



April 2014

# Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

## Introduction

I hope you will agree we have a good series of walks and talks for members in the Mercia Region this year. It is a couple of years since the Trust ran a walk at Naseby and we are fortunate that Martin Marix-Evans, the driving force behind the project there, an expert on the battle and excellent guide, has agreed to show members around the site on 15 June. For those of you with a Wars of the Roses interest, the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society's summer walks programme offers a number of opportunities to learn about the Yorkist victory there and historian Mike Ingram is leading a couple of battle of Northampton events in July. Walks at Cropredy, Evesham and Worcester top off the summer walks programme. On 5 October I am planning to lead the annual walk at Edgehill, which will be combined with the Region's AGM. I am also trying to persuade Harvey Watson to take a group over the newly registered battlefield at Edgcote, possibly in September. But more of that in the next issue. I hope to see you at an event soon.

## Events

Mercia has run a couple of events in the region since the start of the year and has helped organise more in our neighbouring regions which some of you might have been able to attend. on 22 February, Harvey Watson presented on the battle of **Edgcote (1469)** at the Banbury Museum in what we thought would be the finale of our 'Banbury Battlefields' series of lectures. Harvey's talk generated a further excellent turn out with 53 people attending and particular interest shown in the impact of the HS2 rail project on the registered battlefield. Banbury Museum were so pleased with the success of the presentations that it added another on 26 April on the battle of **Stow (1646)**. At Stow the region's annual walk was held on 23 March. With much milder conditions than last year, I led a group of around 15 across the traditional and alternative sites for the battle. Tony Spicer was on hand to

advocate for the traditional location, explaining how the royalists perhaps approached Stow via the Saxon salt way and were caught by the parliamentarians by the ridge at Donnington. I made the case for the alternative site on the basis of the nature of the terrain, proximity to the town to which the royalists fled and different route of approach along what is now the A424. In the London and South East region I have been running a series of talks at Shaw House in Newbury examining the battles there and trying to raise funds for an interpretation board for the second battle of **Newbury (1644)**. Historians Jon Day and Chris Scott spoke about the first and second battles respectively in early March and mid-April. Separately in East Midlands Region Mike Ingram ran a well received walk across the 'revised' battlefield at **Bosworth (1485)** at the end of March.



*Naseby Battlefield Project information board*

## Tewkesbury (1471)

You will recall from the last newsletter that the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society had launched an appeal just after Christmas to purchase The Gaston fields, the only undeveloped part of the Tewkesbury battlefield as the school that owns the land wanted to divest itself of the site. The Society was concerned that the land would be purchased for development despite the fact that in 1999 a planning application was

turned down there following a public inquiry. With widespread local support, the campaign has now raised over £100,000 - sufficient to bid for the land - and the Society has informed the school and asked to be considered as preferred bidder on the basis that the educational aims of the Society and the school overlap in terms of the land. If successful, ownership of the land will be the first step and fundraising continues in order to transform the fields into an community, tourist and heritage asset. More information, including on how to make a donation, can be found at <http://bit.ly/1e3oHiZ>. Separately the Society is nearing completion of its commemorative sculptures for the battle which will be installed at the Stonehills roundabout for dedication on 4 May. For more information on the sculptures see <http://bit.ly/1IZbxwv>.

### **Naseby (1645)**

On 12 March, Daventry District Council considered a planning application for the construction of a 44m wind turbine at Little Oxdenden in Northamptonshire. Whilst the location for the proposed turbine was not part of the registered battlefield at Naseby, it was on the site where the royalists initially deployed before advancing to Dust Hill and the battle itself. The Battlefields Trust objected to the development on these grounds, particularly because English Heritage's 2012 designation guidance for battlefields allows for non-contiguous areas, including where initial deployments occurred, to be registered. Fortunately Daventry Council accepted the reservations of the Trust and others and refused the application.

### **Regional Plan**

For the first time the Mercia region has created a plan for what it would like to achieve over the next three years. Aside from some capacity building, we are aiming to run at least eight battlefield walks a year and maintain a lecture programme in the winter months. The region is committed to campaigning against battlefield threats and aims to ensure historical environment records exist for all securely located battlefields to improve their protection. We plan to continue work to find any grave-pits at Edgcote, install at least two new information boards and support the establishment of an information hub at Edgehill. If you would like to be involved with any of this, please contact me at the details at the foot of the page.

### **Battlefield Trust Events**

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

**Battle of Tewkesbury 1471.** Thursday 5 June, 17 July, 7 Aug, 4 Sept. All walks start at 7:30pm (apart from 4 Sept which starts at 7:00pm) at the Abbey gate in The Crescent, GL20 5PD. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

**Saturday 17 May 2014, Sieges of Donnington Castle and Third Battle of Newbury 1644.** Simon Marsh will talk about the Civil War sieges of Donnington Castle and the little known third battle of Newbury at Shaw House (RG14 2DR). Tickets £12 (including drinks and nibbles) from Shaw House (01635 279279) or the Newbury Tourist Information Centre on 01635 30267.

**Sunday 15 June 2014, Naseby (1645).** Meet at the Red Lion, Sibbertoft, LE16 9UD at 10.30am, where lunch can be pre-ordered, for a driving tour of the battlefield. Some walking involved so please bring suitable footwear and waterproof attire. Contact Simon Marsh on 01844 274112 or [mercia@battlefieldstrust.com](mailto:mercia@battlefieldstrust.com)

**Sunday 29 June, Cropredy Bridge (1644),** Meet at the information board by the bridge (OX17 1PQ) at 10:30am to explore one part of the battlefield and outside the Red Lion (OX17 1PB) at 2:15pm for the other. Lunch at the Red Lion. Contact Harvey Watson on 07818 853385.

**Saturday 5 July and Thursday 10 July, the Battle of Northampton 1460.** All at Delpare Abbey (NN4 8AW). On 5 July a talk on the battle at 11:30am followed by a walk at 1:30pm with Mike Ingram. On 10 July a memorial event and walk at 6:30pm. Contact Mike on [mikeingram2000@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mikeingram2000@yahoo.co.uk) or 07738 908808 for details.

**Saturday 2 August, Evesham 1265,** 10:30 am, annual Simon de Montfort Society Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Memorial in Abbey Park, Evesham (near the Bell Tower) followed by a battlefield walk. Contact Tony Spicer on [a.spicer@btinternet.com](mailto:a.spicer@btinternet.com) or 01684 572925.

**Sunday, 7 September, Worcester 1651.** Meet at the Commandery (WR1 2HU) at 2:30pm. Contact Tony Spicer (see above) for further details.

Simon Marsh