James Touchet

No Picture Available
Born: 1398 Straffordshire, ENG
Married: Eleanor De Holand
Parents: John Touchet & Isabel Unknown

5th Baron Audley; son of John Touchet, 4th Baron Audley, and Isabel; received summons from 26 Feb 1421 to 26 May 1455, but was granted exemption in 1447. His lordship was Chief Justice and Chamberlain of South Wales. He m.1 Margaret, dau. of William, Lord Roos; m.2 Eleanor, nat. dau. of Thomas Holland, Earl of Kent, by Constance, dau. of Edmund, Duke of York. He was succeeded by the son of his 1st marriage, John, 6th Baron Audley. [Burke's, p. 136]

2nd Lord Audley of the family of Touchet; served under King Henry V in his wars for the crown of France; and adhering to the House of Lancaster in the contest of the two roses, commanded the royal army at the battle of Blore Heath, where he was defeated and slain 23 Sep 1459 with 2400 of his companions. He had issue:

1. John, 3rd Lord Audley
2. Humphrey, killed in the Battle of Tewkesbury, 4 May 1471
3. Edmund, Bishop of Rochester
[Barons: Touchet, Lord Audley,
http://cs6400.mcc.ac.uk/genuki/big/eng/History/Barons/baronsl.html]

When Queen Margaret got word of Salisbury's march, she sent Lords Audeley and Dudley to intercept him. Finding his way barred at Blore Heath, near Market Drayton, by an army much larger than his own, Salisbury had drawn up his men in the shelter of a wood and grimly awaited the onslaught. His archers and his men-at-arms fought so fiercely that the royal host was thrown back with heavy losses; Lord Audeley was slain and Lord Dudley taken prisoner. [Richard the Third, p. 35]

m.1 Margaret de Ros; father of:
1. Anne who m. Sir Thomas Dutton
2. Sir John, 6th Lord Audley, who m.1 Anne Echingham; m.2 Alianor Holand
m.2 Alianor Holand and was father of:
3. Constance who m. Robert Whitney
4. Elizabeth who m. Sir Edward Brooke, 6th Lord Cobham
5. Margaret who m.1 Sir Roger Vaughn; m.2 Sir Richard Grey, 3rd Earl of Tankerville. [Ed Mann
A loyal supporter of the Lancastrian King Henry VI, Lord Audley had raised 10,000 men on behalf of the King and was slain at the battle of Blore Heath, Shropshire, 23 Sep 1459. [Ronny Bodine

cross sited in Blore Heath, Staffordshire to mark the spot on which James Touchet, Lord Audley was killed at the battle of Blore Heath in 1459.

A cross was erected on the spot where Audley was reported to have been killed after the battle, and replaced with the current stone cross in 1765, which was renovated in 1949 on the 500th anniversary of the battle.

The inscription on the cross reads:

On this spot was fought the Battle of Blore Heath 1459. Lord Audley, who commanded the Lancastrian forces was defeated and slain. This monument was restored by Tyrley Parish Council to mark the 500th anniversary of the battle

Retrieved from "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Audley%27s_Cross"

The Battle of Blore Heath was the first major battle in the English Wars of the Roses. It was fought on September 23, 1459, at Blore Heath in Staffordshire, two miles east of the town of Market Drayton in Shropshire, England.
Background

After the First Battle of St Albans in 1455, an uneasy peace held in England. Attempts at reconciliation between the houses of Lancaster and York enjoyed marginal success. However, both sides became increasingly wary of each other and by 1459 were actively recruiting armed supporters. The Queen (Margaret of Anjou) continued to raise support for the King (Henry VI) amongst noblemen, distributing an emblem of a silver swan to her supporters; whilst the Yorkist command under Richard, Duke of York was finding plenty of anti-royal support despite the severe punishment for raising arms against the King.

The Yorkist force based at Middleham Castle in Yorkshire (led by Richard Neville, 5th Earl of Salisbury) needed to link up with the main Yorkist army at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire. As Salisbury marched south-west through the Midlands the Queen ordered James Touchet, Lord Audley to raise a force to intercept them.

The Battle

Audley chose the barren heathland of Blore Heath to set up an ambush. On the morning of the 23 September 1459 (Saint Thecla's day), a force of some 6-12,000 men took up a defensive position behind a 'great hedge' on the south-western edge of Blore Heath facing the direction of Newcastle-under-Lyme to the north-east, the direction from which Salisbury was approaching.

Yorkist scouts spotted Lancastrian banners visible over the top of a hedge and immediately warned Salisbury. As they emerged from the woodland, the Yorkist force of some 3-6,000 men realized that a much larger enemy force was awaiting their arrival. Salisbury immediately arranged his men into battle order, just out of range of the Lancastrian archers. To secure his right flank, he arranged the supply wagons in a defensive laager, a circular formation to provide cover to the men on that flank. Fearing a rout, Yorkist soldiers are reported to have kissed the ground beneath them, supposing that this would be the ground on which they would meet their deaths.

The two armies were separated by about 300 metres on the barren heathland. A steep-sided, wide and fast-flowing brook flowed between them. The brook made Audley's position seemingly impenetrable.

Initially, both leaders sought to parley in a futile attempt to avoid bloodshed. In keeping with many late medieval battles, the conflict opened with an archery duel between the longbows of both armies. At Blore Heath, this proved inconclusive because of the distance between the two sides.

Salisbury, aware that any attack across the brook would be suicidal, employed a ruse to encourage the enemy to attack him. He withdrew some of his middle-order just far enough that the Lancastrians believed them to be retreating. The Lancastrians launched a cavalry charge. After they had committed themselves, Salisbury ordered his men to turn back and catch the Lancastrians as they attempted to cross the brook. It is possible that the order for this Lancastrian charge was not given by Audley but it had the effect of turning the balance in favour of Salisbury. The charge resulted in heavy casualties for the Lancastrians.

The Lancastrians withdrew, and then made a second assault, possibly attempting to rescue casualties. This second attack was more successful with many Lancastrians crossing the brook. This led to a period of intense fighting in which Audley himself was killed, possibly by Sir Roger Kynaston of Stocks near Ellesmere.

The death of Audley meant that Lancastrian command devolved on to the second-in-command John Sutton, 1st Baron Dudley who ordered an attack on foot with some 4,000 men. As this attack also failed, some 500 Lancastrians joined the enemy and began attacking their own side. At this, any remaining Lancastrian resistance collapsed and the Yorkists only had to advance to complete the rout.

The rout continued through the night, with the Yorkists pursuing the fleeing enemy for miles across the countryside.

It is believed that at least 3,000 men died in the battle, with at least 2,000 of these from the Lancastrian side. Local legend says that Hempmill Brook flowed with blood for 3 days after the battle.

Aftermath

Salisbury was concerned that Lancastrian reinforcements were in the vicinity and was keen to press on southwards towards Ludlow. He made his camp on a hillside at Market Drayton, which later took his name. Salisbury employed a local friar to remain on Blore Heath throughout the night and to periodically discharge a cannon in order to deceive any Lancastrians near by into believing that the fight was continuing.

Legend has it that Margaret of Anjou watched the battle from the spire of the church in nearby Mucklestone, before fleeing when she realised Audley was being defeated. It is said that she employed a blacksmith, William Skelhorn, to reverse the shoes on her horse to disguise her escape. The anvil from the smithy stands in the churchyard at Mucklestone to commemorate this event.

A cross was erected on Blore Heath after the battle to mark the spot where Audley was slain. It was replaced with a stone cross in 1765. Audley's Cross stands on Blore Heath to this day. Audley is buried in Darley Abbey in Derbyshire.

The battle is commemorated by a re-enactment each year in September at Blore Heath.

References--- The Battle of Blore Heath, 1459 edited by Paddy Griffith ISBN 0-9521488-1-1

External links--- http://www.bloreheath.org