



January 2012

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

As I write this newsletter the government has just confirmed its decision to build the HS2 rail link. Whilst the route has been moved to take account of the Edgcote (1469) battlefield, it still intrudes on its north-east corner. Just before Christmas the planning inspector in the Kelmarsh Wind Farm appeal agreed the construction of six wind-turbines which will impair the sight lines at Naseby (1645) battlefield and at Northampton (1460) remediation work has commenced on a site adjacent to the battlefield which, although brown-field, may contain battlefield related archaeology. The latter is happening despite development conditions imposed there by English Heritage following Battlefields Trust lobbying. These are just the dangers to battlefields in Mercia region; others exist across the country. If we are to fight these threats, the Battlefields Trust needs more members actively involved in local battlefield groups to organise events, raise money and engage with planning processes and local and national politicians. We also need to recruit more members nationally to grow from our circa 1,000 membership to at least double that number as this will put the charity on a stronger footing in terms of both its voice and finances. If you are able to spare time to do these things, I'd like to hear from you. If you would like to help, but have little time, then the one thing you could do in 2012 is recruit a couple of new members. If everyone could manage this we would more than reach our membership target. Lastly, there a few of you who haven't renewed your subscription. The membership secretary, David Austin, would be grateful if you could do this now, preferably by gift aided standing order.

Events

On 30 October 2011, I led a group of about dozen members across the Edgehill battlefield. The walk skirted the royalist left and parliamentarian right, exploring in particular what happened to the royalist

cavalry on that wing and the nature of the infantry fighting. This was followed by lunch in the Castle Inn and the Mercia Region AGM (see below).

Tewkesbury (1471)

Tewkesbury is set to receive its first major piece of public art following the final approval for commemorative battlefield sculptures, commissioned by the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society and designed by the artists Phil Bews. The 5m high pieces will consist of two framed oak structures in the shape of horses. They will be sited at the Stonehill Farm roundabout where the two armies would have first had sight of each other before the battle and will hopefully be unveiled in July 2012. Fundraising for the sculptures is ongoing and details on how Mercia Region members can contribute are available at www.tewkesbury.org.uk/projects/.



Tewkesbury battlefield sculpture 'The Arrival'

Mercia Region AGM

At the Mercia Region AGM held on 30 October the Chairman's report and accounts for 2010/11 were accepted. In the Chair's report, activity to protect battlefields at Edgcote, Naseby and Northampton was

highlighted along with the year's events. On finances, £367 had been generated through walks and talks in the year and £652 had been spent on re-printing the Edgcote-Edgehill trail leaflets for re-sale. The region's balance of funds stood at £720. I (Simon Marsh) was returned as Regional Chair, Gregg Archer as Secretary and Harvey Watson as Events Co-ordinator. No-one was willing to stand as Treasurer so the role has reverted to the national level.

Battlefields at Risk Update

On **Edgcote** 416 postcards were received by the Department for Transport (DfT) from Trust and associated members urging the Secretary of State to reconsider the route of the HS2 rail line to preserve the battlefield. Thanks to all who made the effort to post a card. Whether in response to this or not, DfT has adjusted the HS2 route to cut only part of the north east corner of the battlefield. Separately, English Heritage should report on its deliberations on the Trust's submission to have Edgcote added to the Register of English Battlefields at the Battlefields Panel in early February 2012. The Trust will review its next steps on Edgcote after this meeting. At **Naseby** disappointing news was received just before Christmas that the planning inspector had agreed that the EON power company could build six wind turbines at Kelmarsh Hall on a time limited basis of 25 years. The planning inspector recognised that these would impair the sight lines from the Naseby battlefield, but judged this was outweighed by the sustainable energy benefits. The decision overturned an earlier planning refusal by Daventry Borough Council. English Heritage, the Battlefields Trust and the Naseby Battlefield Project had all objected to the wind farm at the appeal earlier in the year. At **Northampton** work to remediate the Ransome Road brown-field site north of the registered battlefield commenced before Christmas despite English Heritage setting planning conditions requiring archaeological investigation in advance of development. Whilst not on the registered battlefield, some interpretations of the sources place the Lancastrian field defences on the Ransome Road site and at the very least it is likely to cover the area of the Lancastrian rout and may therefore contain grave-pits. The region and local battlefield representative, Mike Ingram, are now engaging further with the local planning

authorities to ensure the archaeological conditions are correctly implemented.

Battlefield Trust Events

Forthcoming Mercia events for your diary include:

Sundays 5th February, 4th March and 8th April, Tewkesbury 1471. Two hour guided battlefield tours led by the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society. Meet at 2.30pm at The Crescent, Church Street. Contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939 for these and other Tewkesbury walks listed below.

Sunday 19th February 2012, 2nd Battle of St Albans 1461. Meet at 10am outside the St Albans Tourist Information Office. Contact Peter Burley 01727 831413.

Sunday 26th February 2012, Battlefields Trust AGM. Tower of London at 11:45am. See www.battlefieldstrust.com for details.

Sunday 25th March 2012, Stow on the Wold 1646. Led by Simon Marsh (merciam@battlefieldstrust.com 01844-274112). Meet 10:30am at the public car park next to the Tesco in Stow at GL54 1BX.

Saturday 31st March 2012, Civil War Conference. Guildford's Guesten Hall (GU1 3AJ), 2.00 -5.00pm. Presentations include: The life of the Civil War soldier (Alan Turton).The Civil War in SW Surrey and NE Hants. (Julian Humphrys) and Q&A with with Mike Arnold, best-selling author of the Stryker chronicles. Tickets: £12 members £15 non-members (includes tea/coffee). Contact Julian Humphrys (07930 432444 heritagetours@hotmail.co.uk) for details.

Sunday 29th April 2012, Tewkesbury 1471. A 2 hour walk from Tredington and back. Meet at 11.00 at Queen Margaret's camp. Contact Steve Goodchild (see above).

Sunday 6th May 2012, Tewkesbury 1471. An in-depth talk and walk. Meet at 2.00 pm at the museum. Contact Steve Goodchild (see above).

Sunday 13th May 2012, Battle of Chalgrove 1643. Led by Derek Lester. Meet at 10.30am at the John Hampden Monument (OX44 7RW). Contact Harvey Watson on 07818 853385 for details.

Simon Marsh