



July 2012

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

I write this having just drafted a Press Release criticising Northampton Borough Council for its 'in principle' decision to allow land on the registered battlefield there to be turned into sports pitches which is likely to destroy any surviving battlefield archaeology. Whilst the planning permission process gives the Trust a further opportunity to stop this, we are fighting a number of battlefield threats at the moment; both those that directly affect the site, such as at the unregistered battlefields at Winwick (1648) in Lancashire and Fulford (1066) near York, or are close by and impact on the character of the landscape, as has happened recently at Adwalton Moor (1643) with a planning application for a wind turbine. The support of Trust members is crucial in ensuring that the Trust's voice is heard. Recent defeats at Naseby (1645) and Shrewsbury (1403) on decisions respectively to build a wind farm and incinerator close to the battlefields, show we all need to do more to fight for our battlefield heritage.

Events

On 13 May Derek Lester led a select band around the battle of **Chalgrove** (1643), providing his interpretation of the action and discussing in detail the events of the day. He kindly provided a booklet about the battle to all who attended the walk. On 8 July, Mike Ingram provided a tour of the **Northampton** (1460) battlefield to a group of around 20, including some re-enactors. He covered the traditional location of the battlefield north of Delapre Abbey by the river Nene as well as the English Heritage and Battlefields Trust preferred site between the Abbey and Hardingstone. He also described an alternative interpretation based on possible earthworks in the centre of the battlefield and generated an interesting discussion about the attack on the Lancastrian earthworks. Mike stressed the range of threats facing the battlefield at present

Northampton (1460)

Northampton Borough Council decided on 11 July 2012 to take forward a proposal to allow sports pitches to be placed on part of the registered battlefield there in the vicinity of Eagle Drive. Mike Ingram and Ian Dexter attended the meeting on behalf of the Trust and, along with other local groups, opposed the proposal. The Trust's main concern is that there could be extant battlefield archaeology on the site which the stripping of turf and construction of pathways, changing facilities and car parks, could destroy. It would also affect the character of the battlefield, making it more difficult to understand and potentially setting a precedent for similar incremental development. However, as this was an 'in principle' decision and needs full planning permission to go ahead, there will be further opportunities to oppose this development. The Trust plans to engage English Heritage to this end.



Battling for Northampton

Elsewhere on and around the battlefield, the Homes and Communities Agency has now selected a strategic partner to develop the Ransome Road site to the north of the registered battlefield area. This brownfield site is the traditional location of the action and the Trust and English Heritage have argued for the need for archaeological investigation in advance of any development given the potential for grave-pits and the Lancastrian field defences that

were constructed. Northampton Borough Council Planning Department has recently confirmed that it fully expects to put in place archaeological investigation conditions on any planning permission. The Council has also been successful in obtaining a Heritage Lottery grant to prepare a £3.5m bid to redevelop Delapre Abbey which sits on the registered battlefield. As part of this work, the Trust has been discussing with the bid developer the opportunities to interpret the battlefield and possibly use of the Abbey to house a small museum about the Wars of the Roses and the battle.

Edgcote (1469)

In June, English Heritage reported that it was arranging for its adviser to gain access to the proposed Edgcote battlefield site in order to complete its deliberations on registration following the Trust's application in summer 2011. It nonetheless appreciated the importance of this in light of the threat from HS2 (see <http://bit.ly/ObDivf>). Mercia Region has also been contacted by HS2 as part of its preparation of an environmental impact assessment. We will engage with the HS2 heritage team undertaking this work over the next few weeks. Further Trust work with a Cranfield University archaeologist to locate grave-pits associated with the battle is also due to take place near the battlefield at the end of July.

Mercia Region Meeting

The Mercia committee met to discuss regional business on 10 May. The future programme of events and projects at Stow, Edgcote and the Edgcote-Edgehill battlefield trail were discussed. Mercia Secretary Gregg Archer agreed to walk the trail in order to refresh the waymarkers. The Region's efforts to update County Historical Environment Records to ensure they captured battlefield locations and the battlefield datasheet project were also covered. The next meeting is due to take place at The Six Bells public house in Thame (OX9 2AD) on 27 September. All Mercia members are welcome to attend.

Naseby (1645)

On 10 June, a memorial to Prince Rupert's bluecoat regiment of foot was unveiled on Dust Hill as part of the Naseby Battlefield Project benefactors' day. The memorial remembers the final stand of the regiment there which partly covered the royalist flight from the battlefield.

Battlefield Trust Events

Forthcoming Mercia events for your diary include:

Saturday 4 August, Evesham (1265).

Annual Simon de Montfort Society wreath-laying ceremony in Abbey Park, Evesham (in town centre near marketplace) at 10:30am followed by battlefield walk. Contact Simon Marsh (01844-274112).

Sunday 5 August, Naseby (1645) Study Day and Walk.

Meet Naseby Village Hall (NN6 6DP) from 11 am. Bring your own flask of coffee! Lunch at the 'Bulls Head' in Clipston. Free to members of the Trust and non-members (£5 per head) are welcome. If you are planning to attend please contact Harvey Watson (07818 853385) by 31 July.

Sunday 16 September, Aldbourne Chase (1643).

Joint event with Wessex Region. Jon Day will lead a walk across this cavalry encounter battle. Final details to be published on the Trust website (<http://bit.ly/faZwkI>) in early August. Numbers limited and booking essential. Contact Simon Marsh (see above).

Sunday, 30 September, Newbury (1643).

Joint event with London and SE region. Meet at The Gun, 142 Andover Road, Wash Common, RG14 6NE, for lunch for a 2pm start. Contact Dave Stubbs (07599 530732)

Saturday 6 October, Powick (1642) and Worcester (1651).

For Powick meet 10:30am at Manor Farm, Malvern Rd, Worcester WR2 4BS. For Worcester meet at 2pm at the Ketch Viewpoint by the Ketch roundabout at the junction of the A 38 and A 4440, grid ref: S0853516. Contact Tony Spicer (a.spicer@btinternet.com, 01684-572925) if you are planning to attend.

Sunday 7 October, Oxford Civil War

Satellite Garrisons. Gregg Archer will lead a driving tour of the Civil War garrisons around Oxford. Meet 10:30am at All Saints Church, Church End, Hillesden MK18 4DB. Tour to end with lunch at a local pub.

Tower of London Lunchtime Lectures

in the Fusilier Museum there continues in the autumn. See <http://bit.ly/OUvVsu> for details.

Simon Marsh