



August 2015

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

I hope you are all enjoying the (at times) good summer weather and that some of you have managed to visit a battlefield or two. The Mercia region has offered opportunities to do this with walks at Stow, Edgcote and Cropredy in recent months. Our partners at the Naseby Project, Northampton Battlefields Society and Tewkesbury Battlefields Society have also offered a range of walks and events at the battles they cover for Trust members. If there are battlefields that you haven't explored and would like to see, drop me a note using the contact details at the foot of the page and we will see whether we can arrange a walk there.

I should also highlight some changes in the Trust at a national level. In May, the Chair of the Trust, Frank Baldwin, and Board Secretary and National Co-ordinator, Peter Burley, stood down from their respective roles. Both had put great energy and enthusiasm into the Trust over a long number of years and were in large part responsible for its impressive growth and increased profile as an organisation. Howard Simmons was appointed as the new Chair at the Board of Trustee meeting in July with Ruth Gibson confirmed as Board Secretary. The National Co-ordinator role has now been split between Simon Marsh - covering research and battlefield threats issues and Geoffrey Carter, who takes on the new role of Director of Battlefields Trust Operations, managing the day to day workings of the Trust. As you might imagine, this level of change in any organisation is disruptive but the new team is working hard to minimise this as far as possible.

Battlefield Threats Update

Some of you may be aware of the ongoing threat to an unregistered part of the **Worcester (1651)** battlefield, where a developer has proposed building houses at Middle Battenhall Farm in the Red Hill area. This location is likely to have seen some fighting and was certainly crossed over by

parliamentarian forces from about the river Severn as they tried to reinforce their compatriots being attacked by the royalists on Red Hill. Despite a recommendation from planning officers to agree the application, councillors on the city planning committee were minded to reject the application and asked the planners to develop reasons to do so. Unfortunately the delay involved meant the developer could take the case to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on the grounds of non-determination. A planning inspector is therefore being appointed and they will have the final say on the application. The Trust has opposed the development since the initial planning application was made over a year ago and plans to write to the planning inspector when they are appointed to explain its rejection of the development.



The under threat area at Middle Battenhall Farm on Worcester battlefield.

At **Northampton (1460)** following the report earlier in the year of the discovery of a round shot from the battlefield, night-hawkers (illegal metal detectorists) have been operating there. The Council, the police and Historic England have been alerted by the Northampton Battlefields Society and all are investigating and taking action to prevent and detect any recurrence. Following complaints from the Northampton Battlefields Society and Battlefields Trust, Northampton Council forced the golf club to undertake archaeological analysis of the top soil it had scraped in the unauthorised

attempt to build a car park in January. This work is now complete. Nothing firmly related to the battle was found and the golf club has now submitted a retrospective planning application for the car park, which the Trust will oppose.

Edgehill (1642)

The project to install a battlefield information hub for Edgehill in the church at Radway village is nearing completion. The centre, which has free admission, will be open to the public from August 2015, though an official opening is planned for October. Museum quality interactive displays, information boards and specially commissioned films tell the story of the battle and the experience of those that witnessed it, both soldiers and civilians. For further information about the project see <http://bit.ly/1I76h2C>

Tewkesbury (1471)

You will recall from previous newsletters that the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society launched an appeal just after Christmas 2014 to purchase The Gaston fields, the only undeveloped part of the Tewkesbury battlefield. The Battlefield Society made an offer of £135,000 for the land to the school that owns it, with generous support from a donor who wished to remain anonymous. But the school has yet to make a decision on the offer and the Battlefield Society is concerned that the donor is becoming impatient and may withdraw their support. As of June the school was still seeking legal advice before taking a decision.

Mercia Region Committee Meeting

The Mercia region committee is planning to meet at 11:30pm at the Brasenose Arms, Cropredy (OX17 1PW) on Friday 25 September. At the meeting it will discuss plans for 2016 and reviewing the projects underway. Regional members are welcome to attend, but if you can't and would like to feed ideas into the committee, please contact me on the details at the foot of the page.

Mercia AGM 17 October 2015

The Mercia Region AGM will be held at the The Swan Hotel and Pub, Kineton (CV35 0JS) at 4:00pm on 17 October following an afternoon walk over the battlefield. If anyone is interested in standing for a position on the Mercia Region committee and would like to discuss it in advance of the meeting they should feel free to contact me on the details at the foot of this page.

Battlefield Trust Events

Forthcoming Mercia events for your diary as follows. More details at <http://bit.ly/faZwkI>. Events are correct at the time of going to press. You are advised to check with the point of contact for any last minute changes.

Wednesday 12 August 2015, Evesham 1265. A walk around the battlefield and town led by Tony Spicer. Meet at the Almonry Heritage Centre, Evesham (WR11 4BG) at 2pm. Further details available from Clive Bostle at bostle@waitrose.com.

Tewkesbury 1471. Thursday 3 September at 7:30pm from The Crescent (GL20 5PD) next to the Abbey and on the first Sunday of the month October - December 2015 at 2:30pm from The Crescent. If flooding occurs the walk may be cancelled. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

Sunday 20 September 2015, First Battle of Newbury (1643). Opening of a new information panel about the battle at the Falkland Memorial (junction of Essex Street and the Andover Road) followed by a walk of the battlefield. Meet 2pm at the Memorial. Contact Simon Marsh on 01844 274112 or merciam@battlefieldstrust.com for details.

Saturday 3 and Sunday 4 October 2015, A 15th Century Marches at War self-drive tour. Saturday Mortimer's Cross (meet at Croft Castle chapel (HR6 9PW)) then Pilleth. Overnight in Ludlow (own arrangements to be made). Sunday Ludlow & Ludford Bridge then battle of Shrewsbury. Those participating are responsible for their own fuel costs, admission charges to NT/EH properties, accommodation and meals/refreshments etc. Contact Anthony Rich for further details on 0121 249 9292 or anthonyrich@virginmedia.com.

Saturday 17 October 2015, Edgehill (1642) and Mercia AGM. Meet at the Radway Church (CV35 0UE) at 2pm for the walk of the battlefield and at 4:15pm at the Swan Hotel and Pub in Kineton (CV35 0JS) for the Mercia Region AGM. The Battlefield Information Hub will be open in the church and you may want to look at this before the walk starts. Contact Simon Marsh on 01844 274112 or merciam@battlefieldstrust.com for further details.

Simon Marsh