



January 2014

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

A very belated Happy New Year to you from the Mercia Region team. Since the last newsletter in September there have been several significant battlefield developments in our region: Edgcote (1469) has been registered as a battlefield by English Heritage following a Trust application back in 2011; a conservation management plan has been published by Northampton Borough Council for the battlefield there; and a campaign has been launched by the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society to purchase land on the battlefield at The Gaston field. There is more on these stories below. The regional team has also been busy planning events for 2014 and hope to see you on a walk or at a talk somewhere over the course of the year. Outside the region the Trust has again been defending battlefields from inappropriate development. It has intervened at Sedgemoor (1685), Towton (1461) and Norton St Phillips (1685) in the past few months in order to protect the landscape and battle archaeology with largely successful outcomes.

Events

The winter months are not the best to walk battlefields, particularly given the weather we have experienced lately. Conscious that this leaves a battlefield 'gap' in the year, the Trust nationally has been trying to arrange battlefield talks by partnering with local museums which can provide venues and ticketing to compliment the Trust's provision of speakers. Wessex and North East and Borders regions initiated this approach and Mercia Region has been running a series of talks at Banbury Museum on 'Banbury Battlefields'. I talked about **Edgehill (1642)** in November, the Trust's Development Officer, Julian Humphrys, spoke on **Cropredy Bridge (1644)** in mid-January and Mercia officer Harvey Watson will talk about **Edgcote (1469)** on 22 February. The talks have been very well attended - around 50 people at the Edgehill talk and a sell out audience of 60 at the

Cropredy presentation. This was almost certainly because the focus was on battlefields around Banbury, showing again that battlefields are ultimately local issues. Proceeds are shared equally between the museum and the Trust which helps both organisations and promotes battlefields to a wider community whilst hopefully providing an interesting and informative afternoon.



Battlefields Trust information board at Edgcote, which has now been registered

Edgcote (1469)

In October the Trust received the excellent news that the Wars of the Roses battlefield at Edgcote had been registered by English Heritage. This follows the Trust's success in having two Civil War battlefields at Lostwithiel in Cornwall registered earlier in the year and is an important part in its approach to better preserving such fields of conflict. There are now 46 registered battlefields in England. Edgcote was not include in the original English Heritage register in 1995 because of uncertainty about its location. But work by the Trust's archaeological advisor, Glenn Foard, allowed an application for registration to be submitted in 2011. It is unclear why registration took so long to be agreed, but it is likely to be due to the consultation process rather than concerns over the proposed HS2 rail link which now clips the eastern side of the registered area for about one kilometre. If the rail link does go ahead, the Trust will

continue to monitor and engage with HS2 on the archaeological work that will need to take place. English Heritage's registration of Edgcote can be found at <http://bit.ly/1eVUzdj>. The Trust has one further registration application under consideration by English Heritage at present for **Winnick (1648)** in Cheshire.

Tewkesbury (1471)

Just before Christmas an opportunity arose to purchase The Gaston field, the only undeveloped part of the Tewkesbury battlefield as the school that owns the land wanted to divest itself of the site. Tewkesbury Battlefield Society is concerned that the land will be purchased for development despite the fact that in 1999 a planning application was turned down there following a public inquiry. With widespread local support, the Society has launched a fund raising campaign to bring The Gaston field into public ownership. More information, including on how to make a donation, can be found at: <http://bit.ly/1e3oHiZ>

Northampton (1460)

In mid-December the draft of the long awaited conservation management plan for Northampton battlefield was published by Northampton Borough Council (see <http://bit.ly/1e3p5xT>). At a Council meeting in mid-January it was agreed that the report should go out for public consultation as part of a process to allow it to be integrated into the Council's local plans. Despite this, the Council has yet to confirm that it will not progress plans to develop sports pitches at Eagle Drive on the registered battlefield and the Trust continues to monitor the situation there closely. Once the public consultation commences, Mercia region will call on its members to support the integration of the conservation plan into the Council's planning framework

Mercia Region AGM

This was held in the margins of the Edgehill talk at Banbury Museum on 16 November. There was a disappointingly low turnout of members and Simon Marsh, Gregg Archer and Harvey Watson were adopted *nem con* as Chair, Secretary and Events Officer for a further year. The region raised £337 through charitable activity in the course of the year and its balance stood at just under £1175 at the end of October 2013.

Battlefield Trust Events

Forthcoming Mercia events for your diary as follows. More details at <http://bit.ly/faZwkI>.

Battle of Tewkesbury 1471. Walk on the first Sunday of each month to April 2014. Meet at 2.30pm, at the Abbey gate in the Crescent, GL20 5PD. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

Saturday 22 February, Banbury Battlefields - Edgcote (1469). Harvey Watson will talk about the battle of Edgcote as part of a series of lectures about battlefields around Banbury. 2:30pm Banbury Museum, Banbury, OX16 2PQ. Tickets £7.50 available from Banbury Museum. Tel: 01295-753752.

Sunday, 23 March 2014, The Battle of Stow-on-the-Wold 1646. A walk over the site of the last battle of the 'First' Civil War. Meet 1:30pm at the public car park adjacent to the Tesco Store in Stow at GL54 1BX. Contact Simon Marsh on 01844-274112 or mercia@battlefieldstrust.com for details.

Saturday, 29 March 2014, The Battle of Bosworth 1485. Meet outside the visitors centre at 11.00 am. The Bosworth Battlefield Heritage Centre, CV13 0AD. A reduced entrance fee has been negotiated. Limited places so pre-booking essential. Contact Mike Ingram on 07738-908808 or mikeingram2000@yahoo.co.uk for details.

Saturday 5 April 2014, Battlefield Conservation Conference and Battlefields Trust AGM. 10:00am at the Royal Armouries, Leeds (LS10 1LT). Followed by the Trust's AGM at 4pm. Details on the Trust website. AGM Entry free.

A series of talks at Shaw House (RG14 2DR) all commencing 7:30pm. Tickets £12 (£30 for all three talks) which include drinks and nibbles are available from Shaw House (01635 279279) or the Newbury Tourist Information Centre on 01635 30267

Saturday 8 March 2014, First Battle of Newbury 1643. Jon Day

Saturday 12 April 2014, Second Battle of Newbury 1644. Chris Scott

Saturday 17 May 2014, Sieges of Donnington Castle and Third Battle of Newbury 1644. Simon Marsh.

Simon Marsh