



May 2016

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

Welcome to the Spring update from the Mercia region of the Battlefields Trust. As the weather has improved the region's programme of walks has started with visits to Stow-on-the-Wold, Ripple and Edgcote. More are planned over the summer – see the last column of the news letter for details. We have also been busy over the last few months arguing against inappropriate development on battlefields in the Mercia Region. Separately, we are turning our thoughts to revisiting the archaeological work we started at Stow last October in an effort to locate the battlefield.

Northampton (1460)

As reported in the Spring edition of *Battlefield* magazine, in March 2016 Northampton Borough Council considered two planning applications for car parks to be built on the registered battlefield there. One was a retrospective application by Delapre Golf club to continue unpermitted work it was forced to halt in January 2015. The other was by Delapre Abbey Preservation Trust to service visitors to the refurbished Abbey buildings, which will, amongst other things, host interpretation about the battle of Northampton. Following objections on the former by a number of heritage stakeholders, including the Trust, the application was withdrawn, though it can be resubmitted again and it will be important for us to remain vigilant. On the other, the Abbey Trust consulted carefully with stakeholders, minimised the impact on the battlefield and proposed the use of sympathetic materials in building the car park. This approach and the benefits gained from bringing the battle of Northampton to the attention of a wider audience through the planned interpretation centre resulted in the Trust offering no objections.

Stow Battlefield Survey

Further engagement has occurred with landowners in the Stow area to prepare the ground for further survey work to try and

identify the Stow battlefield site this Autumn. Work is being planned on the traditional site at Donnington and we also want to test theories that the battle was fought closer to Stow than has so far been thought or elsewhere across the Evesham Road.

Ripple (1643)

There was a strong turnout for Tony Spicer's walk at Ripple in late April. Those attending learned about the defeat of a small army under Sir William Waller by the King's nephew, Prince Maurice, in April 1643 and Tony explored the pursuit stage of the battle, looking at what happened as the defeated parliamentarians withdrew to Tewkesbury. Further good news was also available to the walkers as the planning application to build houses on the edge of the village at the foot of the hill, from where Waller's men conducted a fighting retreat through the village, was rejected by Malvern Hills Council in January this year.



Ripple battlefield – Old Nan's Hill, where Waller deployed, is in the distance

Tewkesbury (1471)

In the last edition of the newsletter I reported that the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society had been told it could buy land on the battlefield at The Gastons following a decision by the Tewkesbury School Trust

Fund that owns the land to sell it to the Society. Unfortunately in mid-April the Trust Fund concluded that it had a duty to obtain best value from the land and that this could not be achieved so would not proceed with the sale. The Battlefield Society continues to work to reach a mutually acceptable solution with the Trust Fund, though at the moment the prospects for a successful outcome do not look encouraging.

Worcester 1651

Since 2013 the Mercia Region has been working with local interested parties to prevent the development of the Middle Battenhall Farm area of the Worcester battlefield from being developed. The area is not part of the registered battlefield, though it almost certainly saw movement of Cromwell's cavalry from the southern part of the battlefield to the eastern sector and probably witnessed fighting toward the London Road. The Council rejected the application to build on the site by the developer, Miller Homes, but this was appealed and the case was all set to be decided by a planning inspector. However, in late March, Miller Homes dropped its appeal, apparently because the Local Plan, which did not envisage building on the Middle Battenhall Farm site, had been approved making a successful appeal less likely.

Naseby (1645)

In mid-January the Naseby Battlefield Project received almost £10,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop plans to establish a visitor's centre for the battlefield. The grant will pay for a feasibility study and a consultation with local people about what facilities they would want to see in any centre. One possibility is to use the church at Naseby to host a centre as the church at Radway does for the battle of Edgehill.

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.

Thursdays 2 June, 7 July, 14 July, 4

August 2016 Battle of Tewkesbury

1471. Walks run by the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society. Meet at 7:30pm from The Crescent (GL20 5PD) next to the Abbey. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

Sunday 5 June 2016, Battle of Naseby

(1645). Mike Ingram will lead a driving and walking tour across this important English battlefield. This is a fund raising tour for Northampton Battlefields Society and a donation of £5 per person, including Trust members is requested. Meet outside Naseby church at 1:30pm. Pre-booking with Mike on mikeingram2000@yahoo.co.uk or 07738 908808 is essential.

Friday 17 – Sunday 19 June 2016, Battlefields Trust AGM and Conference

Held at Sussex University, BN1 9RH. For further details see <http://bit.ly/1TggTSe>

Sunday 10 July 2016, Battle of

Northampton (1460). Join Mike Ingram and the Northampton Battlefield Society on a walk of this important Wars of the Roses battlefield. Meet 1:00pm by the Eleanor Cross on the side of the A508 just north of the A45 junction. Contact Mike Ingram on mikeingram2000@yahoo.co.uk or 07738 908808 for details

Sunday 10 July 2016, Tewkesbury

Medieval Festival. Tewkesbury Battlefield Society is running a battlefield walk during the festival. Meet 1:30pm outside the information tent. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939

Sunday 14 August 2016, Battle of

Chalgrove (1643). Join Simon Marsh for a short joint walk with the John Hampden Society over the site of John Hampden's mortal wounding. Meet 11:00am at the monument to John Hampden on Warpsgrove Lane (nearest postcode OX44 7RW)

Sunday 18 September 2016, Battle of

Southam (1642). Gregg Archer will lead a walk over one of the first battles of the Civil War. Meet at 1:00pm by the duck pond in the centre of Long Itchington. Contact Gregg on greggyarcher@hotmail.co.uk or 07899 900594.

Simon Marsh