

News from the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society

On **Sunday 17th March**, we're due for the annual 'Castles and Churches' tour, but in the light of recent events in Leicester we've decided to forgo the Welsh borders in favour of a trip to Leicester Guildhall to the Richard III exhibition. This will be a self-drive outing, meeting in Morrison's car park at 10.00am to fit into as few cars as possible. Just turn up; there's no need to book.

The Guildhall is open from 11.30 to 4.30, and entrance to the exhibition is free. There is the possibility of a queue, but with luck the rush will be over by then. There are other possibilities on the day:

- There's a walking tour of sites in Leicester, self-guided, with a leaflet available from the Guildhall (or their web site)
- At 2.00 on 17th, in the Guildhall there's a talk by Mathew Morris, the Site Director of the excavation about the archaeology of medieval Leicester and the Search for Richard. This has an admission charge, £3.50, and to reserve a place needs a phone call to 0116 253 2569

Sunday 24th March is Palm Sunday, when the Towton Battlefield Society commemorate the battle. The event is held in Towton Village, down the lane behind the Rockingham Arms. There will be a programme of events through the day, and in the barn we'll be flying the flag for Tewkesbury with our stall. If you happen to be passing, call in and say hello.

On **Tuesday 16th April**, at 7.00pm Sudley Castle is presenting a lecture by Sarah Morris entitled 'Anne Bolyne: Up close and Personal' which 'lifts the veil and reveals the behind the scenes story of writing her debut novel, 'Le Temps Viendra: a novel of Anne Boleyn' and brings Anne alive to speak for herself about her remarkable life'. Entrance is £6. Tickets from the Castle; 01242 602308

On **Sunday 21st April**, we planned to visit Portsmouth to see the new Mary Rose Museum. They must have been having problems with building, though, because they're not at all precise about the opening date. It's been 'late spring' for months now, and that seems to have extended into April, so it seems sensible to postpone until we're certain that it will be open, possibly an Autumn trip.

On **Tuesday 23rd April**, St George's Day, we're having probably our last big fund-raiser for the Sculpture. This will be an auction, to be held in Theoc House. It will be combined with a quiz, for those who just want to test their wits.

The main item for auction is the hand-illustrated and hand-bound Gospels printed, illuminated and bound by Alex Summers especially for the cause. It is a faithful reproduction of the text of the gospels from the Wycliffe translation, possibly the first translation into English.

There are other items for auction, to suit all tastes and pockets.

On **Saturday 27th April**, Tony Spicer is leading a walk around two local battlefields unrelated to the Wars of the Roses; Upton and Ripple. Upton starts at 10.45 outside the Pepperpot. Ripple starts at the Railway Inn at 2.15.

Sunday 28th April is the date of the annual walk to Tredington and back. This is a gentle stroll (rain and mud permitting) which starts at 11.00 at Queen Margaret's camp and returns to the Gupshill in time for a pint, or even Sunday lunch.

Sunday May 5th is the date of the 'big' battlefield walk, which starts at 2.00 in the Museum with a presentation on the battle, followed by a tour of the battlefield, looking at tactics, arms and the action of the battle.

A walk could be combined with a visit to the 'Armour' exhibition in the Abbey over the anniversary weekend. (more information to follow) This promises to be an important event, not least because the Abbey will be opening up the Clarence Vault to visitors.

On **Friday and Saturday 10th and 11th May** we have our annual display of banners, before they are put up for the summer. This year, the show will be in the Royal Hop Pole on Friday afternoon and 11.00 to 4.00 on Saturday. The purpose is for shops and others to choose and book their banners, to be put up early in June.

The Medieval Festival is on **July 13th and 14th** this year.

Sword Hilt

A Society member has purchased a sword hilt. It was reportedly found in 1988 near Deerhurst by an old river crossing which could have been used by Lancastrians fleeing battle. It has passed through three sets of hands since being found, apparently by a dog walker.

The hilt has been examined by an expert from the Wallace Collection and confirmed to date from the fourteenth or early fifteenth century, so it is of the right. The sword has been broken, and

according to the expert it was broken in use, rather than being deliberately destroyed. This makes the possibilities very intriguing!

If the story is true, then this is a unique and important artefact. It would be helpful to know who found it, and enquiries are being made.

The 'Arrivall' sculpture

The project is progressing, as anyone who has seen the You Tube videos will know, but it continues to be blighted by the weather. The almost continuous rain this winter, and the recent cold snap, has played havoc with the programme.

The Victory figure is almost finished; the limbs are being fitted to the knight. Defeat should be plain sailing, though sailing might be a poor choice of word, given recent weather!

The timing of the delivery needs careful co-ordination, because of the need to make the bases at the right time to reduce disruption and cost. We need a degree of certainty that we just don't have at the moment, so we've made the decision to abandon the push for June and to take the pressure off Phil by delaying decisions about erection on site until we've got more certainty.

Predicting a date is tricky without a good idea of what the weather might do, so we're working on the worst case of a summer like last year, which would mean a late summer completion. It will be sometime in 2013, though, barring disaster.