

Locating the battle of Stow-on-the-Wold (1646)

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The traditional site of the battle of Stow-on-the-Wold is located around 2.6 kilometres north of the town square on Horsington Hill north–west of the village of Donnington. This is the area that was registered by Historic England¹ in 1995, though an unpublished 1999 English Heritage (as Historic England was before 2015) report had suggested an amendment to the registration, moving the battle southwards to 1.2 kilometres north of the town.² This paper looks at the documentary, map and archaeological evidence for the location of the battlefield and questions the current Historic England registration.

Prelude and battle

By early 1646, with royalist fortunes waning badly in the Civil War, the King ordered Jacob, Lord Astley, his General for Worcestershire, Staffordshire, Herefordshire and Shropshire, to gather troops from garrisons in his command and proceed to Chipping Norton via Stow-on-the-Wold where he would be met by 1,500 soldiers from Oxford to form a royalist field army for the 1646 campaign. Astley gathered 2,000-3,000 men and probably departed Worcester on 17 March. He headed north to Droitwich as a feint, ostensibly to threaten the parliamentary besiegers around Lichfield, before turning south through Alcester and crossing the river Avon at Bidford. The parliamentary authorities had early warning of royalist plans and responded by ordering the parliamentary governors of Gloucester, Hereford, and Evesham to withdraw troops from their garrisons and join a detachment under Sir William Brereton, then besieging Lichfield, to prevent the conjunction of royalist forces.³

Brereton marched from Lichfield to Coleshill on the day Astley left Worcester with 800 horse and 200 firelocks (essentially dragoons), but delayed any further advance until he received intelligence on the whereabouts of the royalists. Meanwhile Parliament's Gloucester, Hereford, and Evesham forces had rendezvoused near Evesham on 16 March with Thomas Morgan, the governor of Gloucester, in command. Struggling to defend all the crossings on the Avon with a force of 1,600 men, Morgan decided to move across the river to Chipping Campden on 19 March as the routes from the crossing points on the Avon would take any royalist march on Stow toward Chipping Campden.⁴

¹ See <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000037?section=official-list-entry>

² English Heritage Battlefield Panel 2/99, *Annex 5 – Possible revision Stow on the Wold* (unpublished)

³ Sir Edward Walker, *Historical Discourses*, (London:1705), p.152; British Library Thomas Tracts (BL TT) E.329[7], Thomas Morgan, *Colonel Morgan's Letter*, (London: 1645[6]), pp.3-4; The National Archives (TNA), SP16/513, f.77; House of Lords Journal (LJ) Vol 8, (London, 1767-1830) pp.189-190. W.D. Hamilton, (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1645-1647*, (London: HMSO, 1891), p.368.

⁴ Wing S139, R.S., *A True and fuller relation of the Battell fought at Stowe on the Would*, (London: 1646), unpag.; E.329[7], pp.3-5; Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 60 ff.560r-560v; Rev T.W. Webb (ed.), *Military memoir of Colonel John Birch*, (Hereford: Golden Valley Publications, 2004), p.34. Birch's

After crossing the Avon at Bidford using a bridge of boats on 20 March, Astley then marched down the old Roman road, Buckle Street, toward Chipping Campden. Morgan ordered 500 cavalry and some infantry to intercept the royalists to slow their march in the hope that Brereton's force would soon come up; Morgan appears to have judged that he did not have sufficient men to be certain of victory as he sent away one of his cornets to seek cavalry reinforcements from the parliamentary commander at Woodstock in Oxfordshire when the fighting near Campden commenced. The skirmishing there lasted around four hours until the royalists reached the top of the 'Camden hills' and the parliamentarians broke contact, by which time it was 8-9pm in the evening and dark.⁵

Brereton had marched from Coleshill to Stratford on 19 March before receiving incorrect intelligence late in the day that the royalists had turned back and 'bended [their] march toward Lichfield'. He therefore withdrew toward Birmingham and quartered around four miles from Stratford that night. Late at night he received further intelligence that the royalists were 'within three miles' of his force, so he ordered his men to mount up immediately and marched to Knowle, around 13¾ miles north of Stratford, unsure whether his enemy were intent on relieving Lichfield. New intelligence on the morning of 20 March revealed the royalists had crossed the river Avon and that Morgan would face them, so Brereton reversed his march, arriving at Stratford by sunset where he learned of the fighting around Chipping Campden. After a slow crossing of the Avon at Stratford – the bridge was broken down and the horses could only cross on planks one at a time – Brereton reached the Camden hills by midnight and then continued toward Stow.⁶

Morgan had earlier resolved to continue the pursuit of the royalists, marching off at around 11pm after giving his opponents a two-to-three-hour head start. At around 3am Brereton caught up with Morgan's infantry and cavalry. The combined force then marched another mile before scouts reported that the royalists were just ahead of the parliamentary army. Morgan ordered out 400 cavalry and 200 firelocks 'to charge home his [Astley's] rear-guard, to put him to a stand before he should pass through Stow upon the Wold'. This forced the royalists to deploy into battle array and the parliamentary force did likewise before advancing to confront their enemy.⁷

Colonel John Birch, commanding the Hereford detachment, said battle commenced at break of day and Brereton noted the parliamentarians attacked between 4-5am. Dawn on 31 March (allowing for the ten days adjustment between the Julian and

account from late on 16 March 1646 indicates the forces rendezvousing at Evesham numbered 1,600 men. The later memoir written by his secretary (who may have been serving in a military capacity with Birch at the time of the battle) suggests there were 2,700 men in Morgan's command, but we have used the lower figure as likely being more accurate given it was written in the days leading up to the battle rather than some time afterwards.

⁵ *Birch memoir*, p.34; Wing S139, unpag.; E.329[7], p.4; Mary Anne Everett Green, *The Proceedings of the Committee for the Advance of Money*, Vol II (London: HMSO, 1888), p.713

⁶ Wing S139, unpag.

⁷ *Birch memoir*, pp.34-35; E.329[7], 5; BL TT E.348[1], John Vicars, *England's parliamentary chronicle*, (London: 1646), p.398

Gregorian calendars for when the battle was fought) is normally 5:08am GMT at Stow on the Wold, though first light occurs at 4:27am GMT.⁸ On this basis the parliamentary attack is likely to have occurred nearer 5am than 4am and certainly after 4:30am GMT.⁹

The battle commenced with a general attack by the parliamentarians across the whole front. Their left wing of cavalry, apparently commanded by Birch, and infantry deployed in the centre, commanded by Morgan, were repulsed, but the right wing of horse and firelocks, under Brereton, had more success with their superior numbers and forced the royalist cavalry on that side of the battlefield to flee. The disintegration of the royalist left wing of cavalry seems to have occasioned a rout of the whole army, which then fled back to Stow, where further parliamentary attacks were made before the royalists eventually surrendered. Birch said the battle had lasted one hour and he, Brereton and Morgan sent a joint letter about the victory and the gathering of prisoners in the church to the Speaker of the House of Commons at 6am on 21 March, indicating the battle was over by this time.¹⁰

Location of the battle

Landscape

In determining the likely location of the battle, it is important to first consider the approach to the battlefield. The royalists were observed by Morgan's force advancing toward Chipping Campden after crossing the river Avon at Bidford. The route they took was undoubtedly along the old Roman road, Buckle Street. Around Weston Subedge the royalists had the option of continuing on Buckle street to climb up to the modern A44 running across Fish Hill before continuing to the A424 or to bear east and follow an ancient salt way that skirted the edge of Chipping Campden before turning south toward Stow.¹¹

It is clear from Ogilby's 1675 map that the A44/A424 route existed at the time of the battle. Ogilby's Plate 2 (London to Aberystwyth strip map) shows this road passing over Broadway Hill with a route toward Chipping Camden to the east between the 88- and 89-miles markers and another turning to Stow between the 87- and 86-mile markers. Part of this route is shown on Ogilby's Plate 85 (Sailsbury to Campden strip map) from around the 'turning' to Worcester at mile point 74, which is the road down Broadway Hill, to the turning around mile point 72 to Bourton on the Hill, which is shown on Plate 2 running toward Bourton on the Hill after the turn-off toward Stow. Beyond mile point 72 on Plate 85, the road runs to Stow, following the line of the modern A424 with Longborough to the east and Upper Swell to the west. A possible variation on this route for an advance into Stow was for the royalists to follow the

⁸ See [Sunrise and Sunset times for Stow-on-the-Wold, Gloucestershire on Thursday 31 March 2022 \(thetimeandplace.info\)](http://thetimeandplace.info) for these calculations; LJ Vol 8, 231;

⁹ LJ, Vol 8, 231

¹⁰ Wing S139, unpag.; *Birch memoir*, p.35; E.329[7], 5; Walker, p.152; LJ Vol 8, 231; Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 60, ff.586r-587r.

¹¹ *Birch memoir*, p.34; the authors are grateful to Tony Spicer for advice on the route of the Salt Way.

Roman road network westward from Fish Hill and then south which would eventually bring them out on the Tewkesbury to Stow road west of Stow.¹²

The salt way route, after skirting Chipping Campden, ran roughly parallel to the A44/A424, passing through or nearby Broad Campden, Blockley, Bourton on the Hill and Donnington, before turning toward Broadwell. At the time of the battle, a trackway, now a public footpath running from Donnington to the Fosse Way, would have been the direct route from the latter village into Stow.

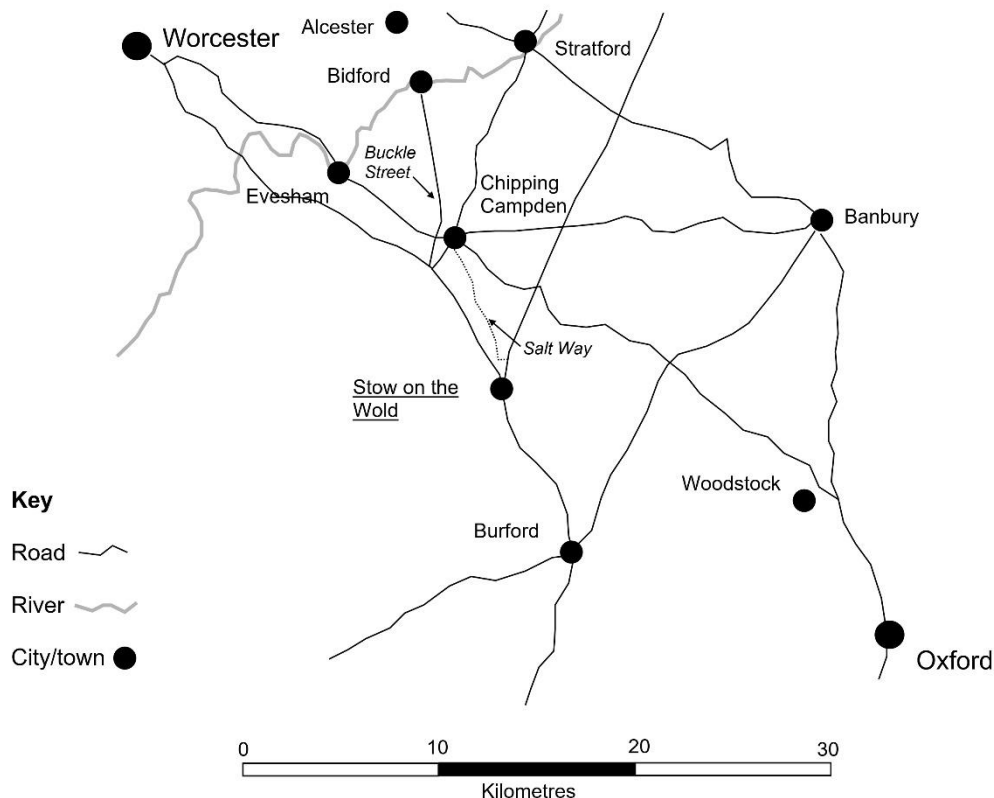


Figure 1: Stow area of operations March 1646

Both routes allowed a running fight to take place as the royalists ascended a hill near to Chipping Campden. For the A44/A424 route this involved climbing up what is now Fish Hill and on the salt way route at the climb out of Broad Campden toward Blockley. It is unlikely that the royalists would wish to march along the salt way, which would have taken them closer to the main parliamentarian force at Chipping Campden, and probably toward the detachment that was harrying their rear, as the evidence from the primary accounts indicated they were attempting to get away from the parliamentarians, who were trying to hold them up.

As Morgan's letter makes clear, nearer to Stow the royalists were 'put to a stand' by his attack with 400 cavalry and 200 firelocks. This indicates the royalists were in line of march when this happened and, as they had baggage waggons with them, were

¹² John Ogilby, *Britannia*, (London: 1675), plate 2, 85

almost certainly on a roadway. It follows from this that the battle must have taken place close to a route into Stow. The roads into the town from the Chipping Campden area run roughly from north to south and any manoeuvring over distance off a road to the east or west would have exposed the flank of the royalist army to further attack by the parliamentarians. The battle is therefore likely to have taken place across or close by a road.¹³

There is only one specific landscape clue about where the battle was fought. This comes from the *Moderate Intelligencer* which says the parliamentarians ‘charged them [the royalists] in a plain or common neer Stow’.¹⁴ A landscape study commissioned by the Battlefields Trust indicates that most, if not all, of the land north of Stow was probably open at the time of the battle (see figure 2). In Broadwell parish, which abutted Stow on its north side to the east of the Fosse Way, the land appears to have been unenclosed pasture fields near the town, becoming unenclosed arable fields further north. On the western side of the Fosse Way was the parish of Upper Swell. Here unenclosed arable fields ran to what is now the A424 with other, open arable fields and meadow to the west of the latter road. It is possible that the area to the west of the A424 contained the ‘common grounds or commons called the Sheephill and the Cowpasture’ described in the 1724 enclosure act covering Upper Swell. If so, this might be the reference to ‘a plain or common neer Stow’ which was reported as the location of the battle by the *Moderate Intelligencer*. Even if these fields were located elsewhere in Upper Swell parish, the appearance of open pasture and arable land adjacent to the A424 is consistent with the description of the area as a plain or common, particularly if whoever reported this to the *Moderate Intelligencer* did so on the basis of seeing the ground rather than knowing about its status. Nevertheless, as noted above, the area north of Stow appears to have been almost entirely open fields, so the reference to a plain or common cannot be located precisely. It is unclear whether there was a hedge or fence that marked the boundary between Upper Swell and Broadwell parishes, though the Fosse Way itself may have been a sufficiently clear marker. Nearer to Stow, what is now the Abbotswood Estate, bounded by the roads to Tewkesbury and Lower Swell, had been emparked in the thirteenth century. It is likely a substantial barrier was constructed to keep animals such as deer inside the park and poachers out. That the park was used to hold deer is possibly evidenced by an etching by Johannes Kip of Sir Robert Atkyn’s estate at Swell in around 1710, showing deer in the southern part of the park.¹⁵

¹³ E.329[7], p.5.

¹⁴ BL TT E.329[14], Anonymous, *The moderate intelligencer*, Issue 55, (London; 1645[6]), p.359

¹⁵ Tracey Partida, Stow-on-the-Wold Battlefield Landscape (Battlefields Trust, 2023) <https://www.battlefieldstrust.com/media/836.pdf>. The 1724 enclosure act is from Gloucester Records Office P323 SD 1/1; <https://www.parksandgardens.org/places/lower-swell-park>.

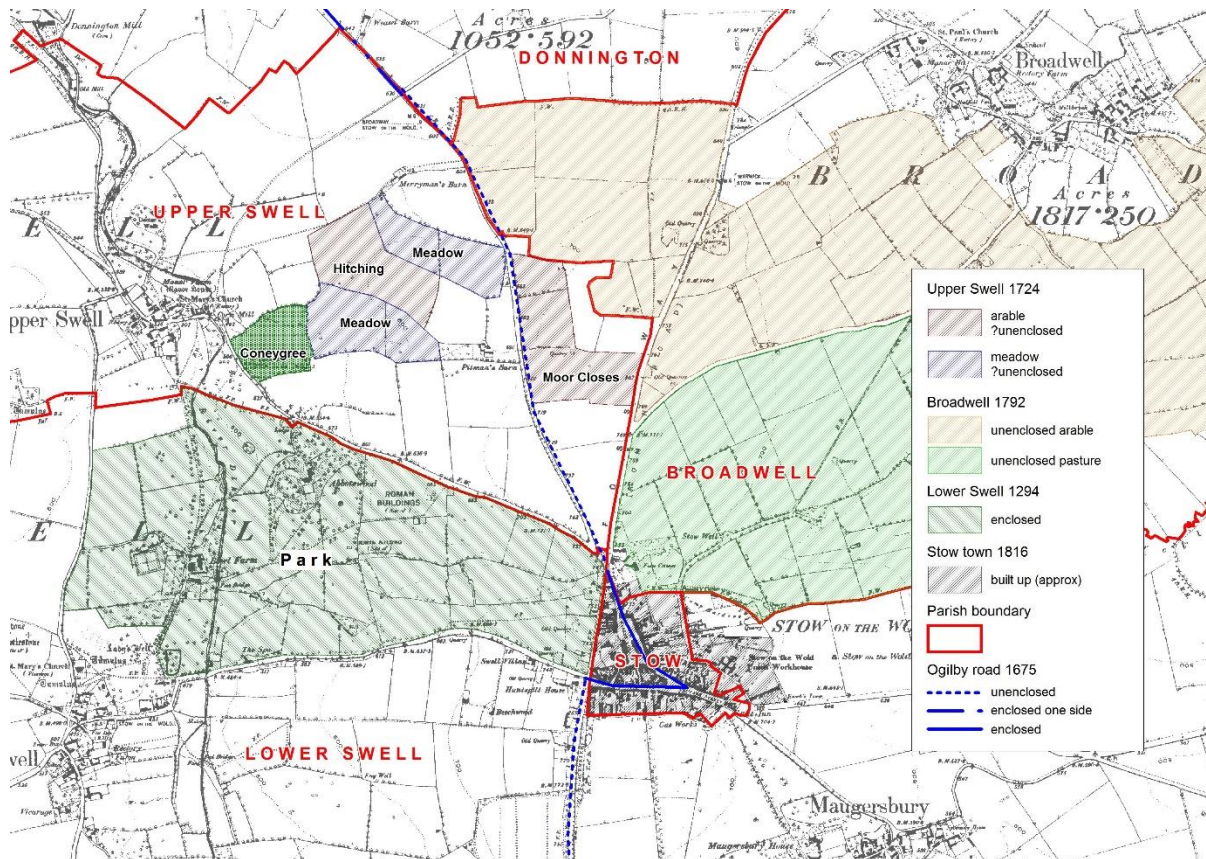


Figure 2: Stow-on-the-Wold battlefield landscape

Around Donnington, the fields to the south-west and south-east of the settlement appear to have also been open and in cultivation as suggested by the remnant ridge and furrow earthworks shown in 1940s RAF vertical air photographs. A 1777 map of the area shows a mature tree plantation on Horsington Hill, on the north side of the traditional battlefield, but whether it was established before the Civil War is unclear.¹⁶

Documentary accounts

The primary accounts of the battle indicate that the battlefield was close to Stow (author's emphasis in all):¹⁷

*I commanded 400 horse and 200 firelocks to charge home his rear-guard, to put him to a stand **before he should pass through Stow upon the Wold*** (Thomas Morgan letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, published 24 March 1646).¹⁸

*About three in the morneing we gott close up to the enimy then **drawne up in a ffield neer Stowe**, it being very darke.*

¹⁶ Isaac Taylor, 'Map of the County of Gloucester 1777' in Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, *A Gloucestershire and Bristol Atlas*, (London and Bradford: Percy Lund, Humphries and Co. Ltd., 1961), p.9

¹⁷ These references exclude a series of letters written in the months after the battle by Sir William Brereton where he describes the battle as being 'at Stow' see Ivor Carr & Ian Atherton, *Sir William Brereton's Letter Book 1646*, (Bristol: Staffordshire Record Society, 2007), pp.99, 109, 115, 121.

¹⁸ E.329[7], p.5

(John Birch account written by his Secretary Roe sometime between June 1646 and 1691).¹⁹

*we marched about a mile, and by that time the Scouts brought word **Enemy were drawn into a body neer Stow in the Ould.***

(RS account, written at Stratford upon Avon 23 March 1646).²⁰

*but he [Astley] makes his passage good and marches all Night, imagining they had not followed him any further, **and so early begins to draw into quarters**, when they appeared and fell upon him.*

(Sir Edward Walker's account, written around 1664).²¹

*and the last Day the Enemy came over the River Avon very strong (as it was reported Three Thousand), and **so came before us to Stow this Morning.***

(John Birch letter to the Speaker of the House of Lords, written at 5pm 21 March 1646).²²

*I came up to Colonel Morgan and Colonel Birch about Three of the Clock this Morning (**near Stowe, on Cotscole Hills**).*

(Sir William Brereton letter to the Speaker of the House of Lords, written at 7am 21 March 1646).²³

*But he [Morgan] **got to Stow** before Sir William came in to him with his horse. Yet the aforesaid Colonel **at his entrance into that place** clapt a party of Horse and Dragoons at the breech of him, which much disturbed him... Early in the morning, and, say the letters, an houre before day, we **charged them in a plain or common neer Stow.***

(*Moderate Intelligencer*, 19-26 March 1646).²⁴

*The Kinges forces intending to fighte, had taken their ground, a place of advantage, for their musketeers **neere the Towne** [of Stow on the Wold].*

(Thomas Malbon account 1651).²⁵

*Letters brought by M. Temple, informed that Col. Morgan Governor of Gloucester with his Forces, and those of Sir William Brereton joyned together; fell upon Sir Jacob Ashley, and all his Forces intending for Oxford, **at Stow in the Woald**, on the edg of Gloucester-shire, and after a sore conflict on both sides, Sir Jacob Ashley was totally routed. (Bulstrode*

¹⁹ *Birch memoir*, p.35

²⁰ Wing S139, unpag.

²¹ *Historical Discourses*, p.152

²² LJ Vol 8, p.231

²³ *Op cit*

²⁴ E.329[14], p.359

²⁵ James Hall (ed.), *Memorials of the Civil War in Cheshire, Lancashire and Cheshire Records Society Vol XIX* (Lancashire and Cheshire Records Society, 1889), p.202

Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affair*, 1682, written from his contemporaneous journal).²⁶

Morgan's account says that the royalists were about to pass through Stow when he stopped them whilst the *Moderate Intelligencer* suggested this was 'at the entrance' to the town. The latter source probably drew on Morgan's account to produce its narrative, so was not independent. Nonetheless, it is indicative of how contemporaries interpreted Morgan's version of events. Most of the remaining accounts reference the battle being near Stow or at Stow. Walker's full account of events leading up to the battle indicates that Astley had been ordered to march to Stow with his army. The section of his account above indicates that the royalists were about to go into quarters and therefore probably near a place with buildings, but he does not directly name the location. However, given the other primary sources place the royalists at or near Stow it seems likely that the quarters were to be in the town and therefore that the army was about to enter Stow when the battle was fought.

No settlement other than Stow is mentioned within the primary accounts of the battle. Moreover, the fact that the royalists were able to flee into the town and some fighting continued there suggests that the distance, for an army in rout, was not far. In addition, the time between the battle starting after 4:30am and prisoners being collected in the church by 6am, suggests Birch's estimate of fighting lasting about one hour is correct and that the time taken to reach the town by the royalists after being routed was short. This further supports a battle site close to Stow.²⁷

Accounts of the location of the battle from secondary sources from 1658-1712 are also worth examination. Of the 15 identified (see Appendix I), eleven name Stow or near Stow as the location of the battlefield. Four of them, detailed below, identify Donnington (sometimes with 'near Stow' added) as the place of the battle. These are listed below (author emphasis in all):

Lord Astleys being vanquish'd at a place called Donnington neer Stow on the Wold, on the 21 of March. In which fight himself was taken prisoner, and with him all the Kings hopes lost of preserving Oxford, till he could better his condition.

(Peter Heylyn, *A Short View of the Life and Reign of King Charles... from his Birth to his Burial*, 1658).²⁸

²⁶ Bulstrode Whitelock, *Memorials of the English Affair*, (London, 1682), p.204

²⁷ LJ Vol 8, 231; Bodleian Library, MS Tanner 60, ff.586r-587r.

²⁸ Wing H1375B, Peter Heylyn, *A Short View of the Life and Reign of King Charles... from his Birth to his Burial*, (London, 1658), p.127-128

In the twenty first of March, Sir Iacob Astley was beaten at Donnington neer unto Stow in the Wold, in the which fight himself was taken prisoner, and the kings hopes quite lost.

(Anonymous, *The Faithful Analist... or, The epitome of the English history*, 1660).²⁹

*And that which compleated the **Ruin of all the King's Affairs** in England, was the Surprize and Defeat of my **Lord Astley at Donnington near Stow on the Wold**, where he was taken Prisoner the 21st of March.*

(Roger Coke, *A detection of the court and state of England during the four last reigns and the inter-regnum consisting of private memoirs, &c.*, 1696).³⁰

Donington; The Lord Aston receiv'd a total Defeat by Collonel Morgan in this place March 21 1645 upon which all Hopes of preserving the King's Garrison in Oxford were lost.

(Sir Robert Atkyns, *The Ancient and Present state of Gloucestershire*, 1712).³¹

Atkyns' account is included as his father (also Robert) lived at Lower Swell and Atkyns junior may have had the opportunity to discuss the battle on his visits to his father or afterwards when he inherited the house in 1710, before his own death in 1711. Whether he did so or not is unclear, but the formulation of his entry about Astley's defeat, particularly the reference to 'all Hopes of preserving the King's garrison in Oxford were lost', was very similar to Peter Heylyn's account which also identified Donnington as the place of the battle saying 'and with him all the Kings hopes lost of preserving Oxford'. Given the similarity in the formulation of these statements about the battle, it seems likely that Atkyns followed Heylyn's account.³²

The anonymous author of the *Faithful Analist* in 1660 also appears to have followed Heylyn as he talked about 'the King's hopes quite lost' because of the battle and his narrative continues in the same way as Heylyn's after the battle. Roger Coke, writing in 1696 and distantly related to Sir Jacob Astley, also puts the battle at Donnington with language that is different from Heylyn, though covering the same points, perhaps suggesting he may also have relied upon him as a source.³³

Heylyn's history was published four years before his death in 1662 when he was around 62 years old. His account of the battle was written some years after it

²⁹ Anonymous, *The Faithful Analist; or, The epitome of the English history*, (London, 1660), pp.286-287

³⁰ Wing C4973, Roger Coke, *A detection of the court and state of England during the four last reigns and the inter-regnum consisting of private memoirs, &c.*, (London, 1696), p.315

³¹ Sir Robert Atkyns, *The Ancient and Present state of Gloucestershire*, London, 1712, p.694

³² 'Parishes: Lower Swell', in *A History of the County of Gloucester: Volume 6*, ed. C R Elrington (London, 1965), pp.165-172. *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/glos/vol6/pp165-172> [accessed 15 November 2022].

³³ Roger Coke, p.311

occurred and in late March 1646 he was either at or had just escaped from Winchester. He then moved from place to place until he settled at Minister Lovell in Oxfordshire in 1648. Whilst he had served as an editor of the Oxford royalist newssheet *Mercurius Aulicus* in the early years of the war, Heylyn was not able to hear immediately first-hand where the battle had occurred from any of those fleeing the fight, and it seems likely his information about its location was obtained, perhaps third hand, sometime after 1648. One possibility (and it is no more than that) is that Heylyn, in compiling the notes for his history, managed to conflate the site of the battle with the siege of Donnington castle in Berkshire which ended in late March 1646 and was therefore the next significant defeat to befall the royalists during the first Civil War. Heylyn did not mention this siege in his history and in an era without copy editors it is conceivable that he might have misread notes or misunderstood testimony referring to the siege of Donnington and linked this to the battle (and village) near Stow, with subsequent authors following his account. In the broader scheme of Heylyn's history, such a mistake would be a minor one and easily made.³⁴

Problems with the traditional site of the battle

Notwithstanding the primary accounts that locate the battle near to Stow, English Heritage, when it first registered the battlefield in 1995 designated the site as being on and around Horsington Hill in Donnington parish. English Heritage was guided in its decision by a report produced on the battle by the National Army Museum (NAM). The NAM produced over sixty reports for English Heritage on English battlefields of which 43 were taken forward to registration, with Stow being one of these.³⁵

The Stow report was one of the weaker ones produced by the NAM. In a paragraph explaining the sources for the battle, the NAM said '[t]he sources for the Battle are fragmentary and it has not been possible to consult any original contemporary record. Secondary sources only have been used in the compilation of this report'. The report went on to conclude, '[t]he sources of the Battle are few and fragmentary and it is doubtful whether further research would produce anything of substance'. In listing the sources used, the NAM identified Ron Field's unreferenced twenty-four-page 1992 monograph on the battle, which placed its location on Horsington Hill, and the Calendar of State Papers Domestic 1645-47. The former was used specifically by the NAM to provide a quote describing the fighting from RS, a trooper serving with Brereton during the battle, and the latter for the Committee of Both Kingdoms letter of congratulation to Colonel Morgan after the battle.³⁶

The RS account did not state where the battle was fought, but Field's 1992 monograph locating the battlefield at Horsington Hill appears to have encouraged the NAM to identify this as the battle site. This lies to the north and west of Donnington,

³⁴ Mandell Creighton, 'Peter Heylyn' in Leslie Stephen & Sydney Lee (ed.), *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol 26 (London: 1891), p.321

³⁵ National Army Museum Templer Study Centre, *The Battlefield of Stow on the Wold (21 March 1646)*, 2000/07/88/59

³⁶ NAM report, *The Battlefield of Stow on the Wold*, pp.3, 5; Ron Field, *Stow on the Wold, 1646*, (Design Folio: 1992), p.13; Wing S139; *CSPD 1645-1647*, pp.387-388.

close to the salt way which runs along the hill's eastern side. It is, however, a problematic battlefield. If Horsington tree plantation, first shown on mapping in 1777, was there at the time of the battle then it could not have been fought on the hill as the action would have not developed in the way described by the primary sources, nor could the battlefield be described as a 'plain or common'.³⁷

If the plantation was not there, it is conceivable that the royalists could have deployed upon the hill if they had been 'put to a stand' by the parliamentarians as they came upon the hill from the north via the salt way or were about to pass by it. If instead they had travelled down what is now the A424 and attempted to move onto Horsington hill after being stopped by the parliamentarians they would have had to make a circa 900m march with their left flank exposed to the enemy which they knew to be in close proximity. This seems an unlikely course of action for an experienced commander such as Astley.

If the royalists had deployed on the hill, the length of which could only allow some of their army to occupy the higher ground and would have disrupted sight-lines for commanders across its front, it is unclear why the parliamentarians would attack the position. The northern slope, which military logic suggests would be defended by the royalists, is very steep (see Figure 3) and it would be a foolhardy commander that attempted an assault there. From 375m north of the crest of the hill the ground rises by 45m, a little less than a one in eight gradient, but for the final 100m of this climb it becomes a one in six and a half gradient. None of the primary accounts mention the parliamentarians being faced with an attack uphill and, if this is what had happened, it is likely they would have said so given the providential style of battle accounts, which emphasised the challenges faced in the fighting which were overcome through God's support, that were written at this time. By way of comparison the battle of Lansdown in July 1643 involved a royalist assault led by infantry and supported by cavalry up a one in six and a half gradient initially turning to a one in five and a half gradient to reach the hill top where the parliamentarians were deployed. Most of the royalist cavalry were driven off the hill by parliamentary attacks and it was only the doggedness of the royalist infantry that saved the day. Whilst the circumstances were not identical, for Stow this perhaps suggests a successful assault on a royalist position on Horsington Hill would have required the parliamentary infantry to have taken ground, which the primary accounts make clear they did not. In any case, if faced by this position, the parliamentary commander could simply have marched around the royalist deployment, cutting off any further movement toward the King whilst waiting for them either to surrender or come-off the hill to fight.³⁸

The accounts of the battle separately indicate that once the royalists were defeated they fled back to Stow. As noted above, the hill is approximately 2.6 kilometres from the market square in Stow and it seems inconceivable that any army that had been 'put to a total rout', particularly when 'all the[ir] horse had turned about and fled', could, in the short time available, have made a coherent withdrawal back into Stow

³⁷ Taylor's map, 1777; E.329[14], p.359

³⁸ Charles Chadwyck Healey (ed), *Bellum Civile*, (London: Somerset Record Society, 1902), p.54

over the distance involved whilst being harried by over 1,000 parliamentarian cavalry troopers and have still been able to put up some sort of fight in the town.³⁹



Figure 3: Looking south toward the northern slope of Horsington hill. Note the steepness of the climb, particularly through the trees in the distance to the top of the hill (author's photograph)

These problems, in part, caused English Heritage to revisit the registration at Stow in 1999 when its independent Battlefield Panel took a paper prepared by English Heritage recommending that the battlefield registration should be changed. This suggested that the battle 'took place approximately 1,200 metres north of the village (sic) [of Stow] on a north-facing slope between the Evesham [A424] and former Donnington roads'. No further action seems to have been taken on this recommendation and the original registration has remained unchanged. Since then, only John Barratt's book covering the end of the war in the Welsh marches, which contained a chapter on the battle of Stow, has attempted to address the site of the battle, with him favouring a location nearer to the town than the traditional one.⁴⁰

³⁹ E329[7], p.5; *Historical Discourses*, p.152

⁴⁰ English Heritage, 'Annex 5: Possible Revision – Stow on the Wold' in unpublished minutes from *English Heritage Battlefield Panel 99/2 – Agenda item 5* (English Heritage: 1999); John Barratt, *The Last Battle*, (Warwick: Helion and Co Ltd, 2017)

Archaeology

It was these problems with the traditional site of the battle that encouraged the Battlefields Trust to look again at where it was fought. In 2015, a battlefield survey project was initiated with the aim of finding battlefield archaeology which would locate the site.

A series of metal detector surveys were undertaken between October 2015 and November 2022 (Figure 4) testing the traditional battlefield site on Horsington Hill as registered by Historic England, revised locations to the south and south-west of the traditional site, proposed by the Battlefields Trust, and a site much closer to Stow.

Initial survey work was conducted in October 2015 across ten different areas, including fields to the south of the traditional site as well as the revised site proposed by the Battlefields Trust. High specification metal detectors were used along with sub-metre GPS for recording the location of all finds and the transects along which metal detecting had taken place. Metal detecting was undertaken by experienced detectorists who had worked on other battlefield sites and used 10m transects which were deemed to be of sufficient intensity to locate Civil War artefacts had the detected area been in a location where fighting had taken place.⁴¹ Detecting was also undertaken for non-ferrous metals only. By far the most prevalent find on a Civil War battlefield is lead shot, and the locating of these artefacts in sufficient quantity would confirm that the battlefield had indeed been located. It was therefore not appropriate to survey for all metals as the abundance of ferrous objects across most land would have incurred a severe time delay and therefore had a significantly detrimental impact on the amount of ground that could be covered during the survey.

Most of the fields surveyed in 2015 had been ploughed within the previous ten years and many had been ploughed that year. Ploughed fields provide good detecting conditions as artefacts in the top-soil are brought toward the surface through the ploughing action. Fewer finds are likely to be made on long term/permanent pasture than on arable or pasture land which has been cultivated in recent decades. In part, this is due to objects having passed down toward the bottom of the soil column due to weight and bioturbation, making detection more difficult. In extreme cases this can place objects out of the range of modern metal detectors.⁴²

A total of 69 artefacts of potential archaeological interest were recovered from the surveyed areas in 2015, a remarkably low number. Finds identified as 'junk' were collected by transect, later assessed, and then discarded. No finds were recovered that could be identified as being of probable Civil War date.

⁴¹ Glenn Foard & Richard Morris, *The archaeology of English battlefields*, (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2012), p.28

⁴² Battlefields Trust, *Battlefield Investigation Policy and Guidance*, (2022), p.17 (see <https://www.battlefieldstrust.com/cms/viewdoc.asp?a=23&b=400&c=619&d=11591571>)

The lack of any Civil War dated finds in 2015 indicated that fighting had not occurred in any of the areas surveyed, casting doubt on both the traditional and revised battle sites hypotheses. By 2022, further permission had been obtained to metal detect on the Horsington Hill (traditional) battlefield site and in November a single day of metal detecting was organised there using the same method as in 2015, though with navigation grade GPS to geolocate search areas and finds and five metre transects used to try and find evidence of the battle. None was found and the oldest object recovered was a very worn George III half penny, probably dating from 1770-75. The field detected had last been ploughed in the early 1980s⁴³ and it is unlikely that all lead shot, had they been present on the site, would have sunk in the soil column beyond the range of modern metal detectors. This detecting covered a little under half of the core area of the traditional battlefield site, with gaps between survey areas varying from 45-110m – insufficiently wide for the royalist deployment to have occurred, and therefore the fighting not to be identified through metal detecting. This work confirmed the conclusion reached in 2015 that the battle of Stow was not fought on Horsington Hill. Furthermore, the lack of evidence to the immediate south of the registered battlefield suggested that no rout had occurred through that area either.

In 2018, in light of the failure to find evidence of fighting in the 2015 survey and after a careful re-reading of the primary accounts, a new hypothesis - that the battle was fought much closer to Stow across what is now the A424 – was developed. Between 2018-2022 permission was obtained to investigate a series of fields on the east and west sides of the A424 around Greenfield farm. Survey methodology similar to that used in 2015 was employed, but this time using a mixture of 5m and 2.5m transects.

The survey conducted in April 2018 recovered 18 lead shot of various forms with an additional four probable fragmented bullets. The bullets were a variety of calibres and most showed evidence of having been fired. Additionally, several distinctly 17th century military forms of shot were present within the assemblage including two slugs, a quartered bullet, and a bullet showing clear evidence of having been double or triple-loaded. An assessment of some of the 2018 bullet finds by Dr Glenn Foard found that ‘the assemblage shows an exceptional frequency of high impact damage... [which is] probably the result of the shallow soils over the limestone geology which, especially if ploughed in 1646 or earlier in the century, may have brought limestone brash into the topsoil’. Dr Foard also noted that ‘the degree of impact distortion was so massive on some bullets that it is likely that some of the other irregular pieces of lead recovered from the site are bullets but lacking recognisable characteristics’.⁴⁴

⁴³ Information provided by the landowner.

⁴⁴ Dr. Glenn Foard, *Report on bullets from the 2018-2022 survey Battlefields Trust on the 1646 Stow on the Wold battlefield*, (unpublished, 2023), p.1

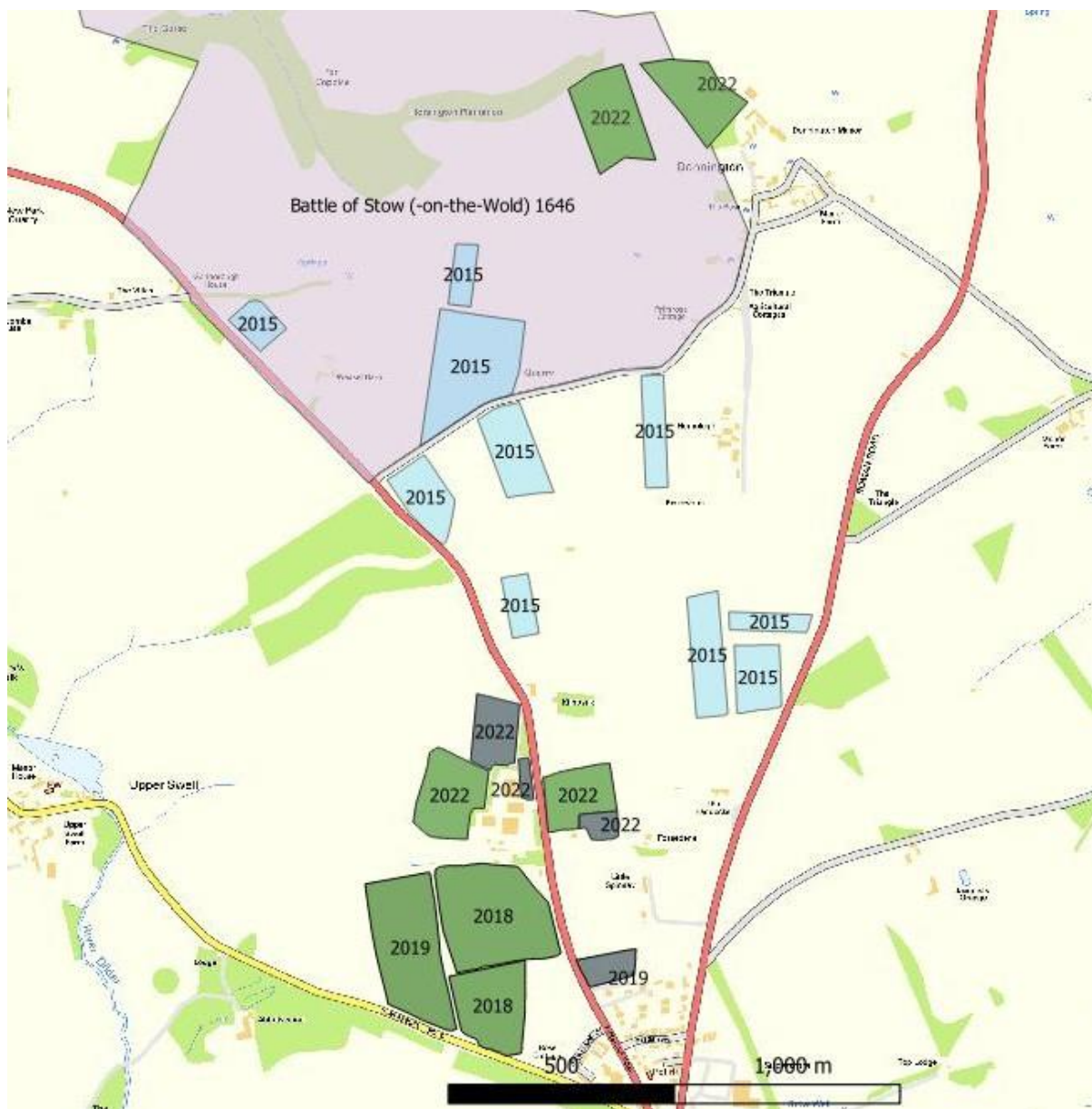


Figure 4: Survey areas at Stow on the Wold (fields investigated in 2022 and coloured green, those in 2018 and the field to the west of the A424 in 2019 were surveyed using 5m transects. Dark grey coloured fields in 2022 and the 2019 field east of the A424 were surveyed with 2.5m transects. 2015 fields were surveyed with 10m transects.) (Registered Battlefield information © Historic England 2018 used under an Open Government Licence v3.0.. Base Map Ordnance Survey Open Data 2022 containing public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0)

Further work in January 2019 demonstrated that the spread of finds did not extend further to the west of the area investigated in 2018, discounting the hypotheses that the royalists advanced along the Tewkesbury road to Stow, but supporting the view that it was fought across the A424 as, in a field to the east, three bullets from infantry and cavalry weapons were found. In January 2022, surveying of areas north of the land investigated in the two previous phases found further evidence of fighting on both sides of the road, including two bandolier powder caps, five bullets from infantry and cavalry weapons, and three probable fragmented bullets.

Six other bullets (two probably from muskets, and four weighing 6.7-9 grams) were also notified to the detecting team as being found by a detectorist on fields west of the A424 around Greenfield farm. The two musket balls appear to be related to the others found in this area, though the four lighter weight balls may be from later sporting activity as they appear too small to be from Civil War pistols. Moreover, at least one other hobby detectorist is known to have made bullet finds in the fields on the eastern side of the A424 and it therefore appears that some battle related archaeology has been lost from there as a consequence.

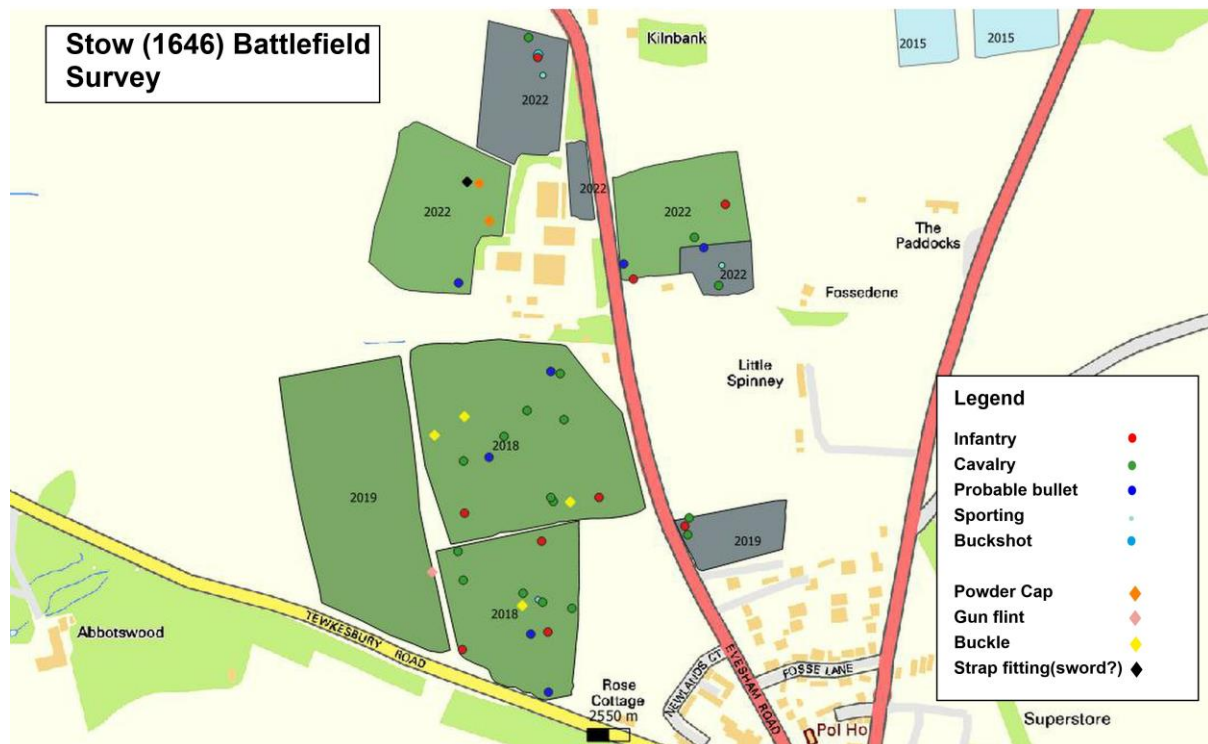


Figure 5: Lead shot and other finds distribution at Stow on the Wold
(Fields shaded green were surveyed using 5m transects, those in grey 2.5m transects). (Base map Ordnance Survey Open Data 2022 containing public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0)

Assessment

Whilst the finds around Greenfield farm confirm that fighting occurred there in the Civil War, it is important to assess whether they could have been deposited during actions other than the battle fought on 21 March 1646. Separately, if the finds do come from the battle of Stow, what do they tell us about the engagement?

Other Civil War actions around Stow

Five engagements, other than the battle fought in March 1646, have been identified around Stow during the Civil Wars. The first was in mid-September 1642 when Anthony Wood reported that Sir John Byron, travelling from Oxford with cavalry troopers, was set upon by the 'country' at Stow-in-the-Wold. Wood's account was

second hand and not completely accurate as he incorrectly reported Byron had been killed. Sir Robert Cooke, writing to his cousin Sir Robert Harley on 13 September 1642 also seems to reference this incident when he described the rescue of an Oxford delinquent from Mr Stephen's house in Worcestershire by 'some troopers that were thought to come from Oxford' and who were subsequently pursued by 'Colonel Fynes' from Broadway to Pershore and then toward Bridgenorth. Byron had left Leicester in late August 1642 with three troops of horse and had lost 46 men in a skirmish at Brackley before continuing to Oxford where he recruited from amongst the scholars before heading toward the rest of the army, which was marching toward Shrewsbury. 'Colonel Fynes' is probably a reference to one of Lord Say and Sele's sons who was presumably commanding local forces at that time. If this was the force that pursued (and attacked?) Byron then it must also have been made up of cavalry and possibly dragoons in order to pursue the royalists in the way described. Wood's account is vague and inaccurate and Cooke's letter suggests Fiennes did not follow the troopers, who were thought to come from Oxford, until they were in Worcestershire. It is therefore far from certain that this incident occurred close to Stow and, in any case, the area in which finds have been made, which covers 300m by 700m, appears too large for the numbers involved in the type of action Wood and Cooke describe.⁴⁵

A second action in the vicinity of Stow occurred in, probably, June 1643, when the parliamentary governor of Gloucester, Edward Massey, attacked the village of Slaughter with 120 horse and dragoons, surprising a royalist horse quarter before continuing to Oddington to attack another cavalry quarter. Massey was subsequently engaged by royalist cavalry near Slaughter whilst returning to Gloucester. Upper and Lower Slaughter are located around 4 kilometres south-west of Stow and the route from there to Oddington (around 3 kilometres east of Stow) would most likely have made use of the Fosse Way and then the road to Maugersbury (1km south-east of Stow), which Ogilby shows on his 1675 map. None of the action described in the primary accounts appears to have taken place in the immediate vicinity of Stow and the route used by Massey would not have taken him close to where the archaeological finds have been made.⁴⁶

Separately, in early September 1643, the Earl of Essex's army, which was advancing to relieve Gloucester, was engaged by a royalist cavalry force east of Stow around the villages of Upper and Lower Oddington. The account of this action from Sergeant Henry Foster of the Red regiment of the London trained bands makes clear that royalist cavalry was forced by artillery fire to withdraw up to the slope that leads into Stow from the east. They were then driven from that slope by more parliamentary

⁴⁵ Andrew Clark (ed.), *The Life and Times of Anthony Wood*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1891), p.60; Historical Manuscripts Commission 14th Report Part II, *The manuscripts of his Grace the Duke of Portland*, Vol III (London: HMSO, 1894), p.98; BL TT, E.117[11] Anonymous, *A true and perfect relation of the manner of the apprehension and taking of 46. rebellious cavalliers at Brackly*, (London: 1642), p.1; BL TT, E.122[13], Anonymous, *A Perfect diurnall of the passages of the souldiers, that are under the command of the Lord Say in Oxford*, (London: 1642), p.1;

⁴⁶ John Corbet, *A Historical relation of the military government of Gloucester*, (London: 1645), p.37; Ogilby, Plate 85.

artillery fire and pursued by Essex's men for three miles before turning to engage again. The pursuit was toward Naunton (probably along a side road identified on plate 85 of Ogilby's *Britannia*) as, according to the official parliamentary account of the campaign, the army quartered at Naunton that night. Neither Foster's account nor the official parliamentary one indicated any fighting in the three-mile pursuit of the royalists from Stow. This is unsurprising given the royalist force was made up entirely of mounted troops with the parliamentarians having to advance at the march pace of the infantry and train of artillery. A pursuit following the road to Naunton and the likely lack of any fighting for three miles beyond the eastern side of Stow mean the archaeological finds from around Greenfield farm cannot come from this action.⁴⁷

On 7 May 1645, according to George Purefoy, the parliamentary garrison commander at Compton Wynnyates, there was an attack by a party of 30 of his troopers on the rear of the royalist army 'within a mile of Stow'. Richard Symonds, who was serving as a cavalryman with the King's army at this time, said that the army had advanced from Oxford on 7 May and quartered at Woodstock before marching to Stow on 8 May. Notwithstanding the discrepancy in dates between the two accounts, an attack on the royalists as they advanced to Stow from Woodstock would have taken place on the eastern side of the town rather than the northern side and cannot therefore account for the archaeological finds that have been made. Purefoy's letter also says he sent out a party on 9 May 'to bang them [the royalists] up in the rear'. Here Purefoy is describing why he sent out his troopers, but he says they 'marched straight to [Chipping] Camden' indicating that between sending them out and reaching Chipping Campden there was no fighting with the royalists and therefore no action near Stow.⁴⁸

Interpretation of archaeological results

Overall, the numbers of Civil War military finds from the archaeological survey were limited. Nevertheless, the fields surveyed using 5m transects in 2018 had a density of lead shot finds of around 1.3 bullets per kilometre surveyed (1.5 bullets per kilometre if probable bullets are included). From the 2022 survey, field 4 (see figure 5 below) produced 0.74 bullets per kilometre surveyed (1.3 bullets per kilometre if probable bullets are included). This compares to 0.3-7.8 bullets per kilometre for various fields surveyed at Edgehill.⁴⁹ Detecting conditions as well as duration and intensity of combat (ie the amount of lead shot deposited in the ground over time) are obvious variables in comparing the battles of Edgehill and Stow. The latter was in all respects a much smaller affair than Edgehill and did not involve artillery firing case shot; at Edgehill case shot may have increased the concentration of finds in

⁴⁷ BL TT, E.69[15], Henry Foster, *A True and exact relation of the marchings of the two regiments of the trained bands of the city of London*, (London: 1643), unpag.; BL TT, E.70[10] Anonymous, *A true relation of the late expedition of his excellency, Robert, earl of Essex*, (London: 1643), pp.7-8;

⁴⁸ BL TT, E.260[36], Anonymous, *Perfect passages of each days proceedings in Parliament*, (London: 1645), p.232; C.E. Long & Ian Roy (eds.), *Richard Symond's diary of the marches of the royal army*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp.164-165

⁴⁹ For detail on fields surveyed at Edgehill see Glenn Foard, *Battlefield Archaeology of the English Civil War*, (Oxford: BAR British Series 570, Archaeopress, 2012), p.149

certain areas of the battlefield. Moreover, the fields surveyed at Stow seem to be mainly on the western flank of the armies, where predominantly a cavalry action took place. Bullet finds would be expected to be less per kilometre in this area than in the main infantry action as use of firearms generally gave way quickly to a melee in Civil War cavalry actions, particularly this late in the war. October 2023 work at the battle of Langport (1645) by the Battlefields Trust also indicated low density of lead shot per kilometre surveyed (0.66–1.27) and it is possible that Civil War battles of relatively short duration with limited numbers engaged generate this type of relatively limited archaeological signature.⁵⁰ Further work is required to test this hypothesis.

One possibility is the bulk of the finds represent the initial engagement that put the royalists to a stand. If this is correct, then the eventual royalist deployment would have been even closer to Stow, with the parliamentarians perhaps deployed on the southern edge of where archaeological finds have been made. But the nature of the initial engagement, which is likely to have been short and sharp given the dark conditions and, according to the primary accounts, focused only on the royalist rear-guard in line of march, seems unlikely to have generated the scatter of finds that have been made.⁵¹

A more likely interpretation is that the royalists were caught in line of march on what is now the A424 at a point north of the most northerly field shown as surveyed in 2022 in Figures 4–7, perhaps just within the Donnington part of Stow parish, which conceivably provides another explanation for the battle being said to have taken place at Donnington. Finds in this northern field may be from this initial engagement, either as over-shots or because the action involved the royalists continuing to move south to escape the attack. With the parliamentarians close by, the royalists were forced to deploy their army. Astley may have identified or been told about the gully (see figure 7), which seems to have been meadow land at the time of the battle, to the west of what is now Greenfield farm which would have provided good protection for his left wing of horse. He may have deployed to leave a gap of 100m or so between the gully and his troopers further south. This would also have given his cavalry on that side of the battlefield an opportunity to charge any advancing parliamentarians as they reached the top of the gully slope, no-doubt disorganised, and may reflect Colonel Birch's comment to his secretary that the parliamentarians had disadvantage of ground. The lack of finds to the west of the fields surveyed in 2018 indicates that the action did not spill into this area, probably because the parliamentarians avoided crossing the gully during the battle. One other possibility is that some form of enclosure did exist between the fields surveyed in 2018 and 2019 Field 1 (see Figure 7) which allowed Astley to anchor his flank and channelled the parliamentary attack. The landscape study was unable to rule-out or confirm this. The preponderance of lead shot associated with horse arms in this area also suggests it formed a cavalry flank for both armies with the smaller number of musket

⁵⁰ Wilson and Marsh (forthcoming).

⁵¹ E.329[14], p.359

shot and powder caps recovered perhaps representing parliamentary firelocks and royalist commanded musketeers (see below).⁵²

The rest of the royalist army would have deployed eastwards reaching as far at the Fosse Way. Astley appears to have led the infantry in the centre and acted as commanding general. Sir Charles Lucas, the senior royalist cavalry commander at the battle probably led the right wing and Sir William Vaughan the left wing. On the parliamentary left (east), Birch and 32 of his regiment had their horses shot when they attacked. This appears a significant number of horse casualties if it was the result of a cavalry action alone and it seems likely that it was commanded musketeers withdrawn from the royalist infantry battalions and interlined with their cavalry squadrons to strengthen the flanks on that side of the battlefield which caused these losses. This was a tactic used by the royalists in other battles.⁵³ Given that most of the parliamentary cavalry seems to have been on the western side of the battlefield, it would have made sense for the royalists to strengthen their cavalry with commanded musketeers on that wing as well. A conjectured deployment for the royalists would place 450 cavalry and 120 commanded musketeers on each wing with about 1,160 infantry in the centre.

The parliamentarians, after their initial contact with the royalists also formed up in battle array and marched forward until they found the enemy deployment. They then waited for daylight. Brereton commanded the parliamentary right wing of cavalry consisting of 800 troopers and 200 firelocks. The firelocks would probably have been deployed as commanded shot between the cavalry squadrons. Birch seems to have led the parliamentary left of perhaps 500 cavalry. Morgan is said to have commanded the 'van', which, according to one account was not the left or right wing of cavalry, indicating, by a process of elimination, that this referred to the circa 1,100 infantry in the centre.

Survey (2022) field 4 (figure 7) may have been part of the initial parliamentary position. Bullet finds might be expected to be lower here because the primary accounts indicate the parliamentarians advance to attack the royalists and most royalist fire would therefore have taken place at a range much closer than the initial deployment distances. Nonetheless this would have resulted in some over-shots back into the initial parliamentary position, and these may be represented by some of the finds made in field 4.

In this interpretation, the archaeological finds indicate that the battle was fought across the A424. A conjectured deployment of the armies based on the archaeology and the key terrain features suggests the royalist (~2,300 men) were positioned across a front⁵⁴ of perhaps around 607m aligned east-west at a point between

⁵² *Birch memoirs*, p.35

⁵³ See, for example de Gomme's depiction of royalist deployments at Marston Moor, Naseby and the so called third battle of Newbury, British Library MS Additional 16,370 ff.60, 63, 65

⁵⁴ This assumes the royalist and parliamentary cavalry were deployed three deep, the royalist infantry three deep and the parliamentary infantry six deep. It allows four feet frontage per man as suggested by Sir James Turner (see Sir James Turner, *Pallas Armata*, (London, 1683), pp.271-272)

Greenfield Farm and the modern outskirts of Stow and the parliamentarians (~2,600 men) also aligned east-west on a front of about 705m around 275m north of the royalist position (figure 5). As noted above, the gully which runs westward from Greenfield farm (figure 6) possibly shaped the action, given the absence of finds in the main field (2019 Field 1) investigated in 2019.

except for the royalist infantry, which would have been deployed in order at around three feet frontage per man. This deployment also assumes the royalists are using 120 commanded musketeers between the cavalry squadrons on each wing (240 in total) and the parliamentary right wing has its firelock companies similarly deployed.

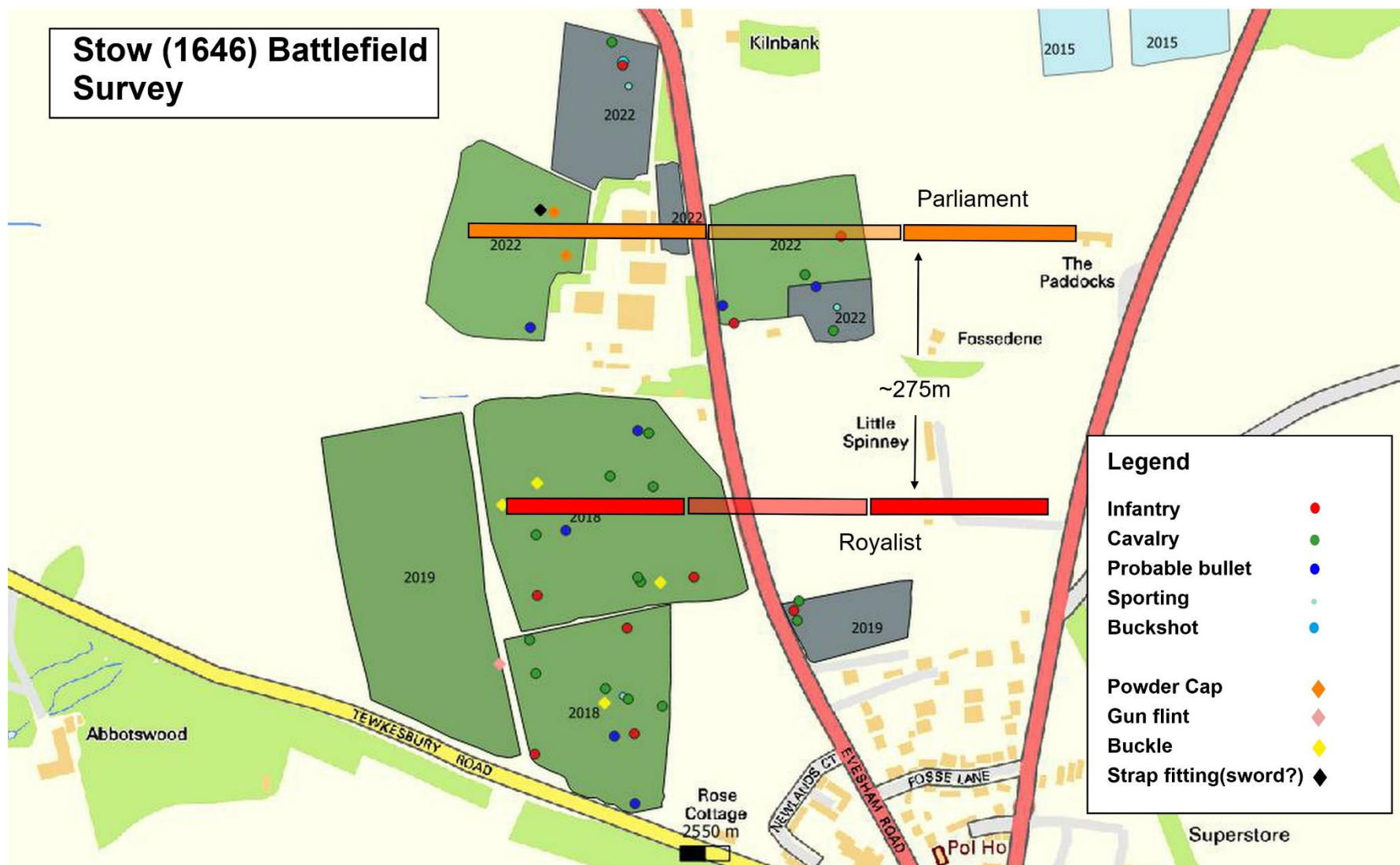


Figure 6: Battle of Stow finds distribution with conjectured army deployments. (Base map Ordnance Surey Open Data 2022 containing public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0)

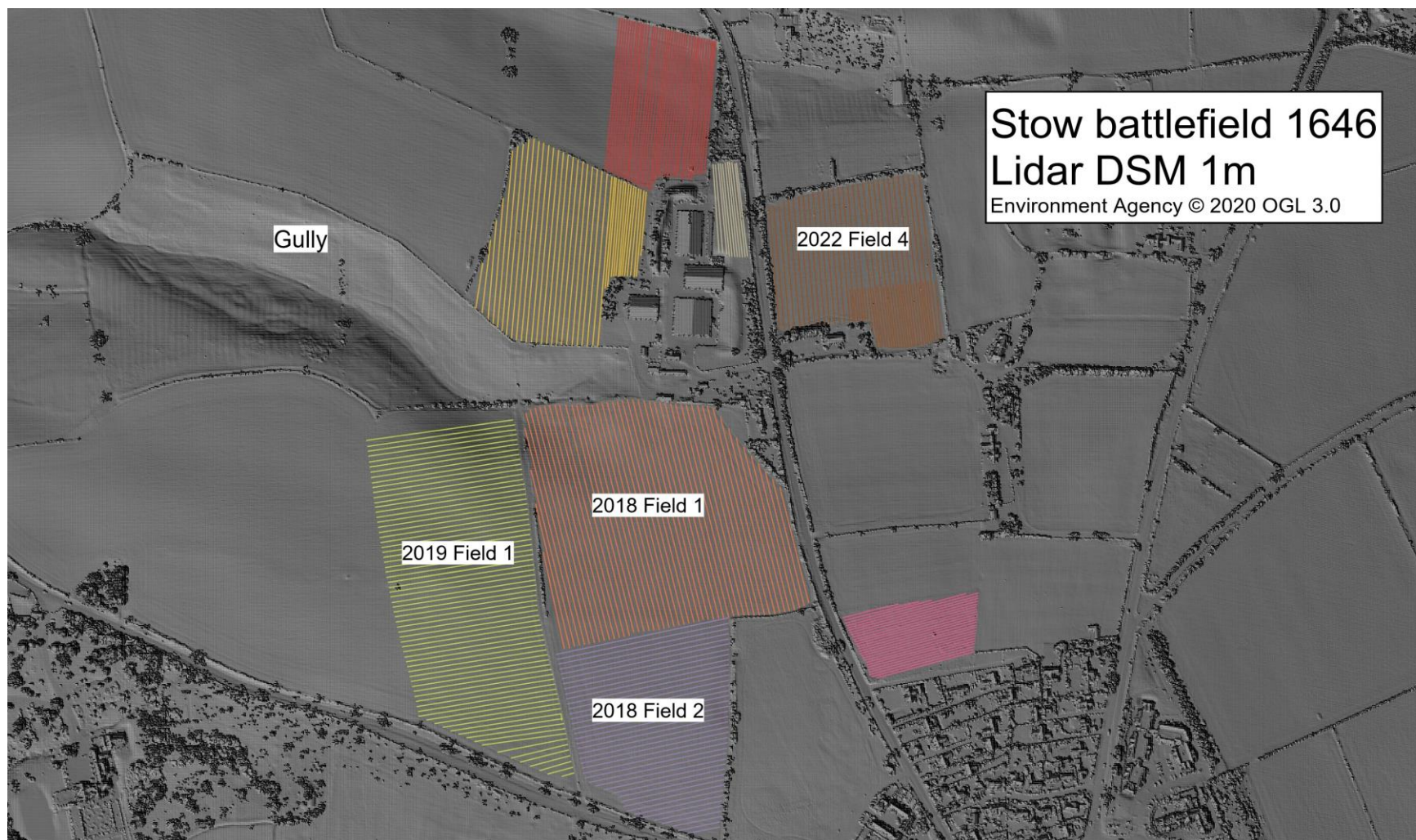


Figure 7: Lidar view of survey areas showing the location of the gully on the western side of the proposed battlefield. The coloured lines each represent a detected transect.

Conclusion

Despite a small number of accounts from the second half of the 17th century and early 18th century placing the 1646 Stow battlefield at Donnington, the traditional site of the battle at Horsington Hill is problematic. Its location in relation to the most likely route of royalist advance, distance from Stow and implications of its steep northern side, makes it an unlikely battlefield. The lack of battlefield archaeology from recent metal detecting appears to confirm this.

Why later 17th and early 18th century accounts placed the battle at Donnington is unclear, though most, if not all, appear to repeat initial claims by Peter Heylyn, who may simply have been confused or misinformed. Alternatively, the initial engagement before the battle commenced may have occurred within the Donnington part of Stow parish and led to suggestions of the battle being fought there, though this seems an overly technical explanation. The accounts of the battle from those who participated or were written in the days following suggest it was fought close to the town rather than where the traditional site is located.

The battlefield archaeology is limited. This is, in part, due to the time that has been available for survey work, because some fields under pasture are likely to have produced less finds than if they had been ploughed, and because permission to survey some fields was not forthcoming. Recording of bullets has also been complicated due to the stoney nature of the ground, which appears to have caused shot to disintegrate or deform to such an extent that it is impossible to be sure that all of them have been identified. Hobby detectorists may also have caused some of the archaeology in the fields around Greenfield farm to have been lost. Nevertheless, sufficient finds have been found to make a good case that the location of the battle is around Greenfield farm. Other Civil War actions around Stow have been considered as possible explanations for the archaeology discovered, but none fit the location of the finds or their distribution. The balance of probability therefore suggests that the Stow battlefield has been located.

The battlefield archaeology found could form part of the initial attack by the parliamentarians that put the royalists moving in line of march to a stand, though the wide extent of the scatter makes this unlikely. A more convincing explanation is that the archaeology represents the western side of the battlefield and a conjectural deployment based on the finds suggests it is located around 800m from the centre of Stow, a more realistic distance than the traditional site on Horsington Hill for the royalists to flee back into the town in sufficient order for groups to continue fighting. Metal detecting on fields that have so far been inaccessible would be necessary to confirm this interpretation and it is likely that fighting stretched into what are now built-up areas of the town.

Appendix I

and **neer Stow on the old**, where old Ashly was taken
(G.W., *Respublica Anglicana*, (London: 1650), p.10)

Lord Astleys being vanquish'd **at a place called Donnington neer Stow** on the Wold, on the 21 of March. In which fight himself was taken prisoner, and with him all **the Kings hopes lost** of preserving Oxford, till he could better his condition.

(Peter Heylyn, *A Short View of the Life and Reign of King Charles.. from his Birth to his Burial*, (London: 1658), pp.127-128)

In the twenty first of March, Sir Iacob Astley **was beaten at Donnington neer unto Stow in the Wold**, in the which fight himself was taken prisoner, **and the kings hopes quite lost**.

(Anonymous, *The faithful analist; or, The epitome of the English history*, (London: 1660), pp.286-287)

Morgan and Brearton follow in our Rear,
Whom for to fight, **at Stow inforc'd wee were**
(Andrew Cooper, *Stratologia*, (London: 1662), p.154)

and the **Lord Astley defeated at Stow in the Would**, two thousand kill'd, and taken prisoners; and so ended this year, the next beginning with the same face of affairs, several surrenders being made to the Parliament.

(Anonymous, *Royall and loyall blood shed by Cromwell and his party, &c*, (London: 1662), p.25)

and **the Lord Astley defeated at Stow in the Would**, two thousand kill'd, and taken prisoners; and so ended this year.

(James Heath, *A brief chronicle of all the chief actions so fatally falling out in these three kingdoms*, (London:1662), pp.24-25)

he got a considerable Army, which for want of the Horse promised him from Oxford, a streight wherein he could not avoid fighting, **he lost at Stow in the Old March 21. 1645/6**. (David Lloyd, *Memoires of the lives, actions, sufferings & deaths of those noble, reverend and excellent personages that suffered by death, sequestration, decimation, or otherwise, for the Protestant religion and the great principle thereof, allegiance to their soveraigne, in our late intestine wars*, (London: 1667), p.644)

March. **Lord Ashly defeated near Stow**.

(George Meriton, *Anglorum gesta, or, A brief history of England being an exact account of the most remarkable revolutions and most memorable occurrences and transactions in peace and war*, (London: 1675), p.350)

*The King, Duke of York, Prince Rupert, and Prince Maurice, were all this while at Oxford, surrounded with the Enemies Forces, expecting only the relief of the Lord Astley's Foot to join with the Kings Horse at Farrington; but these **by the way at Stow in the** Woulds, are encountred by Brereton and Morgan, and totally routed.*

(Francis Sanford, *A genealogical history of the kings of England, and monarchs of Great Britain, &c.*, (London: 1677), p.555)

*Hereupon Sir Iacob Astley.. **being set upon near Stow on the woulds in Gloucestershire.***

(William Dugdale, *A short view of the late troubles in England*, (London: 1681), pp.202-203)

*March [1646] **L. Asley defeated near Stow.***

(R.B., *The Wars of England, Scotland, And Ireland*, (London: 1681), p.135)

*[date 21 March 1646] Sir Jacob Astley, who was the last hopes of the King's Army, **defeated near Stow.***

(Samuel Clarke, *The historian's guide, or, Britain's remembrancer being a summary of all the actions, exploits, sieges, battels, designs, attempts, preferments, honours, changes &c.*, (London: 1690), p.29)

*so that the Royalists hopes were very low, only they had some expectations from a party still remaining under Sir Jacob Astley, but Coll. Morgan **encountering him near Stow in the holds**, utterly Routed him.*

(R.B., *The history of Oliver Cromwel being an impartial account of all the battles, sieges, and other military atchievements wherein he was engaged*, (London: 1692), p.18)

*And that which compleated the Ruin of all the King's Affairs in England, was the Surprize and Defeat of my **Lord Astley at Donnington near Stow on the Wold**, where he was taken Prisoner the 21st of March.*

(Roger Coke, *A detection of the court and state of England during the four last reigns and the inter-regnum consisting of private memoirs, &c.*, (London: 1696), p.315)

Donington; The Lord Aston receiv'd a total Defeat by Collonel Morgan in this place March 21 1645 upon which all Hopes of preserving the King's Garrison in Oxford were lost. (Sir Robert Atkyns, *The Ancient and Present state of Gloucestershire*, (London: 1712), p.694)

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