



The Forlorn Hope

Newsletter of the East Anglian Branch of the Battlefields Trust

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Patron: Bernard Cornwell
Vice Patron: Simon Scarrow

With the Bosworth discoveries very much in mind, this issue is dedicated to King Richard III who fought his last battle in the county of Leicestershire.

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Would anyone who wishes to receive this or any other forms, etc via email please contact me.

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Annmarie

Secretary's Report

What a good year with two hugely popular afternoons namely Marlborough and Bosworth.

May I just thank Glen Brooks for speaking at the Bosworth event and for donating an incredible prize for the raffle.

Thanks to Frances Sparrow who spoke at both events, I especially loved her talk on Sarah Churchill. Next year don't miss "Lies, Spies and Infidels" I hope yet another great afternoon.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Annmarie

Bosworth Afternoon

October 23rd saw our joint meeting with the Battlefields Trust which was a great success.

Frances Sparrow gave a really interesting introduction to the afternoon with her talk on the Duke of Norfolk, one of Richard's staunchest allies. This prompted a question from the audience as to the entry in the York records which accuse John Howard of treason. I have investigated and I hope the answer lies elsewhere in this publication!

Glen Brooks gave an amusing talk on Bosworth from the infantry's man's viewpoint, how to take out the enemy and cause chaos and fear. All warfare has elements in common.

Dr Glen Foard closed the afternoon with an archaeological update now he has found the exact location of the battle. The most fascinating relic found has got to be the white boar badge. A marvellous afternoon which no true ricardian can have afforded to miss.

Programme for 2011

22nd January 2011
AGM

Followed by Military memoirs organised by Tony Hawkins!

19th February 2011
The Battle of Waterloo
By Simon Scarrow

11th June 2011
Lies, Spies and Infidels!
13:00 – 17:00

cost £15

Talks from

John Bassett

The Texas Rebellion and/or The Great Sioux War

Dr Rob Johnson (Tbc)

Deputy Director of the changing character of War Programme, Oxford University

Duncan White

International Bodyguard Association

A Great Afternoon!

8th October 2011
Norfolk at War Part I
13:00 – 17:00

cost £15

Talks from

Kitty Lynn

a local historian

and

Prof. Andrew Lambert
Speaking about Nelson

All meetings are held at The Assembly House Norwich starting at 14:30 and admission price is £2 unless otherwise stated.



Little Britain

This article was from the Sunday Times, originally in the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald.

A vicar has invoked an ancient law to summon villagers to archery practice. Mary Edwards discovered that a law introduced before the battle of Agincourt was still on the statute books. It gave priests the duty of ensuring villagers carried out archery drill. The revival of the ancient law was a way of announcing that the church at Collingbourne Ducis has its first flushing lavatory.

Tony Hawkins

The Assandun Project

The battle of Assandun or Ashingdon was fought on 18th October 1016, when the Danes led by Cnut (Canute) were strong enough, with a fleet of 160 ships according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, to besiege London twice and raid across the country to Wiltshire, fighting two battles at Pensewood and Sherston. The Vikings of Cnut were forced away from London by the English King Edmund 'Ironside', but were still able to mount another far-reaching raid, taking their fleet up the River Orwell (probably) and then setting off across country into Mercia. It is likely that Edmund gathered his army together and mopped up Danish resistance in Kent, before turning back across the Thames to track Cnut with the main force. Edmund was joined by Earl Eadric who had, earlier in the year, taken men and ships over to Cnut's side. Together they overtook Cnut at Ashingdon or Assandun Hill in Essex, bringing him to battle. The exact sequence of these events is not clear, as Cnut may have been caught on his way to Mercia, or more likely on his way back, being overtaken on his way back to the fleet.

The battlefield's location is disputed, with Ashingdon near Southend-on-Sea being the most popular site. However, a strong case has been put forward by Warwick Rodwell among others for a site at Ashdon in north-west Essex. Just by looking at the Domesday entries for Essex the case for Ashdon over Ashingdon gathers pace, as the former is named Ascenduna and the latter Nesenduna. Certainly Ashdon's location fits in better with a route to or from Mercia from the River Orwell, while the key to the correct location lies with the correct identification of a memorial church or Minster, built on the orders of Cnut after the battle and consecrated in 1020. Here, field-name and boundary evidence suggest that the now ruined building may lay beneath or near 'Old Church field' on a hill above Ashdon, especially as the church at Ashingdon and known post-battle land-holdings there do not entirely fit the interpretation of a Minster Church. Archaeology, led by a resistivity survey would help to solve this dispute one way or another. Interestingly and tantalisingly, there is one reference discovered to date of a church at Ashdon being dedicated to Saint Andrew (Calendar of Close Rolls, 1313-1318, 74) rather than to the current parish church of All Saints. A further point of connection with the battle is that St. Andrew's Day falls on 30th November, the date of King Edmund's death, shortly after the battle. Could this St. Andrew's Church be Cnut's Minster?

The Assandun Project was spurred on by the recent article about the battle in 'Battlefield' and the approaching 2,000th anniversary in 2016. Initial work has already been carried out regarding the Ashdon site, which is encouraging. The landowners of what was 'Old Church Field' have been contacted for permission for an archaeological survey, while the village museum at Ashdon has given its blessing and support for the work. It is hoped that a professional archaeological survey will be arranged for the summer of 2011 or 2012, along with field-walking co-ordinated through the village museum. Aerial photographs of the area are to be studied by the end of 2010, while work on field names and boundaries has already taken place at the county archive in Chelmsford. Funds to pay for the various surveys are needed, with an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund being likely.

Michael Rayner