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Yorkshire Battles

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Introduction

This research guide on Yorkshire Battles will give an overview of every battle, siege and naval battle that has been fought in Yorkshire from the Battle of Catraeth in AD 600 up until the Battle of Orgreave during the Miner’s Strike of 1984. This comprehensive guide will then highlight five items from the Leeds Central Library Catalogue from various departments which details the events of each battle. This Research Guide will provide an initial guide for customers and their research into individual or multiple Yorkshire Battles. Stock from Information and Research will be represented with IAR.

Battles Included:

The Anglo Saxons
- The Battle of Catraeth - 600
- The Battle of Hatfield Chase - 633
- The Battle of Whinmoor - 655

The Vikings
- The Battle of Brunaburgh - 937
- The Battle of Castleford - 948
- The Battle of Fulford - 1066
- The Battle of Stamford Bridge - 1066

The Anarchy
- The Battle of Standard - 1138

The Scottish War of Independence
- The Battle of Myton - 1319
- The Battle of Boroughbridge - 1322
- The Battle of Byland Moor - 1322

The Wars of the Roses
- The Battle of Bramham Moor - 1406
- The Battle of Heworth - 1453
- The Battle of Wakefield - 1460
- The Battle of Ferrybridge - 1461
- The Battle of Towton - 1461

The English Civil War
- The Siege of Hull - 1642
- The Battle of Leeds - 1643
- The Battle of Seacroft Moor - 1643
- The Capture of Wakefield - 1643
- The Battle of Adwalton Moor - 1643
- The Second Siege of Hull - 1643
- The Battle of Selby - 1644
- The Siege of York - 1644
- The Battle of Marston Moor - 1644
- The Siege of Pontefract Castle - 1644-45
- The Siege of Pontefract - 1648-49

The American War of Independence
- The Battle of Flamborough Head - 1779

The First World War
- The Battle of Dogger Bank - 1915

The Miners’ Strike
- The Battle of Orgreave - 1984
The Battle of Catraeth - 600
The Battle of Catraeth occurred during the Anglo-Saxon invasion of the late Sixth and early Seventh Century. The battle was fought between the Britons, The Gododdin’s, and the Angles in North Yorkshire, possibly at Caterick. The battle was a disaster for the Britons as they were comprehensively defeated by the Angles and over three hundred of their Lords were killed.

4. Chadwick, N. K. Celt And Saxon, Studies In The Early British Border (Cambridge, 1963) Classmark: IAR 942.01 CEL

The Battle of Hatfield Chase - 633
The Battle of Hatfield Chase was fought on the Northumbrian border in 633. The forces of Edwin, King of Northumbria, were defeated by those of Cadwallon, led by the King of Gwynedd allied with Penda, future king of Mercia. The attack from Cadwallon was the result of the previous invasion by Edwin in Gwynedd. Edwin was defeated and killed and his kingdom of Northumbria was separated into Deira and Bernicia.


The Battle of Winwead/ Whinmoor/ Winwaedfield - 655
The Battle of Whinmoor, fought near a stream on the outskirts of Leeds, was a victory for Oswiu, the King of Bernicia against Penda, King of Mercia and the most powerful person of the time. The battle saw Penda slain and Mercia divided leading to the rise of Bernicia and Northumbria.

4. Cooke, D. Battlefield Yorkshire, From The Romans To The English Civil Wars (Barnsley, 2006) Classmark: Y 942.81 COO

The Battle of Brunaburgh - 937
One of the most important battles in British history, the Battle of Brunaburgh helped to define the separate kingdoms of England, Scotland and Wales. The battle was fought between Anglo Saxon King’s of Wessex and Mercia, under the leadership of Æthelstan, against the allied Norse, Scots and Strathclyde Briton invaders under the leadership of Olaf Guthfrithson, King of Dublin. Æthelstan’s victory effectively gave him control over the whole of England.

1. Todd, C. S. The Battle Of Brunaburgh: It’s Case, History And Site (Hull, 1875) Classmark: Y 942.01 TOD
2. Holderness, T. The Battle Of Brunanburh: An Attempt To Identify The Site (Driffield, 1888) Classmark: Y KIR 942
The Battle of Castleford - 948

King Eadred, leader of the English, was travelling south from Ripon, after burning Ripon Minster, when his army was attacked by Erik Bloodaxe, King of Northumbria. A great slaughter ensued with most of Eadred’s rearguard being killed. The Northumbrians were so shocked by the actions of Erik Bloodaxe that they attempted to disowned him in order to stop any retaliation from King Eadred.

2. Johnson, S. The History Of Castleford (Castleford, 1861) Classmark: Y CAS 942
4. The Vikings In England And In Their Danish Homeland (Kent, 1981) Classmark: Y YOR 942

The Battle of Fulford - 1066

The Battle of Fulford was the result of the Invasion of Harald Hardrada, King of Norway, in August 1066. Harald landed in the Tyne and marched to York with the disgraced brother of King Harold of England, Tostig Godwinson. The Saxon army from Mercia and Northumbria, which controlled York, was under the leadership of Earl Edwin and Earl Morcar. Harald’s pincer movement during the battle proved vital and resulted in the massacre and desertion of the Mercian and Northumbrian troops.

5. Seymour, W. Battles In Britain 1066 - 1547 (London, 1975) Classmark: IAR 355.4 SEY

The Battle of Stamford Bridge - 1066

The Battle of Stamford Bridge, 25th September 1066, was fought between the English Anglo Saxons and the Norwegian Vikings. The Anglo Saxons were under the leadership of King Harold I. The Norwegian Vikings were under the command of Harald Hardrada and Harold I’s own brother, Tostig Godwinson. Despite courageous fighting on both sides The Battle of Stamford Bridge was an emphatic and bloody victory for Harold as the Viking army and their leaders Harald Hardrada and Tostig were killed during the battle.

1. Elliot, R. The Battle Of Stamford Bridge (York, 1810) Classmark: Y 821.7 COL

The Battle of Standard/ Northallerton - 1138

The Battle of Standard was one of the two major battles of the Anarchy Civil War, 1135–1153, between King Stephen and Empress Matilda. The Scottish King David invaded the north of England in support of his niece Matilda. With Stephen fighting in the south it was left to local English nobles to amass an army to repel the Scots. The English, probably under the leadership of William of Aumale, defeated the numerically superior Scots. Despite the defeat the Scots would control the north of England for the next twenty years.

The Battle of Myton - 1319

During the Scottish War of Independence a force of 15,000 Scots crossed the border with the intention of pillaging York to divert Edward II’s attention from the Siege of Berwick. The Archbishop of York, William Melton raised a large army, but this mostly consisted of inexperienced soldiers. William Melton attempted to catch the Scots by surprise, but the battle hardened Scots easily defeated the English and the fleeing English soldiers were killed while crossing the River Swale. The victorious Scottish army retreated to Scotland with their prisoners and treasures.

4. Cooke, D. Battlefield Yorkshire, From the Romans To The English Civil Wars (Barnsley, 2006) Classmark: Y 942.81 COO

The Battle of Boroughbridge - 1322

The Battle of Boroughbridge was the culmination of the dispute between Edward II and his cousin Thomas, Earl of Lancaster. The Royal commander, Sir Andrew de Harcia, gained control of the narrow bridge which crossed the River Ure. Lancaster and his rebel army’s only option was to cross the bridge and were decisively defeated. The Royal victory and the execution of Lancaster ended the rebellion and Edward II turned his attention back to Scotland.

1. Fryde, N. The Tyranny And Fall Of Edward II, 1321-1326 (Cambridge, 1979) Classmark: IAR 942.036 FRY

The Battle of Byland Moor/ Old Byland - 1322

The Battle of Byland Moor/ Old Byland, was fought during the Scottish War of Independence. Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, invaded the North of England in late 1322 attempting to gain a royal hostage. John of Brittany, Earl of Richmond, led the English army for King Edward II. Richmond had settled upon a strong defensive position on Scawton Moor, however King Robert was able to tactically nullify this strong defensive position leading to the Scots routing the crumbling English army. King Robert captured Richmond as a valuable prisoner, however King Edward II escaped.

3. Cooke, D. Battlefield Yorkshire, From the Romans To The English Civil Wars (Barnsley, 2006) Classmark: Y 942.81 COO

The Battle of Bramham Moor - 1406

The Battle of Bramham Moor was the final battle of the Percy Rebellion against the usurper King Henry IV. Henry Percy, Earl of Northumberland, invaded the North of England from Scotland with a small army. Percy was met at Bramham Moor by the Sheriff of York and his army of Henry IV supporters. Henry Percy and the majority of his army were killed at Bramham Moor. Percy’s defeat allowed Henry IV to concentrate on the Welsh rebellion.

The Battle of Heworth Moor - 1453

The Battle of Heworth Moor was a skirmish between the Neville and Percy families, whose feud had been simmering since the beginning of the Fifteenth Century. The Neville family was ambushed by Thomas Percy, Lord Egremont while returning from a wedding. The Neville's were able to force their way through the Percy attack and arrive at Sheriff Hutton, their original destination. The Battle of Heworth could be considered the first battle of the Wars of the Roses.


The Battle of Wakefield - 1460

The Battle of Wakefield, 30th December 1460, was fought between the Yorkists and the Lancastrians. The Yorkists under the command of Richard, Duke of York, were stationed within Sandal Castle. The Lancastrians, led by Margaret of Anjou and Henry, Duke of Somerset surrounded the castle. Richard, Duke of York - having possibly been tricked - decided to leave the relative safety of Sandal Castle and fight the Lancastrians. The Battle of Wakefield was a significant victory for the Lancastrian leaders as they managed to defeat the Yorkist’s and kill their leader, Richard, Duke of York.

5. Cooke, D. Battlefield Yorkshire, From the Romans To The English Civil Wars (Barnsley, 2006) Classmark: Y 942.81 COO

The Battle of Ferrybridge - 1461

The Battle of Ferrybridge was the preliminary stage to the much larger Battle of Towton. The Yorkists, led by Edward IV, wanted to force their way over the River Aire, and at Ferrybridge the Lancastrian army under the leadership of Lord Clifford tried to stop this. Edward, showing his tactical superiority, ordered part of his army to cross the river at an earlier stage, this allowed Edward’s army to outflank and defeat the Lancastrians allowing them to cross the river. Lord Clifford was killed when trying to retreat the Lancastrian army.


The Battle of Towton - 1461

The Battle of Towton is considered to be the largest and bloodiest battle ever fought on English soil. The Yorkists under the leadership of Edward IV and Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick fought against the Lancastrians under the command of Henry VI and Henry Beaufort, Duke of Somerset. Around 60,000 soldiers fought at Towton and nearly half of those were killed during or directly after the battle. The windy and snowy weather was of great hindrance for the Lancastrians. The Yorkists were under great strain during the battle until the arrival of their reinforcements led by John, Duke of Norfolk. The Yorkists broke through the Lancastrian army and they fled. The fleeing Lancastrians were routed at Cock Beck near what is now called ‘Bloody Meadow.’

1. Boardman, A. W. The Battle Of Towton (Far Thrupp, 1994) Classmark: Y TOW 942
The Siege of Hull - 1642

Charles I, who had recently moved to York from London, wanted to secure Hull as it was a great trading port and munition base. Parliament, knowing of Charles’ plan had already fortified Hull under the leadership of Sir John Hotham. Charles’ siege of Hull began in early July. The parliamentarian defenders of Hull were reinforced by Sir John Meldrum and 1500 men, this was enough to surprise and rout the Royalist army on 10th July as the King retreated. This was the first act of violence of the English Civil War.

1. Reckitt, B. N. Charles The First And Hull 1639-1645 (Hull, 1952) Classmark: Y 942 HUL
2. Lamplough, E. The Siege Of Hull: And Other Poems (Hull, 1881) Classmark: Y 821.8 LAM
3. His Majesties Speech; To The Gentleman Of Yorkshire, On Thursday Fourth Of August 1642 (York, 1642) Classmark: IAR SR STC WING C2803
4. Tracts Relating To The Siege Of Hull In 1642, With The King’s Proclamation, And A Scarce Portrait Of John Hotham (Hull, 1867) Classmark: Y 942 HUL
5. Terrible Newes From Hull: Concerning A Great Conspiracy Which Was Intended Against Sir John Hotham And The Rest Of The Said Town, By Cavaliers (London, 1642) Classmark: IAR SR STC WING T769

The Battle of Leeds - 1643

The Battle of Leeds was fought on the 23rd January 1643 between the Royalists, who held Leeds under the leadership of Sir William Saville, and the Parliamentarians, under the leadership of Sir Thomas Fairfax. Fairfax split his army into three to attack the Royalists within Leeds on multiple fronts. Though the Royalists and Saville fought fiercely they were overwhelmed and defeated. Fairfax had now captured Leeds with four hundred prisoners.

5. Snowden, K. The English Civil War In Yorkshire (Pickering, 1993) Classmark: YP 942.81 SNO

The Battle of Seacroft Moor - 1643

By the end of March 1643 Sir Thomas Fairfax decided to consolidate his territory in Leeds by moving his forces from Selby. While moving his army Fairfax and his Parliamentarian army was attacked by Lord George Goring and a much larger Royalist force. Being greatly outnumbered and overrun by the Royalist cavalry the Parliamentarians were defeated and Fairfax made his way to Leeds with a fraction of his army.


The Capture of Wakefield - 1643

On the 30th May 1643 Thomas Fairfax, wanting to limit the effects of the Parliamentarian defeat at Seacroft Moor, led a raid on Wakefield. The Royalists led by Lord George Goring were alerted to the raid and by the time Fairfax arrived at Wakefield the garrisons were manned and prepared. Fairfax still decided to attack and after a Royalist garrison crumbled Fairfax led a charge into Wakefield and defeated the Royalist army. Around 1500 Royalists were captured including Lord George Goring, who was taken to the Tower.

2. Tyas, G. The Battles Of Wakefield. An Historical Narrative Of The Battle Of Wakefield, In 1460: Also An Account Of The Engagement On Wakefield Green, In 1643 (Wakefield, 1854) Classmark: Y WAK 942
4. Crowther, G. H. A Descriptive History Of The Wakefield Battles (Wakefield, 1886) Classmark: Y WAK 942
5. Fairfax, T. The Old History Of Bradford 1776 (Bradford, 1894) Classmark: Y 942.062 FAI
The Battle of Adwalton Moor - 1643
The Battle of Adwalton Moor was fought on the 30th June 1643. The battle was fought between the Parliamentarians led by Sir Thomas Fairfax and the Royalists under the leadership of the Earl of Newcastle, William Cavendish. The Royalists, with an army of around 10,000, marched on Bradford. Fairfax knowing that Bradford could not survive a siege decided to meet Cavendish in battle, even though he only had around 4000 men. When Fairfax reached Adwalton Moor the Royalists were already in position. The battle was fierce but the greater Parliamentarian number proved decisive as Fairfax was defeated. The importance of Adwalton Moor cannot be underestimated.


The Second Siege of Hull - 1643
The Royalists under the leadership of William Cavendish, the Earl of Newcastle, wanted to consolidate after their victory at Adwalton Moor and attempted to capture Hull. The Parliamentarian army, under the leadership of Lord Ferdinando Fairfax and Sir Thomas Fairfax, was besieged by Newcastle from September 2nd until 12th October. The Royalist attacks were ineffective and the Fairfaxes were aided by Oliver Cromwell from the Humber. On October 9th the Royalists attempted to storm the city and were repelled by the Parliamentarians. Newcastle ended the siege and retreated back to York.

1. Lamplough, E. The Siege Of Hull: And Other Poems (Hull, 1881) Classmark: Y 821.8 LAM
2. Cooke, D. Battlefield Yorkshire, From The Romans To The English Civil Wars (Barnsley, 2006) Classmark: Y 942.81 COO

The Battle of Selby - 1644
The Parliamentarians, under the leadership of Lord Fairfax and Sir Thomas Fairfax, wanted to seize control of the important Royalist trading town Selby. The Royalists, under the leadership of John Belasyse, fortified the town and waited for the attack. Fairfax decided the risky strategy of splitting his army into three and attacking on multiple fronts. Once through the outer perimeter the Parliamentarian's greater number overwhelmed the Royalist army.


The Siege of York - 1644
The Siege of York lasted from the 22nd April to the 16th July, 1644. The Parliamentarians, buoyed by their victory at Selby, wanted to advance on the Royalist stronghold of York. The Parliamentarians, under the leadership of Lord Fairfax encircled York. William Cavendish, Marquess of Newcastle, was in control of the Royalists stationed within the city. The Royalist defeat at the Battle of Marston Moor effectively ended the Royalist resistance at York and the Royalist leader Cavendish went into exile on the continent.

3. A Continuation Of True Intelligence From The North, Wherein Is Given A Full Accont Of The Surrender Of York And Of The Removes Of The Armies Since (London, 1644) Classmark: IAR SR STC WING A
The Battle of Marston Moor - 1644
The Battle of Marston Moor was fought on the 2nd July 1644, and is one of the largest battles ever fought in England. Prince Rupert with his Royalist army approached Marston Moor after temporarily relieving the Siege of York. The Parliamentarian army, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell, launched a surprise attack at 7 PM and completely disorientated the Royalists. After two hours of frantic fighting the well organized Parliamentarian’s were victorious. Marston Moor represented the success of Cromwell’s New Model Army.


The Siege of Pontefract Castle - 1644 –1645
Pontefract Castle was a Royalist stronghold during the Civil War. It came under siege by the Parliamentarians in December 1644. Despite being bombarded by artillery the Castle held. The siege was lifted by the arrival of Sir Marmaduke Langdale in March 1645. By July the Castle was back under siege and the starved Royalists were forced to surrender to the Parliamentarian army.

1. Fox, G. The Three Sieges Of Pontefract Castle (Burton, 1987) Classmark: YQ PON 942
3. Fox, G. The History Of Pontefract, In Yorkshire (Pontefract, 1827) Classmark: SR 942.81 FOX

The Great Siege of Scarborough - 1645
Sir Hugh Chomley had held the Castle of Scarborough for the Royalists since 1642. The Parliamentarians, under the leadership of Sir John Meldrum, surrounded and laid siege to Scarborough in May 1645. After a failed parliamentary infantry assault on the Castle the new commander, Sir Matthew Boynton decided to attack Scarborough by both land and sea. By July the Royalist resistance ended and Chomley was allowed to go into exile.

5. Binns, J. ‘A Place Of Great Importance’ Scarborough In The Civil Wars, 1640-1660 (Preston, 1996) Y SCA 942

The Second Siege of Pontefract - 1648-9
When the Second English Civil War began in 1648, the Castle of Pontefract was regained by the Royalists. The Parliamentarians began a siege of Pontefract, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell. After five months of bombardment, on 24th March 1649 the starving Royalists surrendered. Parliament ordered the shattered remains of Pontefract Castle to be torn down.

1. Fox, G. The Three Sieges Of Pontefract Castle (Burton, 1987) Classmark: YQ PON 942
3. Fox, G. The History Of Pontefract, In Yorkshire (Pontefract, 1827) Classmark: SR 942.81 FOX
The Battle of Flamborough Head - 1779

The Battle of Flamborough Head was a naval battle off the coast of Scarborough during the American War of Independence. The new American Navy was helped by Spanish and French ships in an attempt to attack a British supply convoy coming from the Baltic States. On the 23rd September John Paul Jones, in the Bonhomme Richard, led an American French squadron that attacked and captured the HMS Countess Scarborough, then Jones led an attack on the HMS Serapis. After three hours of fighting the HMS Serapis was defeated and sunk, however the next day the Bonhomme Richard also sank. This was the first major victory for the new American navy.

1. Brearley, F. A History Of Flamborough (Driffield, 1971) Classmark: Y FLA 942

The Action Between His Majesties Ship Serapis, Commanded by Capt Pearson & The Bonhomme Richard Commanded by Paul Jones, by William Elliott (1779)

The Battle of Dogger Bank - 1915

The Battle of Dogger Bank was fought on the 24th January 1915. At the beginning of the First World War the British and German Navy’s clashed trying to gain control of the North Sea. The British Admiral Beatty was forewarned of the German attack led by Admiral Hipper. The British had five warships and the Germans only had three, knowing he was outnumbered Hipper decided to retreat. The British chased the German’s and sunk one of their cruisers. However, due to a miscommunication the British ended the chase to finish off the weakened German cruiser rather than continuing the attack.


The Battle of Orgreave - 1984

The Battle of Orgreave was the most violent day of the year long Miners’ Strike. The striking miners were protesting outside the Orgreave Coke works attempting to stop lorries from leaving the steelworks. Thousands of pickets met huge lines of police as the violence escalated. The police used horses and the miners threw stones as the day wore on. Many miners were arrested and later released. The Police conduct is still being questioned.

4. Yorkshire Evening Post, Miners’ Against Police, Article, 19th June 1984
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1. Snowden, K. *Great Battles In Yorkshire, Recounting The Many Battles On Yorkshire Soil From The Romans To The Civil War* (Pickering, 1996)
   Classmark: YP 942.81 SNO

2. Cooke, D. *Battlefield Yorkshire, From The Romans To The English Civil Wars* (Barnsley, 2006) Classmark: Y 942.81 COO


6. Grainge, W. *The Battles and Battlefields Of Yorkshire, From The Earliest Times To The End of The Great Civil War* (York, 1854)
   Classmark: Y 355.48 GRA


10. Seymour, W. *Battles In Britain 1066 - 1547* (London, 1975) Classmark: IAR 355.4 SEY

    Classmark: IAR 355.4 BAR

12. Wagstaffe, S. *Battlefields Of Yorkshire* (London)
    Classmark: SRF 942.74 W175

13. The Wing Collection, *English Civil War Tracts 1640– 1650*  
    Classmark: IAR SR STC WING


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