

Battle of Adwalton Moor – 1643

The Civil Wars of the mid seventeenth century were a reflection of profound political, constitutional, religious and social conflict which was expressed in a struggle for control between King and Parliament.

In the early stages of the first Civil War, the Parliamentary cause in the North was upheld by the Fairfax family, the Royalist part by the Earl of Newcastle. To break the power of Fairfaxes, which was concentrated on the cloth towns of West Yorkshire, the Earl of Newcastle marched on Bradford in June 1643 with 10 000 men. To defend the town, which could not have resisted a siege, the Fairfaxes advanced from Bradford with 3000 – 4 000 men and gave battle on Adwalton Moor.

The Parliamentarians achieved initial success, but once they were out on the open moor there was a sudden change of fortune. The Royalists' pikemen pushed the Parliamentarians back, their cavalry turning retreat into flight. The Royalists had won.

The victory at Adwalton Moor gave the Royalists control of the North for the remainder of the year. It was second only in significance to Marston Moor in the history of the Civil Wars in the North.

The landscape of 1643 was one of hedge-lined fields on the lower slopes and moorland with coal pits higher up. The expansion of housing and roads over the last 50 years has dramatically altered the character of the battlefield.

Amenity Features

Despite its urban fringe character, the landscape still holds some features of historical interest related to the battle. Several of the hedgerows are likely to have been features of 1643 scene, as were the coalpits now visible only as ponds around the Plantation. Public access to the main viewpoints is possible. Portraits of Fairfax and Newcastle hang in nearby Oakwell Hall.

Other Designations

Most of the battlefield is designated as Green Belt or other classes of urban greenspace.

Key Sources

English Heritage, 1995 *Battlefield Report: Adwalton Moor 1643*

Firth, C. H. (ed), 2nd edition 1907 *The Life of William Cavendish, Duke of Newcastle by Margaret, Duchess of Newcastle*

Parsons, D. (ed), 1836 *The Life of Sir Henry Slingsby of Scriven, Bt*