



Winter 2014 / 2015

# The Reiver

The newsletter of the North East & Borders Region of the Battlefields Trust

## Introduction

As another year finishes and a new one begins it is time to take stock of what we have done (and not done) during 2014 and to consider what we want to achieve in 2015. Overall I am happy with our progress given the resources available to us but we can do so much more. So, thanks to all of you for your continued support. I hope that you had a good Christmas & New Year and let's enter 2015 with renewed enthusiasm – there is much to be done.

*Geoffrey Carter*

## Activities

### Tyne and Wear Archives & Museums

We completed our 2014 series of talks for Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums with three sessions on the Wars of the Roses in October. These were well-attended at the South Shields Museum and raised over £100.00 for our local funds. Plans for next year are outlined below.

### Homildon Hill Project

On 14<sup>th</sup> September (the anniversary of the battle) we held a guided walk over the battlefield. Thanks to everyone who turned out.



### Newburn Ford

Our project to address the concerns at Newburn Ford continues. We have submitted an outline plan to the Heritage Lottery Fund and the response has been positive. Over the coming weeks we will be developing this into a full application.

In November Geoffrey Carter spoke to the Ponteland Local History Society about Newburn Ford, supported by Jim and Gill Brown & Sean and Lorrain McCartney who were dressed in full Civil War uniforms and brought with them an impressive display of weapons and artefacts. We received a generous donation from the Society to local funds.

### Carham

Few people have heard of the Battle of Carham. When we held our first public meeting in April 2014 the fact that a battle had been fought there was news to most of the locals and the fact that it was of great importance came as a shock.

Undisputed facts about Carham are few and far between. The date of the battle –was it 1016 or 1018? The place - Wark or Carham? Both are on the south bank of the Tweed, but several miles apart. The protagonists – Malcolm II , King of Scots and Owain of Strathclyde against Uhtred of Bamburgh -or was it his brother Eadwulf Cudel?

From this shaky start we wanted to build a project to commemorate the battle because, 1,000 years ago, this was the battle that split Northumbria and set the England /Scotland Border along the River Tweed rather than at the Firth of Forth.

With a bit of local publicity, hiring Cornhill Village Hall for the day brought an interested and enthusiastic audience of more than fifty to hear Dr Alex Woolf from St Andrews University speak about the battle and the uncertain times of the emergent nations of England and Scotland. Within a week or so of this we had a committee, constitution and a plan of campaign for the new Carham 1018 Society.



Thanks to Dr Woolf's excellent presentation we now had a solid foundation on which to base our project. We learned that the most likely date of the battle was 1018 and this gives us four years to prepare for a 1,000th anniversary commemoration in the summer of 2018. The committee plans to start a publicity campaign by producing a leaflet and then a booklet explaining the importance of Carham

from medieval to present times. Interpretation boards and a website will follow and the disused red Phone Box in Carham has been bought by the Parish Council to emulate the "Very Small Flodden Visitor Centre". The scope for archaeology has to be determined, but it is intended that a small scale search will be launched to try to locate the remains of the medieval Carham Minster, a small wooden building which is thought to have been located close to the Church that stands today. This may be associated with the community of Black Canons established at Carham by St Cuthbert in the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

It is hoped, and the omens are good, that in 2018 that a major Viking living history weekend and battle re-enactment will be staged in the fields along the Tweed. Much work has to be done to organise an event like this, but the re-enactors are keen, the landowners are in favour and the local population want to put Carham on the map.

Perhaps the most significant factor is not the battle itself, but the fact that the Battle of Carham set the Border where it is, and it has remained almost unchanged for nearly one thousand years.

Further details will be announced as they emerge. In the interim we are applying to the Heritage Lottery Fund for a small grant to cover work at both Carham and Homildon Hill.

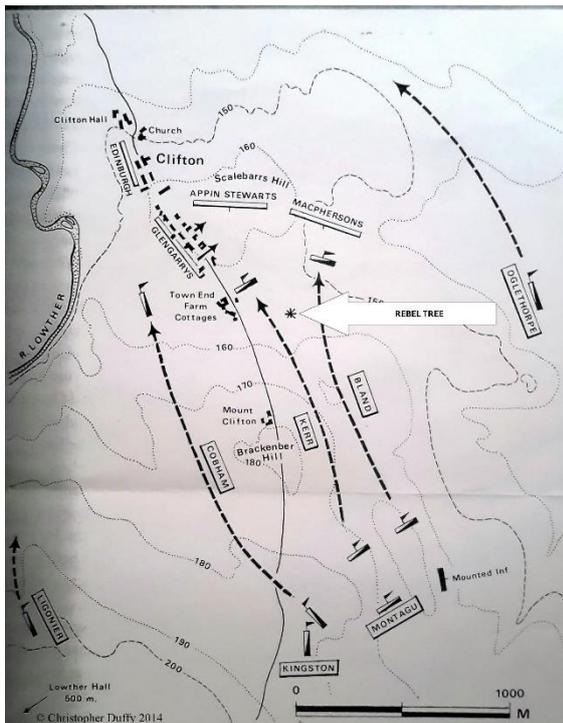
### **Neville's Cross**

At the end of 2014 the Durham County Plan was submitted for public consultation. Within the Plan are proposals for a new Western Relief Road which will pass very close to the registered battlefield at Neville's Cross (1346). The Trust is working with a number of partners to mitigate the possible impact on the battlefield. This

will include an application to extend the registered area in line with the new guidelines for registration introduced since the original designation.

### Clifton Moor

In the autumn of 2014 an outline planning application was submitted which would materially impact on the site of the battle of Clifton Moor (1745), near Penrith. This action was fought between the retreating Scottish forces of Prince Charles Edward Stuart and English army under the command of the Duke of Cumberland.



This battle is one of several that has claim to be the last action fought on English soil. The Trust believes that the planning application does not meet the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework for sustainable development and that the submitted archaeological impact study is inadequate in many areas. Accordingly, the Trust has submitted a formal objection and the outcome is awaited.

### Education

Work has continued with local schools in both Sunderland and Newcastle to develop Key Stage 2 & 3 local history project resources centred on the battles of Boldon Hill and Newburn Ford respectively. In the autumn we took a stand at the Historical Association's 'Northern History Forum' to promote this idea more widely and much interest was attracted. This is an area where there is a lot of potential and will be a priority in 2015.

### National Projects

The Trust's Magna Carta project is moving ahead nationally under the leadership of its full-time director, Edward Dawson. He is in the process of establishing contacts at both Norham and Berwick which were sites of sieges associated with the conflict between King John and his barons.

### Management

We are long overdue an Annual General Meeting, for which we apologise! We will rectify this when the warmer weather returns and we are able to find a suitable venue now that the Newburn Ford Visitor Centre has closed.

In the meantime we will be reviving the idea of a Skype meeting for those who have previously expressed interest in being more actively involved. A separate email will be circulated on this topic before the end of January.

### Future Plans

Work will continue at Homildon Hill, Newburn Ford, Carham and on the education project as mentioned above.

In addition, we plan to mark the 600<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the battle of Yeavering (1415), near Wooler, where Sir Robert Umfraville and the Earl of Westmoreland with 140 spearmen and 300 bowmen are

said to have defeated 4,000 Scots. Little is known of the detail of this action and we hope to be able to shed some more light upon it.

Geoffrey Carter will be giving some more talks for Tyne & Wear Museums. Details are still to be fixed but they will include talks on both Magna Carta and the battle of Agincourt to mark the two anniversaries.

In the southern part of our region a meeting is to be held in January between the Trust, the Teesside County Archaeologist and the Director of the Dorman Museum in Middlesbrough to consider ways in which the profile of the role of Teesside in the English Civil War might be raised. It is hoped that this will lead to a new project which, again, will include local schools.

## **AGM and Annual Conference**

**Friday 1st to Sunday 3rd May 2015**

Our annual conference and AGM will take place in Oxford on 2 May 2015. The theme will be anniversaries relevant to 2015 with a special emphasis on the Magna Carta and Barons' Wars.

There will be various tours and events on Friday 1<sup>st</sup> and Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> for those who wish to make a weekend of it.

Full details are on the Trust's web site.

<http://www.battlefieldstrust.com>

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### **Contact Details**



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*Promoting our battlefield heritage*

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