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## Naseby Battlefield Tour

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(Refer to Battlefield Tour Map at the end of this document)

The named viewpoints can be visited in whatever order suits the traveller. The features of interest to be seen from each are described here, and the order in which they are shown correlates to a large extent with the timing of events on 14 June 1645. Visiting them in this order may be more satisfactory as the 'story' of the battle unfolds. The audio tracks can be found from the link on the website home page. The postcodes given to help satnav users are the closest approximation we can offer and for some locations we have not been able to give postcodes at all, so the tour map should be used.

The facts are not easy to find as they are gathered from letters, diaries and memoirs, some of which were written years after the event. Some of the most interesting and conjectural parts of this interpretation can be explored further in the 'Questions and Puzzles' section of the Project website.

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### Rupert's Viewpoint

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*South of East Farndon, west of the road to Clipston, LE16 9SN. Car parking, coach turning and parking space and cycle racks, viewing platform with wheelchair access and interpretation board. Trees and shrubs appropriate to the area have been planted.*

**Audio tracks:** *Sound of Battle, track 3. Restricted sight, track 2.*

On the morning of 14 June 1645 King Charles and Prince Rupert brought the royal army up from Market Harborough to this position on the ridge between East Farndon and Little Oxendon by about 8.00am. The position was secured to the east by a thick hedge at Little Oxendon, and by steep drops to the west and north, down to the Welland valley. It was strong for static defence 'a position of very great advantage' but poor for tactical movement.

The view to the south differs today with the building of the A14 road, the communications mast next to it and the addition of a spire to Naseby church tower. More importantly, trees, woods and enclosure hedges have been planted. The landscape of 1645 had a few parish boundary hedges and very few trees. Rupert was unable to see Fairfax's army at Naseby windmill (now the Obelisk) because it is beyond the higher ground of the ridge on the horizon. Francis Ruce carried out a scouting reconnaissance to locate the enemy, but reported, allegedly '*With a lie in his mouth*', that he had found nothing. When Fairfax ordered the move westwards his army marched over the ridge into view. It is possible that Rupert saw them and immediately hurried his troop's south-west to meet them across Broadmoor, between Naseby and Sibbertoft. Alternatively, it could be that Rupert moved first to get the advantage of the north-west wind at his back to blow musket-fire smoke towards his enemies.

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### Fairfax's Viewpoint

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*North of the bridge over the A14 on the road from Naseby to Clipston, NN6 6BU. Car parking, coach turning and parking space and cycle racks, viewing platform with wheelchair access and interpretation board. Trees and shrubs appropriate to the area have been planted.*

**Audio tracks:** *Sound of Battle, track 5. Restricted sight, track 3.*

Early on Saturday 14 June Captain-General Sir Thomas Fairfax marched the New Model Army north from Guilsborough towards Naseby to meet at Naseby windmill (now the Obelisk). By 8.00am King Charles and Rupert had moved the royal army to the position on the ridge between East Farndon and Little Oxendon. The view north from the windmill was limited by the rising ground, so that Fairfax and his commander of horse, Lieutenant General Oliver Cromwell, rode along the road to Kelmarsh and Market Harborough, to the edge of the steep hill overlooking Clipston, to look for their enemies. The side road from which this site is entered is the old road to Kelmarsh and Market Harborough.

The countryside was mainly of large, open fields without the hedges and woods, as is shown on the landscape interpretation board so that the visitor can imagine the view they had in 1645. The parliamentarian generals, who were close to this viewing platform, could see the royalist army on the distant ridge to the north and wanted to draw them into a fight. Realising their own hill was too difficult for Rupert to attack; they ordered the New Model Army westward, to their left, onto more high ground south of the open, shallow Broadmoor valley. It is likely that Prince Rupert saw them on the march as they came over this ridge and

therefore ordered his army to Dust Hill, north of Broadmoor, to offer battle. An alternative view suggests Rupert moved first to gain the advantage of the wind at his back to blow musket smoke into the eyes of his adversaries.

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### The Obelisk Monument

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*Between Naseby village and the bridge over the A14, east of the road to Clipston, NN6 6BU. Lay-by to the west of the road. Wheelchair access at road level only. Interpretation board. Obelisk monument erected in 1823; access by steps.*

**Audio tracks:** *Sound of Battle, track 4. Restricted sight, track 1.*

Royalist and Parliamentarian patrols clashed on the evening of 13 June in Naseby village, giving the alarm to both sides. Early on Saturday 14 June Fairfax brought the New Model Army by various different routes north from Guilsborough towards Naseby to meet here, at Naseby windmill. In a treeless landscape on its earthen mound, it was a prominent landmark. The wheeled transport, the baggage and artillery trains had to stay on the primitive roads to avoid getting stuck in mud. The foot (infantry) and horse (cavalry) would have chosen their own routes. The regiments were then ordered into 'battalia', their fighting formation. No one knew if they were about to fight or if they were to continue their pursuit of the royalist army through Market Harborough and beyond. Would King Charles stand and fight?

From here the view to the north is limited by the ridge through which the modern A14 runs in a cutting. The parliamentarian commanders rode north on the road to Kelmarsh (now the Clipston road) to see if they could spot the enemy their spies had reported. They had to go no further than what is now Fairfax's Viewpoint.

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### The Cromwell Monument

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*West of the Naseby to Sibbertoft road, north of the A14, as shown by brown signs, NN6 6BS. Lay-by. No purpose-built wheelchair access, but reinforced path negotiable in good, dry weather. Interpretation board and board with reproduction of engraving of Streeter's 1647 picture diagram of the battle. Cromwell Monument unveiled on 26 May 1936.*

**Audio tracks:** *Sound of Battle, tracks 6, 7 and 8. Restricted sight, track 5.*

The Royalists were deployed on Dust Hill, across the valley to the north, while the Parliamentarian troops were drawn up south of the monument, just south of the top of the hill and out of the sight of a person standing at this place.

This area was mostly open ground, but contained by an ancient parish boundary hedge around Sulby to the west (hard to see, west and north-west of here, but marked by a flag-pole) and to the east by a rabbit warren (on today's Lodge Hill, two fields beyond the road) and boggy ground. Lieutenant General of Horse Oliver Cromwell put dragoons behind Sulby Hedges. Their musket fire caused the royalist cavalry on the western flank to charge, which forced many of parliament's horse to flee. To the west of the monument the ground rises and then falls away for a stretch, making a little valley in the face of the slope occupied by parliament forces. The royal foot attacked and were concentrated into an arrow formation by the little valley so that it almost broke through Fairfax's line. Reserves thrown in stubbornly resisted. Cromwell's troopers routed the horse opposing them and then fell on the left flank of the royal foot, cantering through the site of this monument to do so, but slowed by the ridge and furrow which ran north to south. The royalists began to retreat and to surrender. Despite Rupert's Bluecoat Regiment standing 'like a wall of brass' on the slope just west of the Sibbertoft road, to the north, Fairfax's attacks succeeded in driving the royalists back. Part of the royal army went on fighting, all the way they had come that morning, in a battle reaching a climax on Wadborough Hill.

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### **Sulby Hedges**

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*Pedestrian access only; about 1.5 miles (2.4km) there and back. Drive north on the single-track road and turn left for Sibbertoft village. Just south of the village the road turns sharply to the right and a farm track indicated with a finger-post sign goes left (south); LE16 9UG. Park with care to leave the gate clear for farm traffic or park in the village and follow the track until white-topped wooden posts show the permissive footpath to the left (east) around the edge of the field.*

#### **King Charles's Oak**

*A footbridge (take care) over a ditch gives access to an enclosure created as a wildlife area in memory of Michael Westaway.*

An ancient oak close to this site marked the place where King Charles was seen by Colonel John Okey from his position behind Sulby Hedges. There are views to the New Model Army position and to Sulby Hedges.

## ***Sulby Hedges***

*The field-side path continues to a point close to the flagpole, where a viewing platform stands.*

This hedge marks the northern side of Sulby parish and joins the southward boundary at the eastern (left) side of the field to the south, overlooked from the viewpoint. During the deployment of the New Model Army, Oliver Cromwell ordered Okey to lead his regiment of Dragoons (some 676 men in early June but maybe as few as 600 in the battle) northwards on the western side of Sulby Hedges in order to fire on the royalist right wing of horse (cavalry) east of the hedge. This encounter opened the battle and forced the royalist horse to charge forward.

*Retrace your steps on the same path to the road south of Sibbertoft.*

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## **Retreat Viewpoint**

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*On the outskirts of Sibbertoft village bear right and take the next turn right for Clipston. At the 'reservoir', opposite Lowe Farm (LE16 9UB), a large house on the south (right) side of the road, it is possible to park and walk back to the 'bridleway' sign indicating a path going south. Interpretation board next to footpath.*

**Audio track:** *Restricted sight, track 6.*

The royalist army did not, as popular accounts used to state, break and run from Broadmoor. Considerable numbers probably surrendered there, but many continued to fight as they retreated along the road to Sibbertoft and along the route of the footpath that runs on northwards from its junction with the Kelmarsh to Sibbertoft road. The northern end of this is marked by the 'bridleway' signpost on the Sibbertoft to Clipston road. Looking north, down the hill towards the woods, is to see part of the line of flight. Turning a little to the east there is a circular copse and the skyline formed by the top of Moot Hill. For a while a stand was made there by the Royalists.

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## Moot Hill Viewpoint

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*'Reservoir' parking space opposite Lowe Farm, LE16 9UB. Interpretation board. Start of permissive path (see map on gatepost) to Dicks Hill, the Clipston to Marston Trussell road.*

**Audio tracks:** *Sound of Battle, track 9. Restricted sight, track 4.*

From the Reservoir parking place Moot Hill is to the north with woods on the side running down to the valley beyond. The next hill to the east (right) is Wadborough, where the final stand was made by royalist soldiers. The permissive path goes through the valley between Moot Hill (where there is a flagpole) and Wadborough.

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## ROC Viewpoint

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*The single-track road to Marston Trussell runs north from the Sibbertoft to Clipston road, east of the Reservoir parking place. Where the verge on the left narrows at the top of the hill it is possible, with care, to park on the grass (LE16 9TT). A pedestrian's gate gives access to the field and the brick-built Second World War Royal Observer Corps look-out post, marked with a flagpole. Please shut the gate, look out for livestock and refrain from bringing dogs.*

**Audio tracks:** *Sound of Battle, track 10. Restricted sight, track 7.*

From the Royal Observer Corps lookout the full sweep of the day's battle can be appreciated. To the north-east Rupert's Viewpoint can be seen near East Farndon. Turning clockwise, the communications mast next to the A14 stands on the skyline and further right Fairfax's Viewpoint. The spire of Naseby Church projects from behind a clump of trees and then the white bulk Mill Hill Farm appears. Woods obscure a view of Broadmoor, but then Lowe Farm, opposite the Reservoir parking, shows and to the right of that a lone tree stands on Moot Hill with the woods to the right of the open field. The royalist stand on that hill continued until their comrades had established themselves on the nearer hill, Wadborough. Then the defenders of Moot Hill turned and ran for their lives, down the slope into the valley and up to their new position to continue the fight. How long they held out on Wadborough is impossible to say, but eventually they could stand no more and they fled down the slope to the right, still turning and resisting from time to time. The lucky ones, mostly horse, made it to Leicester.

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## **Marston Trussell – Pudding Bag End**

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*Near the church, LE16 9TY. Interpretation board.*

As the old map on the board shows, the road through the village to Market Harborough in 1645 ran north of the road next to the church. The road next to this place came to a dead-end, a 'pudding-bag end', here, at the then manor house and churchyard. Royalist horse, attempting to escape, did not know that and were trapped here where, tradition has it, they fought to the death. The slain were buried nearby and the name of the field next to the churchyard, 'Slawford' or Slaughterford, was mistakenly attributed to that event. In fact the name predates the Civil War by a considerable period.

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## **The Old Hall, Lubenham**

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*In Old Hall Lane, the road leading south at the eastern (Market Harborough) end of the village, LE16 9TJ. On private land (stay on the road), part of the Lubenham Heritage Trail.*

Of the H-shaped house that stood here in 1645, one wing survives. It was the residence of a Mr Collins, and here King Charles came to spend the night on Friday 13 June. He was roused by the news of a clash of cavalry in Naseby village and, at about midnight, rode to meet Prince Rupert in Market Harborough.

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## **Bloodyman's Ford, Welland Park, Market Harborough**

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*In the park, near the junction of the A4303 and the road to East Farndon, LE16 9BX. Wheelchair access and interpretation board. This interpretation board forms part of the Market Harborough Civil War Trail; see map and text below.*

In the early hours of 14 June 1645 royalist forces marched towards East Farndon to meet at the church, which stood out clearly on the treeless hill. From there they were directed to their positions across the hillside south of the village. Many of them passed along this road, crossing the river here by a ford.

At the close of the battle, from the heights of the hills south of the Welland valley, Royalist troops fled, pursued by Parliamentarian horse. Some rode east or west of Market

Harborough and others made direct for the town, as did King Charles and his personal staff. As they got back here, to Bloodyman's Ford, a troop of Parliamentarian horse threatened to cut them off. A contemporary account says:

*The King himself in person being necessitated, with his own troop only, to charge through the body for his escape and it is said that his flight was aided by a gentleman of the Bedchamber, that stood next the King, and cried, 'Hold your hands! The King will yield his person!' Which while they did, he got away and so escaped.*

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## **The Market Harborough Civil War Trail**

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Key locations, as shown on the plan, have been given interpretation boards.

### ***The Town during the Naseby Campaign***

Market Harborough was a crucial point on the routes to and from Leicestershire and Northamptonshire in the Naseby campaign of June 1645, for here the River Welland could be crossed with ease. Here also there were inns and stables for the shelter of men and horses.

After taking Leicester on 31 May 1645, the royalist army moved to Market Harborough on Thursday 5 June, plundering supplies from southern Leicestershire and north Northamptonshire. They left Market Harborough on 7 June to rendezvous at Cold Ashby on the way to Daventry, where they camped on the ancient hill fort, Borough Hill, just outside the town. A convoy went on to Oxford with the plundered supplies. By Friday night they were back in Market Harborough and the surrounding villages, on their way to Melton Mowbray and Newark.

Early on Friday Fairfax was holding a council of war at Kissingbury when Oliver Cromwell arrived, about 6am, with 600 cavalry. That night they marched to Guilsborough and sent scouting patrols further north and west to find their enemies. Find them they did when a similar royalist patrol was discovered at Naseby, taking supper at a house near the church. In Market Harborough the King decided to turn and fight.

After the battle Market Harborough was again crowded with soldiers, but this time they were the victorious parliamentarians while the royalists there were prisoners, confined in St Dionysius Church.

### ***The Museum and Fox Yard***

*Fox Yard (LE16 7AG), the archway off Adam and Eve street.*

The Museum exhibits include Civil War items.

### ***The King's Head***

*At the northern end of Church Street. **Audio trail:** Sound of Battle, tracks 1 and 2.*

A meeting between Prince Rupert of the Rhine, who was staying in the inn later known as the King's Head, and his uncle King Charles took place at a building that once stood in this street. It was there that the fateful decision to do battle was taken.

### ***St Dionysius Church***

It is probable that at least 4,000 and perhaps 5,000 defeated royalists were taken prisoner. The parliamentarian Provost Marshal had to imprison them somewhere. St Dionysius Church was the largest and most easily secured building in Market Harborough, and quite how many of the royalists taken in battle spent the night here one cannot say. They were marched to Northampton, on their way to London, the next day.

### ***Coventry Road and the High Street junction***

Oliver Cromwell spent the night of 14 June in the town, staying at the Bell Inn which stood on the southern side of Coventry Street. It was from the building formerly on this site that he wrote his famous letter to the Speaker of the House of Commons, the text of which is reproduced on this board.

### ***Northampton Road Bridge***

*South of the river, at the start of the footpath to Welland Park.*

A board tells of the old bridge once at this place. Over this river crossing, heading south, the royalist supply wagons left for Daventry and Oxford, and others returned on the evening of 14 June, fleeing from pursuing troopers of the New Model Army.

















# Battlefield Tour Map

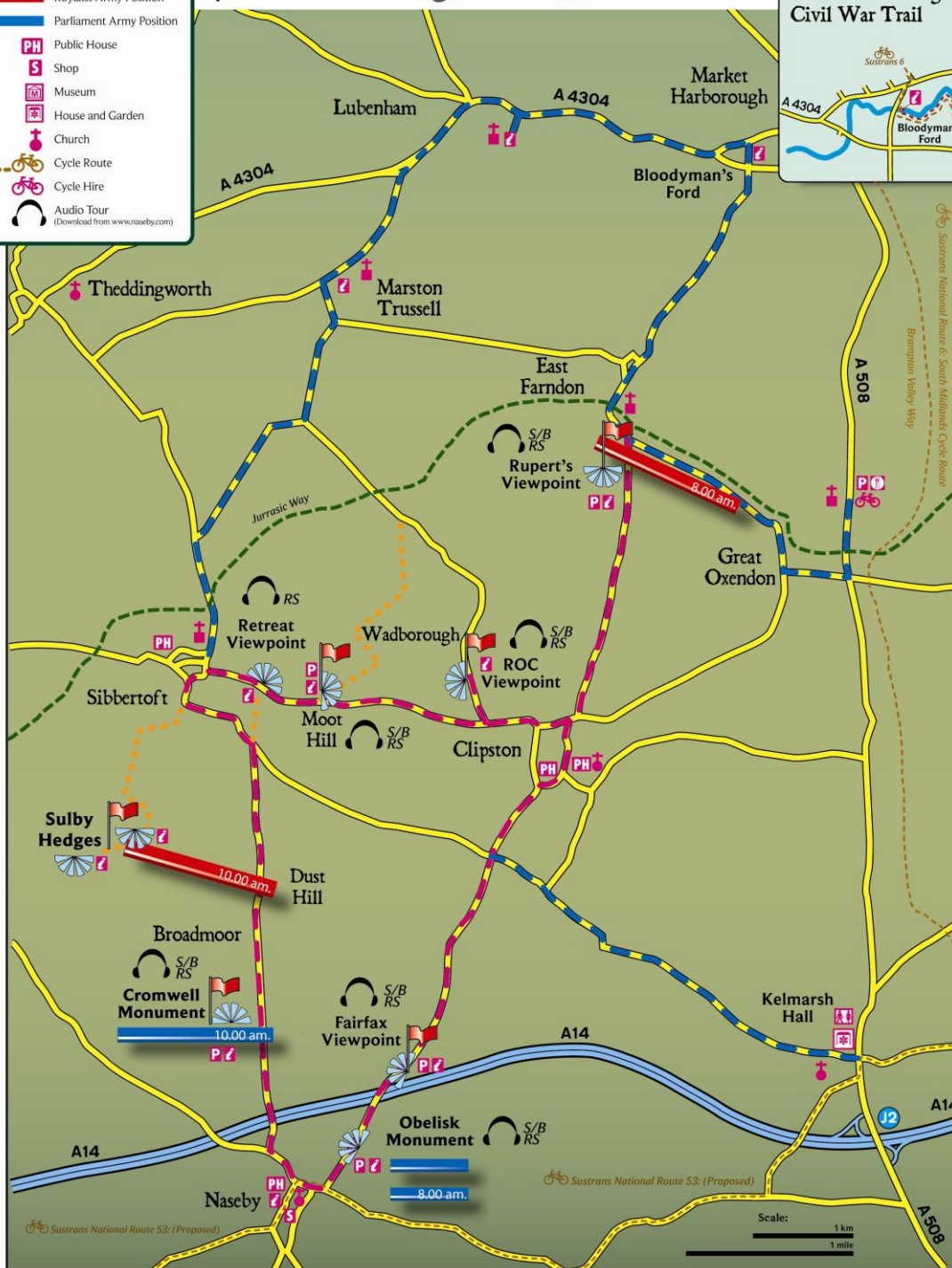
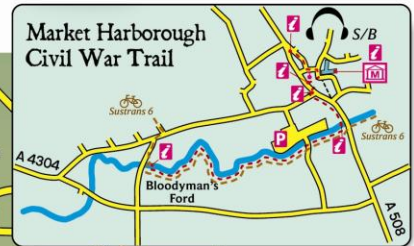
## Battlefield Trail Guide

# NASEBY

16th June 1645

**Naseby Battlefield Trail Map**

-  Viewpoint
-  Parking
-  Information Board
-  Tour route
-  Footpath
-  Extended route
-  Royalist Army Position
-  Parliament Army Position
-  Public House
-  Shop
-  Museum
-  House and Garden
-  Church
-  Cycle Route
-  Cycle Hire
-  Audio Tour  
(Download from [www.naseby.com](http://www.naseby.com))



Scale: 1 km  
1 mile