

November 2012 – February 2013



2<sup>nd</sup> Edition

# Hotspur



The newsletter of the North West & Marches Region of the Battlefields Trust

## Update

**I started writing this Newsletter in July last year and modified it periodically through to November. Now the New Year has caught up with me but the message is still the same. We need more members, we need more active members and we need a few willing souls to act as officers for the Region to help drive us forward and maximise the great opportunities we have in this area for battlefield activity. So please have a read and if you would like to get more involved your contribution will be much appreciated.**

We had a good selection of walks on offer in 2012 and these were more or less attended by some of the Region's members.



The task going forwards is to build on this start, add new activities and get a core of members to help manage the branch. Can I take this opportunity to re-iterate what I said in the first newsletter that it would be great to have a Walks Organiser, a Branch Secretary and a Treasurer. Please let me know if you would be willing to help in such

a capacity. In addition a reminder that if you have a favourite battle, siege or skirmish that you think merits a walk or a workshop, get on the phone to me or send me an email so that we can plan walks etc for this year. I am particularly keen to identify any of you who have knowledge on particular battles or campaigns so that we can build activity round your expertise. For example I would like to hold some workshops on specific battle subjects, anniversaries of conflict and characters involved and make links to other local associations on such topics, as well as identify venues across the Region where we can run some "in door" events for the Branch (thinking particularly of the weather last year).



Covenant Stone Hyddgen 1401

I am also aware we need to hold an AGM when you can determine how you want the Branch to be run in future.

## Some Trust Items

1. We really need to think about how we get more members. We recruited 91 new members to the Trust in 2012. A good effort but it should have been more but was not helped by the flooded, wash out of the English Heritage Festival of History weekend at Kelmars, which meant we lost one of

our key recruiting grounds. Between 2009 and 2011 we have grown our membership from C.300 to C.800. We really want to get over 1,000. So can everyone try to recruit one new person, as their New Year good deed. We also need to look at what activities result in the most recruits – you know what worked for you – let us know your thoughts. More members help us protect and/or conserve more battlefields and make for more enjoyable activities.

2. We are seeing growing interest in Welsh battle sites and I am beginning to make contacts across the border. I have been liaising with various Welsh, battle related, groups and hope we can link up with them, which in turn should lead to some interesting future walks. Indeed I attended the CADW Scoping exercise on historic Welsh landscapes down in [Pembrokeshire](#) in the summer. They are working on legislation to protect battle sites and register them properly and have great ambitions for their sites.

3. The Regional Chairs of the Trust now hold meetings via Skype to talk about Branch matters. And a full face to face session is planned this month. So if you have any burning issues you want discussed now is your chance to let me know so that I can raise it with them.

### **Richard III**

I am sure you have all heard the fascinating news of the discovery of the body of Richard III in the nave of the old church of the Grey Friars, Leicester. This along with the establishment of the correct site of Bosworth, by the Trust, is helping to re-write history. The battle wounds found on the skeleton would seem to show that Richard fought to the very end; definitely a commander who lead from the front. *"a hearse, a hearse my Kingdom for a hearse"*

### **2012 Branch Report**

I presented a case for the protection of the Winwick Pass battle site (19.08.1648) to the Inspector at the Public Inquiry into St. Helen's Core Strategy.



Entrance to the "pass" today

Whilst this had no direct impact on his adjudication it has highlighted the battle, its local value and significance and raised awareness across the borough – all good for future research and conservation. Later I walked the Pass and a very atmospheric place it is and this year we should include it in our walks programme. Meanwhile Michael Rayner is putting the case to English Heritage to have the site considered for possible Registration. Simon Marsh has also been working hard on the issue, to ascertain what happened and where, from examination of the records, letters and reports made at the time.

Since the last Newsletter there were walks planned for Hyddgen (1401), which stormy weather curtailed, Brunanburh and Chester which were very successful and Clifton Moor which I enjoyed on my own!

Wirral Archaeologists presented their finds from field work and made a convincing circumstantial argument for their area as the site of Brunanburh (937).



Debating Brunaburh

This was as important an engagement as Hastings and saw King Athelstan secure his throne as the first true King of England. We had the local MP and several Councillors

attend the day. Bob Burgess, in his usual inimitable style, led a fantastic walk at Chester. With his encyclopaedic knowledge of the Civil War in the City it usually feels as if he must have been there at the time! And I had a beautiful sunny day on the edge of the Lakes visiting Clifton Moor(1745) the last battle between the English and the Scots on English soil, which for the sake of their pride the Scots won. Lastly re-enactors put on a great show in September recreating the battle of Mortimer's Cross (1461) at the stunning new location of Hampton Court Castle on the banks of the River Lugg, originally built by Sir Rowland Lenthall, who fought with Henry V at Agincourt.



Hampton Court Castle and re-enactors

It looks as if Shrewsbury, where Bob and I had a great walk round the battlefield, on the Anniversary weekend in July organised by the 1403 Centre, is under threat yet again. This time it is more urbanisation in the form of a car showroom, for which a planning application has been made for a site on the edge of the registered battlefield. Thus risking a further reduction in the visual context and integrity of the site alongside the Veolia incinerator, which now looks certain to go ahead? English Heritage has been asked for help.

### 2013 NW & Marches

The first event of this year was the commemoration of the Battle of Nantwich (Jan 1644) on Holy Holly Day - Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> January. Julian Humphrys led the walk and talked about the battle.

For further events this year the choice is down to you; here are my suggestions:

- **Denbigh Green 1645** – we have an expert in Wales happy to take us round
- **Winwick Pass 1648**
- **Blore Heath 1459**
- An update on **Preston I 1715 & II 1648**
- Try again to get a group up to **Clifton 1745** and have a joint day with the NE Region
- Weather permitting have another go at **Hyddgen 1401** and link to **Pilleth/Bryn Glas 1402**
- **Buttington 894**, Offas Dyke and **Maeserfelth 641** (Penda & Oswald)
- **Peterloo 1819**
- **Liverpool Blitz 1940-42**

These could be walks and/or workshops. Let me know if you are interested in any or all of these and I can start to organise accordingly. Any other suggestions? In particular will anyone willing to lead a walk or workshop get in touch. Could you let me know by the end of February so I can arbitrarily allocate some dates and we will go from there.

### Trust Conference 2013

A reminder for the Annual Conference and AGM Weekend 5-8th April 2013 to be held at the University of Durham. There is a fantastic programme including visits to Neville's Cross, Homildon Hill, the Heugh Battery and most importantly Flodden in its 500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year. Please see the Trust website for full details.

### Scottish Battlefield Register

The second part of the Scottish Battlefield Register has now been published and very impressive it is too. Go to [www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/inventorybattlefields](http://www.historic-scotland.gov.uk/index/inventorybattlefields) to see the full listing. If anyone fancies a Scottish weekend in the summer to get to see several sites I would be happy to make arrangements and we could perhaps make a weekend of it.

*james parker* 29.11.12