

BUDE-STRATTON & DISTRICT OLD CORNWALL SOCIETY

THE BATTLE OF STRATTON
16th May 1643.

This Battle, one of the early battles of the Great Civil War in the reign of King Charles I, was won by the valour and loyalty of the Cornish Army, ably led by Sir Bevill Grenville, assisted by Lord Mohun, Sir Ralph Hopton, Sir John Berkeley, Sir Nicholas Slanning and Col. Trevanion.

By the night of 15th May 1643, the Parliamentarians, under the Earl of Stamford and Major-General Chudleigh, were already in Stratton and encamped behind the town on Castle Hill, on the opposite side of the valley to the Hill on which the Battle was fought. Hopton and the Cornish Army had reached Week St. Mary by the evening of Sunday, 14th May and, next day, pressed on towards the outskirts of Stratton, where they were reported that evening. The men had very little food and to quote Hopton: "verie well contented with a drie biscuit apiece for want of other provisions".

At 5 a.m. on the morning of 16th May, the Cornish scouts encountered the enemy musketeers deployed in the hedges around Stamford Hill, at the top of which was the main enemy force with 13 cannon. The Cornish army advanced in Four Sections with 2 cannon apiece; Mohun and Hopton from the South, Berkeley and Grenville from the South West, Slanning and Trevanion from the West, whilst Digby with 300 Horse and Dragoons protected the rear and flanks. All day long the Battle raged but Hopton could make no headway. Towards mid-afternoon their powder was running low - only 4 barrels left - and the men were becoming exhausted, but such was their bravery and valour that officers and men all vowed to make one more desperate assault. So about 3 p.m. Hopton gave the order "Out swords and pikes!" and inch by inch they fought their way to the top. The enemy quailed at their determination and hurriedly quit their posts. Although the Cornish Army was outnumbered by 2 to 1 their outstanding courage carried the day and by 4 p.m. the enemy were routed. "This seasonable victory" as Clarendon, the historian, termed it was celebrated by Hopton and Grenville with "public prayers upon the place and a solemn thansgiving to Almighty God for their deliverance". Major-General Chudleigh was captured, after a gallant stand, and 1,700 of his troops made prisoner. The "Roundheads" lost 300 dead, all their 13 cannon with 70 barrels of powder and their baggage, together with £5,000 amongst it.

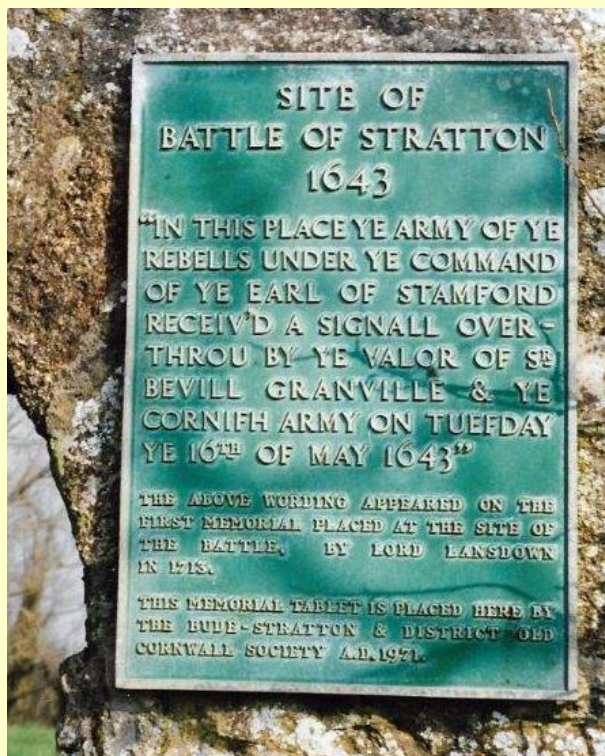
The Earl of Stamford beat a hasty retreat to Exeter. This Battle opened the way for the Cornish Army to fight beyond the Tamar and ensured the linkage of Hopton with Prince Maurice.

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S.G.H.



Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Battle site at Stamford Hill by the Sealed Knot commemorating the 375th anniversary of the Battle of Stratton which took place on 16th May 1643. (Photo: Alan McIntosh)



Left (Photo: Alan McIntosh) / Right (Photo: Bude Stratton and District OCS)