



September 2016

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

I hope you all enjoyed the summer and managed to fit in a little bit of battlefield history. I holidayed in the Dordogne and visited Castillon, the last battle of the Hundred Years War. Although the battlefield is not particularly accessible there is a monument to Sir John Talbot who was killed there with some basic interpretation. My 2016 battlefield highlight though was a July trip to Germany incorporating a visit to Lutzen, a Thirty Years War battle where the Swedish King, Gustav Adolf, was killed. But you don't need to go so far to visit a battlefield and the Mercia region, with support from its partner organisations, has offered several opportunities this year. The Mercia committee is about to start planning next year's events, so please let me know what you would like to see on the 2017 schedule.

Recent Events

Back in May, Harvey Watson led a small but committed group across the 1469 battlefield at **Edgcote**, exploring the different interpretations of this less well-known battle. In June, Mike Ingram ran a tour of **Naseby** battlefield as a fundraiser for the Northampton Battlefields Society and the next month the Society put on another excellent battlefield anniversary event for **Northampton** (1460) at Delpare Abbey. Here the Society and its Chair, Mike Ingram, were deservedly awarded the Battlefields Trust President's prizes for outstanding work on battlefield preservation and interpretation. At **Chalgrove** (1643) in August, I led a well attended walk across the battlefield where the parliamentarian statesman, John Hampden, was mortally wounded. In a joint walk with the John Hampden Society, I explained the different interpretations of the battle and concluded with details on the threat to the battlefield (see below). Finally at the end of August Adam Dolling led another successful War of the Roses walk at **Nibley Green** (1470). A number of local people attended the and provided information on military related finds

and some local traditions about the battle which Adam is planning to follow-up

Chalgrove (1643)

As trailed above, Chalgrove battlefield is under threat from development. South Oxfordshire District Council has recently completed public consultation on its 2032 Local Plan which proposes the building of 3,500 houses on Chalgrove Airfield, a WWII photo-reconnaissance base, which covers around one third of the Historic England registered battlefield. The Trust, the John Hampden Society and Historic England have all objected to the development and the Council acknowledge that further work needs to be done on the proposals to prevent damage to the battlefield. Nevertheless the Battlefields Trust is set to continue its opposition in the event the public consultation does not bring about changes in the plans. It is in touch with local people opposed to the development and intends to work with them to prevent the destruction of this important site.



Chalgrove Walk, by the John Hampden Monument

Tewkesbury (1471)

In the last edition of the newsletter I reported that the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society had been told it could not buy land on the battlefield at The Gastons following a decision by the Tewkesbury School Trust Fund that owns the land. In July this year the Battlefield Society launched a petition as

part of its campaign to acquire this part of the battlefield. The Society would be grateful if Mercia members could sign the petition, which can be done on-line via the following link <http://bit.ly/1e3oHiZ>.

Historic England Registration Review

Historic England has, over the last few years, been reviewing many of the 46 English battlefield registrations with help from the Battlefields Trust. In Mercia Region Shrewsbury (1403) and Worcester (1651) have been completed. Shrewsbury saw the addition of a small strip of land to align the registration with the A5124 road, which had not been constructed when the battlefield was originally designated. Disappointingly, at Worcester Historic England declined to register the Middle Battenhall Farm area that was recently under threat, but remains open to new evidence to change the decision. The Tewkesbury review is about to go to public consultation and a link to this will shortly be made on the Battlefields Trust's website.

John Hampden's Battlefields

The Mercia Region has organised a Winter series of talks with the John Hampden Society looking at the battles where John Hampden fought. These will be held in the Bucks County Museum in Aylesbury at 2:30pm on Saturday afternoons between November 2016 and February 2017. Professor Ian Beckett will give first talk on the Civil War in Buckinghamshire on 12 November, no doubt drawing on his recent book, *Wanton Troopers*, on the Civil War in the county. The remaining talks are on 3 December (Southam and Edgehill), 21 January (Brentford and Turnham Green) and 25 February (Reading and Chalgrove). Tickets (£7.50 for each talk or £25 for all four) are available from the Bucks County Museum (see <http://bit.ly/24Desy9> for further details - scroll down 'What's On' to 12 November)

Mercia Region AGM

The Mercia Region AGM has traditionally been held in the Autumn of each year and has generally taken place following the annual Edgehill walk. The Mercia Committee has decided this year not to walk Edgehill due to other commitments, though we will reinstate the walk next year. Consequently the Mercia Region AGM will take place in the margins of the next battle of Stow on the Wold walk, probably on 19 March 2017. Further details will be available in the January newsletter.

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.

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.

Sundays 2 October, 6 November, 4 December 2016, Battle of Tewkesbury 1471. Walks run by the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society. Meet at 2:30pm at The Crescent (GL20 5PD) next to the Abbey. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

Sunday 6 November 2016, Edmund Ironside/Canute Peace Treaty 1016. A walk led by Tony Spicer exploring these fascinating events of 1016. Meet 10:00am at Odda's Chapel, Deerhurst, GL19 4DA. For further details contact Tony on 01684 572925 or a.spicer@btinternet.com.

Saturday 12 November 2016, Buckinghamshire in the Civil War, Professor Ian Beckett will discuss Buckinghamshire's experience of the Civil War. The talk starts at 2:30pm at the Bucks County Museum, Aylesbury, HP20 2QP. Tickets are £7.50 from the museum (see <http://bit.ly/24Desy9>) or £25 for all four talks in the series.

Saturday 3 December 2016, Battles of Southam and Edgehill, Simon Marsh will discuss John Hampden's first battles. The talk starts at 2:30pm at the Bucks County Museum, Aylesbury, HP20 2QP. Tickets are £7.50 from the museum (see <http://bit.ly/24Desy9>) or £25 for all four talks in the series.

Saturday 21 January 2017, Battles of Brentford and Turnham Green, Simon Marsh and Dr Stephen Porter discuss John Hampden's involvement in halting the 1642 royalist advance on London. The talk starts at 2:30pm at the Bucks County Museum, Aylesbury, HP20 2QP. Tickets are £7.50 from the museum (see <http://bit.ly/24Desy9>) or £25 for all four talks in the series.

Simon Marsh