his opponent and therefore decide to advance with his billmen and men-at-arms. I also needed a mechanism that might cause a unit to disobey its orders if it took a particularly heavy pasting. After some trial and error, I came up with ways of doing all of these relatively simply. I also added a slight chance that untrained troops might also disobey orders when fired on by artillery. This would make it possible for something to happen similar to the events at Losecote Field.
out, for the most part the leader’s job was to share the danger with his men and provide the inspiration for them to give their utmost.

I decided, therefore, not to have leaders based individually so they can move around the battlefield with ease. Instead, each captain commanding a battle is part of his retinue stand or element. The captain is always assumed to be with his retinue and fights with it as an integral part of his battle. There is an option for the leader to move away temporarily to deal with a crisis elsewhere, but for the most part once the game begins, the leaders have quite limited command options. They can help to rally troops who are close by and can try to influence the behaviour of a contingent when circumstances are such that they may not carry out their orders. But the range over which the leaders can influence command was kept deliberately very short.

**SCENARIO OPTIONS**

One of the attractions of the Wars of the Roses is that there were plenty of open field battles suitable as the basis for a good historical wargame. All of them contained different elements, moreover, which mean that no recreated battle needs to be like another. You have the possibility of using field fortifications at Northampton and Second St Albans, for example, a big open battle such as Towton, street fighting at St Albans, or an ambush as at Wakefield. Then there are practically limitless ‘what if’ possibilities. For example, I recently set up a game based on Edward IV’s march to Barnet in 1471 when a Lancastrian force under the Earl of Oxford and Duke of Exeter marched to intercept him near Newark. Historically, the Lancastrians withdrew after a short skirmish but the possibility that the forces actually clashed made for an excellent game. Another excellent ‘what if’ campaign could be based on Edward IV’s invasion of France in 1475. Nothing much came from it historically, but if you want to branch out from the civil wars in England and add a few more continental troops it could be very interesting to assume a more active campaign took place.

You also do not need to limit yourself to the major conflicts and major combatants. There is plenty of scope to build up a campaign or series of games around the various feuding noble families such as the struggle between the Percys and Nevilles for control of the north. The pacification of the pro-Lancastrian north east by the Yorkists after Towton also provides good campaign material with the added interest of possible interventions by the Scots, French supporters of Margaret of Anjou and the various feuding Border Reivers.

It being England, weather played an important part in the Wars of the Roses. The snow and driving wind at Towton and the thick mist at Barnet are perhaps two of the most famous examples. Also many battles were fought at unseasonal times of year with winter and early spring campaigns not being uncommon. The possibility of inclement weather, therefore, can make an otherwise seemingly ordinary game scenario very interesting. Personally, I find that weather should be an element of the scenario design rather than an integral part of the rules themselves. For that reason, I have not included weather in *The Tree of Battles*, but if I was developing a scenario around the Battle of Towton, for example, I would come up with mechanisms to reflect the very cold weather, snow, and wind.

**CONCLUSION**

I think it is not without reason that the Wars of the Roses is becoming a very popular wargaming period, helped in a large way by the new excellent figures that are now available in all scales from 6mm to 28mm. There are, however, not many specific rules available, which was one of the reasons I was motivated to write *The Tree of Battles*, *Poleaxed*, by Pat McGill and Dave Lanchester is another good set of rules for the late medieval period that have been around for some time. They too are focused primarily on the Wars of the Roses and while many of their mechanisms are not quite to my taste they may well suit others. For other reference works and scenario ideas it is well worth investigating the various publications available from the Lance and Longbow Society. Their various books on standards and heraldry are particularly invaluable.

In the meantime, I have made *The Tree of Battles* available as a free download from my website - www.legio-wargames.com - and I will also be posting a number of game scenarios.

**THANKS**

To Michael Perry and Dave Andrews for the loan of their WotR collections, for photographing for this article.
Beyond the Box Office big bashes of the Wars of the Roses like Towton and Bosworth were countless smaller battles and big skirmishes. Simon MacDowall introduces us to some of these wargame-able “Deadly Brawls”.

The Wars of the Roses were a bit like a great big, family squabble gone out of control. On the surface they were all about the uncles fighting over an inheritance - that inheritance being the throne of England. Then the sons, daughters, nephews, nieces and cousins piled in, each looking to get just a little bit more for themselves at the expense of their relatives. They encouraged their neighbours and friends to join in until every noble house in England was involved in a deadly brawl that lasted more than 30 years. Don’t think it was just the men. Without the machinations of Margaret of Anjou (the Red Queen), Elizabeth Woodville (the White Queen) and Margaret Beaufort (the Red and White Queen), the Wars of the Roses would not have been half as much fun.

Technically the Wars - there were at least three of them with bits of uneasy peace between — were about which house would rule England. Would it be the house of Lancaster (red rose) or the house of York (white rose)? Both were descended from King Edward III and had equally dodgy claims to the throne. Great battles were fought at St Albans (twice), Northampton, Wakefield, Towton, Barnet, Tewksbury and Bosworth. King Henry VI (Lancaster) was deposed and later murdered in the Tower of London. Richard of York was killed at Wakefield but his son was crowned King Edward IV. When Edward died of natural causes his brother became King Richard III after a couple of princes went missing in the Tower. Richard then lost the crown to Henry Tudor at Bosworth.

That, however, was not all there was to it. As the senior members of the two great families were fighting it out for the throne, others saw opportunities to settle grudges with annoying relatives and to better themselves at the expense of their
“If you fancy a little foray into the historical wars that inspired *Game of Thrones*, you do not have to build large armies to fight set-piece battles.”

**WARS OF THE ROSES 1455–1485**
neighbors. So if you fancy a little foray into the historical wars that inspired *Game of Thrones*, you do not have to build large armies to fight set-piece battles (although you can do that too).

The set piece battles themselves were relatively small. Bosworth, for example, had less than 10,000 men on each side. The many actions resulting from feuding families settling scores with their neighbours were very much smaller still. A great lord such as the Duke of Suffolk raised two knights and 300 archers in 1475. Sir John Paston, with only 30 men, held Caister castle for two months against the Duke of Norfolk. Such small scale actions are perhaps best fought on the wargames table with individually based figures representing one to five men.

There are plenty of small scale historical scenarios that translate onto the wargames table. Alternatively you could set up a mini-campaign with historical or fictional families fighting it out for dominance. Each contingent could perhaps have one or two knights, half a dozen esquires or non-knighted men-at-arms, and a hundred or so lesser men. The latter would be split more or less evenly between archers and billmen, up to half of whom could be mounted for mobility (although they would dismount to fight).

**AMBUSH THE WEDDING PARTY**

On 24 August 1453 Thomas Percy, Lord Egremont, gathered a force of some 700 Percy supporters including his brother Richard Percy, and John (later Lord) Clifford. Their objective was to ambush the bridal party of Sir Thomas Neville and Maud Stanhope as they passed through Hedworth Moor on the return from their wedding. This affair, a chapter in the long running Percy/Neville feud, was a precursor to the Wars of the Roses. The Nevilles were prepared for trouble. The bride and groom were accompanied by the Earl and Countess of Salisbury, John Neville (later Lord Montagu) and several hundred armed retainers. They succeeded in repulsing the Percys.

The ‘battle’ of Hedworth Moor was apparently relatively bloodless but it set the stage for the much bloodier conflicts to come, with the Nevilles initially taking the Yorkist side and the Percys the Lancastrian. It makes for a great little wargames scenario. Each side can have three nobles, maybe twice that many men-at-arms, and 500-700 archers and billmen. The Nevilles will also have women and children as well as a fairly large number of other non-combatants. Although a bit out of the ordinary on the wargames table, ambushing a wedding party had long been an opportunity of settling scores with rivals as weddings required one family or another to move from the relative safety of their strongholds. As far back as AD 450 the soon to be Roman Emperor Majorian successfully ambushed a Frankish wedding party, claiming it as a great victory. Such a scenario, therefore, does not have to be restricted to the engagement at Hedworth Moor.

**HOLD THE BRIDGE**

Holding a river crossing is a classic small scale action as success or failure could be vital in any campaign. So it is not surprising that the stalwart defence of a bridge, or an audacious assault to seize one, have taken on heroic proportions through the ages. The Roman Horatius holding the bridge over the Tiber, the Saxons defending Maldon against the Vikings, and the Americans seizing the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen in 1945, are famous examples.

In March 1461, the armies of Yorkist King Edward IV and Lancastrian King Henry VI were converging on Towton. The Yorkists had to cross the River Aire. Edward sent Lord FitzWalter with a small detachment (probably about 100 men) to seize the crossing, which he did. At dawn the next day, John Lord Clifford (who had fought with the Percys at Hedworth Moor) led around 500 men
to seize the crossing from the Yorkists. The Lancastrians caught the Yorkists by surprise and overwhelmed them.

When he learned that the Lancastrians had taken Ferrybridge, Edward counter-attacked. Clifford was, however, able to hold the narrow crossing against increasing numbers of Yorkists until Edward sent another force to a crossing three miles west to outflank the Lancastrians. Clifford retreated but was caught by the pursuing Yorkists before he could reach the safety of the Lancastrian lines.

Ferrybridge makes for an intriguing wargames scenario. It starts our with a very small force being surprised in a dawn attack followed by a counter-attack and a flanking action. It could be used as a model for a fictitious scenario which starts off with only a few men with others being fed in as the game proceeds.

**RAVAGE THE ESTATE**

If you had a quarrel with a neighboring noble family, and you could not ambush them on their way back from a wedding, another good way of getting at them would be to ravage the estates of their tenants. This would allow you to undermine their power and prestige even if you are not strong enough to pry them from their castle. There were many such incidents throughout the Wars of the Roses which could make excellent templates for historical or fictional game scenarios.

In the aftermath of Hedworth Moor the Percys attacked the Neville estates across the north. Richard Percy and a band of ruffians went on a spree of pillage and plunder, culminating in the kidnapping of the Bailiff of Staincliffe from Gargrave church (West Yorkshire) who had somehow offended the Percys. Other Percy retainers plundered the property of William Hobdon, vicar of Aughton while Sir John Neville raided the estate of Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland at Catton, Yorkshire. Such scenarios played out across England in similar feuds such as between the Mobrays, Howards, Pastons and de la Poles in Easy Anglia; or Sir Thomas Talbot and William Lord Berkeley in Gloucestershire.
The potential for small scale wargames here are only limited by the imagination. Many need only involve a dozen or so men on each side making them perfect for a 1:1 scale game. A classic scenario might involve one knight, two or three men-at-arms, and six to nine retainers (up to half of whom could be archers) attacking a poorly defended village or estate. They might come onto the table mounted, dismounting to fight on foot. Most of the defenders would be rustics with improvised weapons. A message is sent to the castle for help and in a number of umpire-determined game turns relief arrives in the form of a mounted force of sufficient strength to have the potential to drive off the attackers.

**BESIEGE THE CASTLE**

Sieges are notoriously difficult to recreate on the wargames table and they were quite rare in the Wars of the Roses. A full siege is best played out with 2-6mm miniatures on a grand scale but aspects of siege warfare offer plenty of scope for smaller actions.

In 1469 Sir John Paston’s son and 30 men defended Caister Castle in Norfolk against John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk. The Pastons held out for two months but were eventually forced to yield the castle.

A small siege such as this offers plenty of opportunity for skirmish games involving only a few men. For example you could run a game involving a sally by the defenders to disrupt the siege works or destroy equipment. The idea would be to create as much damage as possible, then get back safely to the castle before reinforcements from the besiegers are able to cut them off. Another idea would be for the defenders to try to get a supply wagon through a lightly guarded part of the siege lines. Scenarios such as these would not require the presence of an actual castle or lots of siege works (although they would add great visual appeal).

**RAID THE BORDERLANDS**

The Scots took advantage of England’s squabbles in the Wars of the Roses to make incursions across the border. When the Percys of Northumberland were not fighting the Nevilles they had to contend with frequent incursions by the Scots. In 1456, King James II of Scotland led a destructive chevauchée through Northumberland, burning and pillaging as he went. A simple game scenario could be built around a small force of Percy retainers attempting to catch and destroy a party of Scots raiders.

Raids across the border were not limited to major incursions. The infamous border reivers, both English and Scots, made a living out of raiding their neighbours. Gangs of marauders numbering anything from a handful to a couple of hundred would descend on rival homesteads to take anything of value they could lay their hands on. Think of the American Wild West or modern urban gang warfare and you will get the right idea. A game scenario could simply involve two rival families fighting it out, or one attempting to drive off the livestock of another. Most troops involved would be irregular, lightly armoured men, many of whom would be mounted. Another angle would be to have the Warden of the Northern Marches coming in with a more professional force to try to sort things out.

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**PHOTO-TASTIC**

Many thanks to Michael Perry for providing all the marvellous photographs for this article. He also made all the figures! All available from Perry Miniatures in their ‘Wars of the Roses’ range.
SCOUT THE ENEMY

Major battles were often preceded by a clash of scouting parties. One or two days before Bosworth (August 1485), King Richard III’s scouts clashed with the Stanleys who were encamped near the village of Atherstone in Warwickshire. Five men of rank are recorded as killed in the engagement which probably indicates that a clash between small scouting parties escalated into something more serious.

I recently ran a game based on this skirmish. Henry Tudor was advancing down Watling Street to link up with the Stanleys who were encamped at Atherstone. Richard III was on the move from Leicester to intercept Henry’s army and his scouts clashed with the Stanley’s near the village.

The game starts off with a small number of scourers (light cavalry) from both armies skirmishing on table. Then Lord Stanley deploys his archers and men-at-arms on a hill to block the enemy advance. A turn later King Richard’s vanguard arrives and attempts to drive off Stanley. Shortly afterwards Stanley is reinforced by his brother William. I fed in a series of reinforcements for both sides until the game developed from a minor skirmish into a small battle. You don’t have to go as far as that. It is quite possible to keep the game at a skirmish level with each set of reinforcements numbering only a handful of men.

Such an action is typical of a clash of scouts and could fit any number of historical or fictional scenarios.

FIGHT THE BATTLE

So far I have deliberately concentrated on small scale actions that could be played out with a small number of individual miniatures. However, as your collection increases, there is always the temptation to fight out something that starts to approach a proper battle.

The Battle of Nibley Green (1470) is a fascinating example of a neighbourhood squabble turned bloody. It came about from a quarrel between Thomas Talbot and William Berkley over the inheritance of Berkley Castle. Talbot challenged Berkley to battle and the latter accepted. It was a rather foolish thing for Talbot to have done as he could only raise about 300 poorly equipped men from his tenants. Berkley’s levy was supplemented by the garrison of Berkley Castle, and miners from the Forest of Dean, giving him 1000 men in total. Despite his inferior numbers Talbot led his men in a charge against Berkley as the latter was deploying. Berkley’s archers broke up the charge. One of the Dean Foresters, a certain ‘Black Will’ shot Talbot through his open helmet visor. Leaderless, Talbot’s men fled the field.

It is not hard to see how Nibley Green might be tweaked for a tabletop game where any two feuding families agree to settle the matter in a formal battle with several hundred men of each side.

RUN THE CAMPAIGN

The historical feuds between the the likes of the Percys and Nevilles, Pastons and Moberays, Talbots and Berkleys, or the border reiver families, make for great little mini campaigns. Each player could control a family with a set number of retainers and seek to better his position at the expense of his rivals, using diplomacy and bribery to gain support from other players, or at least neutralise them.

Alternatively the Wars of the Roses is a great backdrop to a fictional campaign with rival houses being loosely based on historical originals - a bit like Game of Thrones where the Starks were most probably based on the Percys. The possibilities are endless.
As part of this month’s Wars of the Roses theme Simon MacDowall provides us with a beginners guide to the armies of the WotR.

Every noble house maintained its own private army in 15th century England. Comprising men-at-arms, archers and billmen, these retinues enabled the great men to conduct violent feuds with their neighbours and relatives. If the king went to war he would call on his Dukes and Earls to support him with their retinues. They in turn would summon their knights and esquires to provide men from their estates. When there were rival factions, or even rival kings, the support or treachery of a key noble and his retainers could swing the balance.

After England’s defeat in the Hundred Years War with France there were an abundance of unemployed professional soldiers who did not fancy returning to subsistence farming. Such men were taken in by the magnates and given food, lodging and cash in return for military service. As the more than 30 yearlong Wars of the Roses dragged on, new generations of battle hardened men stepped up to take the places of their fathers and grandfathers. These full time retainers were the core of a noble’s retinue but in times of trouble he could call up the tenants from his estates to supplement their numbers.

Royal authority allowed the king to raise men from the towns and shires through what were known as ‘commissions of array’. Such levied troops were not professional soldiers but they could handle weapons. From the time of Edward III (1312 – 1377) men throughout England had been encouraged to practice archery. In 1363 the king famously ordered that “Every man in the same country, if he be able-bodied, shall, upon holidays, make use, in his games, of bows and arrows … and so learn and practise archery.”

SIZE OF THE RETINUES

The number of men a noble might be able to field depended on his wealth. A Duke or Earl might be able to call on around 1000 men while a mere knight could probably only afford a few pages, an esquire or two and, perhaps, a dozen archers. These retainers would be maintained by the knight or noble, wear his livery (see inset), and act as his enforcers.
LIVERIES AND BADGES
Every noble had his own livery colour (or colours) which would be worn by many of his retainers. He also had a number of distinctive badges which also might be worn. Neither the livery colours nor badges bore any relation to the noble’s coat of arms.

This is a list of the livery colours and badges of some of the more notable lords and those mentioned in my articles. I have used modern names for the colours rather than the heraldic terms with the exception of ‘Murrey’ and ‘Tawney’ as neither have neat modern equivalents. Murrey is a deep crimson, approaching burgundy, while Tawney is a brownish orange or russet.

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<tr>
<th>Noble</th>
<th>LIVERY COLOURS</th>
<th>BADGES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King Edward IV</td>
<td>Blue and Murrey</td>
<td>Yellow sun in splendour; white hart</td>
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<tr>
<td>Edward, Prince of Wales</td>
<td>Red and Black</td>
<td>White swan; white ostrich feathers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard of Gloucester, later King Richard III</td>
<td>Blue and Murrey</td>
<td>White boar; white rose</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>White ragged staff; white bear</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Neville, Lord Montagu</td>
<td>Black and Red</td>
<td>Yellow griffin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland</td>
<td>Black and Red</td>
<td>White crescent moon; white lion passant; white shackles</td>
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<tr>
<td>John Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk (until 1461)</td>
<td>Blue and Tawney</td>
<td>White lion rampant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Howard, Duke of Norfolk (from 1483)</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>White lion rampant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir John Paston</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>White griffin over a blue wreath</td>
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<tr>
<td>John de Vere, Earl of Oxford</td>
<td>Tawney</td>
<td>Blue boar; white stars</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sir William Stanley</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>White hart’s head</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas, Lord Stanley</td>
<td>Tawney and Green</td>
<td>Yellow eagle; yellow eagle feet</td>
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<tr>
<td>Henry Tudor, Earl of Richmond, later King Henry VIII</td>
<td>White and Green</td>
<td>Red dragon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas, Lord Clifford</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Red wyvern</td>
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<tr>
<td>William, Lord Hastings</td>
<td>Murrey and Blue</td>
<td>Black bull’s head</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thomas Talbot, Lord Lisle</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>White hart resting with yellow antlers</td>
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<tr>
<td>William, Lord Berkeley</td>
<td>Red</td>
<td>Red unicorn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset</td>
<td>White and Blue</td>
<td>White yale (goat-like mythical beast)</td>
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The ability to raise his own troops allowed the noble to enforce his will within his demesne and beyond. It was also a burden, as titles of nobility came with the obligation to maintain and provide a certain number of troops to his overlord. Maintaining a full-time body of professional soldiers was quite an expense. There are records of some experienced esquires avoiding knighthood in order to spare themselves the expenses that came with the title.

There are records that give us an indication of the number of men the lords and knights could raise and maintain. In 1452 Sir Walter Strickland contracted to provide his overlord (the Earl of Salisbury) with 150 billmen and 145 archers. Half of them were defined as "horsed and harnessed" - harnessed meaning wearing armour. This is a large retinue for a knight, others might only have a dozen or so men. In 1475 Richard, Duke of Gloucester raised ten knights and 1000 archers while the Duke of Norfolk had two knights and 300 archers.

SO WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE WARGAMER?

It means that you don’t have to amass a huge number of miniatures before recreating the anarchy of late 15th century England on the tabletop. The feuds of the Nevilles and Percys in the North, the Pastons and Mowbrays in East Anglia and the Talbots and Berkleys in the West only involved a few hundred men on each side (see Feuds, Raids and Anarchy). Some engagements could be fought out as skirmishes with individually based miniatures, others as small battles.

TROOP TYPES

There were three main types of troops in the Wars of the Roses.

**Men-at-Arms.** Primarily nobles, knights, esquires and other men of rank in ‘full harness’ ie: wearing full plate armour. They would all be mounted but they usually dismounted to fight on foot. There were two reasons for this. The first being that, with so many archers around, horses were particularly vulnerable. The second being that their followers would be concerned that the nobles might ride off and desert them if things went wrong. The usual practise in battle was for the men-at-arms to dismount to fight in the front rank alongside the billmen and archers. Their horses would be taken to the rear and would not be remounted until the battle was over. Occasionally a small number of men-at-arms might remain...
mounted, ready to attack a flank or spring a surprise attack. The preferred weapons for men-at-arms would be the lance on horseback or poleaxe on foot.

Is it necessary to raise duplicate miniatures for each man-at-arms wargames unit - one mounted and one dismounted? The short answer is no. Almost all my men-at-arms are on foot only. I have a number of mounted figures which I can use as a separate wing or to allow some to mount up in those very rare occasions where this could happen (Richard III at Bosworth, for example).

For the most part battle began and ended on foot. This would not necessarily be the case in some small scale engagements such as a lighting raid or a relief force arriving on table. For such games, players may wish to field some mounted men-at-arms.

**Archers.** These would be the most numerous troop type in any retinue. Armed with the famous English/Welsh longbow they did not have the same battle-winning impact that they did in the Hundred Years War with France. This was because both sides tended to have similar numbers of archers and they cancelled each other out.

Typically the archers on both sides would deploy a few paces to the front of the men with close combat weapons. Battle would begin with an archery duel which would hopefully soften up the enemy before closing into hand-to-hand combat.

Most archers would have worn some protective equipment, the most common being a helmet and a padded jack. Veterans would have picked up bits and pieces of other body armour from previous battles and many contemporary illustrations show archers wearing partial plate armour.

A number of veteran archers would be mounted for mobility only. They never shot nor fought while mounted. For the most part, therefore, it is not necessary to field any units of mounted archers. For a raid, ambush or similar small skirmish action it might be useful to have some archers initially mounted. While they did not ‘fight’ on horseback, I am sure that they would not be averse to riding down a few fleeing peasants.

I had always wanted a unit of mounted longbowmen, not for their battle effectiveness but because I think they look great. Painted in Henry Tudor’s livery, they act as a small bodyguard for the future Henry VII, escorting him onto the battlefield and moving around with him.

**Billmen.** Armed with bills, halberds, glaives or spears, these men fought in hand-to-hand combat alongside the men-at-arms. Their weapons had evolved from peasants tools to become rather effective ‘can-openers’ for dealing with fully armoured men-at-arms.

The billmen would tend to wear similar protective equipment as the longbowmen with helmet, jack and bits and pieces of mail or plate armour. It is mostly likely that a contingent of billmen would be led by a knight or esquire in full plate and some of the most senior veterans would probably have amassed a fairly complete set of armour.

When the archers had done their work by softening up the enemy, they would withdraw through the ranks of the billmen behind them. The billmen and men-at-arms would then close into a deadly hand-to-hand combat to settle the issue.

It is worth noting that medieval records mentioning ‘archers’ often refer to all men of ignoble rank, around half of whom would have been billmen. In the numbers quoted above, therefore, the Duke of Norfolk’s ‘300 archers’ would most likely have been around 150 longbowmen and 150 billmen.

**Other troops.** Most armies had a small number of lightly armoured non-noble horsemen known variously as ‘scourers’, ‘currours’ or ‘prickers’. Their job was primarily scouting, raiding and rounding up deserters. They played very little part in set piece battles but they would be invaluable in a small scale actions such as a raid, pre-battle skirmish or a relief force. For such actions it is worth building up a few units of scourers who might ride in on an unsuspecting estate to drive off the livestock.

Crossbowmen were rarely used in the Wars of the Roses but they did appear from time to time. At the siege of Caister castle (see Feuds, Raids and Anarchy) Sir John Paston’s most senior retainer was killed by a crossbow bolt. For the most part, however, you do not need any
crossbowmen in a Wars of the Roses retinue but you could have a few if you wish. Most crossbowmen were probably mercenaries from France or Burgundian Flanders.

Handgunners, did take part in a number of engagements. They were usually (perhaps always) Burgundian or French mercenaries - the Burgundians supporting the Yorkists and the French supporting the Lancastrians. As such they would be costly troops available only to the armies of kings or very great lords.

French mercenaries fighting for Henry Tudor were probably Swiss trained pikemen and halberdiers. As with the handgunners, the ability to hire men from abroad would be limited to kings and pretenders to the throne. Scottish troops were often involved in the north, also occasionally joining English armies, such as that of Margret of Anjou. It would seem that spears were more common amongst the Scots than bows or bills. Those Scots fighting for Henry Tudor at Bosworth were in French pay and probably would have been trained and equipped like the French pikemen and halberdiers.

RAISING THE ARMY

There are plenty of great miniatures available for the Wars of the Roses, especially in 28mm. In my view the best sculpted and most flexible is the extensive Perry range of metals and multi-part plastics. They cover all the troop types you could possibly need, including light cavalry and European mercenaries. Front Rank have a very good range and can mix with Perry although they suffer from overly large heads, hands, feet and weapons. Wargames Foundry’s range was designed

**LIVERIES AND BADGES**

Knights banneret and more senior nobles had the privilege of leading men into battle under their own banners. These were square flags which displayed the noble’s coat of arms. Lesser knights (knights bachelor) might display a pennon but would fight under the banner of a more senior noble. Banners were richly embroidered and were either stiffened with buckram or held by a baton at the top as well as against the flagpole. This kept the banner fully displayed rather than flapping in the wind.

The standard was a very long tapering flag with a rounded split tail. It had the cross of St George ‘in the hoist’ (against the flagpole) with the field in the noble’s livery colour(s) and bearing his badges and motto. With its relatively simple badges and colours, the standard became an easily recognisable rallying point for men wearing the same livery colours and badges. It is probable that only men of rank had standards. They proclaimed the noble’s location on the field.

I tend to give them to my most senior nobles who command battles (divisions) or armies, while smaller units are identified by the banners of the leading knight. Some units would carry a simple square flag in the noble’s livery colour(s) bearing one of his badges. These would be much easier to recognise than the complex heraldry of the banner and, unlike the standard, did not indicate the noble’s presence on the battlefield.

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**John Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury leads his men forward. Figures by Foundry and Citadel with Talbot’s head by Wargames Factory. Flag: Freezywater.**
by the Perrys and are similarly well proportioned but of slightly smaller stature. I have mixed them with Perry Miniatures quite successfully. Old Glory also have an extensive range which are also smaller than Perry or Front Rank. Although there are miniatures available in 6mm and 15mm scales, given the small size of most engagements and the great variety of 28mm figures, I would suggest that 28mm is the scale to go for.

The best way to start raising your armies is to pick a couple of noble families from competing factions. Paint up the noble and a few men-at-arms from his immediate retinue with one of his knights or esquires carrying his standard or banner (see inset). The beauty of the fully armoured men-at-arms in the later 15th century is that they did not carry shields nor wear surcoats so you do not need to paint up lots of tricky heraldic devices. If you like doing this (as I do - a bit) then some men did wear tabards either displaying their coat of arms or (for lesser men) the livery colours and badge of their overlord.

The next step is to raise the bill and bowmen in roughly equal proportions. Close retainers would probably wear the lord’s livery colours in the form of a vest or tunic over any armour. These would sometimes also include the lord’s badge. Others would simply wear their own clothes. What I tend to do is to paint retainers in livery colours but not always paint the badges. This allows me to swap them around as many livery colours were the same while badges were specific. For example, Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick’s livery colour was red. So too was that of John Howard, Duke of Norfolk. I have several archers and billmen in red livery so I could use them to form the retinues of either noble. A small wargames contingent for a skirmish might include the lord, his standard bearer, a couple of other knights or esquires, and a dozen or so billmen and bowmen. If a number of players each raise similar small contingents then you already have the beginning of a small campaign where feuding families try to get the better of each other. Join the small contingents together and you can begin to form armies that could support a claimant to the throne.

Unless they are carrying a flag or displaying coats of arms, most troops are pretty well interchangeable. If you paint up men in livery colours then (if you leave off the distinctive badge - which was not always worn) they can support any number of nobles that wore those colours.

**REALISING THE POTENTIAL**

The Wars of the Roses offer incredible potential for interesting wargames. From small skirmishes between feuding families with only a dozen or so miniatures on each side to the largest battle ever fought on English soil (Towton, 1461), they offer endless variety. You could even set up a fictional or semi-fictional campaign based on a number of noble families fighting it out for supremacy. These could be based on historical families or be imaginary families inhabiting an imaginary world.

**THANKS AGAIN**

Many thanks (again) to Michael Perry for supplying the photos for this article, all from the Perry Miniatures War of the Roses range.

**LEGIO WARGAMES**

The author of this article is Simon MacDowall of Legio Wargames. To find out more about Legio, purchase (or download for free!) their games - including War of the Roses rules *The Tree of Battle*, go to legio-wargames.com.
It is the intention of this and the following three articles to share with readers my thoughts on staging historical re-fights of Wars of the Roses battles using DBM rules. The battles chosen are those that can benefit from "tweaking" the rules to ensure that the main characteristics of the battles can be achieved. My interest in this period was rekindled by the fairly recent release of the Old Glory Wars of the Roses figures.

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<th>Type</th>
<th>Training</th>
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**Duke of Somerset's Command**

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**Appendix**

The figures given by my sources for the strength of the various protagonists vary but, taking an average of these, the Lancastrian/Yorkist forces were 3000/5000 men respectively, which according to the DBM rules would approximately equate to only 15/25 elements respectively. This would be too small for DBM purposes but, those who prefer to use DBA rules, may wish to adapt this article, which should enable the battle to be fought on only a 3' wide table (25mm scale).

In order to stage a DBM 25mm game, I have assumed each element represents far fewer men. The armies for my game are 45/75 elements respectively.

I set out below my suggested army lists for both sides. I do not have information giving a fairly precise breakdown of the armies, thus I have used the DBM Army List Book IV. Any of you that have more detailed reference work can obviously use the benefit of that to alter the lists where appropriate.
These are Highly Detailed wargames buildings made using a process new to wargaming, which gives strength and lightness

**Hill Set (4 pieces) £11.50**
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**38 WEST ST, DUNSTABLE, BEDFORDSHIRE LU6 1TA**

**RULE AMENDMENTS**

1. The makeshift defences of St Albans are treated under the rules as temporary fortifications, thus the defenders will benefit from the Plus 2 Modifier.

2. King Henry VI’s command cannot move until the earlier of Warwick’s arrival at the Chequer’s house or turn 8.

3. Although there are three Yorkist commands as well as the three dice for initiative, there will be a further differently-coloured D6 rolled from Turn 3. If this extra dice is a 6, Warwick and the remaining undeployed half of his command are placed at the Chequer’s house.

4. In the same bound that the Earl of Warwick is placed on the table, a further D6 is used to determine his PIP score for that bound. After he has made his moves, resolved any shooting and combat, Warwick for this part of his command will dice again and continue to make further moves until a PIP score of 1 or 2 is rolled which will then bring the bound to an end. During these subsequent moves his Bow elements can continue to shoot and be shot back at, but only by the target element or other elements of enemy Bow that have not shot this bound. In future turns Warwick’s command will only have one dice to be used by all his command.

5. Following the arrival of the Earl of Warwick, the Lancastrian defenders in their next bound will not now receive the plus 2 modifier for defending temporary fortifications.

The above amendments are to allow for the peculiarities of the battle such as Warwick’s breakthrough, the unpreparedness of King Henry VI (by giving Warwick’s initial move further potential impetus) and the panic caused among the remaining Lancastrians defending the fortifications.

The game would also benefit from one of the proposed rule amendments that may be introduced as an official rule amendment in the near future, which is as follows:

6. A group moving in difficult going and not in a single-element-wide column can use just one PIP for such a group for all elements that can make a legal contact for combat purposes. However, the usual rules will apply in moving in difficult going except on the move to make contact. For the avoidance of doubt, for example a four-element-wide line can use just one PIP if all these elements can make a legal contact, thus if only three can do so it would cost an extra PIP to move the fourth element.

For the purpose of clarity, the gardens behind the temporary defences and all movement in the built-up areas count as movement in difficult-going.
Anyone not in the know might be forgiven for thinking Edward, Earl of March, and leader of the Yorkist faction, had won a famous victory when he entered London to popular acclaim on the first day of March, 1461.

In fact, he was then on the losing side after the Lancastrians had surprised his ally the Earl of Warwick at the Second Battle of St Albans only two weeks previously. Nevertheless, Londoners rejected the arrival of Henry VI and his ruthless queen, Margaret of Anjou, welcoming instead Edward and Warwick. Then, two days later, they celebrated when Edward accepted the title of King Edward IV and again the following day when the young son of the late Richard, Duke of York, arrived at Westminster for his inauguration. But, Edward was not yet crowned, nor would he be until he finally dealt with Henry and Margaret. To do that, he needed to gather his forces and win a decisive victory.

Edward quickly prepared his campaign. He ordered the Duke of Norfolk to raise his forces and join him on the road north. Warwick also left to reassemble his army around the town of Coventry. Lord Fauconberg in the meantime led out 10,000 foot soldiers, followed soon after by Edward and his forces.

Warwick lost track of Edward and Fauconberg, however. He had expected to meet them at Doncaster, but they had marched instead to Nottingham because Edward felt he had picked up the trail of the main Lancastrian army. Norfolk meanwhile, was still trundling around somewhere to the southeast. Edward reached Nottingham on 22 March only to discover Henry’s army had pulled back across the River Aire into Yorkshire.

The Lancastrians knew their victory at St Albans was not enough to re-establish the monarchy of Henry VI. Warwick had, after all, escaped with most of his army, and popular support in London and the southeast was with the Yorkists. They were also aware, however, that Edward was no fool, as his recent defeat of Owen Tudor at the Mortimer’s Cross had shown.

Hopefully our Wars of the Roses introduction (page 10) has left you wanting more WotR action. In this article we get into the meat of the conflict - Towton was the largest and bloodiest battle ever fought in England - and, following the historical background, two gamers share their two different wargaming Towton projects with us.

The Battle at Ferrybridge - prelude to Towton. Illustration by Graham Turner from CAM 120, Towton 1461 © Osprey Publishing Ltd. www.ospreypublishing.com
With Warwick and Edward united in London and the powerful Norfolk backing the Yorkist claim, Henry and Margaret would need a bigger army. Perhaps ironically, the city of York contained the strongest contingents of Lancastrian support, so Henry and Margaret took up residence and awaited their troops.

The new king shifted to Pontefract Castle, twenty miles from York, to rest his soldiers and decide on how to proceed. Edward could strike north if he felt powerful enough, but Pontefract was also a useful location for defence if the Lancastrians advanced. Either way, he needed to secure the river crossing at Ferrybridge just a couple of miles from his camp. To that end, he ordered John Radcliffe, Lord Fitzwalter to seize and guard the crossing. Edward’s caution was warranted; off to the north, the Duke of Somerset was leading the Lancastrian army out of York’s city gates under the impaled heads of the three previous Yorkist leaders who had rebelled against his king. The Lancastrians pushed out west to Tadcaster, then down the London road into the little village of Towton. Somerset decided that this was a good place to stand if the Yorkists came north, so he made camp. He also ordered Lord Clifford to take his command and scout down to the River Aire and the crossing at Ferrybridge.

PRELUDE TO BATTLE

Fitzwalter arrived at Ferrybridge to find the bridge in disrepair. He detached some men to make it passable, which they did, though the crossing remained narrow. With night falling, Fitzwalter and his men retired. None of them heard the hooves of approaching Lancastrian horses. It was a confused Lord Fitzwalter that woke to considerable commotion outside his tent. He stormed outside expecting to chastise some drunken soldier, only to witness his camp under severe attack by horsemen. The Yorkist commander barely had time to pick up a poleaxe when he was struck down. Elsewhere in the chaos, a soldier, recognizing the danger, sped off in the direction of Warwick’s camp to get help. The Earl in turn told the King and soon the whole Yorkist army was literally up in arms. Edward despatched an emergency force towards Ferrybridge while he organized the army to follow.

Back at the bridge, the Lancastrians had been busy. First they routed the leaderless Yorkists. Then they set about making the crossing defensible against any counter-attack. Lancastrian arrows flew when the Yorkist advance party approached, one of them hitting Warwick in the leg. Edward arrived, pushing his men forward to retake the vital crossing, but the fighting space was too cramped and the Lancastrians could not be moved. Edward reassessed the situation and decided that if he could not go over he would go around. The King grabbed Lord Fauconberg and ordered him to go west to the ford at Castleford, cross over, and come down the north bank to take the Lancastrians in the flank. The former Lancastrian supporter was happy to oblige and set off with his command. Clifford was in the middle of the Lancastrian defence at Ferrybridge when he heard of Fauconberg’s crossing. Realizing the Yorkists could cut his line of retreat, Clifford ordered his troops to withdraw. That became a hasty retreat when the Yorkists in front finally began to lever his men off the bridge. Clifford and his men scampered up the road towards Sherburn-in-Elmet, pursued by Fauconberg’s flanking force. It remains unclear why the main Lancastrian commanders, presumably camped around Towton, did not send help to Clifford when scouts must surely have reported his plight. But they did not come to Clifford’s aid, leaving him high and dry when Fauconberg caught up with him at Dinting Dale less than three miles from Towton. Clifford died in the ensuing fight. Fauconberg did not pursue any survivors, perhaps understanding that the main Lancastrian army must be nearby. Rather he pulled off to the west again to await Edward’s army that was rapidly approaching from Ferrybridge.

Fauconberg may have reflected on the battle to come, it was surely going to be one of the largest in English history. Somewhere ahead, Somerset waited with up to 20,000 Lancastrian supporters and maybe Henry and his queen, while down the road the new king advanced with only slightly less soldiers, eager for battle and to claim the crown that was rightfully his.
THE BATTLE

The Battle of Towton took place on a plateau between the villages of Towton and Saxton in North Yorkshire on Palm Sunday, 29 March 1461. While estimates vary on the numbers involved, there is no doubt that it was the largest battle fought in the Wars of the Roses. Modern estimates put each side at around 25,000 participants, more than twice the usual number for a battle in this period. The armies faced off north-to-south with a slight dip in the ground between the two. The Lancastrians had a slight numerical advantage, but the weather was against them. That morning saw a snowstorm with a strong southerly wind blowing the falling snow into Lancastrian faces.

Lord Fauconberg took advantage of the situation and had every archer under his command advance and fire a single arrow. Feeling the Yorkist arrows falling on them the Lancastrians shot all their arrows in reply as they would expect to do in the pre-battle archery exchange. However, with the snow and wind against them, their arrows fell short of the Yorkist position. Lord Fauconberg then led the Yorkist archers forward again and they shot not only their own arrows into the Lancastrians, but also collected Lancastrian arrows from the ground and returned them too!

The number of casualties that resulted from losing the archery exchange left the Lancastrians with little option but to close with the Yorkist men-at-arms. They gained the advantage on the west of the line, perhaps supported by an ambush from the Castle Hill Wood as some sources reported. The Yorkist line just held on long enough for the Duke of Norfolk to arrive with around 5,000 reinforcements on the east side of the line. That was the turning point of the battle and shortly thereafter the Lancastrian army was in full rout.

The arrival of Norfolk also resulted in the battle line swinging anti-clockwise, compromising the Lancastrian line of retreat towards Tadcaster. The Lancastrian troops were now forced to retreat through the River Warfe and Cock River with the pursuing Yorkists giving them no quarter. The Lancastrian army was all but wiped out, though most of the nobility escaped. Contemporary sources say that 28,000 died on the field, making Towton one of English history’s bloodiest battles.

Below: Pike and cavalry form the main Lancastrian battle line with Old Glory handgonnes in the fore. Other figures by Foundry and Corvus, flags by Freezywater and Little Big Men.
IT’S NOT EASY, BEING GREEN

One of my biggest obstacles in building forces involved in the Wars of the Roses was ‘culture shock’. As an American I have strayed far from my Welsh roots. I wasn’t even sure of the hierarchy of nobility. I knew there were kings and queens, but what came next; dukes, earls, counts, marquises, lords? Not being raised with noble rankings as part of my culture, I had to start at square one.

The language of flags is the same as that for coats of arms, i.e. French. The rules for heraldry are also complex and the terminology can confuse a newcomer. This is the description of Edward IV’s standard at Towton:

“St. George in the hoist. Field: Azure over murray a bordure company azure and murray. Badges: a bull sable passant reguardant, crowned about the neck, horns and hooves Or. Roses en soleil argent.”

Adding to the confusion was the fact that even the English consider the Wars of the Roses among their history’s most complex. The wars were fought over four decades and many of the nobility who started them died in the fighting. Their sons fought in their turn, and also fell. Indeed, so many died the baronage of England was devastated. Besides the death and fighting, there was the confusion caused by their personal intrigues and overlapping relationships. Many of them were so interrelated and intermarried that to make a pact with one was to sever a pact with another.

I knew that I was going to have to study carefully to get things right. The internet, contacts in the UK, and lots of good books saved the day. Along the way, the education gained was enlightening and entertaining, with the real plus being new friends gained who hold similar interests.

MODELING THE ARMIES

Modeling the forces involved is the best part of this hobby for me. It is wonderful to envision the armies and collect the figures; to first develop an idea in your mind’s eye, and then watch it come into reality on the tabletop. In the proposed refight of Towton, I needed an army for each side, but for once I was ahead of the game.

The majority of my castings were bought over thirty years ago. Diversity was always my main priority, so through the years I have purchased different models with that in mind. The great bulk of them came from the classic Fifteenth Century range by Wargames Foundry; they’re full of character, with exceptional detail and a huge variety of animated poses. The US company Old Glory stresses variety as well, so a few bags from them provided command figures and more men-at-arms. Essex sold me archers, billmen, and a few personality types from their mounted knights range to add to the mix: my Edward IV is a conversion of an Essex medieval figure holding a hawk. I’m glad I put the collection together in 28mm. I like the large size of the models and even enjoy the feel of them. They’re chunky and weighty, and just look like knights. Sometimes storage can be an issue with 28s, but if your intention is to enjoy the color and spectacle of well-detailed masses of troops, there’s no other way to go in my view.

Historical accuracy was as important as aesthetics when deciding on the composition of forces, but here too I used some artistic license. I already had archers, billmen and cavalry, but not in the correct historical ratio – I needed almost double the archers! Also, I wanted to use the forces for other actions, so even though artillery was not present at Towton, I spread bombards and smaller guns throughout each side. I added units of pike, crossbows, and handgonnes, and that gave me the basis for a Burgundian force that could act as mercenaries.

For painting and basing the armies, the best idea came from finally finding a use for old CDs. For basing, I’d decided on using 2” x 4” stands made of sheet metal.
The second consideration was the ambush supposedly sprung by the Lancastrians from the copse of trees known as ‘Castle Hill Woods’. While most historians argue that it probably did not happen, a surprise attack could have changed the victors and history. A flank attack with a snowstorm to hide the attack. The ambushed were very sturdy with even cuts, and their ability to stick to a magnetic surface really helps with transportation. Basing the command stands was where the CDs came in as they offered a large enough footprint to create mini-scenes, using several foot and mounted figures where desired. No set amount of figures was used for CDs or metal stands. Thus, basing was a lot of fun as I tried to tell a story with each stand. The effect came off well and fascinates the viewer, who can take in the whole scene on the table, or wander from one point of interest to the next. I used a substance called pumice gel to base my CDs. It has an interesting property very useful to the wargamer. There is very little water to the mix of pumice gel, so it doesn’t warp the long, thin surface of the CD. After drying, it gives the same effect as ballast and glue, with a coat of paint further sealing the pumice. I spent extra time with the modeling of the command stands, especially after finding the right flags. They were a labor of love, and in the end it proved time well spent. If I had an idea of what the personage looked like, I’d model him, as was done with the John Talbot character.

SPECIAL RULES FOR TOWTON

There are two main factors to consider when refighting the Battle of Towton. The first is the weather, of course, that made it difficult for the archers to keep their bowstrings dry and kept the nobles squinting through the snow. The common soldiers, on the other hand, could barely hear or see what was going on, so stood around stamping their feet for warmth while waiting for signals. Partly because of the weather, Towton wasn’t a great display of tactical acumen. There were horrible casualties, but the only frequent mention of any maneuver is of the Duke of Norfolk’s arrival late in the day to reinforce the Yorkist right flank.

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THE AMBUSH AT CASTLE HILL WOODS: MYTH OR REALITY?

While mentioned in some early accounts of the battle, the theory of a surprise attack originating from the woods on the Yorkists’ left flank is now largely regarded as not probable. Topographical surveys by Army and university teams show that the ground would not support a mounted attack in that location. Metal detector and soil surveys by English Heritage have not revealed a single artifact in the area of the ambush, from a battlefield otherwise rich with them. The ambush idea does not stand up when the facts known about the terrain, the weather and troop placement are all considered.

According to Mark Taylor of the Towton Battlefield Society, the current thought is that the entire line of the Lancastrian army began to pivot at some point after the action was joined, and the sending of mounted troops to support that pivot was confused as a flank attack. In the great debate of history, this now leads to a new question: what caused the pivot that led the Lancastrians to put their backs to the Cock Beck?

There are those that continue to argue in favor of the ambush. Some suggest the main ambush party hid down by the river and out of sight, while awaiting the opportune moment to attack. They would have had to climb up the banks of the river to the rear of the wood before emerging from it. That would explain how they could remain undetected. Most tantalizing to this idea are the remains of what some people believe to be a bridge, found a few years ago along the river, at the spot to reinforce just that location.
size of the force and magnify the panic could have rolled the flank, routed the Yorkists, and led to Edward’s capture or death. The action at ‘Castle Hill Woods’ was therefore what we elected to refight one chilly spring day, probably reminiscent of the weather at Towton. The battle would also be an excuse to use newly painted armies of the Wars of the Roses. Little did we know what a challenge painting them would be, but the satisfaction gained after six months effort was very worthwhile.

I knew little about the ‘Castle Hill Woods’ ambush when I began. The wood, from which the Lancastrians allegedly launched their attack, was about 75 feet above the banks of the River Cock, not far from an area of the battlefield now known as Towton Dale. No one reported how many men hid in the woods, or who commanded them. It’s also unknown how large the woods were in order to make a guess on the size of the ambush. Some suggest the main ambush party hid down by the river prior to emerging from the wood. In an army of many thousands, it would seem as many as possible would be used for the ambush, but what if the woods could only hide a small force? As an American, I began to wonder how I had got myself into this ambiguous battle, in a distant medieval war.

So, refighting Towton would require a special rule for the snowstorm. As well as affecting sight and hearing, the snow moistened the ground and loosened the soil. Where thousands of troops stood the earth was churned into muck. Even the meadows would have been slick and slippery. On each turn in our refight, the umpire rolled for wind direction, with its effect on other rules duly noted. As an added benefit, our scatter dice had symbols to reflect direct hits, and these were used to indicate snowfall. A first roll of a direct hit meant it was snowing at that point. A second roll told which way the snow blew.

The snowfall affects three other things; movement, sight, and archery ranges. The first two are modified in most rules, but archery ranges should increase or decrease depending if the wind is for or against them. Using flags as a means of signalling would also be restricted, as would visual ability to discern the size of an attacking force. The latter becomes important when considering the panic when being attacked in the flank or rear and not knowing how many there are or who is doing the attacking. All these things can enhance or complicate your play, depending on your preference. I’ve always liked simple resolutions, however, that still provide a good, entertaining game.

A second special rule was needed for the rout, assuming there is one in the game. When the rout of the Lancastrians began at Towton, Warwick and King Edward supposedly shouted “Spare the Commoners! Kill the Nobles!” as the pursuit began. The cavalry probably gave the command little more than a passing thought, because years spent fighting had taught them one thing; routs were payday, and captured nobles were worth their weight in ransom. To present the opportunity for your men-at-arms to make bank, the CD command stand becomes the target. Our rules were Warhammer based, so our army leaders had an effective command radius. When one of the fighting bases was outside of command distance and it saw an opposing command stand, it could attack of its own accord. Combat resolution was done with dice. Each base or stand was awarded from eight to twelve dice, depending on the troop type on the stand. The procedure involved all dice being rolled at once and tallied. Every two 6s allowed the removal of one of the other’s dice. Dice were rolled for six combats. At the end of the sixth combat, dice were again tallied; if one player’s dice have been completely eliminated, the other player must have three or more dice left to capture that stand. If dice are left, the leader by three or more dice chooses to stay in combat or break off. A leader by only one or two dice is obligated to remain in combat for six more turns. A combat like this is easier to play than it is to describe. There is no need for record keeping to slow the action, and the repeated die rolls with their see-saw results are invariably exciting.

THE REFIGHT

Our playing area for the refight was a 6’x6’ table that I had previously prepared. John Merrill, Don Nelson, and I have been gaming for years and appreciate each other’s laid back style of play. John always has the rules down cold, while Don and his camera always provide an enjoyable photographic history of our events. As for myself, I painted the figures and bought the beverages.

Somerset and his men at arms stand strong in the center. Little Big Men banner and figures by Foundry, Old Glory, Essex and Rose Miniatures.
Our playing table reflected the simplicity of the Towton battlefield. Set in a low-lying valley between two ridges, the actual field looks like the classic wargaming encounter. A few soft resin medieval cottages from the old Hudson and Allen range were placed in the rear center of the Lancastrian lines to represent Towton. For trees and snow, a few hunks of cardboard were cut to shape and sprayed white, with bare branches from the yard stuck in place with putty. They weren’t pretty, but after making so much comment about the weather it would have been hard to justify leaf-filled trees!

The armies had been placed already in action, so the flank attack could immediately begin. The forces were evenly balanced with about forty combat stands and four command stands per side. A force of eight combat stands, however, consisting of archers, billmen, and mounted knights, had been pulled for the Lancastrian flank ambush. Thus, almost a quarter of the strength of the Lancastrian army was devoted to the ambush. The Yorkist line had Fauconberg on the right, Edward IV in the center, and Warwick’s troops on the left where he would bear the brunt of the attack. The Lancastrians were drawn up with Northumberland on the right, facing Warwick. The Earl of Devon and the Duke of Exeter held the left flank, while Somerset stood in the center.

None of us had gamed the ‘Wars’ before. The players were testing things out, so the archery was tentative with the players allowed to target specific units. Don played the Yorkists, and he dropped much of his archery on two units, the Duke of Somerset’s men-at-arms and a unit of pike led by Lord Dacre. John was hampered by the wind, and spread his volleys amongst the Yorkist units. Don’s archery devastated Somerset’s men and Dacre’s pike, reducing both units to almost half strength! Somerset reacted as in real life and pushed the remnants of his force to close with the Yorkist unit nearest him, the Burgundian pike and crossbows. Throughout the battle, the continuing action between Somerset and the Burgundians would become the stuff of legend. All down the rest of the line units came into contact with a clash of steel. No gains were made, but they succeeded in blooding each other well.

Already the battlefield was a swirl of flags with stands locked in the crush of melee, both players trying to absorb the shock of so many casualties so quickly. When the battle had joined to melee, archers on both sides had set down their bows. Gathering swords and daggers they plunged into contact alongside the men-at-arms. Then the Lancastrians sprang their ambush. The fresh units emerged from the woods to slam into the flank of Warwick’s host. John had been limited to only striking the battle-line at first contact, so the ambush began with a bit of a stutter. That changed in succeeding turns as John’s mounted knights swung into the Yorkist rear while his archers picked choice Yorkist targets.

On the other flank, Fauconberg’s host was enjoying great success. They crushed Devon’s crossbows and sent his Burgundian hand-gunners fleeing. Flushed with victory, they reformed with Fauconberg’s mounted knights moving beyond the flanks to seek new opponents. In the center, we all waited for the fall of Somerset’s remnants as his tiny force took on the unscathed Burgundian pike. Somerset was with his men, however, and stood strong. When the dust cleared, the Duke had taken losses, but he had given as good as he got. His men prepared to contest again, and would stand their ground throughout the day.

By now, the weight of assault from the front and rear were telling on the tough men of Warwick. The archers and billmen began to give ground, with the line swinging into a curve to guard against the onslaught. John’s mounted knights dug in their spurs and lowered lances for an inviting mark, Warwick
himself. Suddenly, all of the Earl’s archers broke, unable to stand against the press of the more heavily armored Lancastrian billmen. The men scattered, with Warwick’s remaining foot struggling to maintain the line. Coming to their aid was the retinue of the Earl of Essex, but it looked like they might be too late. Then, with one combat’s resolution, the situation suddenly looked dramatically better: Warwick’s retinue held, and held well, with the attacking mounted knights obliged to break off the combat. It was a near run thing with Warwick so battered he moved his command stand towards the safety of other Yorkists. That was the bright spot for Warwick, but all along the rest of the battle line confusion reigned. The stress and exhaustion of constant melee began to tell as more and more bloodied units began to break away, only to be ridden down by pursuing forces. Large gaps were appearing everywhere, but most telling was the way Warwick’s flank was falling apart. A large, empty space was opening between Edward IV’s command stand and the advancing Lancastrian forces… But, alas, time had run out in the game with neither side victorious and both badly damaged.

The after-action discussion agreed on several points. The Yorkist right flank was in shambles, but the Duke of Fauconberg’s left flank held firm. If the Duke of Norfolk’s troops arrived as he had historically, the Yorkists would probably have held. The Lancastrian lines were not in much better shape than the Yorkists, and they had been so roughed up that an attack by fresh forces would probably have sent them packing like their historical predecessors. The Warhammer Historical rules worked well and always seemed to provide realistic conclusions, while the action flowed smoothly from start to finish. The only caveat to detract was the usual wargamer’s complaint, “Gee, we could have used more men.”

**WHAT’S NEXT?**

You’re never done, you know that. Astute readers were probably shocked to realize that here were no figures from the new ‘Perry Twins’ Wars of the Roses range included in the two armies. No one is more chagrined than I am about that. I’m thinking at least two boxes of plastic archers are needed, and at least one box of the new mounted knights. Also needed are Henry VI and Margaret of Anjou models to make another command stand for the Lancastrians. Plus, Renegade Miniatures has a new Wars of the Roses range, and I would be remiss if I ignored the ‘Wars’ range of figures from Front Rank Miniatures. **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Little could have been accomplished without the fine efforts of Phillip Haigh, author of related books; Mark Taylor of the Towton Battlefield Society, and Dave Lanchester and Pat McGill of the Lance and Longbow Society. The Lance and Longbow as well as the Towton Battlefield Society have websites with contact information.
A VERY PUBLIC TOWTON

By Stephen Davison

Last year was the 550th anniversary of the Battle of Towton. Having had a long-term interest in the period, John Paul Stubbings and I of the Sheffield & Rotherham Wargames Club agreed to put together the armies that fought the battle for a refight to mark the anniversary. While researching the battle, JP came across the Towton Battlefield Society, and seeing that they held a festival every year we contacted them to enquire about taking our project along.

The Battlefield Society were very keen on the idea, so we talked to them about the festival and our plan for recreating the battle in miniature. Thankfully for me, JP took on most of the organisation, including constructing the board and painting the Yorkist army. I got away with having to paint the Lancastrians forces and doing research into the battle.

Our armies and the scenario were designed for the Impetus rule system, but are written here in a general way that can be adapted to any rule system.

THE OPPOSING ARMIES

The Lancastrian force consisted of three commands of roughly even size; one each for the Duke of Somerset, the Earl of Northumberland, and the Duke of Exeter. Each command contained 4 to 6 foot units, half of which were archers. To add a bit a flavour, we included a unit of Scottish pikemen to represent the last of the Scots who had joined the Lancastrians army for the campaign.

The Yorkist force contained four commands with three starting on the table, those of Edward VI, the Earl of Warwick, and Lord Fauconberg. The fourth, the Duke of Norfolk, began the game off table. As with the Lancastrians, each command contained of 4 to 6 units on foot, half of which were archers. The total number of Yorkist units starting on the table, however, were 2 to 4 units less than the Lancastrian starting force. The Duke of Norfolk and his retinue (one unit in his command) were mounted as heavy cavalry, allowing them to get into the fight quickly.

TOWTON LOCAL RULES

Refighting Towton with any accuracy required three local rules. In order to represent the effect of the weather on the initial stages of the battle, we reduced the maximum range of the Lancastrian archers. The armies were also deployed within the maximum range of the Yorkist archers, but outside that of the Lancastrians. The Yorkist player had the first turn too, and started with an archery volley. The Lancastrian player then had the choice to stand, or advance across the field.

Some accounts of the battle - although no contemporary accounts - mention an ambush planned by the Lancastrians similar to the ambush at the Battle of Wakefield in December of the previous year. Whether or not the ambush took place is disputed, but we decided to include it as an interesting talking point. To represent the ambush, we placed one unit of light or medium cavalry in Castle Hill Wood on the left of the Yorkist line. The Yorkist player could not move towards or attack this unit until the Lancastrian player first moved it.

The third local rule concerned the arrival of the Duke of Norfolk. This was randomised to add uncertainty. At the end of turn 3 we rolled a D6 with a ‘1’ signalling the Duke’s arrival. If Norfolk failed to arrive, we rolled at the end of each consecutive turn, adding one to the score required. On Norfolk’s arrival, we placed his command on the road from Ferrybridge on the right hand side of the Yorkist table edge. Norfolk and the troops under his command were then activated in the next turn.

THE 550TH ANNIVERSARY EVENT

The 550th Anniversary Commemorative Event took place appropriately on Palm Sunday. Having decided on the project towards the end of January, JP and I had just over three months to get things sorted. Despite the ample amount of time, I was still painting figures the night before the festival!
We decided to recreate the battle in 15mm on a 4’x4’ table. That meant it was easier to transport the game, and it would fit on the tables available at the festival. JP carved the board from two pieces of foam insulation and prepared the Yorkist forces, while I prepared the Lancastrians, both using Peter Pig figures.

The festival took place in Towton Hall. Outside there was a medieval camp with reenactments taking place throughout the day, along with a range of medieval demonstration and craft stalls. We were situated in a barn by the hall, along with a number of trade stands.

On the day, we started with the table on display talking to people who came by. We had a selection of figures from different periods and scales to give a wider sense of the hobby, and we had prepared a flyer directing people to our club website and upcoming local wargames shows.

In the afternoon we ran through the scenario. It was difficult, however, to get into the normal flow. I have found this is often the case when playing demonstration games, but it was even more difficult with a primarily non-wargames crowd as we were unsure how much detail to go into when explaining the game mechanics. In the end, we went for a loose version of the rules to keep the game pacy while roughly describing what we were doing. The game played out historically, apart from Edward IV being captured!

After the game, JP began using the table to talk through the battle with visitors. That involved moving the figures in large groups to demonstrate the key phases of the battle. That drew a lot of interest and discussion from the crowd, especially from those who had been on the battlefield tour earlier in the day as they related the landscape and description from the tour to the tabletop representation. We took turns doing the narration, with JP doing the lion’s share for each run through. The discussion then lasted from 10 to 20 minutes.

The Battlefield Society said they received a lot of positive feedback about the table and in particular the talks about the battle. Visitors found it gave them a good overview of what had happened and why it was important. We have since attended other events at the request of the Society, taking the table and running the battle, and were asked about possible future events at Bosworth and Marston Moor.

We found this was a brilliant way to study an individual battle and brings it to life on the tabletop for others. It also creates a useful focus for completing a project. On the flip side, it was a lot of hard work and not something to take on lightly. As well as preparing the terrain and armies there is a need to learn about the battle and the period inside out to talk about it and answer questions confidently. It was tiring, and the next time we would look to get more people involved in preparing and running the table. Overall though, it was a great way to show how the hobby can be used to teach history.

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The Medieval Soldier in the Wars of the Roses, A.W. Boardman:

Towton 1461: England’s bloodiest battle, C. Gravett

The Towton Battlefield Society can be found at www.towton.org.uk
By all accounts, the use of the longbow in battle was on its way out by the time the houses of Lancaster and York fought over who should be England’s King in the second half of the 15th Century. However, while it was true that the longbow’s best days were in the past, rumours of its demise were premature. The armies that fought in the Wars of the Roses still counted archers as their most significant asset, and nowhere was their potency more ably demonstrated than at the Battle of Tewkesbury in May 1471.

The Wars of the Roses is the name given to the sporadic, but concentrated, outbreaks of petty vendetta settling and high-stakes politics amongst England’s nobility from 1455 to 1485, although the fighting was amorphous enough to blur the start and end dates of the conflict – historians argue for the duration of the war from anywhere between 1399 to 1499. The cause of all the fighting is clear, who was going to sit on the throne of England? Henry IV, a Lancastrian, had deposed Richard II in 1399, setting the fuse for the intense competition to come. The common soldier, who might have expected a break in his fighting career after the end of the Hundred Years War with France in 1453, was deprived of that prize and sent back into the field to fight again and again. And so it was that the awe inspiring sight of the English arrowstorm was now seen on English soil rather than French or Scottish.

The catalyst for the major period of fighting from 1455 was the reign of the weak Henry VI. His inability to govern set off a scramble for power behind the scenes that soon erupted into the open. The first major battle fought over the issue was at St Albans in 1455, then in 1460 the Lancastrian rout at the Battle of Northampton ended Henry’s reign to all intents and purposes and he found himself a prisoner in the Tower of London. However, the subsequent Act of Accord that disinh erited Henry’s son and replaced him with the Duke of York unleashed a sustained campaign driven by Henry’s queen, Margaret of Anjou, to overturn the Act and restore Henry and the Lancastrian lineage. The two sides met in a rapid succession of battles at Wakefield, Mortimer’s Cross, and again at St Albans, the whole coming to a crescendo at Towton, where up to 20,000 men lay strewn and mangled across snow-covered Yorkshire fields. A new King, the Yorkist Edward IV, backed by the powerful Earl of Warwick, emerged from the mud and blood to become one of England’s greatest general-kings, even though his reign proved to be relatively short.

In the 1460s, the Wars of the Roses became a regional event with fierce fighting in the north, primarily between the Nevilles and Percies. Edward remained in London, while his champion, the Earl of Warwick, himself a Neville, carried the crown’s fight to his enemies. But by 1469, Warwick had turned his coat against Edward, fuming at Edward’s
rash decision to marry Elizabeth Woodville and his own loss of influence over the king that resulted. Edward and Warwick met in combat at the Battle of Edgecote on 26 July 1469 with Warwick coming out on top. Edward IV was confined at Warwick’s stronghold of Middleton Castle, but Warwick could not restore order to England and had to recall Edward to come and take charge. Any symptoms of peace breaking out were soon squashed, however, when Warwick turned a commission to put down the Lincolnshire rebellion in 1470 into another chance to wage war against the King. This time he was joined by the King’s brother Clarence, who Warwick may have thought was a suitable replacement for his former protégé. The subsequent fight at Empingham, known as the Battle of Losecoat Field, in March 1471, saw Warwick’s fortunes reversed and the victorious Edward IV put a price on the defeated noble’s head. Warwick fled to safer ground in France, where he met up with the still seething Margaret of Anjou. Together, they conspired to invade England and bring down Edward and put the still imprisoned Henry VI back on the throne. Their new found alliance was cemented by Warwick’s daughter being married off to Edward of Lancaster, the Prince of Wales. With the help of Louis XI of France, the invasion forces were soon ready.

The invasion went off without a hitch. Warwick landed in England’s West Country and advanced on York, gathering support along the way. Of most significance was John Neville turning his coat against Edward IV, who now fled to Burgundy with his supporters. The befuddled Henry VI now found himself back on the throne, but he would barely have time to warm the seat before Edward was back on English soil and ready to fight.

Edward landed at Ravenspur at the mouth of the River Humber in March 1471. Accompanying the King were his brother Richard of Gloucester, Lord Rivers, Lord Hastings, and a sizeable group of mercenaries. They marched to York, then took the road south to London, issuing commissions for troop recruitment in Derbyshire and Nottingham along the way. Warwick was in Coventry waiting for Clarence before coming out to fight, but Clarence flip-flopped again and returned to his brother’s side. Edward made it to

**Margaret’s Landing and the March to Tewkesbury**

From Campaign 131 - Tewkesbury 1471, © Osprey Publishing Ltd. www.ospreypublishing.com

Margaret of Anjou (left) and Henry VI, painted by Jim Bowen.
Edward IV (1442-1483)

There have been few grander sights on an English battlefield than the strapping 6ft 4in Edward of York who took the Yorkist fight to the Lancastrians at a series of battles culminating in the carnage at Towton in 1461. His father had been killed the previous year at Wakefield and that left Edward in poll position to claim the throne of England, which he duly did on entering London after Towton.

Unfortunately, Edward’s impact on the battlefield was echoed in his exploits with the ladies. His blindness in that regard led him into a disastrous marriage with commoner and Lancastrian Elizabeth Woodville. Edward’s mentor Warwick “the kingmaker” was so upset that he defected to the Lancastrian cause along with Edward’s brother, Clarence. Edward and Warwick met at the Battle of Edgecote Moor with Warwick coming out on top and Edward a prisoner in all but title. Warwick was no king, however, and he had to release Edward to bring order to England.

Edward’s other blind spot was not recognizing his enemies clearly enough, and he attempted to reconcile with Warwick and Clarence. But, similarly to the situation with Somerset, Edward’s reaching out was spurned and Warwick and Clarence led another revolt. Defeat followed, but they fled to France to ally with Margaret of Anjou. The invasion of 1470 followed, leading to the Readoption of Henry VI.

Edward fled to Burgundy where he raised an army to reclaim his throne. On his arrival back in England, Edward marched to York then London. Along the way, Clarence rejoined him and the brothers marched into London unopposed and arrested Henry VI. Warwick was still on the loose, however, so Edward marched out to meet him, this time at Barnet. Warwick died in Edward’s victory but the king had little time to savour his victory, when news of Margaret of Anjou’s landing came. Edward marched against the former queen on roads that led to Tewkesbury. After the battle, Edward settled in to govern England, which he did with considerable administrative skill. He also found time to send expeditions to France in 1475 and Scotland in 1482, both of which met with success.

Edward died peacefully in 1483, a remarkable event for the seemingly doomed sons of the House of York.

THE CHASE

If Edward thought he could rest on his laurels, he was sadly mistaken. Almost at the same time as he was viewing Warwick’s stripped body and ordering it taken back to London, news came that Margaret of Anjou had landed with a significant force at Weymouth. Edward surmised correctly that she would try to make it across the River Severn to join up with Jasper Tudor and he had to stop her before that happened.

Margaret of Anjou may have landed fully confident in victory, but the news coming out of Barnet gave her cause for thought. With Warwick dead, she had to find support from Tudor and to do that she would have to avoid Edward’s victorious army. Nevertheless, Margaret was not the quitting kind and she drove her army relentlessly forward.

On 1 May, Margaret’s army reached Bristol, where she may have re-armed and replenished, but she had also wasted valuable time. Edward was homing in from the northeast in the direction of Cirencester. Margaret threw a feint out towards Sodbury the next morning, then hot-footed it due north. Edward took the bait, arriving early at Sodbury, where he waited for the Lancastrians to come up and give London, but did not stay long. He was soon on the road north with his army, along the way he ran into Warwick’s army at the small town of Barnet.

The Battle of Barnet took place in a bank of fog on 14 April 1471. The two sides could not see each other’s deployment properly, and consequently their left flanks overlapped. That almost proved disastrous for Edward when the Earl of Oxford’s Lancastrian forces crashed into the Yorkist left flank, sending them scattering to the rear. Fortune favoured Edward, however, for when Oxford’s men began to return to their lines, some Lancastrians mistook them for turncoats, others mistook Oxford’s banners for Edward’s, and they all panicked. The battle quickly turned into a rout and Warwick was killed while trying to find his horse.
Above: Yorkist archers, men-at-arms and cannon fighting under the Duke of Gloucester’s (the king’s brother) colours.

Below: The Earl of Devon’s troops look across the field towards Hastings’ Yorkists.
The battle. He waited in vain; only nine miles away to the west Margaret’s army was sliding past, unseen by the Yorkists.

A furious Edward soon realized his mistake. He sent word out to the town of Gloucester to close its gates against Margaret, which they did just in time. Edward then set off north towards Cheltenham, reaching the town after a hike of 31 miles. On reaching Gloucester, Margaret had the choice to assault the town and escape across the river, but she did not know how close Edward might be and could not take the chance. She pushed her already tired army north to the next crossing of the Severn near the little Abbey town of Tewkesbury. Just as she began her march, the garrison of Gloucester sallied out and attacked the Lancastrian rearguard, capturing some artillery pieces in the process. That damage would prove disastrous for Margaret in the fight to come. When she reached Tewkesbury, Margaret did not have time to get her exhausted army over the narrow fords and had no choice but to draw her army up to fight off Edward’s force, which was now only a few miles distant.

THE BATTLE OF TEWKESBURY

Edward’s army spent the night of 3 May 1471 camped a few miles from Tewkesbury at Tredington. The King could not afford to delay, however, and he was in armour before daybreak, hoping to bring Margaret’s forces to battle before they could escape across the river and join Tudor. Edward split his army into three battles under the command of his brother Richard, Duke of Gloucester, Lord Hastings, and himself. However, Gloucester, who normally led the vanguard and would therefore take up his position on the right wing, was ordered over to the left instead of Hastings who had been found wanting at Barnet. This was a wise move on Edward’s part because Hastings was unlikely to stand up against Edmund Beaufort, the Fourth Duke of Somerset, who occupied the Lancastrian right wing. Hastings took up his position on the right wing with Edward’s battle in the middle. As an extra measure, Edward peeled off 200 mounted spearmen (scourers) to investigate a small wood.
out to the Yorkist left. Their orders were to trigger any Lancastrian ambush that might have been placed in the woods, and if there was no ambush to act on their own initiative in the coming battle. Finally, Edward brought his field artillery to the front, along with his archers and 300 Flemish handgunners. They would open the battle when the time was right.

The Lancastrian army was also deployed in three battles. The centre was under the nominal command of the Prince of Wales, but in reality Lord Wenlock took charge. Somerset commanded the right wing, and the Earl of Devon took the left. Margaret’s whereabouts in the battle are uncertain, but she was kept out of harm’s way. The Lancastrians occupied a low lying ridge about a mile south of Tewkesbury abbey in a grassy area known as the Gastons. The River Swilgate ran down the eastern edge of the field, restricting any movement out to the Lancastrian left. A road ran down the Lancastrian right and cut across the field between the two armies. Hedges and banks lined the roads and a small brook cut down through the field in front of Somerset’s deployment. All of this should have been an impediment to a Yorkist advance, but that was not how events transpired and it would be the Lancastrians who found themselves entangled.

Both sides were approximately equal in number, about 6000 men, with the Lancastrians having the slightest edge in manpower by about 500. Each battle, therefore, contained between 1500 and 1800 men, depending on the size of any reserve if there was one – the chroniclers make no mention of reserves at the battle. Due to the previous salt from the town of Gloucester, however, the Lancastrians had less field pieces and they were outnumbered in their archery contingent too. Given that circumstance, it was unlikely that the Lancastrians could stay on the defensive for any length of time under the missile barrage that was likely to come their way.

All across the battlefield, men waited in anticipation for the fight to begin. The many multi-coloured banners flapped in the morning breeze, and the sun glinted off the men’s armour. A few birds probably flitted around the hedgerows, oblivious to the carnage about to envelop them. On the given command, Edward’s trumpeters blew the signal for the guns and arrows to fire and the sound and sight of thousands of missiles flying towards the Lancastrian lines ripped the sky.

There was little the receiving troops could do to avoid the Yorkist barrage. It was soon evident in Somerset’s battle, moreover, that his men could not take much punishment and he did not have enough firepower to deter the aerial assault. He therefore ordered his battle to advance, an order he would soon come to regret. Somerset’s battle surged forward, but instead of driving straight forward, the advancing soldiers veered left before crashing into the join between Gloucester’s and Edward’s battles. Most historians argue that the change in direction was because of the nature of the terrain; particularly the hedges and a small hillock on their right steered them that way. That may have been the reason, but it also fair to speculate that the fire pouring into the battle from Gloucester’s battle may have pushed Somerset’s soldiers away from the fire to the left. Also, the more they veered left, the more they became exposed to the missile attack. Whatever the case, Somerset’s advance had disastrous consequences.

The battles of Edward and Gloucester gave some ground to the advancing Lancastrians, but soon pushed back. Somerset’s battle, assailed on two sides, began to bend then break in the savage fighting. It was at this juncture that the 200 scourers in the wood suddenly bore down on the right and rear of Somerset’s battle, which soon frayed then disintegrated under the pressure. Lancastrian soldiers began running for the rear, the Yorkist left flank in hot pursuit. Some say that a chagrined Somerset paused in his flight to kill Wenlock, who he blamed for not coming to his aid. It is difficult to see what Wenlock could have done, however, if Somerset’s battle had slewed across Wenlock’s front. Wenlock too would have had to slew left to fight and that would have given Devon’s battle no room to his front. If Devon had advanced, then Wenlock would have had no room to fight. It therefore appears that Somerset’s dilemma was entirely of his own making.

Wenlock’s battle collapsed at the sight of their routing comrades and Devon’s soon followed suit. Edward’s army poured forward in victory, killing indiscriminately as they went in one of the hallmark routs of the Wars of the Roses. Thousands of Lancastrians died, many in the Bloody Meadow along their line of retreat, others in the rivers that blocked their escape. The most notorious deaths came when Edward pulled Lancastrians out of Tewkesbury Abbey, where they had sought sanctuary, and had them killed.

The Duke of Somerset was later beheaded for his role in the rebellion and was buried in the Abbey. The Prince of Wales died on the field, some said while begging for his life. That broke the spirit of his mother, Mary of Anjou, who retired to France a shattered woman. Edward returned to London, where he faced a brief rebellion from Lord Faulconberg to free Henry VI. That was the last straw for Edward and he ordered Henry’s death in the Tower.

In the space of a couple of weeks, Edward had pulled off the remarkable feat of destroying two armies and putting an end to the Lancastrian cause, for a short while anyway. Other challenges would arise, but they never reached the crisis levels of 1471 proportions. On Edward’s death in 1483, however, the Wars of the Roses would flare again, this time ending up on Bosworth Field two years later, but that is a different story.
The Battle of Tewkesbury would make an ideal club or group wargame for up to six players, with perhaps an umpire to keep the unruly nobility in line. Previously, the costs of doing that might have proven prohibitive to involve a bunch of players in a one-off game. Now, however, with the release of the Perry Miniatures plastic Wars of the Roses figures, the expense for refighting a Wars of the Roses battle has lessened considerably. That is even more the case if each player bought a box to act as the core of their “battle”: add a few character figures, field pieces, handgunners, and cavalry to that mix and you are ready to fight – you can argue about who gets to be the allegedly hunchbacked, malicious Duke of Gloucester later!

The second reason gamers argue for not playing the Wars of the Roses is that the battles appear to be turgid ‘slugfests’ and very static. In short, there is little generalship required in crashing your men into someone else’s then throwing dice for the next half hour to see who wins. There is some merit to that argument: the Wars of the Roses were not for the dainty or polite. Nevertheless, examined more closely, victory in the Wars of the Roses required good tactical positioning and a keen sense of timing, and yes, good luck. All of those elements come into play at the Battle of Tewkesbury.

Forces
The refight was fought using Field of Glory rules and the Storm of Arrows supplement, but neither is essential in setting up the wargame as long as you use rules pertinent to the Wars of the Roses.

There were six ‘battles’ involved in the Battle of Tewkesbury, three Yorkist and three Lancastrian. They were all approximately equivalent, so we can equalize the forces using a Perry box to make up a ‘battle’ with a ratio of 1:1 longbowmen to billmen. The basic forces can be supplemented with metal figures from the Perry Wars of the Roses and their Agincourt to Orleans ranges, or from other manufacturers dealing in 28mm Late Medieval figures. The important differences between the sides are as follows (see also Table 1):

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**WARGAMING TEWKESBURY**

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**TEWKESBURY ON TOUR**

The Perrys put on a Battle of Tewkesbury display game at this year’s Salute show, using the game to trial a set of rules designed for the period by fellow Games Workshopper Jervis Johnson.

**WHY DOES THAT TABLE LOOK DIFFERENT?**

As with a number of battlefield sites from this period the exact location of the Battle of Tewkesbury is a point of some debate. The Salute table shown here was set up based on an alternative site to the one we have gone with in our scenario. At Salute the Perry’s opted for setting the action nearer to Gobes Hall, which can be seen near the centre of the table. One battle - two table options, can’t be bad!
• The Yorkists should have an extra longbow base for each battle: the Lancastrians receive an extra base of billmen to even out the sides.

• The Yorkists should field three light artillery pieces: the Lancastrians field one.

• The Yorkist army should contain three bases of handgunners: the Lancastrians contain one.

• The Yorkist army can field up to three Scourers (light cavalry) either on the field or in reserve as a flank attack.

Of the commanders, only Edward IV is considered Superior. The rest are Field commanders with the exceptions of Hastings and Somerset, who we can regard as inferior on the day.

DEPLOYMENT

Deployment can be historically based as in the scenario map, or players can deploy as they see fit, as long as the three ‘battles’ are in line abreast formation.

Table 1: Field of Glory Unit Designations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Armour</th>
<th>Quality</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Shooting</th>
<th>Close combat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men-at-Arms</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Superior</td>
<td>Drilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Heavy weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retinue hill</td>
<td>Heavy</td>
<td>Armoured</td>
<td>Drilled</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Heavy weapon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retinue bow</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Drilled</td>
<td>Longbow</td>
<td>Swordsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scourers</td>
<td>Cavalry</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Lancer swordman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Handgunners</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>Protected</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Drilled</td>
<td>Firearm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artillery</td>
<td>Light</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Undrilled</td>
<td>Light artillery</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table is 6’x4’ with a river edge restricting any movement on the western edge. The northern edge is Lancastrian and the Yorkists advance from the southern edge. The ‘battles’ arrive on the table simultaneously and may be deployed anywhere in the deployment zones as marked on the scenario map.

Any ‘battle’ attempting to move across the brook near the western edge becomes immediately disorganized upon contact with the brook. This local rule does not apply to cavalry or stationary forces.

The ambushing force will come as no surprise if you have read the accompanying article, so to add that element to the game the flank attack may enter from any point on the Yorkist side of the table, including the western edge up to the level of the most advanced Yorkist units.

Victory:

Victory in Wars of the Roses battles was absolute, with the routing army suffering severe casualties as they tried to flee the field. Therefore, whichever side is left standing on the table at the end is the winner. It might be a bit too realistic to set up a post-battle chopping block on your table for the 28mm execution of treacherous nobles, but that is your choice.

Happy slogging!

Opposite page: The Prince of Wales’ battle looking towards King Edward.

Below: The table with the Lancastrians on the left and Yorkists on the right.
EDWARD'S UNQUIET REIGN
The Lancastrian royal family and those loyal to them wasted no time in vacating York and running northwards into the night. Edward had to content himself by replacing his father’s head with that of the Earl of Devon who was captured in the town. He lingered in York, rewarding his followers, then marched around Lancashire and the Midlands in a show of strength to areas sympathetic to Henry. Meanwhile, Henry and Margaret made their escape to the Scottish court. The Scots and Lancastrians essayed a couple of unsuccessful minor campaigns south, but it was left to the powerful Percys in Northumberland to carry the Lancastrian flag against their hated rivals, the Yorkist Nevilles. Edward proved hesitant in settling the northern question at first because he was more interested in securing the crown and campaigning against Lancastrian holdouts in Wales.
Consolidation continued through 1462 and 1463, but quashing the Lancastrian cause proved hard work. Calming the north proved particularly problematic, especially with the Duke of Somerset stirring up Lancastrian support in 1464. After winning a small victory at Hedgeley Moor, Somerset slipped up and was killed at the Battle of Hexham. Edward himself came north and reduced Lancastrian-held castles, beheading numerous rebellious nobles. Then, Henry VI was captured (again!) and transported to the Tower. England was pacified for the moment, so Edward could enjoy his marriage to Elizabeth Woodville. But he had made a grievous political error.

TWILIGHT AT TEWKESBURY
Warwick’s choice of queen alienated Warwick and Edward’s own brother, George, Duke of Clarence. The split became final in 1469, coinciding with another Lancastrian revolt in the north. Warwick and Clarence switched allegiance to Henry VI’s cause, isolating Edward who was on campaign near Nottingham. Edward was waiting for the Earls of Pembroke and Devon to reinforce him, but Warwick intercepted and defeated them at Edgecote Moor in July 1469. When Edward’s men heard the news, they defected, and Edward was arrested when he arrived back in London. Warwick now had two kings under his control, but he could find little noble support for his own government. He therefore reconciled with Edward who became once more king of England. Edward’s revenge for his humiliation was swift.
Within months of his reinstatement, Edward was again in the field, this time smashing a revolt in Lincolnshire at
the Battle of Losecote Field in March 1470. The king then turned on Clarence and Warwick, declaring them traitors. Both fled to join Margaret of Anjou in France where the French King Louis XI forged an alliance between the erstwhile enemies. Warwick invaded England in September 1470 and marched to London unopposed. He then placed Henry VI back on the throne. Edward now fled with his brother, Richard, Duke of Gloucester, to Burgundy where Charles of Burgundy furnished him with troops for his own invasion.

The Yorkist king landed in Yorkshire in March 1471, ostensibly to reclaim only his lands, but in reality to rebuild his power base for another assault on the throne. On hearing this news, Clarence abandoned Warwick and joined his brothers. Edward now had a sizeable army at his disposal and marched south, entering London on 11 April. Three days later, he caught up with Warwick’s army at Barnet and destroyed them, killing Warwick in the rout. Edward had to pivot quickly though because news arrived that Margaret of Anjou had landed in Weymouth and was marching to Wales, where Lancastrian support eagerly waited. Edward and Richard marched quickly across country and brought the Lancastrian army to battle at Tewkesbury on 4 May 1471. The result was a devastating defeat for the Lancastrians and the death of Prince Edward, the only son of Henry VI and Margaret. There would be no more because on Edward’s return to London, Henry died of causes unknown (but widely suspected). Edward’s reign now entered calmer waters for the next twelve years before his death by natural causes in 1483. The Wars of the Roses now entered their final phase.

TUDOR DAWN

Edward’s death left his twelve years old son, Edward V, as king, and Edward’s brother, Richard, the new king’s protector. But there would be no easy transition of power. Richard was in his northern territory when news arrived of the king’s death. He moved quickly to grab the heir to the throne who was also making his way south. Richard entered London with the child on 4 May and placed him in the Tower for safekeeping. The new king’s protector now engineered a coup to seize power by persuading the queen to give up her other son to join Edward in the Tower then declaring her marriage illegal and the two boys illegitimate. Parliament backed Richard and crowned him as Richard III. The ‘princes’ in the Tower were never heard from again.

Meanwhile, since 1471, the Lancastrian claim to the throne resided with Henry Tudor, who lived in exile in France. His attention turned back to dynastic matters with Richard’s coup and the subsequent rebellion of the Duke of Buckingham. That shambolic escape took place in October 1483, but it was poorly organized and led and before long Buckingham’s head graced the swordsman’s block. Many of his supporters fled to Henry’s side, while Buckingham’s widow married Jasper Tudor, uncle of Henry. Henry himself pledged to marry Edward IV’s eldest daughter in December 1483, garnering more support as a result. Richard’s plans for the Yorkist dynasty on the other hand withered when his only son died in April 1484, followed by Richard’s queen in March 1485. The Yorkist hold on the crown was therefore already very tenuous when Henry Tudor launched a serious invasion in 1485.

Henry sailed from Harfleur on 1 August 1485, his destination Pembroke. It was a massive gamble, but Henry had been promised considerable manpower on his arrival. Beginning his campaign in the strongly held Tudor lands in Wales helped and soon Henry was marching inland accompanied by Jasper Tudor, the Earl of Oxford, and around 5,000 soldiers. If he hoped to pick up yet more men before taking on Richard in what would have to be a decisive battle, Henry would be sorely disappointed. Richard was in Nottingham when word came of Henry’s invasion. He sent out commissioners of array to muster his forces and instructed his nobles to bring their retainers. Some, particularly his northern allies, seemed slow to gather and Richard sensed treason, but as yet had no real evidence on which to act. Nevertheless, the Stanleys were already in touch with Henry, but did not yet show their hand. Henry’s army marched out of Wales to Shrewsbury, then continued east. On 20 August, Richard left Nottingham for Leicester with around 8,000 men. He was now in an excellent position to advance west and block Henry’s line of march to London. Both armies bedded down within a few miles of each other on the night of 21 August. The next dawn would witness the decisive battle for the English crown near a little town called Market Bosworth.

Below: The gilded silver boar badge, found at Bosworth in September 2009. The badge was almost certainly worn by a Knight in King Richard’s own retinue, and it’s discover suggested a new location for the battle.
Henry Tudor, the Lancastrian pretender to King Richard III’s throne, landed in Pembrokeshire in Wales on 7 August with his followers, several hundred English exiles and a veteran force of from one to two thousand French mercenaries provided by the French king. Henry Tudor, already proclaiming himself king, managed to raise an army and marched through mid-Wales to Shrewsbury and into England. With more troops gathering to his banner along the way, Henry’s army numbered from five to six thousand by the time it reached the battlefield.

Richard was awaiting the invasion, and received the news that Henry Tudor had landed on 11 August while hunting in Nottinghamshire and immediately sent letters to his allies to bring troops. His army numbered about ten thousand, with about a thousand of those provided by Northumberland and a thousand contributed by Norfolk. The army of the Stanleys numbered as many as six thousand.

Having travelled up to Wargames Illustrated HQ from Wales, it was only right that I should control the forces of Henry Tudor, and it was only appropriate that Nick Eyre from North Star (who had travelled from across the carpark) take the role of the scheming King Richard. We aimed to put together a small scale tabletop battle that could be completed in a few hours on a standard sized gaming table; this is the sort of scenario and scale that could be completed in an evening at the club.

The armies were selected from the collections of Michael Perry and Dave Andrews who had kindly loaned us their WotR figures for the occasion. They are, unsurprisingly, very well painted and the figures are mounted on large bases, sometimes as many as 12 models strong. Casualty removal is done with single figures in Clash of Empires, but not wanting to tear Michael’s figures from their multi-bases we used spare models to mark casualties rather than remove them – easily done, showing what can

be done using CoE if you have similarly based armies.

Richard’s army was divided into three battles, commanded by himself, Norfolk and the reluctant Northumberland. Henry’s was treated as a single army, while Stanley’s force, nominally under the command of Richard, was considered as a separate entity altogether. The victory conditions were simple: the death of either Richard or Henry and the battle was over.
The terrain had been pre-determined for the game, with a large hill in the centre of Richard’s table side representing the slope of Ambion Hill, a few buildings on one side edge representing nearby Sandeford and marshy ground on the same side edge. Richard deployed his troops in the centre on and around the hill, with Norfolk on his right and Northumberland on his left. The army of the pretender and Oxford deployed in the middle and on the left, leaving the right side of their table edge so that Stanley’s troops could occupy the side table edge.

**NORTHUMBERLAND**

Northumberland’s loyalty to Richard was in doubt and the earl’s forces were kept as a reserve at the commencement of the battle. We judged that it was doubtful that he would change sides, determining that if the battle looked as if were lost he would retreat instead.

6+: Joins the battle on Richard’s side
1 or lower: All of Northumberland’s units make a retreat move as if they have lost combat. They are not disrupted following the move. Roll again next turn.

**STANLEY**

Stanley had a reputation for political expedience and waited until he could determine which side the fighting favoured, remaining uncommitted until the crucial point of the battle.

6+: Joins the battle on Henry’s side
1 or lower: Joins the battle on Richard’s side

**Modifiers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Modifier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Henry within 40cm of enemy troops</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry involved in combat</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northumberland joins Richard</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry in opponent’s table half</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard in opponent’s table half</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk killed</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford killed</td>
<td>-2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard killed</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry within 30cm</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DEPLOYMENT**

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Stanleys to commit, as Oxford urged his men forward, his archers inflicting a few losses on the enemy. Henry opted to dice for Stanley to join the battle, but perhaps worried for his young son - who was in Richard’s camp - bided his time.

**OXFORD ADVANCES**

Seeking an early engagement that would prove decisive, Oxford on the left of the rebel army advanced in quick time, with Henry remaining in reserve. In response, Norfolk advanced on the King’s right against Oxford’s strong showing, hoping to delay the rebels long enough to bring their superiority in artillery to bear and allow for Northumberland to arrive.

The King’s guns concentrated their fire on rebel infantry, causing a few losses. Henry, now aware that a major clash was about to take place on the left, rode in the other direction in an effort to beseech the Stanleys to commit, as Oxford urged his men forward, his archers inflicting a few losses on the enemy. Henry opted to dice for Stanley to join the battle, but perhaps worried for his young son - who was in Richard’s camp - bided his time.

*Above: Norfolk’s men begin to move off.*

*Below: Viewed from Ambion Hill - Henry and his bodyguard ride towards Stanley.*
NORFOLK ATTACKS

Richard chose this point to proceed downhill to pressure the rebel centre and tempt it into giving battle, but the real battle was taking place on his right as Norfolk launched his attack upon Oxford.

The charge of Norfolk’s mounted men-at-arms against a company of billmen was irresistible, killing six for one knight felled. Norfolk’s other two charges resulted in one win and one defeat by narrow margins - Oxford’s men held as expected, and Norfolk’s managed to hold on, despite getting quite a pummelling.

The billmen on Oxford’s far left, however, were dealt a severe beating and failed their morale test so spectacularly that the unit was destroyed on the spot, its members cut down or dispersed.

King Nick opted to roll the dice to see if he could bring on-side Northumberland, but he got no result.

Above: Norfolk’s men leave no doubt as to which way they are heading!

SIMULTANEOUS COMBAT

All of the various combats take place simultaneously. As each combat is worked out a note is made of the result (we use dice placed behind the losing unit to display the size of the loss). Once all of the combats have been resolved the relevant tests are taken. Any units having been destroyed or fled, trigger further morale tests in nearby units. In our game, the destruction of the billmen on the lances of the mounted men-at-arms forced a number of morale tests down the line. One unit failed the test badly and fled with Norfolk’s men in pursuit.

Norfolk’s mounted men-at-arms crush a unit of Oxford’s billmen.
STANLEY STIRS
The situation on the left was precarious and, with Richard bearing down on him, Henry was in danger of having his army cut in two. Unsure of what Stanley would do, Henry rode to the left in support of Oxford; perhaps a show of arms could rouse Sir Stan.

Oxford’s French mercenaries charged to enable their broken allies to reform. Despite their experience, the mercenaries lost the fight by 4 points! Oxford, pacing behind the billmen fighting Norfolk’s infantry, exhorted his men with rousing words and spurred them on to inflict heavy losses on their foes.

Defeated, the mercenaries retreated, but carried on in the fight. Fortune was with the pretender elsewhere as Oxford’s fine oration and his men’s efforts broke Norfolk and his footmen. This potentially decisive moment spurred Stanley to throw his hand in with the rebels.

At the beginning of the King’s third turn events had certainly begun to turn, with Stanley now making his move and Norfolk, though rallied, in a poor position. With a breakthrough threatened, Richard launched the first charge of his infantry in the centre against Henry’s crack French troops and Norfolk’s heavy cavalry attacked Oxford’s infantry in an attempt to turn his flank.

Cursing Northumberland’s sloth, Richard’s centre continued to advance, his guns and archers beginning to cause some significant damage on Henry’s billmen (and also take a pot shot at the turn-coat Stanley). The Duke of Norfolk decided that he could do no more in the sticky situation he found himself in and, after ordering his men to hold at all costs promptly galloped to support the much more advantageous position on his right.

NORFOLK
OXFORD
RICHARD
HENRY
STANLEY
NORTHUMBERLAND

The charge by Oxford’s troops on his left presented us with a potentially sticky situation as their target was just a few millimetres directly behind the unit that had broken the previous turn. Fortunately the rules allow for this by requiring the two units to line up neatly, levying a movement penalty on the charger (which in this instance had no effect as the units were so close before the charge).

KEEP GOING LADS, I’LL BE BACK IN A BIT (MAYBE)...
Nick decided to extricate Norfolk from the unit he was attached to because he concluded that they were a lost cause with a vastly superior company bearing down on them. Because commanders attached to units are lost if the unit breaks or is destroyed, moving Norfolk now saved his life, even though it weakened the unit he was formerly attached to.
On Richard’s far right, the mercenaries and Norfolk’s billmen fought an inconclusive combat, but next to them the charge of his men-at-arms was easily repulsed and the cavalry made a swift, fighting withdrawal. The first charge of Richard’s infantry forced the mercenaries back, but they held. All in all, it seemed as if Richard’s army had lost the entire impetus of the battle over a single turn.

**THE KING’S NAME IS A TOWER OF STRENGTH**

Richard’s aggression had got Henry’s attention as he wheeled around to face the usurper king. His artillery, ineffectual throughout the battle, finally misfired and was out of action for the rest of the day.

Two charges were launched, against Richard’s fresh infantry in the centre and against the battered billmen on Richard’s right that had already been bested once. Oxford threw his weight into the fight on the far left in an effort to save his mercenaries. His influence was timely as the Frenchmen fought and hacked their way through the larger body of men forcing them back in disorder. The battered billmen on Richard’s left, spent with fatigue and fear, were utterly destroyed. But in the centre, the charge of Henry’s tired foot, their ranks thinned by enemy volleys of shot and arrow, broke upon the fresh troops of the king. Inspired by Richard, they pursued their foes deep into Henry’s lines.

The battle seemed to have swung again in Henry’s fourth turn, with the poor showing by his centre and Oxford now stuck in combat on the far left. It was Nick’s fourth turn and he felt it was time for Richard to deal a decisive blow before the Stanleys were able to influence the battle, especially given that Northumberland had obviously betrayed his king.

Forward rode the king, trotting toward the whelp Henry as his foot soldiers pursued the fleeing rebel infantry, presenting the pretender with an opportunity to charge at the King of England or to quit the field in shame.

Again, on Richard’s right, Norfolk’s men-at-arms charged in and again they withdrew in the face of resistance from the stout billmen. Oxford, his men nearly spent, was forced to give ground again.

In the centre, Stanley was not yet in position to give battle, the infantry on Henry’s right was broken and the infantry on his left succumbed in their prolonged fight. At the end of the turn, Richard rolled again to determine what Northumberland would do and the earl retreated, presumably concluding that Stanley’s intervention would result in defeat for Richard.

**FIGHTING WITHDRAWAL**

In *Clash of Empires*, open order cavalry (and light chariots) are able to perform a fighting withdrawal if they lose a combat against infantry but pass their morale test. Certain situations, such as the enemy retreating or the withdrawing unit fighting on two sides, may prevent a fighting withdrawal, but no conditions applied that hampered Norfolk’s cavalry.
SO WISE, SO YOUNG, THEY SAY, DO NEVER LIVE LONG

With the king in his sight, young Henry gave his battle cry and with his fellows in arms, and most loving friends, drew his sword and galloped to meet the advancing Richard.

Stanley was now in a position to cut the king’s line of retreat and smash his infantry in the flanks. The arrival of this help, and the courageous charge of Henry rallied the hearts of his remaining billmen to stand for just a short while longer and support the pretender.

Oxford was inspired too as he and his men killed an enemy for almost every dice rolled, eight in all, and suffered just one. But the battle, and the future of the crown, was decided in the centre of Bosworth Field (AKA a tabletop in the Wargames Illustrated studio). Young Henry’s gallant charge was met with terrible violence; as his friends were butchered about him he called a retreat only to be run through with a lance.

The tragic defeat of Henry on the bloody field of Bosworth provided us with a fantastic afternoon’s gaming and plenty to ponder what might have transpired following the battle. With Richard in total control of the land, would the Wars of the...
Roses continue against the rebellious Stanleys and would Northumberland come up with convincing enough excuses to keep his head? In a future article we will be presenting Clash of Empires army lists for battles of this period, including Bosworth.

For more details about Clash of Empires visit www.greatescapegames.co.uk where you can read battle reports, download army lists and buy the books. With over 50 free downloadable army lists online and two accompanying sourcebooks, Clash of Empires has over 120 army lists from the chariot period to the high medieval era. Clash of Empires is available from good hobby stockists worldwide, including Warpath Games and Brookhurst Hobbies in the US and War & Peace Games in Australia.

Above: The Scene at the end of play. With Richard driving Henry off the table (centre right).

Above: The whelp Henry turns and runs as good King Richard pursues (in the background Northumberland prepares his excuses!).

NO MORE WAR?

The Battle of Bosworth was over and with it the Wars of the Roses, at least they were in all the best stories and plays written about the 15th Century civil wars that ripped the English nobility apart. In the immediate aftermath of the battle, Henry denied Richard his kingly due, stripping the former king and throwing his body over a horse. From Bosworth, Henry paraded Richard’s humiliated corpse through the streets of Leicester, ensuring that no one would have any doubts over the fate of the Yorkist usurper and his cause. The new king, rightfully restored, had Richard’s body, thrown into an anonymous grave, or into the River Soar, depending on who you believe. Henry marched in triumph down to London, dismissing his French mercenaries along the way. Soon he was crowned Henry VII and married Elizabeth of York, uniting the houses of York and Lancaster. He was less conciliatory with other remnants of the Yorkist cause, hounding them mercilessly for two years, culminating in the battle of Stoke Field on 16 June 1487. With that victory, the Wars of the Roses came to their untidy end.
The defeat at the Battle of Bosworth on 22 August 1485 shocked England to its very core. Henry Tudor had landed in Wales with a small force, even for a war in which few armies could muster 10,000 men, and marched into England. The Yorkist king, Richard III, rode out to meet Henry confident that he would easily beat the young upstart. But treachery, that perennial participant in the Wars of the Roses, played its hand again and Richard died fighting in a battle that suddenly slipped out of his control. With that, English history clapped the dust off its hands and welcomed the shiny new Tudor era. For contemporary Yorkists, however, the battle might have been lost but the cause most certainly was not.

A CLASH OF KINGS?

One of Richard’s trusty lieutenants that fateful day at Bosworth was Francis Lovell, 1st Viscount Lovell. He grew up in the Yorkist cause and was Lord Chamberlain to the recently deceased king. Although his benefactor’s body lay mouldering under a future Leicester car park, Lovell was undeterred from restoring a Yorkist to his rightful place on the English throne. Within a year, he was back in the saddle, rousing the faithful to rebel against the Lancastrian usurper. The time was not yet ripe, however, and Lovell’s rebellion barely got off the ground - the Stafford brothers, who threw in their lot with Lovell, picked an inauspicious place to raise their standard, in the Lancastrian stronghold of Worcestershire, and met a grim fate. Lovell escaped to Burgundy, however, where disaffected Yorkist loyalists gathered around Margaret of York, the Dowager Duchess of Burgundy. There he met John de la Pole, the 1st Earl of Lincoln, and presumed successor to Richard III. Much to Lincoln’s delight, Lovell had been working on a new plan to restore the Yorkist accession.

Fortune favoured Lincoln after Bosworth. Despite his position in the Yorkist hierarchy, or perhaps because of it, Henry VII allowed him to keep his head. An apparently grateful Lincoln gave all the appearances of acquiescence but inside he seethed at the usurping Henry. When he arrived in Burgundy early in 1487, he listened intently to the story Lovell now spun. One of the deficiencies of his 1486 rebellion, Lovell must have reasoned, was the lack of a figurehead to put on the throne - rebels needed leadership more than anything, along with a cause to back. While on the run before leaving for Burgundy, Lovell had met with an Oxford monk named Richard Simons who had been grooming a young boy, Lambert Simnel, to impersonate the Yorkist prince, Edward, Earl of Warwick. The original Edward was currently imprisoned in the Tower of London, but the story Simons intended to spread was that Edward had escaped. He would then produce his Simnel rabbit out of his hat and foment a rebellion to place ‘Edward’
on the throne. The plan impressed Lovell who set off for Burgundy to raise support and funding. Simons took the boy to Ireland, a hotbed of Yorkist support. Lincoln approved of the plan too. He reasoned that if they were successful, the real Warwick could be freed to take the throne, but if that did not happen then Simnel would make a suitable substitute; either way, Lincoln would be the power behind the throne. Or, Lincoln could just as easily get rid of Simnel and rule himself. Lincoln and Lovell also had money to spend thanks to Margaret and Yorkist supporters in England. Indeed, they had enough to buy ships and mercenaries. The two conspirators thus hired the notorious Martin Schwartz, responsible for destroying two towns in the Low Countries during 1485, and 2,000 of his colourful landsknecht soldiers. With their business settled in Burgundy, the conspirators sailed for Ireland to complete their preparations. In the meantime, King Henry had learned of the plot and mustered his forces at Coventry from where he could strike in any direction. He left for Kenilworth but ordered his northern knights to rally on York if the rebels should attack the city. Lincoln, Lovell, and their army of 8,000 marched towards York on 5 June, but it soon became apparent that no one with any real authority was going to join them en-route - much to the annoyance of Martin Schwartz who believed he had been misled. Further disappointment awaited at York where the mayor closed the gates to Lincoln, forcing the rebels to march on Boroughbridge instead. Rebel spirits were raised, however, when Henry’s commander in the area, Lord Clifford, foolishly camped too near the Yorkist army with only 400 men and was promptly sent packing in a night attack. By now though, Henry was on the move, first to Coventry, then Leicester where Richard III had spent his last night on earth - the parallel was probably not lost on the new King. On 12 June, Henry crossed over into Nottinghamshire, stoically advancing as his army mustered around him from all directions. Leading
the vanguard was Henry’s redoubtable ally, John de Vere, 13th Earl of Oxford. Jasper Tudor and the Duke of Bedford marched too, alongside the Earls of Devon and Shrewsbury and a number of England’s more powerful nobles. Others kept their cards closer to their chests, however, and played a waiting game, such was the confused state of affairs during the Wars of the Roses.

Henry pitched camp at Ruddington to await the rest of his army and to gather intelligence of rebel movements. His camp was rife with rumour and false alarms reminiscent of those that all but doomed Richard III’s army before Bosworth. Moreover, the rebels were advancing quickly at over twenty miles per day, trying to find Henry and hit him before the Royal forces could properly organize themselves. Lincoln also skilfully outmanoeuvred Henry’s northern allies under the Earl of Northumberland, sending them skittering back north to protect their own interests and away from the main event. Unfortunately, Lincoln’s rapid march met a running resistance organized by the Lancastrian Edward Woodville, Lord Scales, through Sherwood Forest, and that delayed the onset of battle just enough to allow significant reinforcements under George Stanley, 9th Baron Strange, to join Henry’s suddenly ominous army.

A STORM OF ARROWS!

On receiving news of Lincoln crossing the River Trent, Henry gathered his command and marched to meet his destiny. On the morning of 16 June, he heard Mass delivered by the Bishop of Exeter then sent out scouts to find the enemy. Two of the lone riders operated in front of Oxford’s vanguard. As they approached the small village of Stoke, near Newark, they saw the Yorkist host outstretched across Burham Hill in the fading Summer light. Quickly, the scouts turned tail to find Oxford and report their findings, and then rode on to the King and the main Royal army. Oxford wasted no time the following morning in setting his vanguard of around 6,000 men on the march to bring the Yorkist rebels to heel. Henry and the rearguard set off too, but by a different, longer route. He probably expected Oxford to wait for the army to come together before engaging, but events would soon take an unexpected turn.

When Oxford arrived in the vicinity of Lincoln’s army arrayed along the crest of the hill, he ordered his command into battle formation. The enemy had the advantage of height and numbers with around 8,000 in the Yorkist army. Of those, the mercenary landsknechts made up around 1,600, the Irish perhaps 4,500, and Englishmen constituted the other...
2,000. The rebels also occupied a wider area of ground at around 4,000 feet to Oxford’s 3,000, but it is also likely that Oxford kept his right flank free for the King’s forces when they should turn up. To ensure the safety of his potentially open flank, however, Oxford placed Sir Edward Woodville and around 2,000 mounted men-at-arms and archers. Cavalry, numbering around 1,200 under Sir John Savage, took up positions on Oxford’s more secure left flank - neither force would fight on horseback, preferring to dismount and fight on foot. Oxford held other advantages, particularly in command experience, whereas the rebels had only the mercenary captains on whom they could call for advice and leadership. As for the armies, Oxford’s was a balanced force typical of the Wars of the Roses, with archers, billmen, and men-at-arms spread along the line in approximately equal numbers. Lincoln had the landsknechts, of course, but his Irishmen - though undoubtedly brave and reckless - were lightly dressed and highly vulnerable to arrows.

If Lincoln intended to defend the ridge, he soon changed his mind when he realized the King was not in the enemy ranks. Now was the time to strike, to sweep Oxford from the field before the King could arrive, and tip the balance in favour of the Yorkists for the main engagement that would surely follow. Other accounts contest that the Royal archers so pestered the rebels that they forced Lincoln to order the advance. Whatever the case, at 9am, Lincoln gave the signal to attack. Off the Yorkists marched, steadily, with the mercenaries in front setting the pace and bringing their crossbows and handguns into action. Barely had they started moving when the Royal arrows fell amongst them like rain. The crossbows and handguns were powerful weapons but almost single-shot compared to the ten arrows every minute the Royal archers unleashed onto the advancing Yorkists. The Irish suffered fearful losses, but the whole line was hit hard, reminding one commentator of hedgehogs because of the amount of arrows protruding from Yorkist bodies. The rebels crashed into Oxford’s line and the hacking and slashing began. The Royal vanguard struggled initially to come to terms with both the Irish ferocity and the cool-headed professionalism of the mercenary pikemen - these were unconventional foes even for seasoned veterans of the Wars of the Roses. But Oxford’s men retained their discipline and held their line until the first impulse of the rebels began to give way to fatigue. The Royal men-at-arms pushed back - possibly spurred on by the arrival of the first contingents from the main army - driving into the rebel ranks in wedge formation so suddenly that many of the rebel commanders became caught up in the rampaging melee. Down they went; Schwartz, Lincoln, and Geraldine, all of them dead despite the King’s order to capture Lincoln alive. Only Lovell escaped the disintegrating mass of the rebel army. Leaderless, the rebels routed and fled, pursued relentlessly by Oxford’s horsemen, though it seems the vast majority of them never made it off the battlefield.

When the King finally arrived on the scene, he too ordered his cavalry to chase the fleeing rebels. He ordered the killing of any captured Irish or English, adding to the high casualty rate of the rebel army that may have exceeded half their starting number: the mercenaries were allowed to return to Europe. The King also spared the child Lambert Simnel and sent him to the Royal kitchens to work. Simons was sent to prison, perhaps saved by his priest status. Of Lovell, rumours abounded but little hard evidence exists as to what happened to him after the battle. Henry raised his standard on Burham Hill, then left without bothering to dismount. After all, he had won this game of thrones for a second time and he had a kingdom to run.
REFIGHTING STOKE FIELD

Given that Abingdon was the centre of southern support for the Yorkist cause after Bosworth, it seemed somehow appropriate that our local wargames club would take on the happy task of refighting the Battle of Stoke Field. The mere charging of armies up and down a hill was, however, not enough for our intrepid crew: we wanted some good old-fashioned Wars of the Roses treachery and mayhem. To that end, our Umpire, Iain, had enhanced an idea he found in an old magazine that promised to provide the ingredients for a fun afternoon of carnage and butchery. We also decided that we wanted more players involved, so we allowed the whole Royal army to take the field, though we reduced the sizes of the contingents to provide for wastage and to keep the forces even. For rules, we opted for Hail Caesar, They are remarkably useful for producing fun Wars of the Roses battles. For added tension, each side drew a card from a pack of strategy cards and chose a stratagem from a list devised by Iain: the Yorkists chose a Hidden Force card, and the Royalists chose two extra bombardments.

PLAYER BRIEFINGS

All of our players assumed the identity of a commander at Stoke Field and received a written briefing that they had to keep secret even from their allied commanders. The briefings outlined the strategic and tactical situations, a character note that included opinions on allied commanders, and a list of potential victory points — winning was very much an individual accomplishment in this game, though it would help to be on the winning side too. Some highlights:

- Thomas Geraldine, Chancellor of Ireland, leads his countrymen onto the field of battle. Figures by Foundry from the collection of John Stallard.
John de la Pole, Duke of Lincoln

What seemed like a simple plan, to pass off a scullery boy as Edward VI, has turned somewhat sour after an optimistic beginning. The Irish were up for the cause, but the English nobility that you thought would be only too happy to rise up for the House of York once more, have not rallied to the standard. Now you are trundling around England desperately seeking allies while those you brought with you are at each other’s throats and a Royal Army gathers to the south. *Lincoln gains victory points if he removes Henry's head from his body, engages in combat, or destroys enemy units.*

Francis, Viscount Lovell

You have joined with the Duke of Lincoln to lead a rebellion against the hated Henry VII and his bag of Tudors. Lincoln’s involvement should have brought more support, but he has produced precious little so far. Perhaps the mercenaries might make up the difference, but their commander looks the shifty type. This might all end very badly. *Along with victory points for amount of turns in combat and destroying enemy units, Lovell adds points for killing enemy commanders, but loses points if he leaves the field before the end of the battle.*

Thomas Geraldine, Chancellor of Ireland

With the defeat of your Yorkist benefactors at Bosworth, your position in Ireland has become somewhat precarious. It is vital, therefore, that this rebellion succeeds no matter how sketchy the claims of the young ‘Edward’. Moreover, defeat will ensure you will share the fate of the other Rebel commanders. Except, that is, for the mercenary Martin Schwarz, and that is reason enough for not trusting him. *Geraldine gains victory points for the usual fighting and smiting, but gets extra if he punishes Schwartz for even looking like he is going to change sides.*

Martin Schwartz

You have been hired by Margaret of Burgundy to assist in the Yorkist rebellion. Being a ruthless mercenary, you don’t much care if the boy is the real king or not, you just want to get paid. But you also need to be on the winning side to get paid and the omens on this campaign have not been good so far: where was all the English support that was promised? You constantly argue with the Rebels, especially that bumpkin Geraldine, all of them rank amateurs. *If Schwartz, plays his cards right, he can switch allegiance at the crucial moment on the battlefield, gain Royal approval, and more importantly victory points.*
THE ROYALISTS

John de Vere, Earl of Oxford
You are completely loyal to King Henry VII. Perhaps you thought the Yorkist threat was over, but they are back just two years after Bosworth. Now you command the vanguard of the Royal army, tasked with seeking out the Rebel army. When you find them you are supposed to wait for the King to arrive then demolish them together. However, you do not trust Lord Strange, who commands the Rearguard: he was a Stanley, the same one that switched sides at Bosworth and could do so again. De Vere achieves victory points by killing Rebel commanders and shattering enemy units, but gains extra points when he kills Strange if the latter shows an inclination to follow the white rose instead of his true King’s red.

Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford
You are a Tudor, therefore your fate is completely tied to that of your king. This rebellion could be as dangerous as that which led to Bosworth, and you remember how fickle fate was on that occasion. It does not matter that you know this boy is a fake; the ignorant Rebels think he is true and that is all that matters. To help defeat these Rebels would do your cause and reputation no harm either, so you must fight hard. Tudor gets victory points for his combat achievements as well as killing enemy commanders, especially that treacherous dog Lovell.

Talbot, Earl of Shrewsbury
If anyone knows the price of rebellion it would be a nobleman connected to Shrewsbury where Henry IV was forced to defend his crown in 1405. That set off eighty years of political turmoil and warfare, but now Henry VII is on the throne peace might come at last. That was before this latest rebellion, and it will have to be put down immediately before the cycle starts again. Of course, it would help if you could send a messenger to their mercenary commander and get him to switch sides. That will cost some victory points, but if the Royalists win the battle, Shrewsbury will get more than enough to compensate.
Along with some imaginative character sketches, Iain had prepared a card-based ‘Commission of Array’ system for allocating forces to each commander. Thus, they all began with a core force and drew cards for added units. Lovell, for example, commanded 1 x Mounted MAA; 1 x Mounted Serjeants-at-Arms; 4 x Retinue Archers; and 2 x Retinue Billmen. He then drew a card that allowed him to select another two bases of Retinue Archers. In similar fashion, Schwartz added two Arquebusiers to his Landsknechts, while Lord Scales’ bad luck left him with nothing to add to his Mounted MAA and 4 x Northern Border Horse.

**THE BATTLEFIELD**

Our Battle of Stoke Field was fought lengthways along an 8’ x 6’ table. The Yorkists lined up along a ridge about 2’ in from their table-edge. The ground sloped away sharply on their left flank towards the Royal edge while on the right flank the ground only sloped gently. The Royal army would approach along either the Upper or Lower Fosse Way that ran up to the ridge on each side of the table. Otherwise, the table was clear of terrain features, allowing the armies to get to grips without interference.

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**George Stanley, Lord Strange**

Talk about gratitude! Henry would not even be on the throne if it wasn’t for your intervention at Bosworth, or rather your non-intervention on the Yorkist side. And just because you were disloyal to the Yorkists, your fellow commanders now do not trust you. The impertinence! Maybe you did pick the wrong side two years ago: certainly Oxford does not deserve your loyalty. **Stanley gains victory points for combat and destruction like the other commanders, but if he hangs back like he did before, maybe he can be on the winning side again.**

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**Edward Woodville, Lord Scales**

Some call you the last knight errant, a member of a dying breed of noblemen. You have already survived many adventures and as a Woodville you were very much a part of the Yorkist cause. That was until Richard III came to the throne and the Woodvilles were driven out. You have been with Henry ever since, and you are not about to lose all you have gained to that upstart Lovell and the traitor Lincoln. You are also keeping a very close eye on Lord Strange. **Scales receives victory points for combat and a hefty bonus for killing Lord Strange if he turns his coat again.**
THE BATTLE OF STOKE FIELD, 2013

Medieval commanders understood the need to maintain cohesion in their armies and pick the right moment to force their mass against the enemy’s weakest point. This was a lesson seemingly lost on our latter day Royal leaders, while the Yorkist commanders for the most part just had to stand and wait for good things to happen. As a result, our game and the historic battle rapidly became estranged, but such is the fun of wargaming historical battles.

The refight began with Oxford rapidly advancing alongside Scales’ cavalry on the Upper Fosse towards the Rebel line on the ridge. For the moment, the Yorkists sneered with contempt - with a little bit of smugness thrown in for good effect - because it appeared that the Royalists had overlooked the fact that the landsknechts were not drawn up along the ridge. What the Royalists could see was Lincoln arrayed in the centre with Lovell on his right and Geraldine’s Irish kerns on his left. Undaunted, Oxford used his stratagem card to hit the Rebel centre twice, causing disorder to Lincoln’s archers and sergeants-at-arms and sending his cavalry backwards in disorder. Scales leaped forward to charge into the temporary gap, while Oxford rushed to provide assistance. Jasper Tudor arrived three moves behind Oxford on the Upper Fosse, while Shrewsbury entered along the Lower Fosse.

Facing an imminent charge, on only the second turn of the game, Lincoln’s centre refused to reorganize, and the Royalists surged forward into archery range and unleashed a hail of arrows into Lovell and Lincoln. Numerous hits were inflicted but the Yorkists passed their break tests with ease. Scales’ horse, originally full of vim and vigour, now seemed to have second thoughts and laboured up the slope to get to grips with their still vulnerable target. Lovell and Lincoln’s archers returned fire, but as yet their extra bowmen were having little effect. Still, Lincoln had found time to get his line reorganized in anticipation of Scale’s charge. Jasper Tudor moved up and into line with the now static Oxford and hit Lovell’s line for five hits but with no resulting disorder to exploit. Lovell kept his discipline to hit Oxford for one casualty, resulting in one of Oxford’s line units becoming disordered. That meant Oxford could not come forward to support Scales with the necessary force.

Scales’ charge struck home on the next turn, pushing Lincoln’s heavy cavalry backwards but in good order. However, Scales’ Northern border horse delivered very little punch and Lincoln’s billmen held their ground against them. Out on the Rebel left, Schwarz appeared from the table edge at the bottom of the slope, effectively blocking Shrewsbury’s path to the main fight. The protection afforded by the landsknechts allowed Geraldine to cross the slope in a frenzied charge and slam into Oxford’s men-at-arms. Fitzgerald’s archers moved rapidly in behind his kerns to offer fire support. Lovell too came off the slope and smashed into Tudor’s retinue billmen. Lincoln, meanwhile, crowded round the Northern border horse and turned his other units to face Scales’ heavy cavalry that had now become completely isolated. Fitzgerald brought his spare kerns round to hit the border horse. This was all going rather well for the Rebels; the Royalists could not gain any momentum and began to take serious casualties in combat and from enemy fire.

The assault of the Irish kerns on Oxford disrupted his line but had little dramatic effect. Behind them, however, and further up the slope, Scales’ Northern border horse had bitten off far more than they could chew and were destroyed. His heavy cavalry were still screened off behind the Rebel lines, so Scales was effectively out of the battle at this point. Out on the Rebel left, having finally decided whose side they were on, the landsknechts began to move menacingly towards Shrewsbury’s battle. The result would be a sharp and painful defeat for Shrewsbury, who must have wondered why he took the road less travelled. On the Rebel right, Tudor found himself in a similar situation as Lovell’s heavy cavalry broke his retinue billmen. Tudor withdrew most of his command...
to reorganize and bring his unlimbered bombard into play. His first shot landed amongst Lovell’s billmen, causing great confusion and disorder. Tudor’s archers followed up by inflicting three casualties on the unfortunate billmen.

Oxford now staged a comeback, attacking the Irish head on, forcing them backwards in disorder. Two other units of kerns broke for the rear, but they had done well to buy time and shore up their flank. Moreover, to come to grips with the Irish, Oxford subjected his command to traverse fire from Lincoln’s bowmen, still happily ensconced on the ridge. Lovell surged forward again, taking out the bombard, while his archers inflicted further punishment on Oxford’s now beleaguered command. Tudor and Oxford rallied their troops, but the battle was definitely slipping away from them and they were being pressed by three determined Rebel commanders. Matters were made significantly worse when Jasper Tudor became enmeshed in a melee with Lovell’s heavy cavalry and paid the ultimate price - packed back in his box early!

Lovell and Lincoln now assailed the Royalists with a storm of arrows, sending units careening back in disorder. Lovell drove his units into the attack once more and Fitzgerald rallied to Lovell’s aid from the other flank - unfortunately for him, though, he was wounded and could not contribute to combat results. What was left of Shrewsbury’s command could not come to the aid of Oxford, however, because Schwarz’s arquebusiers were lashing them with gunfire (note: there is no rule for arquebusiers in Hail Caesar, so we used the Handgun rule). The King finally turned up to pitch in for Shrewsbury, but His Majesty was supporting a lost cause by this time. Back on the slope, Geraldine’s Division had shot its wad and had to fall back, though that was no real hardship to the Yorkists. To make sure of victory, Lincoln swept forward down the slope, despatching Oxford’s remaining cavalry with ease then sweeping through into his infantry, shattering them and the Royalist Division. With that, the Royalist cause was finally lost.

TO THE VICTORS…

The Royal army lost our refight primarily because they launched a series of uncoordinated attacks, particularly the wildly over-optimistic Scales. The Yorkists held the ridge with ease though it helped to have the landsknechts screening the left flank from any real danger. As for victorious commander, that would be the redoubtable Lovell who attacked relentlessly and put an end to Jasper Tudor’s career. All of our players agreed that the Hail Caesar rules worked extremely well for our Wars of the Roses encounter as they do for medieval battles in general, and it would be interesting to see more support given to the rules at that end of the historical spectrum.

OUR THANKS GO TO…

Iain, Chris, Alan, Craig, Reg, Ross, Andrew, and Richard at the Abingdon Wargames Club for making this excellent game happen.

Additionally, our thanks go to Michael Perry for taking the wonderful photos that accompany this article. All the models shown are from Michael’s collection, apart from the Irish, who were on loan from the collection of Warlord Games supremo John Stallard.

READ MORE

- David Baldwin, Stoke Field: The Last Battle of the Wars of the Roses (2006) - the definitive account and probably all you will need for the battle.
- Thomas Penn, The Winter King (2011) – A fascinating biography of Henry VII that provides the background story of Henry’s trials after Bosworth with the Yorkist cause that would not quite go away.
Never Mind the Billhooks author Andy Callan presents a scenario for a set of rules you all own - as long as you picked up last month’s magazine....

Although it has been overshadowed by Bosworth, Stoke Field, fought two years later, was really the last battle of the Wars of the Roses. It took place only six miles from where I live, just up the road on the old Fosse Way, so I was only too happy to oblige when the editor had the idea of asking me to contribute to this Wargames Illustrated “Last Battles” theme issue as a follow up to the publication of my Billhooks rules in the previous issue of the magazine.

STOKE FIELD AND THE LIMITATIONS OF HISTORY

Like Bosworth, Stoke Field saw an attempt by a Pretender, at the head of an outnumbered and somewhat rag-tag army of English malcontents and foreign mercenaries, to win the throne by trial of battle. This time though, the king’s supporters stayed loyal and his big battalions won the day.

According to Sir Charles Oman, the Wars of the Roses were “unfortunate in their historians” and Stoke Field is no exception to the list of battles for which we have little contemporary evidence. Indeed, A.H. Burne reckoned “... there are fewer authentic details than about any battle of like importance fought since Hastings”. There have been various interpretations over the years but they all have to rely on such concepts as Burne’s “inherent military probability” rather than any written records.

We do know that John de Vere, Earl of Oxford, confirmed his reputation as a first class commander by more or less winning the battle with his Vanguard alone. As he had done at Barnet and Bosworth, he took on opponents of at least equal strength and drove them from the field. We also know that Henry VII, canny as he was, avoided taking the same sort of risks he had at Bosworth – where he had come within a spear’s length of falling to Richard III’s furious attack - and contrived to stay well out of the action this time, leaving the fighting to the professionals.

But because we know so little of its tactics, the main interest of the battle lies in the unusual make-up of the rebel army, which contained sizeable contingents of German and Irish mercenaries as well as the typical English bows, bills, light horse and men-at-arms.

THE ENGLISHMAN

At the head of the rebel army was John de la Pole, Earl of Lincoln. As a grandson of Richard of York he had at least as good a claim to the throne as Henry Tudor and it may well be that he backed the Pretender Lambert Simnel only as a mask for his own ambitions. The level of support he had been able to rally on the march to Stoke had been disappointing,
so the English troops in the army probably numbered no more than 3000 on the day of the battle. But there had been some minor successes at Tadcaster (against Lord Clifford) and around Sherwood Forest (against the cavalry of Lord Scales) so there was still some cause for optimism. The army must have contained a sizeable mounted element, because it marched the 180 miles from its landing on the Lancashire coast near Barrow-in-Furness in only eleven days.

THE IRISHMAN

The contingent of Irish bonnachts, some 4000 strong, was led by Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, Lord Chancellor of Ireland under Richard III. They would have fought in the typical manner of their country, as light armed skirmishing kern or mailed, axe-wielding gallowglasses. There can only have been a few of the latter because it was the “nakedness” of the Irish - that is to say their lack of armour - that was most remarked on at the time, leading to them ending up “shot through and full of arrows like hedgehogs” (according to the French chronicler, Molinet).

THE GERMAN

The German contingent of around 2000 men was paid for by the fabulously wealthy Margaret of Burgundy, widow of Charles the Bold and sister of two dead Yorkist kings – Edward IV and Richard III - and as such an implacable enemy of the Tudor usurper. They were led by the Swabian Captain Martin Schwarz, an experienced mercenary who had served under both Duke Charles and the Emperor Maximilian. Although the term was not yet in common usage, these were the sort of men who would soon become known to the world as “landsknechts” and we must assume that they fought in the way that was the mark of their trade – as a block of pikemen and halberdiers, flanked by small “sleeves” of shot (at this period a mixture of crossbowmen and handgunners) this representing the very latest thing in Continental military tactics. A corps of French mercenary pikemen had played a prominent part in Henry’s victory at Bosworth, as a reward for which he made their commander Earl of Bath, so there was every reason to expect that German troops equipped in the same way might prove equally successful on another English battlefield.

WARGAMING STOKE FIELD

Stoke Field was one of the great set-piece battles of the Wars of the Roses and if you want to do a re-fight of the full encounter there are any number of suitable rule sets out there. Way back in Wargames Illustrated 165, June 2001, James Morris described a re-fight using the Armatai rules of Arty Conliffe, which seem to have made a better show of re-creating the peculiar characteristics of WOTR battles than many more generic Ancient/Medieval rules [Ed: Prime members check it out in The Vault]. You can find my own attempt at simulating such big, scrum-like affairs in the Paper Soldiers book I did with Peter Dennis, Wargame the Wars of the Roses 1455-1487, published by Helion in 2016 and now available in digital format.

Above: The Battle of Stoke 1487, “The last stand of Schwarz and his Germans”.

Never Mind the Billhooks published in WI 297 (September 2020) is pitched at a rather different level of action – what I have described as a “Big Skirmish/Small Battle” - so in order to make a suitable scenario I have had to stretch the history even more than most modern reconstructions.

Above: Gallowglasses. Figures by Antediluvian Miniatures form their “Historical” range.
PRELUDE TO STOKE FIELD – A BILLHOOKS SCENARIO

In the words of the anonymous herald who left the only eye-witness account of the battle:

“On the morn, which was Saturday, the King early arose and heard two masses… And the King had five good and true men of the village of Ratcliff, which showed his Grace the best way for to conduct his host to Newark, which knew well the country, and showed where were villages or groves for bushments, or straight ways, that the King might conduct his host the better. … And so in good order and array, before nine of the clock, beside a village called Stoke, a large mile out of Newark, his foreward reconnoitred his enemies and rebels...”

Now let’s turn that into a wargame.

It is the morning of Saturday 16 June 1487. For reasons unrecorded by the chroniclers the rebel commander, the Earl of Lincoln, has sent a detachment a short distance down the Fosse Way to observe and delay the enemy advance. All the elements of the rebel army are keen to strike the first blow, so English, Irish and German units have been formed into a combined force of mostly light-armed troops under Francis, Viscount Lovell. Belatedly realising they might well encounter enemy cavalry, Lincoln has ordered Captain Schwarz to send two of his pike companies to join them, to provide some suitable “stiffening” in the ranks.

Meanwhile, the Royal army has broken camp at Radcliffe-on-Trent and its forward elements of light horse “scurvers”, helped by local guides, are probing north up the Fosse Way. Some time in the early morning the rebel forces come in sight around the small hamlet of Flintham, where the old Roman road breaches an east-west ridgeline. Sir John Savage, at the head of this Royal advance-guard, decides to engage the enemy while passing word to the Earl of Oxford to make haste and send up some urgently-needed reinforcements.

THE BATTLEFIELD

Assuming a standard 6 foot by 4 foot table, the Fosse way runs straight up the middle, from one short edge to the other (South to North). There is a low ridge running East to West which is not steep enough to impede movement. On the East of the ridge there is a cluster of hovels, and enclosures, giving cover against arrows but which can only be entered by skirmishers. On the west of the ridge there is an area of woodland extending to the western table edge, so the gap between the trees and the village is only about half the table’s width. There are one or two more copses in the southern half of the table but the rest of the terrain is open fields, with no enclosures or other bad going.

The rebels start the battle deployed along the ridgeline or behind it and may choose to occupy the village to the east and the wood to the west. Anything north of the ridgeline is out of sight of enemy to the south. The Royalist forces start on the southern table edge.
**ORDERS OF BATTLE**

**REBELS (YORKISTS)**

**Leaders**

(Dice for their grade: 1 = Dolt; 2,3,4,5 = Commander; 1 = Hero)

1. Thomas Lord Lovell (English), Commander-in-Chief of this army detachment
2. Captain Weiss (German) (a hard-bitten professional – re-roll if he comes up as a dolt or a hero!)
3. Constable MacSweeney (Irish)

**Troops available at the start of the battle:**

- Up to 90 points chosen from:
  - Irish Gallowglass Companies (12 men) @ 18 points
  - English Bow Companies (12 men) @ 12 points
  - English Bill Companies (12 men) @ 12 points
  - English Light Horse Squadrons (8 men) @ 12 points
  - German Skirmisher Bands (6 men) @ 6 points (Handgunners or Crossbowmen)
  - Irish Skirmisher Bands (6 men) @ 6 points (Kern, armed with javelins)
- The force must include at least two units from each nationality.

**Reinforcements** (to arrive later in the battle):

- A block of two companies of German Pikes (12 men each) @ 12 points = 24 points in total.

**ROYALISTS**

**Leaders**

(Dice for their grade: 1 = Dolt; 2,3,4,5 = Commander; 1 = Hero)

1. Sir John Savage, Commander-in-Chief of this army detachment (re-roll if he comes up as a dolt).
2. Captain Fluellen
3. Serjeant Nym

**Troops available at the start of the battle:**

- Up to 90 points chosen from:
  - English Bow Companies (12 men) @12 points
  - English Bill Companies (12 men) @12 points
  - English Light Horse Squadrons (8 men) @12 points
  - Skirmisher Bands (6 men) @ 6 points (Archers)
- The force must include at least one unit of each of these types.

**Reinforcements** (to arrive later in the battle):

- Two Squadrons of Light Horse @ 12 points or one Squadron of Knights @ 24 points = 24 points in total.
SPECIAL RULES AND POINTS TO REMEMBER

Reinforcements
The Players each roll a dice at the end of Turn 2 in the Main Battle Phase and at the end of every subsequent turn.

Their reinforcements arrive on a roll of 5 or 6. If the Royalists roll a 5 they get the Light Horse, if it’s a 6 they get the Knights. The rebels get both companies of Germans on either a 5 or 6.

Position the reinforcements on their respective baseline, where the road enters the table. The only thing they can do is to march up the road, taking two move actions each turn whenever a bonus card is drawn and their player wins the dice-off, until they come within command range (6") of a friendly Leader.

Gallowglasses
These men are formidable fighters with their two-handed axes but their mail armour gives relatively poor protection.

In Melee they count as Men-at-Arms, rolling 1 ½ dice per figure (so three dice for two figures), but they have only medium armour, so save for 4, 5, 6 in Melee or when shot at.

Light Horse
They can fight as a squadron of eight spear-armed cavalry or, if the figures are equipped as mounted archers or crossbowmen, they can dismount to form a band of six skirmishers with two horse holders. They dice for Morale as Cavalry (roll D6+1) or Skirmishers (roll D6) depending on their role. Two Squadrons of mounted Archers can dismount and combine to fight as one Company of Bows (12 men and 4 horse-holders) in which case they dice for Morale as Infantry (roll 2D6).

Arrow Supply
Don’t forget that Archer companies, but not Skirmishers, get only six Shoot actions in the battle.

Leaders
You might find you don’t have enough leaders to carry out fancy manoeuvres – this is deliberate! Losing a Leader in a melee or arrowstorm will severely limit your options.
Moving through friendly troops

Always apply the “Brexit Rule” in the case of the Rebel army:

“All troops can move through a friendly unit of their own nationality. But if foreign mercenaries move through English troops who don’t have a leader with them scuffles break out and both units take a Disarray”.

What happened next

Once the rebel screen has been driven back on the their main body (which is inevitable as soon as any further Royalist reinforcements arrive – the best they can hope to do here is to delay things a bit by winning this opening round) Oxford’s Vanguard will move up to engage and start the battle proper.

What limited accounts we have suggest it was a hard fight, but eventually the royal army prevailed and the rebels were scattered, to meet an early doom in the “Red Gutter” and the waters of the Trent or over the following days in what is euphemistically referred to as “mopping up” operations.

Any captured English or Irish were swiftly executed as rebels but the few German survivors were allowed to make their way home as best they could – an early example of what the landsknechts would come to refer to later as a “good war”.

Lincoln was slain in the battle, but the de la Poles continued to be a thorn in the side of the Tudor dynasty until John’s youngest brother, Richard, Duke of Suffolk, known as “the Last White Rose”, was killed in action at Pavia in 1525.

This news, together with that of the capture of the French king Francis I at the same battle, must have given Henry VIII one of the happiest days of his life.

Main references


English Heritage Battlefield Report: Stoke Field 1487, Historicengland.org.uk

Taken together, these give a comprehensive coverage and assessment of the available source material and the various historical interpretations of the battlefield site.
The 1480’s where a turbulent time for the House of York, and those who allied with and against them. Following the death of King Edward, his brother, Richard of Gloucester ascended to the throne as the result of some famous historical jiggery-pokery (namely the ‘disappearance’ of the rightful heir, Edward’s son Prince Edward) in 1483. The rival dynasty to Richard and the House of York where of course the Lancastrians, and the latest head of that line was Henry Tudor, who, whilst the newly anointed Richard III was making himself comfortable on his throne, was raising an army in France and seeking allies amongst the English nobility for a shot at the crown of England.

The clandestine discussions between the Stanley fraternity (which must have included Sir John) on hearing that Henry Tudor’s invasion plans were gaining momentum, must have been intense. Sir John had backed the Plantagenate kings and the House of York all his life, but his Uncle (Thomas Stanley) was the stepfather of the Lancastrian Henry Tudor, and it would appear that at some point in the early days of

As with previous years our latest figures have a connection with the historic town of Newark, Nottinghamshire; the home of WI.

I’m sure you will agree that freebie number one, Maid Marian, needs little introduction; a conspicuous member of Robin Hoods Merry ‘Men’, we can’t help thinking that Robin’s closest companion would have roamed through Newark (on the edge of Sherwood Forest) at some point during her outlawing career. Freebie number two however will doubtless be less familiar to readers….

Sir John Savage of Clifton was the eldest son of Sir John Savage of Rock Savage, member of the prominent Cheshire family who followed William the Conqueror over the Channel in 1066. Sir John was a true medieval warrior and his story is entwined with that most bloody and turbulent period of English history, The Wars of the Roses (1455 - 1487).

Although details of his history and campaigning are sketchy, it appears Sir John’s first foray on the battlefield was at the Battle of Barnet in April 1471, in which he fought for the House of York and King Edward IV, against Richard Neville, the notorious Kingmaker. Sir John’s name is again recorded in the ranks of the King’s army at the Battle of Tewksbury (1) later that same year in which King Edward saw off another threat to his throne from the House of Lancaster, when his forces clashed with those of the Duke of Somerset. The King was again victorious and in recognition of Sir John’s service he was knighted. More honours were to follow in 1482 when he was elevated to the rank of Knight Banneret by Richard Duke of Gloucester (as this is a title traditionally bestowed on the ‘field of battle’ it would appear Sir John was again ‘in action’ at this time, although where is intriguingly unclear).

Sir John’s main estates lay in the north west of England, around Cheshire, the stronghold of the mighty and influential Stanley family. Thomas, Lord Stanley, was an uncle to Sir John (through marriage) and it is clear that there was a strong affinity, even allegiance, to the family. It seems likely that this kinship led to Sir John’s eventual break of adherence with the crown and the Yorkist cause.

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The Title of Knight Banneret
A Knight banneret, was a knight (not necessarily a nobleman, but nearly always) who led a company of troops during time of war under his own banner (which was square-shaped, in contrast to the tapering standard or the pennon flown by the lower-ranking knights) and were eligible to bear supporters in English heraldry.

The military rank of a knight banneret was higher than a knight bachelor (who fought under another’s banner), but lower than an earl or duke.

Under English custom the rank of knight banneret could only be conferred by the sovereign on the field of battle. There were some technical exceptions to this: when his standard was on the field of battle he could be regarded as being present though he was not. His proxy could be regarded as a sufficient substitution for his presence.
Richard III’s reign, Sir John’s loyalty shifted from the crown to the pretender.

All we know for historical certainty (2) is that either before leaving France or when having landed in Wales to begin his rebellion “Tudor’s left wing. It is evident from the words of the medieval chronicler (and spectator at Bosworth) Polydore Virgil, that Savage added great weight to Henry’s cause; “a little before the evening of the same day (i.e. 21 August 1485) John Savage, Bryan Sanford, Symon Digby, and many others, revolting from King Richard, came to Henry with a chosen band of armed men, which augmented the forces of earl Henry and greatly replenished him with good hope” (the English has been modernised). Richard’s response to this was to brand Savage a traitor.

As with all of his new supporters, on being crowned Henry VII, the new king rewarded Sir John with new estates and wealth (he acquired rich properties in the East Midlands at the expense of the Yorkist Zouch family), and it would appear Savage became a valued retainer of the new King.

It is a popular misconception that Bosworth 1485 was the curtain call of the Wars of the Roses, in fact this honour fell to the Battle of Stoke Field (or East Stoke), June 1487. Less than two years after Richard III’s defeat, and death, the fate of England again hung in the balance.

The Yorkists had conjured up a new pretender to the throne in the form of Lambert Simnel (a complete imposter who played the part of one of the murdered sons of Edward IV) and King Henry was forced to call on his loyal retainers to help stamp out the rebellion.

And so, via Barnet, Tewksbury and Bosworth Field, we finally come to Sir John Savage and the Newark connection. The Yorkist forces of the young pretender Simnel, under the Earl of Lincoln and John da la Pole, met with Henry’s army six miles from Newark near the hamlet of East Stoke. Some who had been summoned by the king where playing the waiting game (a regular tactic of nobles during the Wars of the Roses) but Virgil tells us that Sir John was not so backward in coming forward and had joined Henry’s army as part of “a large force of Stanley retainers led by George, Lord Strange and Sir John Savage”. As at Bosworth, Sir John was again given command of the left flank of the King’s army, about 1,200 men. In fact the battle turned out to be little more than a rout, the Yorkists with their Irish allies and German and Swiss mercenaries were slaughtered and Simnel taken prisoner. King Henry and Sir John had seen off the last serious Yorkist threat to the throne of England.

Sir John evidently continued to be a loyal servant and solider of Henry, as he next appears to us on campaign with the King on the continent in 1491. Charles VIII of France had annexed Brittany by compelling Anne, Duchess of Brittany to marry him. In violent opposition to Charles’ actions King Henry laid siege to the town of Boulogne. Sir John had travelled over the Channel with Henry’s forces and was at Boulogne during the siege.

As we have seen, Sir John had survived at least four of the battles of the Wars of the Roses, some of the most bloody conflicts England had ever seen, and yet he met his death at a siege in France in what, by all accounts, was a bit of a damp squib of an encounter, and in which there was hardly any loss of life other than his own. Virgil’s account of the incident reveals the following “In this siege of Boulogne, of such short duration, scarcely any blood was shed. Nevertheless there perished there John Savage, a most hardy soldier, who, with Sir John Rysely, having left the camp and while riding foolishly under the town walls was suddenly ambushed and seized by the French; but, his temper aroused, after his capture he fought back with great intrepidity and was killed. John Rysely, however, who was on a most speedy horse, got away in safety to his own lines.”

Sir John Savage now rests in the family vault, St. Michael’s Church Macclesfield, Cheshire. His tomb is adorned by a magnificent effigy of himself in full plate armour. Be warned though if you go to visit - someone has swapped the descriptive labels of the tomb and got the Savages mixed up, we can only assume it’s an act of sarcastic vandalism by the ghost of King Richard, for all the switching the Savages did to him!

Thanks very much to the Lance and Longbow Society for their help with the research for this article, particularly Dave Lanchester and Phil Scott. Find out more about the L&LS by visiting their website at www.lanceandlongbow.com

Below: Sir John Savage gives us a twirl!
Painted by Dave Woodward of Ever Victorious Miniatures

(1) - There is some debate here as to whether this was “our” Sir John, or in fact his farther - Sir John Senior, but my research leads me to the conclusion it was in fact Sir John Junior, our hero.

(2) - Citing Gill in Richard III and the Buckingham Rebellion and Chrimes in Henry VII
‘Billhooks’ Games Designer Andy Callan tells us a bit about where it came from and why.

This all started a few years ago with some games of Sharp Practice by the TooFatLardies. My local group enjoyed the scale of the game - bigger than a skirmish, smaller than a battle - and the card-driven turn sequence. But then along came Studio Tomahawk’s Muskets and Tomahawks and we tried that too and found ourselves getting the two games hopelessly mixed up. Probably a case of more grey hairs than grey cells!

I solved our problem by coming up with a game that combined what I found to be some of the best elements of the two sets, together with some ideas of my own and we have used my “Big Skirmish: Rules for old wargamers with short attention spans” ever since. But it turned out that wasn’t the end of the story….

We soon found we had a similar problem with Saga and Lion Rampant. Some bits we liked, others we didn’t and we could never quite remember the mechanisms and subtleties of the rules from one game to the next. So the medieval period looked like being set aside. And then we discovered the Perry 28mm plastic Wars of the Roses range.

You know how it is. “I’ll just buy a box of these to see what they are like…” And then you find they are very nice indeed and you bring a few along to a club night and everybody else likes them and before you know where you are you have enough for a game. But what rules to use?
Easy ... I’ll just do a quick re-write of my ‘Big Skirmish’ rules and we’ll be off and running. Only we didn’t get out of the blocks, it somehow didn’t have the right ‘period flavour’. So, in the end I had to go back to first principles and do a more or less complete re-write until, after more than a hundred hours of editing and endless play tests we now have a new game that we are happy with and one which the guys at Wargames Illustrated liked so much they decided they would give away for free with the magazine.

Never Mind the Billhooks is set at the Big Skirmish/Small Battle level, the sort of thing that probably went on a lot of the time, particularly up around the Scottish borders, without ever troubling the chroniclers. My original inspiration was Nibley Green, Gloucestershire, fought in 1470 between the private armies of Lords Lisle and Berkeley, with no more than 1,000 men a side (See Feuds, Raids and Anarchy for more on Nibley Green).

Billhooks is a card-activated game with points-based random army generation and using only good old D6s. You roll dice to hit and dice to save (depending on armour) so it’s very familiar Old School in that respect. Longbows are deadly but not dominant since their arrow supply is limited, so to win a battle you have to get stuck in to melee. Cavalry and skirmishers have their uses but it’s the heavy infantry - Men-at-Arms, Bills and Pikes - who will win the battle for you.

All the key rules are on a short cribsheet (with no confusing tables of plusses and minuses) and you should find yourself playing along without too much reference to the main rules after only a few turns. A typical two-player game with about 100 figures a side will play out in one to one and a half hours but it will easily expand to a bigger, multi-player set-up once everyone is familiar with the common and easily-memorized mechanisms.

If you want to re-fight Towton please look elsewhere. This game is not a simulation of a typical Wars of the Roses set-piece battle. Truth be told, nobody really knows the tactical detail of what went on in those battles anyway because “The Wars of the Roses were ... unfortunate in their historians”. (Oman). You can find my own attempt at simulating such scrum-like affairs in the Paper Soldiers book I did with Peter Dennis Wargame the Wars of the Roses: 1455-1487 (Helion & Company).

By contrast, Never Mind the Billhooks is very much a lightweight, ‘Beer and Pretzels’ sort of game. The turn of a card or a roll of dice can be significant, and occasionally decisive, but don’t take a defeat to heart. With this game there is always going to be time for a quick re-match.

I LIKED IT SO MUCH I BOUGHT THE COMPANY

By Dan Faulconbridge

The above statement is a massive exaggeration, but now I’ve got your attention I did just want to add to Andy’s points by saying that after myself and Asun from Wi played Never Mind the Billhooks we liked it so much I asked Andy if we could work on the rules, make them look pretty and give them away free as a supplement with Wargames Illustrated magazine. Being the all-round good egg that he is Andy never had any desire to profit from their publication and was all too happy for other Wars of the Roses buffs and converts to get their hands of the rules.

Several months of editing, proofreading, playtesting, photography, Coronavirus and designing later and - voila! - bagged with this magazine are the collective efforts of the small but enthusiastic team involved (particular thanks to Steve W, Pete B, Matt B and Asun). We hope you enjoy them as much as we did/do and that your billhooks never grow rusty.
SPOTLIGHT!

A NEW ‘ERA’ IN PLASTICS

PERRY MINIATURES WARS OF THE ROSES BOX SET

By Michael Perry

This month sees Perry Miniatures enter a new era with their latest plastic box set release. Having already produced American Civil War and Napoleonic in 28mm hard plastic, the twins have turned their attention to ‘The Wars of the Roses’, a conflict which drove a wedge between the noble houses of England and culminated in the death in battle of one king and the ascension to the throne of a new dynasty.

Michael Perry gives us a detailed guide to what’s in the box, and why...

As they were a series of civil wars, The Wars of the Roses make an ideal subject for a plastic box set, with both sides looking identical apart from the colour of their livery coats and badges. Luckily most of Europe were clothed and armoured in a similar fashion, with polearms and bows being used in many armies. The second plastic box set, which will be released in 2010, will utilize the same bodies (apart from the command) but include more European weapons: pike, crossbow and handgun, plus separate pavises etc. With this second box of infantry the bulk of most European armies will therefore be viable.

The figures are made with separate arms to allow gamers to build both bowmen and billmen in either standing or advancing poses. They also enable the ratio of bow to bill to vary as the original retinues did in the 1450-1500 period, archers outnumbering their polearmed compatriots by at least 3-1 and at times as much as 8-1. On the sprue there are a number of outstretched arms for the archers, designed to be reaching for the bunch of arrows stuck in the ground, but these could equally work for advancing bowmen. There are also shooting arms, arms nocking arrows and those holding the bow in readiness. The billmen’s arms come with a mixture of mainly bill, but also halberd and spear, the latter being a fairly common weapon in contemporary English images amongst foot soldiers.
Heads are also separate, the neck and collar being a ball and socket joint. There is a large variety of sallets, kettle hats, armets and soft hats. The heads with open faced sallets, simple skull caps and soft caps would be best to be used for the archers, with visored sallets for the better armoured. Any of the helmeted heads, apart from armets, can be attached to the billmen. At the time of writing, I haven’t actually seen a completed production sprue of the command frame, but there are two armets, one with a separate visor which might be a little fiddly to fit but can obviously be glued open or closed and bunged on one of the full harnessed bodies. These command bodies come with a choice of arms i.e. poleaxes, a sword and gesturing arm or sword and standard pole.

Many of the figures wear jacks (multi-layered linen and stuffed body armour), a very common form of defence, some under livery coats with just the bottom edge showing. Others have breast plates, mail or combinations of the above. There are also those wearing brigandines, which are coats made up of small metal plates with a canvas lining and a more expensive top fabric all pierced through with rivets. I have represented these rivets as single rivets whereas in reality there were generally in groups of three, but on a model of this size it would be difficult to tell and even worse to paint! The fully harnessed bodies I’ve made in English/Flemish armour, very similar to Italian in style, with only minor differences.

This page: Sculpted with the right amount of detail, these billmen and men-at-arms really look great. These actual size 90mm ‘3-ups’ were painted by Jim Bowen.
THE BODY IN THE WOOD

As Michael put the finishing touches to the new figures something was stirring beneath the ground in rural Leicestershire...

Following much recent activity involving soil samples, peat deposits and metal detectors, battlefield experts and archeologists have come to the decision that The Battle of Bosworth, the pivotal clash in the Wars of the Roses which saw the death of Richard III, did not take place at the accepted location, but was actually fought two miles to the south west!

This was not news to Alan and Michael Perry however, as the real location of the battle had been revealed to them under mysterious circumstances several years before. Michael takes up the story...

"In 1985 as members of the White Company (a late 15th century re-enactment group) my brother Alan and myself marched from Nottingham to the old Bosworth battle site. For this quincentenary event our group represented Richard’s Yorkist forces with members of the British Army following Henry Tudor’s route, marching (although apparently transported, as we heard afterwards) from Wales to the site.

We arrived at the campsite in the early evening knackered and wet only to find the area assigned to us was a boggy depression at the bottom of the slope.

The rest of the campsite was jammed with other medieval re-enactment groups gathering for the event, so a bunch of us jumped into the company’s baggage van and went looking for a better pitch. Eventually we came across a village with a decent sized green so we piled out of the van all still dressed in the period clothing from the march. A local approached us with great excitement exclaiming, “Ah! At last you’ve come to the right place!” referring to the battle site two miles away. We didn’t quite realize at the time what he meant. Anyway, he was one of the village ‘elders’, well at least he had some influence there and was more than happy for us to camp on the green.

The battles of the period make for an exciting range of encounters from relatively small battles like First St. Albans (1455), Ferrybridge (1461), Hedgeley Moor (1464) and Nibley Green (1470) to Towton in 1461, the largest (about 100,000 combatants) and bloodiest battle fought on British soil. Although there were not many sieges there were a number of bloody fracas in towns, First and Second (1461) St Albans for example, and defended positions like Blore Heath (1459) and Northampton (1460). Weather played its part as well: fog at Barnet (1471), snow blizzards at Towton and heavy rain before Northampton. Subterfuge and ambush were used on occasion, as at Hedgeley Moor and Wakefield, and treachery at Northampton and Bosworth to name but two. Foreign mercenaries were employed at times: Burgundian handgunners at Second St Albans, French on the Lancastrian side at Tewkesbury in 1471, and again with Henry Tudor at Bosworth in 1485, plus Swiss and German pike and handgunners with the Irish kern at Stoke Field in 1487.

THANKS!

The archers in Edward IV’s livery of blue and murrey were painted by Jim Bowen and are resin ‘3 up’s’(90mm, the size we make the originals for plastics). The others figures are painted by Dave Andrews and are the actual 28mm plastic figures - first shots of the infantry sprue. Bunches of arrows and swords in scabbards are on the command frame.
Although after he had broken into the village hall he persuaded us that this would be a better place to sleep. It also had a kitchen, so we planned a feast and invited anybody in the village who was interested. This turned out to be a fascinating evening as most of the guests had stories about the battle happening close to this village.

Apparently a local newspaper was produced at the end of the 18th century and many issues of it included letters from angry farmers of the village complaining of plough shears being damaged from metal fragments in the soil. Another guest mentioned that while digging in the churchyard a mass burial pit was found 15 foot deep with remains. If this was true it would make sense for the battle to be fairly close as it’d be unlikely after the battle to have the bodies transported very far to consecrated ground as there are closer churches to the old battle site. The village ‘elder’ talked about his father who in 1938 unearthed a corpse in a copse on his land. The ‘body’ was found only 6” under the top soil, it was flat and was comprised of a mixture of bone and fused corroded metal. His father called in Leicester County Council to investigate, which they did and took it away. After the war he made enquiries about it, but the council denied all knowledge. One of the theories as to why the battle has been recorded in the wrong place is that the cross on a 19th century map was moved an inch or so as not to clash with the large letters spelling out the word ‘Leicester’ on the map and that subsequent maps were based on that. I haven’t mentioned which village this was as the authorities up to now haven’t released the new location fearing to attract metal detectorists. Hopefully, it’ll be the same place.”

The study has also thrown new light on the use of medieval artillery - They have found 22 lead shots fired by everything from the smallest hand-held gun of the time to the largest cannon of the time. “For me the most important thing about the discoveries at Bosworth is that it opens the door for archaeology to explore the origins of firepower” Dr Glen Foard Battlefields Trust
ATTACK OF THE TRAPEZOIDS

PAINTING BURGUNDIAN MERCENARIES
By David Imrie (AKA Saxon Dog, saxondog.blogspot.com)

We asked respected professional figure painter, David Imrie, to guide us through the process of painting up his Wars of the Roses period Burgundian army. He also took the opportunity to introduce us to a trapezoidal basing style.

Like many gamers in recent years I have swapped a metal mountain for an even larger plastic one. Although I welcome the opportunity to collect an army at less cost, I still have the problem that plastic figures take the same time to paint as metal ones.

So, when I was asked to do this article I decided it was a perfect excuse to make a start on that plastic mountain.

I’m a big fan of the collections of Dave Andrews and Simon Chick, in particular their stunning Burgundian and Swiss armies. A while back I purchased two boxes of the Perry Miniatures European Mercenaries 1450-1500, with the view to doing some Burgundians. Alas they sat lonely and neglected on the painting desk since the day they were delivered…ring any bells? Now was their big chance!

As the theme of this issue is ‘Wars of the Roses’ I decided to have a go at doing some mercenaries for my Yorkist collection.

BURGUNDIAN MERCENARIES IN THE WARS OF THE ROSES
Burgundy supplied mercenaries to support the Yorkist invasion in 1470-71. When Edward returned from exile, just prior to the Battle of Barnet, he sailed from Flushing with 1,500 retainers and Burgundian-supplied mercenaries (these may have been Flemish or German). There doesn’t appear to be any definite information on what troop types these mercenaries fielded, however, there are some accounts that mention handgunners (“goners and borgeners” as referred to in Gregory’s Chronicle, which is a source for the Battle of Barnet) also thought to be with Warwick’s army at the second battle of St Albans in 1461.

As Burgundian armies at the time usually had equal parts handgun, crossbow, and pike, I’m happy to assume that the Yorkist mercenaries had a similar mix. I have painted up some of my troops in Burgundian livery vest and carrying a Burgundian flag, though how likely it is they would have worn it on the field while under Edward’s command is just not known and arguably not accurate, however, this approach suits me as I plan to collect a proper ‘Burgundian Ordinance’ army in the future.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER
The first problem was… I only had ten days to paint and base up a small force. I knew if I was to make the deadline, I would have to find a quick way to paint the figures. I would need to paint them faster but still keep them to a high standard that I would be happy with in my collection.

I really like plastic figures, but I don’t enjoy putting them together. Fortunately Jack Glanville, wargames buddy and keen plastic kit basher, offered to build up some of the figures for me a few months back and he had managed to glue together 30 figures ready for their shiny coat of paint.

The next problem came when I undercoated the figures, my normal black undercoat didn’t work. I just couldn’t see the amazing detail that these plastic figures had. My old eyes were struggling to see the definition on the solid black undercoated figure. I then came up with
the idea to wash them in a thinned down Humbrol Matt Black enamel paint. This would hopefully bring out the detail and prime the figures at the same time.

Success! I was able to see the fine detail and also paint from my preferred black undercoat. First up would be a small unit of Burgundian/Mercenary pike. I set them all out on my desk and came up with a plan. I would block them all in with their first coat of paint and then use Games Workshop (GW) Agrax Earthshade wash (a replacement for their excellent Devlan Mud) to cover the whole figure. The idea was to use this wash like the ‘dip’ method and then do highlights on the figures afterwards, if it was needed.

1) A figure with the Humbrol Black wash. As you can see the recess areas are flooded with black, but I can see the raised areas and detail better.

2) The figures blocked in with their first coat of paint. I used Vallejo Oily Steel for the armour, the padded jerk is Foundry Buff A, and the trousers are a mix of any dark blue, red, brown or green I could find. The livery coat is Foundry French Blue C for the blue, and the white half is Vallejo Pale Sand. The shoes, belts and strapping were all given a coat of Foundry Bay Brown C.

3) Next you can see the figures with the GW Agrax Earthshade washed over them. Use the brush to lift off any excess wash that may gather in the recesses.

4) The figures with their highlights, ready to be based. I highlighted the armour with Vallejo Oily Steel and a tiny amount of GW Chainmail mixed in. The padded jerk was highlighted with Foundry Buff A, plus a tiny amount of Buff B. The trousers and other cloth areas were just given a highlight of their initial colours. The livery vest was then highlighted with the Foundry French Blue C and the white area was just highlighted with white. Don’t re-paint the whole area again. The idea is to find the very top highlight, sometimes two highlights are needed depending on the colour and the size of the area. If it looks good without a second highlight, then don’t bother.

The skintones were then layer-painted from dark to light. They are Vallejo Model Colour Tan, then Dwarf Skin and a top highlight of Elf Skin. I painted these after the wash had dried, as the face and hands are the focal points of a figure and I wanted these to look good!
BASING

The bases are 3mm MDF from Warbases. The rectangle is 60mm by 45mm for the units, with a command trapezoid that has a rear baseline measuring 60mm across.

As these will be mostly for use in friendly games using the *Hail Caesar* rules the base size is just personal taste and not for any game/rules reasons.

I started with black tile grout and carefully spread it around the figures’ feet.

After the grout was dry I then glued on some patches of sand and small rocks.

The groundwork was given a coat of GW Steel Legion Drab (replacement for Graveyard Earth).

Next I dry brushed on a coat of Vallejo Desert Yellow. Then I added some Vallejo Dark Sand into the dry brush mix and finally some Pale Sand. I then used PVA glue and added some static grass and tufts. You can add some discarded battle debris to make the ground work more interesting.

During a chat with Dave Andrews at the Partizan show in May, Dave mentioned that he had liked the idea of the half hex (trapezoid) command base that Barry Hilton and I had used on our Napoleonic collections. For me it was just an easy way to make sure the flags are centre of the units in whatever formation they adopted (YES, I HAVE WARGAMES OCD!) I had messed around with irregular shapes and semi circle variants.

Then Barry came up with the trapezoid idea, so blame him! Dave is keen to use it to attach his character/command figures to units but aims to use semi-circles as he isn’t a fan of the trapezoid - horses for courses and all that...

These small command stands usually have no effect in combat; however, I sometimes add the figures to the overall strength of the unit if a commander is permanently fixed to the unit.

Barry has written a piece which appears in this very issue on the wider application of the command base idea into other periods. It is designed to save time and money which is also good news as you can use the money you saved to buy more figures!

I’ll need more troops for games, but it’s a start to conquering my plastic mountain. I hope you found this article of use… at least I got some figures painted.

PAY ATTENTION IN CLASS!
HERE IS THE MATHS BIT...

A trapezoid is a four-sided figure in which one pair of opposite sides are parallel.
David's Napoleonic Prussians also use the same approach to command bases.
Steve Wood provides an easy ‘wargames standard’ painting guide aimed at getting your forces battle ready for Never Mind the Billhooks in super-quick time.

The following article should help you paint your retinue for Never Mind the Billhooks and hopefully give you some ideas regarding colour schemes. But first, a couple of caveats!

I am by no means a professional painter. All of my models are painted with wargaming in mind and are used to fight battles with my wargaming buddies. I tend to use whatever technique will get my figures onto the table in as fast a time as I can manage!

The second caveat is regarding colour schemes and uniforms. The information for this period is sketchy at best. We don’t really know how the armies lined up or how they fought in any great detail. The same is true of the ‘uniforms’ that the troops wore. We do have details of the likely coats of arms, the flags and banners and therefore, to some extent, the household livery colours and badges that were in use; but there are few contemporary records. I’ve put a couple of references that I used at the end of the article. The whole point of our gaming group in moving to the Wars of the Roses period for wargaming was to give us some respite from the ‘button counting’ that goes with some other eras, notably Napoleonic. (Which incidentally, is my favourite period!)

With this in mind, my retinue is entirely fictional. The leader is Sir Harry Hotspur, ably assisted by Sir Eric Diehard and Sergeant Daniel Rose (who usually takes the left wing). The majority of my army has a white and blue livery, although in this article, I am using a couple of other colour combinations. Within reason, you can choose whatever colours you see fit but again, I’ve included some actual colour combinations used by the historical houses of the time at the end of the article.

I’ve given examples of painting billmen and bowmen who were the mainstay of the armies of the time. The techniques can easily be used for other troops.

All figures are Perry Plastics.

All paints used were Vallejo, unless otherwise stated.
PAINTING THE ARMOURED BILLMAN

1
The model was prepared and assembled in the usual way - scraping off any mould lines that can be seen, then assembled using polystyrene glue. Using polystyrene glue rather than cyanoacrylate (super glue) is my preferred option as not only do you get a better joint but the glue will provide some filling.

I then spray primed the model using Army Painter Plate Mail.

Once it was dry I gave the model a heavy wash using Army Painter Dark tone (black) ink.

2
Using a dry brush technique, I quickly dry brushed the model first in Army Painter Plate Mail and then with Silver (70997).

I also picked out the chin and lower face with Flat Flesh (70955).

3
I then block painted the detail:
1 - New Wood (311) was used for the bill staff.
2 - Prussian Blue (70965) for the leggings.
3 - Leather (70871) for the shoes, belt and dagger.
4 - Brass (70801) for the tip of the dagger’s sheath.

The figure could have been based at this point and would have look fine for the table, but I wanted to put in a bit more effort.

4
I have touched up some areas to finish off.

A wash of soft tone ink on the flesh and bill staff and boots has added a bit more shading.

I also touched up the silver - dry brushing where I thought it a bit rough!

This technique of getting armoured figures painted quickly works just as well on the heavily armoured foot knight units of the time.
APQS

Army Painter quickshade is a superb product in that it does exactly what it says on the tin and always gives first class results. In addition, the quickshade provides a good protective coat to your model. I do, however, share the reservations of many in the hobby who think that the product is expensive. This is not helped by the fact that the product goes off as the tin is emptied and no amount of thinning helps. I have yet to get to using anywhere near over half a tin before I have to replace it. Once you are halfway down the tin, the air in the tin reacts with the quickshade to produce a skin which leads to the product spoiling. If Army Painter could produce a tin half the size, I am sure that they would convince more wargamers to use what is otherwise a first-class product!

PAINTING THE BOWMAN

1

The archer was primed in leather brown, before painting the flesh and helmet.

1 - The bow was painted with Old Wood (310).
2 - The tips were painted with German Camouflage Black Brown (70822).

2

Next I block painted the main colours. I used a Black (70950) and Red (70957) scheme for the livery. The moulding on the figure makes this straightforward to do, you don’t have to be an expert at painting straight lines!

1 - I used Stone Grey (70884) for the sleeves.
2 - Leather Brown (70871) for the boots.
3 - Buff (70976) for the bottom of the gambeson.
EXAMPLES OF LIVERY COLOURS

Blue & White: Richard, Duke of York
Black & Red: John Neville, 2nd Earl of Westmorland.
Green & White: Edward Neville, Lord Abergavenny.
Yellow & Green: John Bouchier, Lord Benners.
Blue & Red: William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke.
Black and White: Humphrey Talbot

You can reverse these colours for different houses and pretty much any combination will do. It simply depends on your taste and how closely you would like to stick to the history that we are aware of.

I picked out some of the detail using:

1 - Camouflage Black Brown (70822) for the belt and wrist guard.
2 - Orange Brown (70981) for the pouch.
3 - Black (70950) for the dagger sheath.
4 - Plate Mail for the buckles.

The model was then painted with Army Painter Dark Tone (Black) Quickshade and left to dry for 24 hours before spraying with matt varnish.

Just to add a bit of detail and depth, I dry-brushed the helmet with Silver (70997).

Highlighted the face with Flat Flesh (70955) - particularly the nose!

I also carefully re-painted the red side of the tunic to give it a richer colour and retouched the sleeves and gambeson with the original colours.

I also added some arrows to the base. These are from the Perrys' kit and the arrow shafts are painted with Iraqi Sand (70819), the feathers painted with Off White (70820) and then a heavy ink wash of strong tone applied.

Once dry, I retouched the arrow flights with white and recoated the shafts with Iraqi Sand (70819).
PAINTING THE BILLMAN IN GAMBESON/QUILTED JACKET

1

This time after assembling the figure, I primed the figure with Army Painter Leather.
1 - I then painted the helmet and bill hook with Plate Mail.
2 - The face and hands were done with Flat Flesh (70855).

2

1 - I block painted the gambeson with Buff (70976).
2 - The laces with Off White (70820).
3 - The tunic sleeves are German Camouflage Beige (70821).
4 - The leggings, Burnt Red (70814).
5 - Boots and belt, Leather Brown (70871).
6 - The bill staff is painted with New Wood (310).

3

The figure was then painted with Army Painter Strong Tone (dark brown) quick shade.
Note that I paint the figure - not dip it - that way I can control the amount of shading. It also saves wasting the quick shade and is less messy!
I then left the figure to dry for 24 hours before varnishing with Army Painter Matt Varnish.
Once again, apart from basing, your figure could be used at this point.

4

I dry-brushed the helmet and billhook with Silver (70997) to make them stand out.
I also carefully highlighted the quilting on the gambeson with Buff (70976).
The face received another light ink wash before highlighting the nose and cheeks with Flat Flesh (70855).
All the bases were carefully covered with Vallejo Dark Earth Textured paste (26218) to blend the figure bases to the Renedra plastic 20mm square bases.

All the figures in my retinue are separately based in this way to allow casualty removal from the movement trays. To add a bit of detail, the billmen had some Woodland Scenics Fine Talus sprinkled on as the paste dried.

Once everything was dry, I carefully paint the base with my favourite brown. It’s actually an emulsion paint from B&Q (UK DIY store) called Delhi Bazaar. I also have emulsion pots in Chocolate Brown and one very similar to Iraqi Sand. B&Q do a great colour matching service - if you take in a paint sample on a piece of paper, they will colour match it and produce a big pot of paint for about three quid! This is ideal for scenery and basing and means that you can save your nice paints for the figures.

The base was then highlighted by dry-brushing with the original brown mixed with Iraqi Sand.

I finished off the base with some Woodland Scenics - scatter and then add some Gamers Grass tufts or flowers - or both.

### REFERENCES

From Freezy Water Publications:
- *Standards, Badges and Livery Colours of The War of the Roses* by Pat McGill and Jonathan Jones.
- *Armies, Battles and Commanders of the War of The Roses* Volumes 1 and 2 by Martin Stephenson, Dave Lanchester and Pat McGill.

From Osprey:
- *Towton 1461* by Christopher Gravett.

From Helion:
- *Wargame the War of The Roses* by Peter Dennis and Andy Callan.

I also used the *Perry’s Art work* by Peter Dennis as well as images from my Pinterest board.
LORD CALLAN

In tribute to the author of *Never Mind the Billhooks*, for our latest Giants in Miniature figure release we present Lord Callan; fearless (and totally made up) fighting commander of the Wars of the Roses – the perfect frontman for your Billhooks army.

The Giants in Miniature figure range is produced by *Wargames Illustrated* and is available from our website or via North Star Military Figures. Lord Callan is our 54th figure in the range, which features such ‘Giants’ from history as Wellington, Caesar, Queen Victoria and … Van Helsing. If you want one don’t delay – each figure is a limited edition and several (including Flashman and Harald Hardrada) have already sold out and will never be cast again.

Start out by cleaning, removing any mould lines, and priming your miniature. Prepping your miniature is a very important step as it will help make the painting process much smoother and more enjoyable.

I’ve used Vallejo paints for this miniature but you can use any brand of paint. Just make sure that you are thinning the paints properly before you apply them and that you use an appropriately sized brush. I generally work with a size 1 brush for most things, however there are elements such as the fleur de lys that will require a small brush such as a size 00.

Ben Macintyre of Brush Demon shows us how to paint Lord Callan, or any other WotR man-at-arms for that matter.
1. To start with we block out each area in the darkest version of the appropriate colour. These form the basis of the subsequent layers, and will act as a shadow.

   1. Vallejo Gunmetal Grey (Armour)
   2. Vallejo Black Red (Surcoat Red)
   3. Vallejo Blue (Surcoat Blue)
   4. Games Workshop Bugman’s Glow (Flesh)
   5. Vallejo Burnt Umber (Leather)
   6. Vallejo Burnt Umber (Wood)
   7. Vallejo Tinny Tin (Gold details)

2. Now we have the base colours all blocked in, we can go back and start to add highlights to pick out the details and to increase the 3D effect of the miniature. Leave a small amount of the previous layer showing in the deepest recesses to add to the effect.

   1. Vallejo Oily Steel (Armour)
   2. Vallejo Red (Surcoat Red)
   3. Vallejo Blue mixed with Royal Blue (50/50) (Surcoat Blue)
   4. Games Workshop Cadian Flesh (Flesh)
   5. Vallejo Beasty Brown (Leather)
   6. Vallejo Burnt Umber mixed with Khaki (50/50) (Wood)
   7. Vallejo Brassy Brass (Gold details)
Next up is to start adding more depth and contrast to the different areas of the miniature with a further layer of highlighting. We want to pick out the areas and edges that catch the most light. Focus on applying these colours to the upper edges of cloth folds, the ends and edges of straps, and the sharpest edges of his helmet and armour.

1. Vallejo Silver (Armour)
2. Vallejo Vermillion (Surcoat Red)
3. Vallejo Royal Blue (Surcoat Blue)
4. Vallejo Basic Skintone (Flesh)
5. Vallejo Beasty Brown (Leather)
6. Vallejo Khaki (Wood)
7. Vallejo Gold (Gold details)

At this point we want to do one last highlight to really push the contrast. The brighter the colours the smaller the area they should cover, so it’s best to apply them with a smaller size 0 or 00 brush.

1. Vallejo Chrome (Armour)
2. Vallejo German Orange (Surcoat Red)
3. Vallejo Magic Blue (Surcoat Blue)
4. Vallejo Light Flesh (Flesh)
5. Vallejo Khaki (Leather)
6. Vallejo Khaki mixed with Vallejo Ivory (50/50) (Wood)
7. Vallejo Silver (Gold details)
At this stage I like to go back and increase the definition between each different area, and darken the deepest recesses. For this I use a small size 00 brush and either black, or the appropriate colour from stage one, and carefully paint it directly into the recesses and joints between areas.

This is also the best stage to paint in extra details such as eyes, teeth and the livery badge on his chest.

After that all that remains is to give the miniature a coat of varnish to protect it, and base it to match your chosen game system and battlefield.
WARS OF THE ROSES
RULES

by Peter Dennis
or: You’ve seen the re-enactment, now play the Wargame.

Purely by chance, the weekend we hired a video camera was the weekend of the Battle of Stoke Field re-enactment. So I bowed along, not knowing what on earth to expect, arriving in time to witness the clanking arrival of a body of men-at-arms in glittering ‘white’ armour at one end of the roped-off field.

Well, to cut a long story very short, and despite the somewhat anachronistic gear of some of the participants, I was given quite a lot to think about by that afternoon’s proceedings, and, as usual, I began to see it in wargaming terms.

In the first place, the lunkheads were firing arrows at each other. Overflew, and rubber-tipped as they were, they made a pretty intimidating sight as they zipped into a body of Vikings, serving that afternoon as Irish kerns. They flanked, cut thickly into them, instinctively and raised their shields, adapting that heads-down posture which the French knights at Agincourt were supposed to have used, plodding forward as if into the teeth of a gale. They were not happy, they did not like it. Had they rehearsed this? Surely not!

The instinctive bunching caused by this fire would have been enough to put them at a disadvantage if attacked, quite apart from the thinning of the ranks real arrow fire would have caused. The impact of the ‘Kerns’, when they arrived at the men-at-arms was slight. Again and again during the afternoon, it struck me that the only chance of a speedy decision was for one side to physically knock the other over at first impact; to crash into them with such force, as a formed body, that the men-at-arms of the enemy were carried off their feet, and their formation broken.

This nearly happened when a body of German pikemen zoned into the line, carrying it a good ten yards back. The pattern that afternoon though, was that the fights became straggling hand-to-hand engagements, spirited at first, but as the men became tired, punctuated by periods of standing off and snarling, while the participants regained their breath. The fights, and even the advances, were noisy. Orders would not be heard over the din. Trained troops who could respond to trumpet calls, or changes in drum rhythm might have been able to respond to fresh orders, but the more they became disorientated by the noise and the glaring weapons, the more the formations became lost in a melee, then the less likely they were to be receptive to orders.

I decided to try the ‘continuous morale’ system that I first came across at a Wargames Developments conference at the hands of John Armays, and which has since been used several times already in this organ – the idea of the disorganisation markers following the units around the table, the little pile growing and shrinking with the unit’s fortunes.

Weapon type didn’t seem to make much difference that afternoon. Admittedly there were no cavalry, and that might have altered things, but the only major divide seemed to be between the pikes and the rest. The pikes were clearly in trouble once their impact was spent, while the pikemen were numbered in ‘stands’ rather than individual figures, and I wanted to avoid all that boring headcounting, so I decided on a standard unit size of six four-man stands, basing what few size-based modifiers there were to be on relative unit sizes.

The thorny question of ammunition supply we tackled by giving each unit a little set of arrow markers, each one representing two minutes worth of steady fire, with the option of firing two in any one move. This proved popular and, since a reserve supply can literally be carried in carts, no record keeping or feats of memory proved necessary.

So here goes. As ever, the factors are purely subjective, and in many places players can alter things to suit themselves. We set out to get a fast game for fairly large forces, 10-15 units a side say, with a fair amount of frustrating randomness built into the command and control section, and an absolute minimum of lotsomme chart-cranking.

SCALES for 15mm figures
1 move is about 2 minutes
2mm = 1 yard
1 infantry stand of four figures represents 80 men, and can be mounted four-in-a-line, or 'foursquare' in two ranks. Stand size isn’t important, we use 10mm front per figure.
Cavalry stands (40mm front) represent about 50 men – 3 stands dismount to form 2 infantry stands.
Guns represent 2 pieces and count as a two stand target.

CLASSES OF TROOPS
A Fully armoured men-at-arms on foot or riding armoured horses.
B Well armoured men-at-arms and cavalry on unarmoured horses.
C Lightly armoured soldiers and archers.
D Irregular types, peasants etc… you know.

SETTING UP THE GAME

Unless you’re set on playing an ambush game, one side can be said to offer battle, usually the ‘defender’, and the other side accepts that offer. Thus we allow the defender, or blocking force to set up, knowing where the enemy is camped, or at least where he will be coming from. The ‘attacker’ then sets up, outside bow range, but as far back as he likes, and the ‘defender’ has the option of changing a third of his deployment when he sees the enemy layout. At that point orders are written by the commander of the attacker to his subordinate generals or ‘brigade commanders’. Individual units do not need orders.

According to Philippe Contamine, medieval commanders were convinced that the attacker would lose, so both sides would stand glaring at each other for most of the day, hoping the other side would attack. At any event, for our purposes, once the orders are written (The defender may of course also write orders if he wishes) the game proper begins. Players familiar with Critical Event Theory (Carry on till something happens) will use multiple moves to get the ball rolling.

SEQUENCE OF PLAY
Moves are simultaneous.
1 Initiation throws
2 Move
3 Shoot
4 Contact phase COB
5 Melee phase COB
6 Rally Ds, attempts to cease pursuit, tidying up.

COMMAND AND CONTROL
If they are loyal, sub-commanders will be controlled in their actions by the written orders they have. They are the plan. Whether they do so or not however, no commander may react to events which his figure could not see, or about which he has not been informed by messenger.

That said, all units have to throw an initiation dice before they are allowed to INITIATE a movement or manoeuvre. Thus each unit must throw when it wishes to:

Begin an advance (or retreat, for that matter).
Change direction whilst advancing or retreating.
Halt. (All units except charging cavalry will halt automatically if they come to a halted friendly unit in their path)
Change target for missile troops.
Cease Shooting
Change formation (must be at the halt)
A D6 is rolled, Troops with a high percentage of knights, mounted or on foot need 4,5 or 6. Trained men-at-arms and professional soldiers of all types need 3,4,5 or 6. The local yokels and D class wallahs need 5 or 6.
Commander-in-chief with unit +2
Self-defence emergency action +2
Sub-General with unit +1
Missile-armed troops ordered to halt +1
EACH D –1
Mounted unit advancing on enemy –2

MOVING
Real what-the-hell merchants, and folks who can’t remember numbers will randomise this by rolling 2D6 for foot and 4D6 for cavalry. For the rest...
Formed infantry 10cm(4’)
Routing infantry and pursuers on foot 20cm (8’)
Formed Cavalry Walk/Trot 20cm (8’)
Routing, Pursuing and Charging (one move only) Cavalry 30cm (12”)
NB All troops gain 1D marker during wheels and formation changes, for the duration of the wheel or change (Formation changes take 1 move for trained troops, 2 for untrained). D class units carry one D during ANY movement.

SHOOTING
Complete units shoot at other complete units, (2 ranks of figures maximum depth to fire) so nominate the target for each unit shooting, throwing an initiative dice if this represents a change of target during continuous firing, and roll a D6 for each shooting unit:
Shooting unit has twice as many stands as target +2
Shooting unit has two more stands than target +1
Target is unarmoured +1
Target is mounted +2
Close range fire +1
Target has twice as many stands as shooter –2
Target has two more stands than shooter –1
Target in full plate against arrows (not x-bows or guns) in cover –1
EACH D on shooting unit –1
If the final score is 5 or 6, one D is inflicted on the enemy, 7 or more, 2Ds. Close-range Ds against armoured targets, and all Ds against unarmoured targets may be thrown for to convert them to casualties: A class need 6 to ’kill’ a stand, B 5 or 6, C & D 4.5 or 6. Units suffering casualties have special Red D markers. (See ‘Rallying Ds’).

Ranges

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<tr>
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<th>Close</th>
<th>Long</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bows</td>
<td>100 yards 20cm (8’)</td>
<td>200 yards 40cm (16’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossbows</td>
<td>100 yards 20cm (8’)</td>
<td>250 yards 50cm (20’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hand guns and organ guns</td>
<td>80 yards 160cm (6’)</td>
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AMMUNITION
Because of their high, and potentially very high, rate of shooting, arrow supply to archer units was a tactically significant factor. We give each archer unit six arrow markers, each of which must be surrendered one per shoot move. Archers may shoot twice (using 2 ‘arrow markers’) in any one move provided they are not moving. Note that only archers can move and shoot. This gives a somewhat undeserved advantage to crossbow units, but they should be rare and expensive, and in any case if you are bothered by this, up the Bowmen’s shooting factor against them.

ARTILLERY
The maximum range of field guns is anybody’s guess. We give them 500 yards, a convenient metre. They need 4 clear moves to reload.
Roll a D6:
If over 200 yards range – first shot -2, second shot –1
Target D class or cavalry +1, Target professional soldiers –1, gunners under fire –1
If the final score is 5.6 or more, 1D is inflicted. A 6 is needed in all circumstances to convert this to a ‘Kill’. (NB All units under fire from Gunpowder weapons at close range (200 yards for field guns) will suffer 1D extra while that fire continues. This cannot be ‘converted.’)

CLOSE QUARTER BATTLE
This is done in two phases: The Contact phase, as the units crash into each other is done at the end of the move, and subsequent melee phases take place in the following moves.

Contact phase:
Roll a D6 per side and consult the factors below:
Each extra rank of figures up to 3 +1
Cavalry charging troops without pole-arms or stakes +3
Hitting a stationary unit +1
For each class higher than enemy +1
Pike armed v inf +1
Pike armed v Cav +2
Terrain advantage +1
Mounted charging except against pikes +1
EACH D –1

Melee phase:
Front ranks only are considered here.
Each class higher +1
Terrain advantage +1
Overlapping by a clear stand (4 figure front) +1 per side
Pike armed –1
EACH D –1

Results
For each 2 points difference a D is given to the loser. These may be ‘converted’ as for shooting.

FLANK/REAR CONTACTS AND PURSUITS
A Unit hitting an enemy in the flank or rear will automatically cause 3Ds to be given to that unit. If it survives the impact, it must find figures to face the new enemy, and fight 2 melees, Ds from both being cumulative.
Winners of melees must throw a D6 to see if they pursue: 1, 2 or 3 Cavalry will, 1, 2 trained troops will, 1,2,3 or 4 D class troops will. 1 is deducted from the throw for each D the winner carries.
Each move the pursuer throws a dice for every 3 stands in his unit, 5 or 6 – remove a stand of the pursued unit.
Broken units will leave the field, they cannot be rallied. Pursuers may attempt to cease pursuit by throwing a D6 at the end of the move. The throw is the same as that to see if they begin pursuit, but one D is gained for every move spent pursuing.

MORALE
The ‘D Marker’ system lies at the heart of these rules, and governs the actions of every unit:

UNITS WITH 2 D markers may not attack an enemy unit.
3 D markers must halt, may not shoot or reload artillery.
4 D markers Must fall back, unless in melee for 2 moves.
5 D markers Will break, unless Swiss/German mercenaries, who will march off the field, defending themselves, in formation.

You will see that a close eye needs to be kept on the morale of units. Besides the causes mentioned elsewhere for collecting the dreaded Ds, units will get a temporary D for any period they are crossing an obstacle, and will get a proper D if a friendly unit of an equal class routs past them within 10cm.

Rallying ‘Ds’
If a unit is not moving or shooting, its own officers will attempt to get it back to order. 3, 4, 5 or 6 thrown at the end of the move will rally 1 D. Units under fire, or D class must take 2 from the dice. RED Ds, which are given when a unit loses a stand are meant to represent a more permanent erosion of fighting power, and only Generals or sub Generals are able to rally those when present with the unit.
Such Generals are also allowed to rally Ds whilst the unit is actually engaged in a Melee, and thus are capable of making a considerable contribution to a combat. However, if they are with a unit when it loses a stand, then a D6 is thrown, a 1 means they are wounded and that unit gets an extra D. A further throw will show the number of turns they are out of action, but should that second throw come up 6, that commander is dead.

OTHER STUFF
Clearly, a million and one details have been left out here. The famous Longbowman’s stake, for example (– well, if you must have a rule,
The archers, and everyday's story of country-folk. Five centuries before Dan and Doris everyday life was liable to be somewhat hectic, as this Wars of the Roses action shows. The men are mainly Minifigs, with a few Front Rank, fielded by Peter Dennis and Max Attendenborough.

Two moves to stick 'em in, and one to take 'em out, OK?) Having started off by declaring my hatred of charts, I have ended up with at least three. The basic idea is that you should be able to remember most of it after one game. A little tiny bit of chart-scanning isn't too bad; in any case, we haven't found a way round it yet!

I'm not sure how far we are justified in largely disregarding the difference in hand-to-hand weapons. It has become fashionable to look down one's nose at the 'hardwarist' and his multiplicity of variables and charts, and my noisy afternoon at Stoke Field, where units were armed with a variety of choppers and bonkies, seemed to confirm that view, but somebody who knows somebody who was in it told me that they really were scared of the two-handed swordsmen... so who knows?

(Editorial interpolation: As the "somebody" in question I should point out that it was the pikemen who were scared of the two-handed swordsmen. Once they got past the pike points a natural fear of losing fingers or hands rapidly set in.)

I also feel there's a personal element missing from the rules as given here. Lord So-and-So was quite likely to make a bee-line for Lord What'sname and set to grappling, and since the Wars of the Roses were about and between people, perhaps command stands should be allowed to fight individually, where they can get to each other, perhaps treating them for duelling purposes as tiny units capable of having their own individual Ds. Better still, a straight dice roll apiece might be more in keeping, the high roll surviving.

It's traditional to end with a note on sources. Well, if you want to come round and see the Video one night, you're welcome. There aren't too many books I could recommend on the business of medieval warfare; I have looked, honestly. Philippe Contamine's War in the Middle Ages (Basil Blackwell) is excellent. So is Oman's The Art of War in the Middle Ages (Cornell University Press 1953 – rare.) Heath's WRG books are required reading for this period of course.

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