



September 2017

# Encounter

The newsletter of the Mercia Region of the Battlefields Trust

## Introduction

Summer has zipped by and I write this just before I return to work after some holiday. I managed to get down to Cornwall over the summer, staying in Fowey, just south of the Civil War battlefields at Lostwithiel. These were registered by Historic England in 2013 following an application by the Trust (which has just made another for Second Newbury to be registered) and they are worth investigating. Restormel castle, in the care of English Heritage lying north of Lostwithiel, which saw action in the first battle, the town itself and the iron age ramparts at Castle Dore, where the parliamentary army was finally forced to surrender are particularly interesting. Back to the Mercia Region, we have some good battlefield walks organised for the autumn, so I hope you will be able to join us on one of these.

## Recent Events

In April Gregg Archer led a small group around the battlefield of **Islip Bridge (1645)**, one of the minor actions fought during a raid around Oxford by Oliver Cromwell. Gregg explained the background to the raid and the action that occurred in and around Islip, including some of the uncertainties that remain about the most likely location of the action. In early July Anthony Rich led a walk across the **Cropredy Bridge (1644)** battlefield. This confused encounter action is always worth seeing 'on the ground' to understand the distances and challenges involved for opposing commanders. As always Anthony's presentation rewarded those who participated in this regard. Tony Spicer led a joint Battlefields Trust/Simon de Montfort Society walk at **Evesham (1265)** in early August. The battle saw de Montfort killed and Tony explained the circumstances of the rebel defeat by the future Edward I who led the forces of his father Henry III. The Trust's partner organisations, Northampton Battlefields Society, Tewkesbury Battlefields Society and the Naseby Project have also held a number of well attended walks and

events since April.

## Radcot Bridge Information Board

I reported in the last issue of *Encounter* that the Region had been progressing the production of an information board at Radcot bridge, which saw battles there between supporters and opponents of Richard II in December 1387 and between royalists and parliamentarians in May 1645. The board is now complete and can be seen below. Alan Watkins, the landlord of The Swan public house which is adjacent to the bridge is sponsoring the project and he is now organising the board's production and installation.



Radcot Bridge Information Board

## Edgehill 1642

The Edgehill group which developed the information hub about the battle at St Peter's church at Radway have been awarded the Battlefields Trust President's Award. This recognises the contribution of an individual/organisation to the cause of battlefield preservation. Trust Development Officer, Julian Humphrys, presented the award, which was announced at the Trust's annual general meeting at Newark in June. Julian highlighted the reasoning behind the award saying 'its the fact that it is a local community which has come together, obtained funding and actually staged this themselves. It's a real community effort'. The group has also launched a poetry competition for adults and children to write

about the battle of Edgehill and/or its impact locally. More details can be found on the Battle of Edgehill Exhibition website at <http://www.battleofedgehill exhibitionradway.org.uk/poetry.html>. The poetry competition will be judged by Clare Mulley, who was the Trust's poet in residence in 2016.

### **Chalgrove 1643 Development Threat Update**

Having seen the threat of house building on part of the battlefield of Chalgrove go away over the summer as the plans for the airfield development there altered to take account of battle site, another application to develop an adjacent field which is also part covered by the battlefield has been lodged. The application is well crafted to avoid construction on the battlefield area, but proposes that this part of the registered site be made into a public green space with trees or hedges planted to act as natural screening for the houses planned. The Trust has objected to the proposal, arguing that any public space should not alter the character of the battlefield and that any natural screening should be implemented outside the registered area. The region will continue to monitor the situation.

### **Tewkesbury 1471**

In May the Tewkesbury Battlefield Society and the Borough Council unveiled a new set of information boards for the battlefield. The Society worked with the Council to provide the input to the interpretation panels, which form a trail around the battlefield and mirror the other trails established around the Town. An accompanying leaflet is available from the Tourist Information Centre containing extra background information for visitors undertaking the battlefield trail.

### **Nibley Green 1470**

Also in May a planning application was received by Stroud District Council to develop riding school facilities in the area most likely to have seen fighting during the battle of Nibley Green in 1470. This was a small action fought as part of the feud between Viscount Lisle and Baron Berkley over the inheritance of Berkley Castle. Lisle was defeated and killed in the battle. The Trust objected to the proposed development on the basis that a full heritage impact assessment had not been conducted. The application was refused because of the impact of the development on the visual amenity of the area.

### **Battlefield Trust Events**

Forthcoming Mercia events for your diary as follows. More details at <http://bit.ly/faZwki>. Events are correct at the time of going to press. You are advised to check with the point of contact for any last minute changes.

**Saturday 30 September 2017, Battle of Nibley Green (1470).** Adam Dolling will lead a walk over the site of possibly the last private battle on English soil. Meet at St Martin's church North Nibley, Gloucestershire (GL11 6DL) at 10:00am. For more details contact Adam on [asdolling@hotmail.com](mailto:asdolling@hotmail.com) or 07968 722973

**Battle of Tewkesbury 1471.** Sundays 1 October, 5 November and 3 December 2017. The walks start at The Crescent, (GL20 5PD), next to the Abbey at 2:30pm. If flooding occurs the walk may be cancelled. For details contact Steve Goodchild on 01684 294939.

**Sunday 29 October 2017, Battle of Edgehill 1642.** Join Simon Marsh for a walk across Edgehill, where the first major battle of the Civil Wars took place. There will also be an opportunity to look at the information hub about the battle in the church at Radway. Meet at Radway Church (CV35 0UE) at 10:30am. For details contact Simon on [merciam@battlefieldstrust.com](mailto:merciam@battlefieldstrust.com) or 01844-274112

**Saturday 4 November 2017, Battles of Powick 1642 and Worcester 1651.** Tony Spicer will lead this walk which covers one of the first actions of the Civil War and what is recognised as the last major battle of this tumultuous period. Meet at 10:00am at Old Powick Bridge, Old Road, Worcester (vicinity of WR2 4BU). Parking at the bridge is extremely limited. About 5/10 mins walk away there is unrestricted parking in the Lower Wick area e.g. Canada Way (WR2 4ED) or streets off it. Those taking refreshment after the walk at Manor Farm (postcode WR2 4BS) have permission to park there before the walk.

**Sunday 14 January 2018, Ashdown AD781.** A joint walk with the South East region to blow away the New Year blues over the site of Alfred the Great's first victory over the Danes. Meet at 1.30 pm at the Bell Inn, Aldworth, Berkshire, RG8 9SE. For further details contact Harvey Watson on 07818 853385.

Simon Marsh