Case Name: Battlefields Register Review: Battle of Shrewsbury

Case Number: 1421465

Background
Historic England is undertaking a re-evaluation of the registered area of the battlefield.

Asset(s) under Assessment
Facts about the asset(s) can be found in the Annex(es) to this report.

Annex	Name	Heritage Category
1	Battle of Shrewsbury 1403	Battlefield

Visits

Date	Visit Type
11 June 2014	Full inspection

Annex 1

Factual Details

Name: Battle of Shrewsbury 1403

Location
Battlefield, Shrewsbury

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Shropshire	Unitary Authority	Astley
	Shropshire	Unitary Authority	Pimhill
	Shropshire	Unitary Authority	Shrewsbury

History
HISTORICAL CONTEXT
On 21st July 1403 the armies of King Henry IV and the rebellious Percy family met in battle some three miles to the north of Shrewsbury. Although the Percy family, including Henry Percy, 1st Earl of Northumberland, and his son, Sir Henry Percy, better known at Hotspur, had been instrumental in helping Henry seize the throne from his cousin King Richard II in 1399, their relationship was far from amicable. Under Richard II, the Percys' had been given extensive civil and military responsibility including the defence of the Border region. In 1399 Hotspur was appointed High Sherriff of Flintshire and subsequently completed successful campaigns against the Welsh patriot Owain Glyndŵr in 1401 and 1402. In 1402, the Percy's were also victorious against a Scottish force at Homildon Hill. However, the lack of financial recompense for their military expenditure heightened their disenchantment with Henry IV's rule along with his failure to put an end to Glyndŵr's rebellion through a negotiated settlement. Also infuriating the Percy's was the King's increasing promotion of the military authority of his son, Prince Henry, in Wales, and his failure to ransom the Percys' kinsman, Sir Edmund Mortimer, Henry Percy's brother-in-law, whom had been captured by the Welsh in June 1402. Spurred on by these grievances, the Percys' hatched a scheme to divide England in alliance with Mortimer, who was uncle to the Earl of March, and Glyndŵr. Now supporting the Earl of March as the rightful heir to the throne, Hotspur raised a small group of retainers in early July 1403 and started the march south to meet his uncle, Thomas Percy, 1st Earl of Worcester. Although Hotspur's ultimate destination was Shrewsbury, which was garrisoned by Prince Henry, he spent several days in Cheshire raising an army. Cheshire was seen to be a natural recruiting ground as it was the county in which Richard II's archer bodyguard had been raised and was the only region which had attempted to resist Henry's seizure of the throne. More importantly, it had many experienced soldiers, notably its archers, which were expected to be reinforced by a Welsh force under Glyndŵr. The King received news of these events whilst at Burton-on-Trent on 12th July as he marched an army north to assist the Percys' against the Scots. He immediately headed north-west to intercept Hotspur before he could join forces with Glyndŵr, arriving at Shrewsbury shortly before him on 20th July. Hotspur, who found the gates defended against him, withdrew some three miles to the north-west to the village of Berwick. The King, who was under pressure to attack before Glyndŵr's reinforcements could arrive, spent the night camped outside Haughmond Abbey. On 21st July, Hotspur moved his rebel army to a ridge overlooking Shrewsbury, to the east of Albright Hussey, so that he could observe the ground towards Haughmond Abbey and the approach of the King. Although there is no firm evidence for the size of each army, it is assumed that Hotspur was outnumbered. Initially, there was a general reluctance to commence battle and a great deal of time was spent in negotiation. The Abbot of Shrewsbury and the clerk of the privy seal served as a delegation on behalf of the King, offering Hotspur peace and pardon if he would desist from his adventure. As a result of their persuasions Hotspur decided to negotiate and sent his uncle, Thomas Percy, who explained the causes of the rebellion and demanded a real reformation. When the king had condescended as far as reason would allow, his uncle returned to his nephew and reported the contrary, inflaming the mind of Hotspur and impelling him to battle, even though he was reluctant to fight. Negotiations ended near noon and the two forces advanced close for the battle in a large field planted with peas below the ridge.

DESCRIPTION OF MILITARY ACTION
Contemporary accounts of the battle indicate that the first clash of arms came around two hours before dusk when the royal vanguard under the Earl of Stafford advanced against Hotspur's line and were met by a deluge of arrows from his Cheshire archers. An archery duel subsequently developed resulting in heavy casualties. On seeing the discomfort of his vanguard, the King led his main battle forward to its relief and at this moment Hotspur led a group of horsemen forward in an attempt to kill the King. Bloody hand-to-hand fighting followed and many men were slain on both sides. Although Hotspur's foray did kill the Earl of Stafford and Henry's standard bearer, Sir Walter Blount, it failed to find the King. It is then thought that Henry launched a counter-attack which may have included an outflanking movement by a body of troops under Prince Henry, possibly using the depression of a small brook, now known as Battlefield Brook, to avoid detection. Despite Prince Henry, who was fighting his first battle, being shot in the face by an arrow, his division reached the main body of the enemy before the others, breaking their line, and overthrowing all opponents. Passing right through he faced about, and thus closed them in between his own division and that of the King. The rebel army fell into a state of great confusion, not knowing whether they were fighting against the King's party or their own. During this uncertainty, Hotspur was cut down and killed, apparently being shot in the face when he opened his visor. His death was not initially realised, and at some point soon afterwards the Northumbrian knights mistakenly hailed the death of King Henry and took up the war cry 'Henry Percy king' to encourage their own men. Understanding the object of these cries, the King retaliated by shouting 'Henry Percy is dead' with the absence of a reply confirming Percy's demise. As the news of Hotspur's death began to spread, his army began to disintegrate in flight, with the battle believed to have dispersed into many smaller actions over a wider area before coming to an end. Estimates placed the dead and wounded at well over 5,000 men, with the majority being interred in a mass grave on the battlefield.

Hotspur's body was taken by Thomas Neville, 5th Baron Furnivall, to Whitchurch for burial. However, when rumours circulated that Percy was still alive, the King had the corpse exhumed and displayed in the market place at Shrewsbury. After this, the King dispatched Percy's head to York, where it was impaled on one of the city's gates; his four-quarters were sent to London, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Bristol, and Chester before they were finally delivered to his widow who had him buried in York Minster. In January 1404, Percy was posthumously declared a traitor, and his lands were forfeited to the Crown. In 1406 the site of the mass grave was acquired by the Rector of Albright Hussey to build a chantry chapel to commemorate the souls of the fallen. Completed with endowment from Henry IV, it was in use by 1409. In 1410 it was re-established as a college of seven chaplains with a large moated enclosure built around the church and a series of fishponds built to serve the college. The college was dissolved in 1547. The church was restored as the parish church in 1862; it is now redundant. The collegiate church is listed at Grade II* (NHLE 1246192), and the whole of the collegiate site is a scheduled monument (NHLE 1003717).

Details

TOPOGRAPHY
The site of the battlefield is dominated by a ridge of high ground running from Albright Hussey in the west to Battlefield Farm in the east. The land is still primarily agricultural in nature, mainly being under arable cultivation, although some parts are under permanent pasture, with the open fields of 1403 now enclosed with hedges. The Church of St Mary Magdalene occupies a prominent position on the landscape, enclosed by the earthwork and buried remains of a large moated enclosure. To the south-east of the church there are a series of five fishponds separated by causeways and now traversed by a boardwalk. Earthwork remains of ridge and furrow are found in both the western half of the churchyard and the south-west section of the site. The ridge and furrow formed part of the common fields of the manor of Albright Hussey and, with the field system being in place by the C13, they probably pre-date the battle. The modern world has imposed itself to some degree on the site, including the construction of the railway line on the east side, opened in 1858, the gradual

northwards spread of Shrewsbury, and the construction of the Battlefield Link Road, completed in 1998.

FEATURES
The most prominent features associated with the battle that are still evident are the ridge on which Hotspur's rebel army assembled and the two areas of ridge and furrow. The earthwork remains of the ridge and furrow in the battlefield's south-west corner lie in a field which has been known as Trooper's Piece and Roushill whilst the adjacent field was called King's Croft in the C18. The Church of St Mary Magdalene stands as a prominent memorial to those who died during the battle.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL POTENTIAL
Although the battlefield has not been subjected to extensive archaeological survey and investigation, it has the potential to contain archaeological remains associated with the battle in the form of arrowheads, weapons and personal effects. The ridge and furrow remains are of considerable importance as any possible archaeological remains will not have suffered mechanical damage for several centuries. Further significance is also derived from the site of the mass grave which lay within the enclosure where the Church of St Mary Magdalene stands.

Selected Sources
Books and journals
Priestley, EJ , The Battle of Shrewsbury 1403, (1979)
Calvert, E, 'Annales Rich II Et Hen IV' in Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, Vol. 10, (1898), 295-305
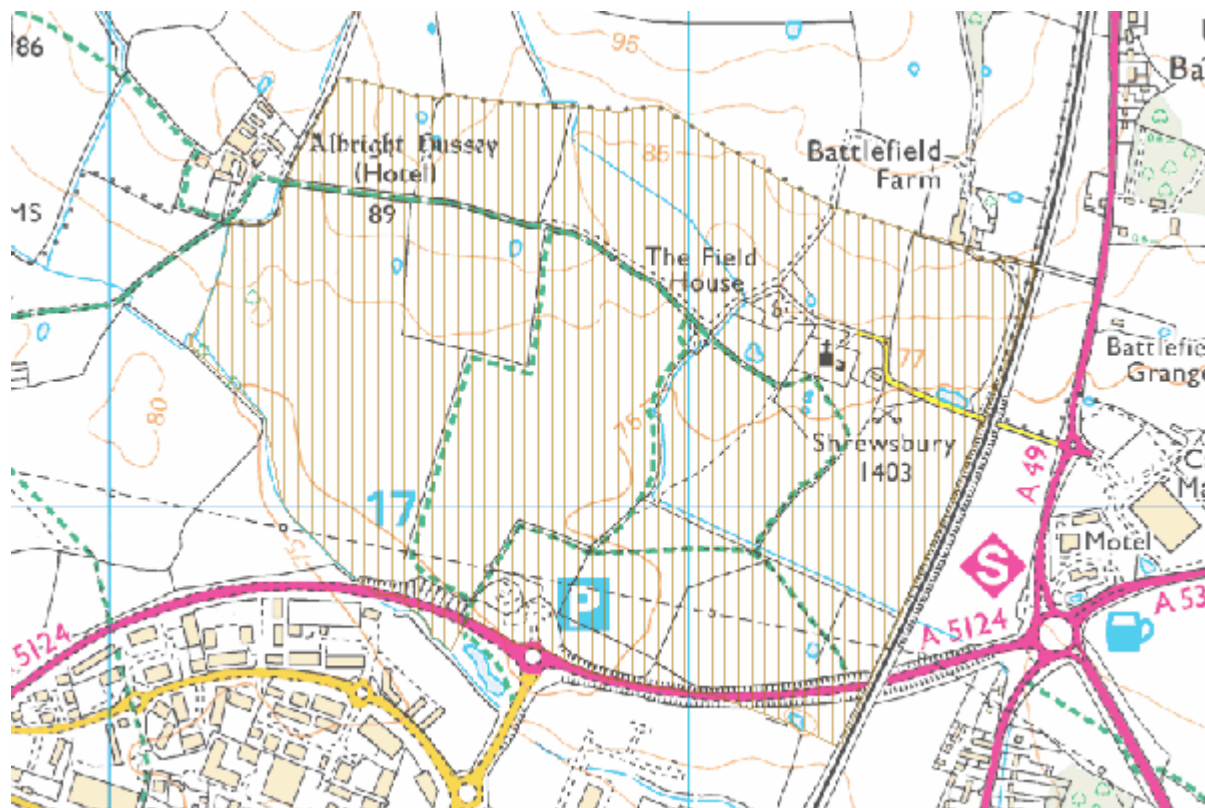**Websites**
Information on the Battle of Shrewsbury from the UK Battlefields Resource Centre, accessed 8 December 2014 from
http://www.battlefieldstrust.com/resource-centre/medieval/battleview.asp?BattleFieldId=39
Other
English Heritage, 1995, Battlefield Report: Shrewsbury 1403

Map

National Grid Reference: SJ5086717165

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF – 1000033_2.pdf.

Current List Entry

List Entry Summary

This battlefield is registered within the Register of Historic Battlefields by Historic England for its special historic interest.

Name: Battle of Shrewsbury 1403

List Entry Number: 1000033

Location

SHREWSBURY

The battlefield may lie within the boundary of more than one authority.

County	District	District Type	Parish
	Shropshire	Unitary Authority	Astley
	Shropshire	Unitary Authority	Pimhill
	Shropshire	Unitary Authority	Shrewsbury

National Park: Not applicable to this List entry.

Grade: Not Applicable to this List Entry

Date first registered: 06 June 1995
Date of most recent amendment: Not applicable to this List entry.

Legacy System Information

The contents of this record have been generated from a legacy data system.

Legacy System: Battlefields
Legacy Number: 34

Asset Groupings

This List entry does not comprise part of an Asset Grouping. Asset Groupings are not part of the official record but are added later for information.

List Entry Description

Summary of Battlefield

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Reasons for Designation

Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

History
Legacy Record - This information may be included in the List Entry Details.

Details
BATTLE OF SHREWSBURY
1403

The rebellion of 1403 arose from deep resentment of the way that King Henry IV had failed to reward the Percy family for securing the northern Border Country. Henry Percy - 'Harry Hotspur'- hatched a scheme to divide England in conjunction with Edward Mortimer and the Welsh patriot Glyn Dwr.

Hotspur rode south early in July 1403 with 160 followers. His ultimate destination was Shrewsbury where he may have arranged to join forces with Glyn Dwr. By 19 July he had recruited an army of 14,000. The King hurried westwards to intercept Hotspur before he and Glyn Dwr could join forces.

Both armies faced each other on 21 July, three miles north of Shrewsbury. Neither side relished the prospect of battle but negotiations failed. Finally, only some two hours before dusk, Henry's troops advanced but were met by a deluge of arrows from Hotspur's Cheshire archers. Bloody hand-to-hand fighting followed in which Hotspur was killed. By dusk the rebels had fled.

The battle was important politically because, with Hotspur's death, the Percy challenge to Henry IV was crushed, biographically in the military career of Prince Henry, later Henry V, victor most notably at Agincourt in 1415, and militarily because it was the first major battle in which English archers had fought against each other on their own soil. As such it provided a brutal lesson in the effectiveness of the longbow in the hands of skilled exponents.

Although the open ploughed fields of 1403 have been enclosed with hedges, the lie of the land allows an appreciation of the course of events. The church within the battlefield was established as a memorial to the dead in 1409.

AMENITY FEATURES
The church of St Mary Magdalen is redundant but provides some information and a car park for visitors. The battlefield is crossed by waymarked footpaths giving access to both Royal and rebel positions. The historic Albright Hussey manor house is in use as a hotel.

OTHER DESIGNATIONS
The church and surrounding earthworks are a scheduled ancient monument. Albright Hussey manor house is listed.
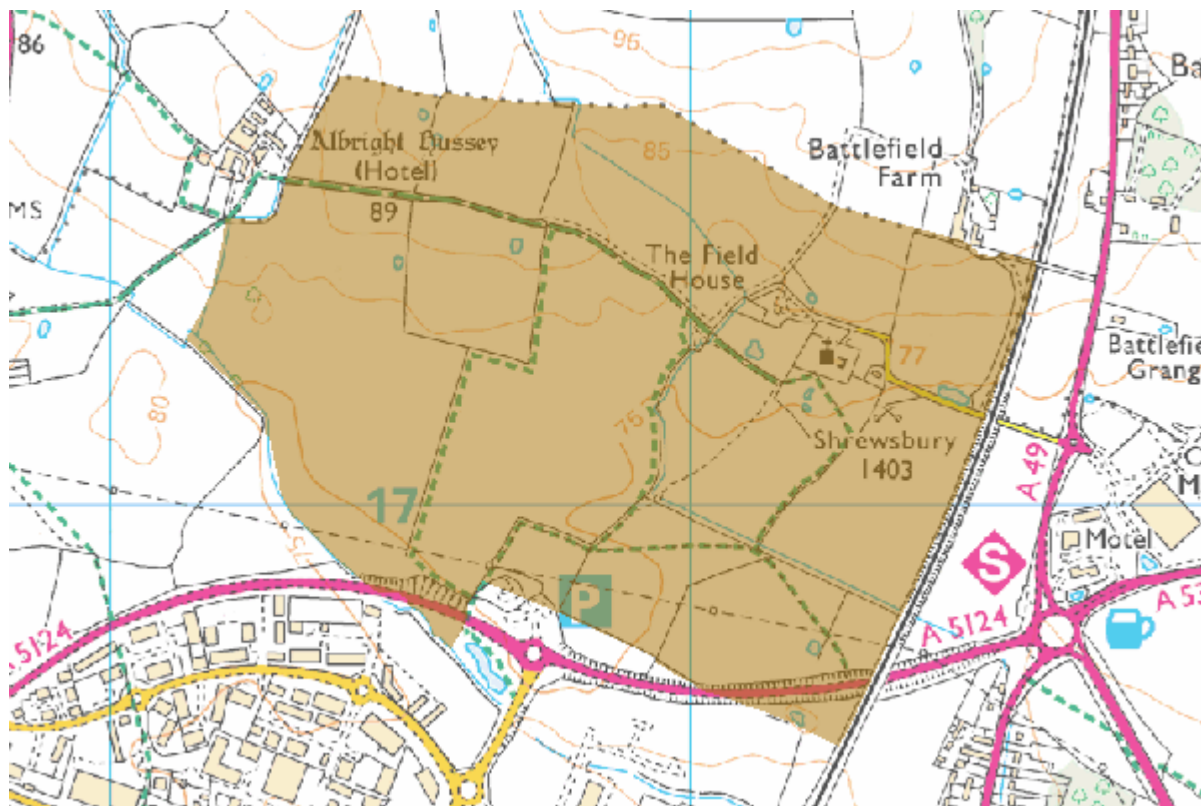
KEY SOURCES
Calvert, E (trans.), 'Annales Rich II. Et Hen IV', in Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Natural History Society, 2nd Series, 10, 1898, 295-305.

Selected Sources

Websites

English Heritage, 1995, Battlefield Report: Shrewsbury 1403, accessed 11-JUN-2015 from https://content.HistoricEngland.org.uk/content/docs/battlefields/shrewsbury.pdf

Map

National Grid Reference: SJ 50862 17231

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The above map is for quick reference purposes only and may not be to scale. For a copy of the full scale map, please see the attached PDF - 1000033_1.pdf