



Summer 2012

# Engagement

The newsletter of the London & South-East Region of the Battlefields Trust

## **Introduction**

It seems that with every month that passes new threats appear to our historic battlefield heritage and the Battlefields Trust has new problems to deal with. Recently we have had to oppose decisions to build a wind farm close to the site of Naseby (1645) and an industrial incinerator close to the site of Shrewsbury (1403). Now the latest piece of cultural vandalism is the decision 'in principle' by Northampton Borough Council to allow land on the registered battlefield of Northampton (1460) to be turned into sports pitches which is likely to destroy any surviving battlefield archaeology. The planning permission process gives the Trust a further opportunity to stop this but as I'm sure you realise the Trust's resources are limited compared to the number of calls being made upon them and the support of the Trust's members is crucial in ensuring that the Trust's voice continues to be heard.

However, the news isn't all gloom and doom. A few years ago archaeological work at Naseby Battlefield enabled historians to pinpoint the exact site where Prince Rupert's Bluecoat Regiment of foot made their last stand on the evening of the 14<sup>th</sup> June 1645. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 an impressive memorial was unveiled at the site in the presence of the present day Bluecoat Regiment of the Sealed Knot. This sort of archaeological work shows how much there is still to be learned from our historic battlefield sites.



*The Bluecoat Regiment fires a volley in salute to the memorial unveiled on Naseby battlefield on the 10<sup>th</sup> June 2012.*

## **Newbury**

Just two weeks after the unveiling of the Bluecoat memorial Newbury's MP, Richard Benyon, unveiled an impressive information panel at Wash Common, site of some of the fiercest fighting on the 20<sup>th</sup> of September 1643. As you probably know, Newbury was the site of two major Civil War battles, one in 1643 and the other in 1644. The Battlefields Trust has campaigned for years to preserve what is left of these two battlefields, we also argued that interpretation panels were needed to explain the story of the battles. Local history enthusiasts Nick Battle, Ian Ash and Dave Stubbs are to be congratulated on raising the necessary funding and making arrangements for the panel to be made and erected. They have really demonstrated what can be achieved with a little bit of determination and enthusiasm. It is hoped that in time there will be further information panels

and possibly a foot trail and a car trail to enable people to follow the course of the two battles.

### **Lunchtime Lectures in the Tower of London**

The Battlefields Trust have organised a series of lunchtime lectures to be held in the Officers Mess of the Fusilier Museum at the Tower of London. The cost will be £25 for non members and £20 for Trust members, this will include a sandwich lunch and a glass of wine.

Future lectures include:-

**Total War: With the Red Army from Stalingrad to Berlin. Speaker: Dr Michael Jones.** A lecture and sandwich lunch

12.30-2.00pm Monday 8 October 2012.

To book a place at this event visit

<http://www.justgiving.com/Stalingrad-to-Berlin-8-October-2012>

**Fighting in Iraq 2004. Speaker: Dan Mills.** A lecture and sandwich lunch

12.30-2.00pm Monday 3 September

2012 To book a place at this event visit

<http://www.justgiving.com/Battlefields-Trust-City-Talk-Iraq-3rd-September-2012>

For further information on these talks email [helen@battlefieldstrust.org](mailto:helen@battlefieldstrust.org) or ring 0207 387 6620. Space is limited so book early to guarantee a ticket!

### **Future Projects**

August 2014 will be 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the outbreak of the Great War, no doubt there will be many commemorative events about the Western Front and the fighting in Flanders, but it is often forgotten that London itself was a battlefield and between 1914 and 1918 it witnessed the world's first ever strategic bombing campaign, first with Zeppelin airships and later with Gotha bombers. Though this campaign has been largely overshadowed by the bombing raids of the Second World War it was an enormously significant event and led

directly to the creation of the Royal Air Force. The London & South-East Region is considering running a project to compile information on where there are remains connected to this campaign, this would include monuments, memorials, fighter airfields and anti-aircraft gun emplacements. Please let me know if you want to be involved in this project.



*Military historian, Chris Scott, explains the importance of the Battle of Newbury 1643, during the unveiling of the information panel. Standing alongside is MP Richard Benyon.*

In 2015 we will also be celebrating the 800<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Magna Carta, the oldest constitutional document in the world, and the London & South-East Region are going to be regularly attending meetings of the Magna Carta 800<sup>th</sup> committee. Although it's not a battlefield we are particularly concerned about the way that Runnymede is preserved and presented, (the main memorial to Magna Carta was erected by the American Bar Association and until fairly recent years there was no British memorial to one of the most important events in English history). If any of our members have ideas about how this event should be commemorated I will be interested in hearing from you.

### **London & South-East Region Events**

Please note that unless otherwise stated most LSE events are free to Battlefields Trust members, however, a charge of £5 per head will normally be levied on non-

members. Forthcoming London & South East events for your diary include:

**Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> September London & South-East Committee meeting.** Meet at 18.30 in the downstairs bar of *Ye Olde London*, 42 Ludgate Hill, The City, London, EC4M 7DE. Nearest tube: Blackfriars. Nearest station: City Thameslink. All members of the region are welcome to attend.

**Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September, The Port of London at War, the Blitz on the Dockland 1940.** A walk led by City Guide Chris Everett. Meet at 10.30, at Trinity Gardens exit, Tower Hill tube, finish at the Prospect of Whitby pub, (nearest tube Wapping). The walk will be about 1.5 miles and take about 2 hours. Chris writes, *"With War looming for a second time in Europe, Britain and London in particular began preparations for War. The Port of London would inevitably become a target for enemy bombers and defensive measures were put in place. With 8 million mouths to feed in the South East of England it was vital that Port operations continued despite enemy action. How successful were the measures? What worked and what didn't? Why were dockers safer at work than at home? What effect did Black Saturday the first day of the blitz and 6 years of war have on the docks and Port?"*

Numbers will be limited to 20 people so if you wish to attend it is essential that you ring Chris on 07775 701833 to reserve a place.

**Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1st Battle of Newbury 1643.** We will be meeting at The Gun Pub, 142 Andover Road, Wash Common, RG14 6NE, for lunch. Followed at 2pm by a walk around one of the Civil War's hardest fought battles. Contact Dave Stubbs on 07599 530732 for further details.



*Members of the Sealed Knot Civil War re-enactment society with the newly unveiled Newbury information panel.*

**Saturday 13th October 2012, Potters Bar October 1916.** Clive Hammersley will be leading a walk looking at the dramatic events of the night of 1st/2nd October 1916 when German Zeppelin L-31, under the command of Kapitan Heinrich Mathy, Germany's leading Zeppelin ace, was shot down in flames over Potters Bar by Lieutenant Wulstan Tempest a Royal Flying Corps fighter pilot. The incident marked a turning point in the aerial attack on London during the First World War. Meet at "The Old Manor Pub", (Post code EN6 2JD), at 11am. The walk is about two and a half miles long, mainly on level ground. We will also be visiting the Potters Bar Museum and afterwards having lunch in the pub. Contact Clive on 07505 067691 for further details.