



February 2013

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

A belated Happy New Year to you all! Traditionally the turn of the year is a period of reflection and a look to the future and it is probably worth recapping our past and planned activities. Mercia Region had a successful 2012, organising walks at Stow, Chalgrove, Northampton, Naseby, Worcester and Powick, the Oxford Civil War Garrisons and Edgcote. Our partner organisations, the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society, Naseby Battlefield Project and Simon de Montfort Society also arranged walks at Tewkesbury, Naseby and Evesham. On the archaeological front, unsuccessful (to date) investigations were conducted at Edgcote to find the grave pits associated with the battle. Following Battlefields Trust campaigning the proposed HS2 railway line was adjusted northward, which may now have less impact on Edgcote battlefield, and the region engaged with the archaeologists undertaking the environmental impact assessment for the line. From July 2012 the region's primary focus was to save the registered battlefield at Northampton from inappropriate development. Whilst the threat has not gone away some progress has been made. Elsewhere, a project commenced to develop Radway Church as an information centre for the Edgehill battlefield. Looking forward the region is putting together an interesting series of walks for 2013. It will continue to work to preserve the Northampton and Edgcote battlefields and is keen to see projects developed at battle sites in the region.

Events

On 6 October 2012, Tony Spicer led walks covering the battles of **Powick (1642)** and **Worcester (1651)**. The morning walk examined the skirmish at Powick in September 1642 which established the reputation of the royalist cavalry and the events nine years later on that part of the Worcester battlefield. The afternoon walk focused solely on the 1651 battle and

looked particularly at the action around the bridge of boats by the confluence of the Severn and the Teme. Twenty people attended the morning walk and twelve in the afternoon. On 7 October, Gregg Archer led a select band around the **Oxford royalist garrisons (1642-1646)**. In a driving tour Gregg visited Hillesden, Boarstall House and Brill, discussing the skirmishes and, in Boarstall's case, siege experienced by the locations. Later in the month the Naseby Battlefield Project ran a driving tour of the **Naseby (1645)** battlefield, taking-in the interpretive viewpoints that have now been established. Following the Mercia region AGM on 10 November, Harvey Watson led a visit to the **Edgcote (1469)** battlefield to see the Trust's information board there and discuss the different theories about the battle.

Northampton (1460)

After meeting Trust officers in October and following objections raised by Trust members, Northampton Borough Council appears to have started to modify its approach to the Northampton battlefield, though it is too early to tell whether this will see plans cancelled to have sports pitches constructed on the battlefield. The Council has indicated its commitment to an archaeological survey of the battlefield and the development of a conservation management plan. A tender for the latter was issued in December and Land Use Company won the bid with Glenn Foard and Tracey Partida, who have done a lot of work with the Trust in the past, acting as battlefield archaeology consultants on the project. It seems unlikely that archaeological work will be commissioned before the completion of the conservation management plan. The Council is due to announce the results of its public consultation on the disposal of land to allow the sports pitches to be constructed in early 2013, though the proposal seems to have been largely opposed. Separately some of you may have read about plans to expand the Delapre Golf Centre car park which sits

on the registered battlefield. This application has now been withdrawn following opposition from the Trust and other heritage stakeholders. Finally in mid-January the Council agreed its Central Area Action Plan for future development in and around Northampton. The plan proposes the building of a restaurant/pub on part of the battlefield which has been quarried out and has been used for motor cycle scrambling. English Heritage was involved in discussions about the plan and appears to be satisfied with the outcome. The Trust has separately secured council agreement that any planning permissions granted to areas north of the battlefield will have conditions attached requiring archaeological work in advance of development.

Mercia Region AGM

A disappointingly small number of members attended the Region's AGM in November. The Mercia Chairman, Simon Marsh, provided details of the year's activities and reported that the region had £835 available to spend on battlefield related projects. The 2013 programme of events was also discussed. Simon Marsh, Gregg Archer and Harvey Watson were reappointed as Chairman, Secretary and Events Co-ordinator respectively for 2012-13.

Edgehill (1642)

Efforts to create a information point for the Edgehill battlefield in St Peter's Church, Radway, on the edge of the registered battlefield, are progressing well. David Beaumont the Trust's local representative and the local history society have been working with the Church of England to submit a Heritage Lottery Bid. If successful this would allow interpretative information about the battle to be displayed in the church, which holds a memorial to Captain Kingsmill, a royalist officer killed during the fighting. The HLF bid was submitted in mid-January and the outcome should be known by April.

Battlefields Trust Conference

The Trust's national conference is being held at the University of Durham on 5-7 April. See <http://bit.ly/YrFbvb> for details.

National Army Museum

The NAM is running a public vote to decide Britain's greatest battle. It would be great to see Naseby, which is in our region, win. Please go and vote at <http://bit.ly/VpWVFO>

Battlefield Trust Events

Forthcoming Mercia events for your diary as follows. More details at <http://bit.ly/faZwkI>.

First Sunday of every month (to April 2013), Tewkesbury (1471). two hour walk led by the Tewkesbury Battlefield. Meet 2.30 pm, at the Abbey gate in the Crescent, (Junction of Church Street and Gander Lane, GL20 5PD). For further details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

Sunday 17 March 2013, Siege of Berkhamsted Castle (1216). Joint event with London and SE Region. Meet at 11.00 am outside the main entrance. Contact Laurence Burrige on 07907 050140.

Sunday 24th March 2013, Stow on the Wold 1646. Meet 1:30pm at the public car park adjacent to the Tesco Store in Stow at GL54 1BX. The walk will last approximately 2.5 hours. For further details contact Simon Marsh on 01844-274112 and mercia@battlefieldstrust.com).

Sunday 14 April 2013, Battle of Barnet (1471). Joint event with London and SE Region. Meet at 11.00am at the Old Monken Halt public house, High Street, Barnet, EN5 5SU. Contact Harvey Watson on 01494-257847.

Saturday 27 April 2013, Upton (1651) and Ripple (1643). For Upton meet outside the Heritage Centre at the Pepperpot (old church tower), WR8 0HT at 10:45am. For Ripple meet at the Railway Inn, Ripple GL20 6EY at 2:15pm or earlier for lunch. For further details contact Tony Spicer on 01684 572925 or 07850 888269.

Sunday 12 May 2013, Siege of Faringdon (1645/6) and Radcot Bridge (1387). A two mile walk around Folly Hill and Faringdon followed by a driving tour for Radcot with optional lunch. Meet 10.30am at the park in Stanford Road, off London Street, between Tuckers Road and Nursery View. Map Reference SU29459545. Contact Tim Norris Tel 01451 833668, Mob 17990 571945 and tim.c.norris@gmail.com

Tower of London Lunchtime Lectures in the Fusilier Museum there continues in the autumn. See <http://bit.ly/OUvVsu> for details.

Simon Marsh