



The Forlorn Hope

Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch of the Battlefields Trust

EDITION 24: SUMMER 2014

In memory of the D Day landings, June 1944

Patron: Bernard Cornwell
Vice Patron: Simon Scarrow

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Would anyone who wishes to receive this or any other forms, etc via email please contact me.

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Anmarie

Minutes of the AGM of the East Anglian Region of the Battlefields Trust

Held at The Assembly House, Norwich on Saturday 11th January 2014
9 members attended

Apologies

There were no apologies.

Minutes of the last AGM and Matters Arising

The minutes of the last meeting were taken as read. There were no matters arising.

Chairman's Report

The Chairman reported the good news that in spite of poor attendances the branch was still here and hoped to be for some time.

Secretary's Report

The Secretary's report had appeared in the last edition of The Forlorn Hope but she updated everyone on the three battlefields currently under threat, Tewkesbury, Towton and Edgecote.

Treasurers Report

The Treasurer gave the report which was accepted and thanked Bob Kerry for auditing and preparing the report. Bob had suggested changing the financial year to end in September and this was agreed.

The Treasurer reported an uncashed cheque from June 2013 which will be 'returned' to the balance but could in theory still be cashed.

Election of Officers

It was agreed there was still no need for a vice chairman.

The committee were re-elected en bloc.

Chairman: Karen Austin
Secretary/Treasurer: Annmarie Hayek
Committee: Dr Paul Gurbutt
Publicity Officer: Peter Johnson

Continued ...

Programme for 2014

25th October 2014

Researching Modern History:
The Battle of Britain, with reference to the Luftwaffe fighter, the Messerschmitt 110
by John Vasco

John Vasco has undertaken research into the Luftwaffe since 1980, the results of which have been 8 books, primarily on the subject of the Messerschmitt 110 and the units that flew it. John's primary research has been centred on the Battle of Britain period, when the south of England came under ferocious attack from the German air force – airfields, factories and the civilian population all suffering from these attacks. This was the first time the battlefield that had been England over the centuries witnessed a major assault from a new dimension: the sky.

In covering that period, John's talk will cover the various aspects that go into the research required that ultimately results in the books we see on the bookshelves. The term 'modern history' is particularly apposite, as he was able to contact and receive information from participants from both sides of the Battle of Britain conflict, and with regard to the German side, travelled to Germany to interview many of the former Luftwaffe veterans. Copies of documents and photographs will supplement the talk.

As well as his interest in world war 2 aviation, John has been a member of the Richard III Society since the early 1980's.

All meetings are held at The Assembly House Norwich starting at 14:30.



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Any other business

It was agreed to pay for a newspaper advert for the 22nd March meeting.

Rosamund Cummings asked if the date for the Trust AGM had been confirmed but there was no news on this.

Bob Kerry asked for a speaker on WW1 fiction, the Secretary will investigate.

The Chairman thanked Annmarie for her work.

There being no further business the meeting was closed at 14.30.

The Battlefields Trust Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2013

	In	Out	£
Bank balance carried forward			287.86
January meeting (AGM): Raffle	11.00		298.86
Room Hire		30.00	268.86
March meeting: Entry Fees	25.00		293.86
Speaker		50.00	243.86
Room Hire		60.00	183.86
June meeting: Entry Fees	272.00		455.86
Raffle	20.00		475.86
Speaker		50.00	425.86
Room & Equipment Hire		110.00	315.86
September meeting: Entry Fees	306.00		621.86
Speaker		50.00	571.86
Room Hire		60.00	511.86
2012 Audit		10.00	501.86
Printing, postage and stationary		108.40	393.46
Balance			393.46

Battlefields Trust AGM and Conference 2014

The Battlefields Trust AGM this year, held on 5th April, was part of a joint Conference with The Royal Armouries at Leeds on Best Practice in Battlefields Conservation.

The weekend began on Friday afternoon, 4th April, with a tour of the Battlefields of Aldwarton Moor, 1643, and Branham Moor, 1408. The ensuing discussion on the exact site of Branham Moor continued, on and off, throughout the weekend; I think the English Heritage view was finally declared 'inaccurate'!

More members arrived on Friday evening and an enjoyable social time was spent with a meal and a quiz. The question master – who also set the questions – described them as: 'most difficult, sometimes fiendish'! The proof of this was that the winning team only got less than half of the available points!

The conference started promptly on the Saturday morning with a welcome and introduction from Dr. Karen Watts, Senior Curator of Armour and Art at the Royal Armouries.

The first presentation was given by Caroline Able, the Heritage Manager of Leicester County Council, who has responsibility for the Bosworth Battlefield, and who has made compiled a study for the promotion of the Battlefield Conservation Management.

Using a research project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund between 2005 and 2014 L.C.C. has been able to put into place an over-arching plan for the preservation and conservation of the battlefield, the first comprehensive plan in the U.K. This plan has been formed in consultation with, and for the use of



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interested parties, local landowners, archaeologists, researchers, visitors, and the County Council, which funds the visitor attraction.

Having a management plan, together with the increased interest in Bosworth and Richard III has enabled Leicester County Council to obtain more funding for developing a Visitor Centre and other on-site facilities, with a programme of special events to attract more visitors. The increase in visitor numbers, and the income this generates has enabled the County Council to ensure that a plan covering all aspects of conserving and protecting the Battlefield can be put into place. This will also help the local economy generally by providing employment and encouraging the development of local facilities.

While it must be acknowledged that public interest in Bosworth Battlefield and Richard III is exceptional, the whole plan for conservation and preservation, along with the development of visitor facilities, is one that could be used for other, less well-known battlefields, and it is an example of positive thinking for other local government bodies.

Our second speaker was Karen Watts of the Royal Armouries. She is curating an exhibition at the Tower of London next year to commemorate the 600th anniversary of the Battle of Agincourt. The theme will be Henry V, Patriotism, and the Battle itself.

Karen first gave us an overview of the sources available for finding out about what actually happened that day. Most of these were written some time after the events and gave the views of the author rather than an un-biased factual record. The best source is the Froissart Chronicles, which are now available to search on the website of the University of Sheffield. There is also a database available for researching information on soldiers who fought in the Hundred Years War, approximately from 1365 to 1453, which was part of a research project by Royal Holloway, University of London.

The museum in Paris is also arranging an exhibition to coincide with the anniversary, although their focus will be from 1415, the 'low point' of the war from their point of view, to 1453 when the last English administration left Normandy.

The timing of these exhibitions has meant that it has been possible to co-operate, Karen is co-curating the Paris project, and has facilitated the exchange of artifacts for display. It has also been possible to jointly fund a survey of Agincourt, the Castle and the Battlefield. A previous survey concluded that the Calvary site on the battlefield is not the mass grave of the combatants, so possible new sites are being investigated, in the hope of more positive results. Agincourt Castle has also been surveyed more fully, and some of the vaults have been located.

While it has not been possible to locate, or borrow, all the artefacts that one might wish to see included, there will be some rare items that are not usually found in medieval exhibitions. For instance, no medieval war bows are known to exist, some have been borrowed from the Mary Rose Museum, as their manufacture had not changed greatly in the century between Agincourt and the sinking of the ship. A little-known portrait of Henry V has been borrowed from the Museum of London, and Henry V's funeral achievements from Westminster Abbey will form one section, with background music from the 'Agincourt Carol'. There will also be some manuscripts that are usually kept in the National Archives, including the letter written by Henry V regarding Charles, Duke of Orleans.

Altogether this sounds as if it will be a remarkable exhibition and one that anyone interested in Battles and Battlefields should make a priority to visit.

After an excellent lunch in the Wellington room, and an opportunity for a brief look at some of the exhibits in the Armouries, we returned to the lecture hall for a talk by Dr. Glenn Foard on Historic Terrain.

Dr. Foard was the lead archaeologist on the project which re-defined the location of Bosworth Battlefield, but for his talk he gave more general information on other sites and examples from other centuries.



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He emphasized the need to consult old maps and written sources before starting on the ground research in the area of a Battle. Terrain has a key role in determining how a battle plays out and what goes wrong, or right; but, landscapes change and only by referring back to contemporary sources can you be that you understand the sequence of events.

All these factors had to be taken into consideration when working on the location of Bosworth, the terrain had changed markedly, a marsh drained and roads re-located. In addition, the use of guns, this was one of the first battles where they were used, made a difference in the distance between the two armies when hostilities started. The longer firing range of even these early guns meant that the battle commenced before the armies were close enough for hand-to-hand fighting.

Battles fought in the same terrain, but by armies under different commanders, as in France on the Somme in the 1870's and again in 1914-18, while using different tactics often have the same results because the terrain has a role in how the battle proceeds and reduces the scope for changing orders as the battle continues.

In conclusion, we should understand that a lot of research is required in Archives and Record Offices, and consideration to the types and conditions of weapons involved, before going to a battlefield, spade-in-hand, to assess the archaeology.

Our next speaker was Dr. Tony Pollard of the University of Glasgow who told us about his Archaeological Project on the Western Front, funded by the Australian Government, to identify burial sites and create a memorial to those Australians who died there in the First World War.

The precise location of the work was Fromelles, where Australian soldiers, backed by English troops, attacked a Bavarian Regiment, as a diversion from the main Battle of the Somme.

Before starting work at Fromelles the team visited the military archives in Bavaria to consult the records and establish where the casualties were well cared for and the dead were buried, in contrast to the British Officers who refused the opportunity of a cease-fire to clear the battlefield. Hence, all records of casualties and grave-pits were in the Bavarian military reports.

Having found the approximate location of the graves the team then undertook geophysical surveys and used metal detectors to search for evidence. The metal detectors found mostly shrapnel and buttons, but these were helpful in establishing the location of each side during the battle.

They then dug a sample trench in each pit to see what had survived. In fact they found 250 bodies in all, which were re-buried near the site of the new Memorial. This is now a focus for Australian visitors and the commemoration of the Australian anniversaries connected to the War.

An interesting sideline to this work was the discovery, on German maps, of a British machine which was delivered to the trenches near Mametz on the Somme in 1916. The Levens Flame Project, devised in 1916, was a huge flame thrower, using compressed gas to throw huge flames into German trenches. Although this machine was delivered it was never actually used as a German bombardment had buried it in a collapsed trench. Having located the position on Bavarian maps the team excavated it, to find that most of the parts would still work.

Back in England, the Royal Engineers re-constructed the machine and made a test firing on Salisbury Plain. Using enough jet fuel to take a Jumbo Jet from London to New York, the machine fired a 75 meter sheet of flame which melted earth! One can only imagine the effect on the German Trenches!

On a happier note, some of the Australian soldiers found at Fromelles were identified from their records. One of these had a great niece who had only heard of her uncle and was thrilled to now be able to visit his memorial. Dr. Pollard showed us a photo of the lady and her family which, as he said, 'makes archaeology a bridge between history and the present'.



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The final item of the conference was a 'Close of Project Report' by Julian Humphreys, the Battlefields Trust Development Officer. This project, which ran from 2009 to 2014 was funded by English Heritage and was to identify, protect and publicise battlefield sites, predominately in England, and add them to the English Heritage Battlefields Register.

Julian is preparing a full report for the Battlefields Trust Magazine, so it would be unfair to pre-empt this, however, some successes should be noted:

- Previously little-known Battlefield have been registered
- English Heritage now consults the Battlefields Trust on Battlefield management
- Information Boards, using Battlefields Trust logo, are now at more sites
- Growing public awareness of the need to preserve Battlefields

There is still much work for the Trust to undertake, but it can now cover the whole country and is stronger. The increase in Membership shows greater interest and members should be encouraged to look at local issues as well as the wider picture for the whole country.

With this report the conference ended and there was a short refreshment break.

The AGM of the Battlefields Trust was then convened. This was attended by members of the Committee and 20 members of the trust.

The Annual Report and Accounts for 2012-2013 were approved.

Changes in the Trustees were approved: Geoffrey Carter and Julian Humphreys joined the Trustees.

The Treasurer has resigned and replaced by another member.

The Trust Business Plan was discussed, after a report by the Chairman. The general feeling was that, although progress is slow it is steady. New targets are realisable and should enhance the Trusts' profile in the Heritage sector.

A new patron, Professor Michael Wood, was nominated by the Chairman, who felt that his high profile and academic work will increase the profile of the Trust. Professor Wood was accepted unanimously.

Under any other business there was a discussion regarding Merchandising, promoting the trust by offering items of interest both to Members and to members of the public. In particular the discussion focused on the design of a new Battlefield tie and a scarf for the ladies.

A decision was also made to ensure that in the future the Minutes of the AGM will be posted on the members page of the website well before the next AGM.

The AGM in 2015 will be in March or April, in Oxford. Plans are being made to visit the Battlefields of Evesham and Worcester at that time.

The Trust Dinner, which was held at a local restaurant was excellent and very enjoyable.

The following morning we left Leeds for Towton where Julian Humphreys, using information gathered for his recent publication on the Battle, gave an interesting and informative walking tour.

In the afternoon the majority continued for a tour of the Maston Moor Battlefield, although, regrettably, some of us had to leave after lunch to make our way home.



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We had a very interesting and informative weekend, with the good company of both old and new friends. It is unfortunate that the Conference and AGM did not attract more members, partly this may have been due to the lateness in publicizing the event and it is to be hoped that in the future we are given more notice so that those who are interested in Battlefields, Battles and their history can make time to learn more about the past events and how they are being preserved and commemorated now.

Rosamund Cummings, May 2014

Richard III Afternoon

Over 80 people attended the afternoon, many from the Richard III Society.

Bob Woosnam-Savage from the Leeds Armouries, gave an amusing talk despite its grim subject matter. It was all too easy to see the last desperate minutes of Richard III, very moving.

Professor Caroline Wilkinson from Dundee University gave an account of facial reconstruction and in particular that of Richard. Her description of "feeling" through the computer was fascinating. Caroline's own theory is that the head may have to be altered, new testing means eye and hair colour may be incorrect. We may have to shift our ideas on that considerably.

Frank Baldwin, Chairman of the Trust, gave a short talk on the Trust and then presented me with a plaque, winner of the Chairman's award for 2013. I kept the thank you's to a minimum, mindful of the Madam Chairman – 'keep it short, it's not the Oscars!'

What an afternoon.

Articles, letters, quotes, opinions, praise, corrections, reviews of books, plays and films with a historical connection, we need them all. Pass any on to Annmarie Hayek and room permitting we'll publish them.

