



January 2015

Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

Introduction

As we enter 2015 we can look forward to a year of battle anniversaries. In October it will be 600 years since Henry V fought at Agincourt and won the battle against the odds. June sees the 200th anniversary of the battle of Waterloo and there are a series of First World War anniversaries this year of which Gallipoli is perhaps the best known. Closer to home, Evesham will witness the 750th anniversary of the defeat of Simon de Montfort. Here the Battlefields Trust partner organisation, the Simon de Montfort Society, is planning to hold an event in August to commemorate the battle and de Montfort's death. Whilst the First World War will, no doubt, be the focus for the majority of popular battle commemoration this year, the Evesham event along with others organised by the Waterloo 200 project (see <http://bit.ly/1yvaSt7>) and Agincourt 600 (see <http://bit.ly/1BECzqY>) show that this history remains relevant and engaging. Magna Carta is also 800 years old this year and the Trust is running a HLF sponsored project to engage local people about the associated sites of conflict and subsequent Barons Wars (see <http://bit.ly/1BQ3qGt>). This forms part of a wider series of commemorations organised through the Magna Carta 800 project.

Events

Late summer and early autumn saw the region run a series of successful walks. On 7 September Tony Spicer led a group of 15-20 around the Red Hill area of the **Worcester (1651)** battlefield. The walk commenced at the Commandery, used as a hospital by the royalists during the battle, and headed-up the old London Road. At Red Hill Tony detoured to explore the area towards Battenhall where parliamentary reinforcements crossed from the southern side of the battlefield to stabilise the position at Red Hill and were engaged by the royalists. Tony explained the current threat to this area from development (see below) before heading across to Perry Wood, the scene of more fighting, and then down the

old medieval road back into the city. The walk ended at Fort Royal and participants were able to view the new information boards installed there by the Battle of Worcester Society. On a clear and warm 5 October a group of around 15 walked the **Edgehill (1642)** battlefield with Simon Marsh. Starting at the Castle Inn, Simon explained the background to the battle before leading the scramble down the hill, much as the royalist infantry would have done on the day of the battle. With a stop to demonstrate the deployment of 17th century armies, the walk headed down the royalist left toward the parliamentary position on what is now the MOD ammunition site. The group retraced their steps to Radway church to view the memorial to Capt Kingsmill, who fell in the battle, and where David Beaumont explained the project to establish an information centre about the battle in the church and its progress. Lunch and the Region's AGM followed at the Castle Inn.



One of the information Boards at Fort Royal, Worcester.

On 26 October Gregg Archer led 10 members of the Trust on a walk examining the skirmishes at **Gosford Bridge (1644)** and **Islip Bridge (1645)** near Oxford. Starting at Islip, the group walked to Gosford Bridge where Gregg explained the background to

the campaign and the fighting in detail as well as the commanders. Returning to Islip the group were able to see other locations connected with the Civil War. The walk ended at Islip Bridge where Gregg explained the background to Cromwell's 1645 'Oxford raid' and his theory as to where the actual battle was fought around the village.

Worcester (1651)

Following objections from the Trust and others, developers have amended plans, first put forward in December 2013, to construct houses at Middle Battenhall Farm on an unregistered part of the Worcester Civil War battlefield. But the modified plans still threaten this part of the battlefield and the Trust has objected to the development for two reasons: firstly because archaeological work undertaken to determine whether fighting took place there was inadequate in the Trust's view; and secondly because the development would in any case impact on the landscape of the battlefield. Regrettably the local English Heritage Inspector has withdrawn earlier objections and has agreed the revised scheme. An update on this will be provided following any planning decision.

Nibley Green (1470)

In mid-October 2014 Stroud District Council rejected an application to install solar panels on what may well be the battlefield of Nibley Green - the last 'private' battle on English soil. The Trust had objected to the development on the grounds of impact both to any archaeology and the battlefield's setting. A new planning application for a smaller solar array was subsequently made by the landowner that only marginally impacts on the supposed battlefield site. Nonetheless, the Trust objected to this in early December on the grounds of the impact on the battlefield's setting.

Mercia AGM

The Mercia Region AGM was held at the Castle Inn, Edgehill on 5 October. The Chairman's report and regional accounts were accepted and the following officers elected: Simon Marsh, Chair; Anthony Rich, Secretary; Gregg Archer, Treasurer; Harvey Watson, Events Coordinator; and Joyce Norris, Committee Member.

Naseby (1645) - Late News

I have just heard that Naseby Battlefield Project is planning a large event at Naseby on the 370th anniversary weekend of 13/14 June this year. More to follow next edition.

Battlefield Trust Events

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

Battle of Tewkesbury 1471. First Sunday of the month. All walks start at 2:30pm at The Crescent, GL20 5PD, next to the Abbey. If flooding occurs the walk may be cancelled. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

Northamptonshire Battlefield Talks. A series of battle talks including: Northampton (1461) by Mike Ingram on 17 January 2015; Naseby (1645) by Martin Marix Evans on 14 February and Edgcote (1469) by Harvey Watson on 14 March. All 2:30pm at Northampton Museum and Art Gallery (NN1 1DP). Tickets £7.50 or £18 for all three talks available from the museum Tel: 01604-837397. For details see <http://bit.ly/1xNRDbi>

Banbury Museum Battlefield Talks. A series of talks on: First World War Zeppelin Raids on the UK by Harvey Watson on 24 January 2015; Banbury during the Civil War by Gregg Archer on 14 March; and Finding Bosworth Battlefield by Glenn Foad on 16 May. All 2:30pm at Banbury Museum (OX16 2PQ). Tickets £7.50 from the museum shop Tel: 01295 753752. For details see <http://bit.ly/1KhVIAG>.

Sunday 22 March 2015, Stow-on-the-Wold (1646). Simon Marsh will lead a walk over the last battle of the first Civil War. Meet 1:30pm in the public car park adjacent to the Tesco store in Stow (GL54 1BX). The walk will last about two and a half hours and will be over rough terrain. For details contact Simon on Tel: 01844-274112 Email: mercia@battlefieldstrust.com.

Saturday 25 April 2015, Mortimers Cross (1461). Joint event with the NW and Marches Region. A days' programme of activities including visits to both alternative battle sites. Start point and times to be confirmed on the Trust website. Contact Anthony Rich on 0121 2499292 or at anthonyrich@virginmedia.com for details.

Sunday 10 May 2015, Edgcote (1469). Harvey Watson will lead a 3-4 mile walk across the site of one of the least famous - but most pivotal battles in the Wars of the Roses. Meet 1.30 pm Chipping Warden Parish Church (OX17 1JZ). Contact Harvey on 01494 257847 for details.

Simon Marsh