

The Black Pear Bulletin

Issue No.3 February 2014

The Monthly Newsletter of the Battle of Worcester Society



THE SOCIETY CAMPAIGNS THROUGHOUT THE WINTER!

The Chairman writes: Unlike Civil War Armies, the Executive Committee has not found winter quarters to await better Spring weather, but have continued to be busy on a number of fronts.

CIVIL WAR TALKS

It has been terribly exciting, and sometimes a little frustrating, organising the series of five Civil War evenings at the Commandery beginning in March. David Nash, newly installed at the Commandery, has been particularly helpful in accomodating us. We have some terrific speakers, and all five evenings will be excellent entertainment, especially for £5 admission. Please do come along and support this Society initiative. I would ask members to note that these events are open to the public too, with other societies circulated also. Admission will be on the basis of "first come, first served", so I urge members to arrive well before the start time of 6pm on all occasions. For full details of the talks, see below.



The Commandery

OLD ST.MARTIN'S CHURCH SERVICE

The new arrangements for the Annual Commemoration Service on 7th September at Old St. Martin's Church are beginning to take shape, with much thanks to Canon Paul Tongue. I intend to make the Service, which begins at 12 noon, more intimate than previously at the Cathedral, and for those wishing to, why not join us for a post Service drink and a bite at the nearby King Charles House. Tony Spicer of the Battlefields Trust will be conducting a guided tour from The Commandery up to Perry Wood and back, using the old roads. Assemble for 2.30pm at the Commandery. (So time for a pint or two and a pie followed by an opportunity to walk of those calories!).

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Membership continues to grow - and with growing cross Party support! Robin Walker, MP, has for many years been a staunch supporter, and of course, Lord Faulkner, our senior Patron, is an unstinting advocate of what we aim to achieve. Now we have Joy Squires, City Councillor and Labour Parliamentary Candidate, amongst our ranks. I will be approaching other political parties to join our ranks too over the coming months.



New Member, Councillor Joy Squires

SUBSCRIPTION BALLOT RESULT

Members were balloted about an increase in subscriptions and the overwhelming response was in favour. Therefore, individual membership rises from £10 to £15 and Family Membership (2 adults and 2 children) rises from £15 to £20 a year. To assist with administration there will be one renewal date for all members, appropriately, 3rd September. The Membership Secretary will be contacting members individually about how this will work in practical terms.

NEW EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

Please note that with immediate effect the new Executive Committee structure is:

GRANT SIMMONDS	CHAIRMAN
RICHARD SHAW	VICE-CHAIRMAN
NATALIE DIGGER	SECRETARY and MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY
BEN HUMPHREY	HEAD OF FUNDRAISING
CHRISTINE SHAW	TREASURER
KEN POTTS	FELLOW OF THE SOCIETY
ROGER FAIRMAN	
VAUGHAN WILSHERE	
BRIAN BULLOCK	
MARK DIGGER	WEBMASTER

HOWARD ROBINSON - OUTGOING MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

Massive thanks to Howard for the fantastic support he has given the Society over the years; we simply would not have functioned without him. These days, Howard is busier than ever, so handing over the baton of Membership Secretary to Natalie Digger will allow more time for him to pursue his other interests. Howard will remain an active member of the Society and has said that some time in the future he may be able to re-join the Executive Committee. Howard - you'll be welcome anytime.

THE BATTLE OF WORCESTER SOCIETY PROUDLY PRESENT



CIVIL WAR NIGHTS

at the Commandery

A SERIES OF CIVIL WAR TALKS BY LEADING ACADEMICS AND BEST-SELLING AUTHORS

ALL START AT 6PM

ENTRANCE £5 ON THE DOOR

THURSDAY 20th MARCH DR. GLENN FOARD

"BATTLEFIELD ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE ENGLISH CIVIL WAR"

WEDNESDAY 16th APRIL MALCOLM ATKIN

"AN ACCIDENT WAITING TO HAPPEN: WORCESTER, 3rd SEPTEMBER 1651"

TUESDAY 20th MAY LINDSEY DAVIS

BEST-SELLING FICTION AUTHOR, INCLUDING THE CIVIL WAR NOVEL

"REBELS AND TRAITORS"

MONDAY 23rd JUNE MICHAEL ARNOLD

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR OF THE "STRYKER" CIVIL WAR SERIES

WEDNESDAY 23rd JULY PROFESSOR RONALD HUTTON

"THE NATURE OF THE GREAT CIVIL WAR"

Each talk will be followed by a Question and Answer Session, after which there will be an opportunity to purchase signed books by the authors

Refreshments and Battle of Worcester Society merchandise available

www.thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk

logos of Museums Worcestershire and Waterstones



CHAIRMAN'S DIARY

A good mix of meetings again this month on behalf of the Society. January kicked-off with my first ever meeting with the Worcestershire legend that is Malcolm Atkin. It was a privilege to meet with the man who taught me so much about the Civil War in Worcestershire through his marvellous books; I actually took all my Atkins books and asked him to sign them for me!

Later the same day I met with David Nash, (who I keep going to call Graham. Those of a certain vintage will understand, I'm sure). David is now in charge of the Commandery and could not have been more helpful, especially in relation to our forthcoming series of Civil War talks. David is also Chairman of the Vesta Tilley Society and a keen social historian, and it was very clear that we have a strong supporter in him.

Canon Paul Tongue managed to see me for a whole morning to discuss the service in September,

despite very difficult family circumstances. Paul, I'm sure we all wish you and your family the very best in the weeks and months ahead.



SIMON GERAGHTY – DEPUTY LEADER OF
THE WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY
COUNCIL AND SUPPORTER OF THE
SOCIETY

Apart from a delightful meeting with Cllr. Joy Squires, (see above also), I met with Cllr. Simon Geraghty, the Deputy Leader of the County Council. Simon is another great advocate for what our Society in promoting a greater understanding of the Battle can do for the City. It is so encouraging to speak to our representatives of whatever political party and discover that we as a Society and what we represent is supported consistently and genuinely. Both Joy and Simon gave me some very useful suggestions and clearly we have two friends here, one from each side of the political divide.

I was invited to visit The Elms School in Malvern to discuss with the teaching staff a Civil War project they are undertaking. I am very keen to involve youngsters of all ages, and all backgrounds,

especially as the Civil War appears so low down the pecking order of history education priorities, (an absolute disgrace). The meeting was very encouraging and will help us in establishing later this year the Junior Section of the Society, after all these youngsters will be the Society members of the future.

At the quarterly Battle of Worcester Partnership meeting at the Guildhall I had the opportunity to chat with, amongst others, Ian Blyth of the Sealed Knot. Ian has undertaken to do what he can to harness support for our aims within his own society. Excellent chap!

Finally, also met with representatives of the Museums Service, and of course, regularly met with other Executive Committee members, especially Richard and Natalie.

COMMANDERY NEWS

As April approaches, (the date when the consultants appointed by Museums Worcestershire is due to make public their recommendations), there is no further concrete news to report. In the short term, David Nash's appointment to the Commandery is reflected in the increased number of events the Society plan to hold there. The Commandery is our "natural" home and your Executive Committee will endeavour to establish a permanent home there for the Battle of Worcester (and Powick) and the Civil War in Worcestershire in general. We will, however, as I have mentioned before, keep our options open and see what transpires in April.

NATIONAL CIVIL WAR CENTRE - NEWARK

A deputation of the Executive Committee have been invited to Newark in early February to talk with those who are establishing the new National Civil War Centre, which is due to open later this year. The Executive Committee believe that the County and City Councils missed a wonderful opportunity to put Worcester at the epicentre of the Civil War some years ago, but it's all water under the bridge now, and I believe we are all pushing in the same direction. Much can be learnt from the Newark experience and we should be able to compliment one another, especially as I am using the tagline which seems to have met with with general approval:

"WORCESTER - THE CIVIL WAR CITY
Where the English Civil War Began and Ended
1642 - 1651"

Ultimately, I would like to see a two-centre Civil War experience, Worcester twinned with Newark.

FUNDRAISING

I am delighted that the new structure of the Executive Committee will allow Ben to focus exclusively on fundraising for the Society. Ben is, of course, ideally suited to the role and will be visiting the United States with senior Patron, Lord Faulkner, at the end of September. Meetings will be set-up in advance, using the many key contacts Lord Faulkner has "across the pond", with the additional assistance of the U.S. Ambassador and local MP, Robin Walker. The hard work of fundraising for our first realistic major project really begins here. "The Presidents" monument (Ken Potts's superb piece of Presidents Adams and Jefferson during their 1786 Worcester visit) atop Fort Royal is our goal, but many hundreds of thousands of pounds - and dollars! - will need to be raised before this can be achieved. The benefits for Worcester and its economy are obvious, not if, but when we get there.

A big thank you to Lord Faulkner for not only suggesting the visit but co-ordinating and planning it.



LORD FAULKNER - OUR SENIOR PATRON
TO LEAD U.S. FUNDRAISING VISIT

THE BLACK PEAR AND THE BLACK PEAR BULLETIN

During Ben's chairmanship he regularly appealed for members to come forward with items for the Black Pear Journal which we aim to publish twice yearly. Since taking over the Chair in November I too have made such an appeal and the response so far has been "zilch".

Accordingly, I'm recommending to the Executive Committee that the Bulletin continue as a monthly issue with any articles or items supplied by the membership to be included in the next edition. In time, we may look to produce something a little more elaborate, but money and time, as always are the issues.

WORCESTER NEWS

My monthly article seems to be attracting a good deal of interest, especially my recent one about Scottish Independence. The next article is likely to be more of a plug for us, but none the less, do hope you all look out for it.

MERCHANDISE

The following are now in stock and can be purchased via the Secretary:

All Members only prices

Battle of Worcester Society original crested lapel badge NEW £4

Battle of Worcester Society Mugs £4

Battle of Worcester Society Hoodies £15

Battle of Worcester Society Ties NEW £14

A new T-shirt will be produced for the Summer and a Society App is still under discussion.

CONCESSIONS

Don't forget to use the stores where we have a 10% discount concession on production of a current membership card:

PEPLOWS

CARDINAL'S HAT

CHARLIE'S CAFE (SIDBURY)

WORCESTER LIVE EVENTS

CARLUCCIO'S

POCKETS MENSWEAR

SIMPLY BEAUTIFUL BEAUTY SALON

CHOCOLATE DELI

CROMWELL'S CROSSING

Tony Spicer of the Battlefields Trust has had the working of an information panel agreed at the recent meeting of the Battle of Worcester Partnership. It is hoped that the panel will be in situ soon. Work to clear the access path to, what is a beautiful spot, will need to be carried out, and I have mentioned this to Joy Squires, who is looking into it. Further updates will follow.

FORT ROYAL RETAINING WALL, LONDON ROAD AND THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR WORCESTER!

As an acknowledged and well-documented apolitical animal, I have said before and will say so many times in the future, I'm sure, how lucky we are in the Society to have Robin Walker to represent us. He is a great supporter (and member) of the Society and bangs the drum for us inside and outside the House whenever he can.

Recently Robin suggested, what I thought to be an excellent idea, which I have since followed through with the City Council and await its response. Robin suggested painting the retaining wall of Fort Royal along London Road with a mural of the Battle of Worcester. Tastefully done, this would be a piece of free advertising and highlight to the casual passer by and those stuck in traffic queueing to get into Worcester where Fort Royal is. The work need not cost very much at all. It is a project which could be designed and produced by the University or one of the colleges, or a combination of all three. We would of course oversee the design! The problem may be the condition of the wall itself. A recent survey gave the wall the all clear, but vegetation is a problem and there might be a problem applying the paint straight onto the brickwork. But we'll see. Great idea, Robin, let's hope it takes off.



SOCIETY MEMBER ROBIN WALKER MP
– SPREADING THE WORD INSIDE AND
OUTSIDE THE COMMONS

TAMAR CLOSE

City Archaeologist and Chairman of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, James Dinn, conducted the Vice-Chairman Richard Shaw and I, along with Chris Guy, the Cathedral Archaeologist and Tony Spicer of the Battlefields Trust on a fascinating field walk of the Tamar Close site. Situated in the middle of a 1960s residential development near Newtown Road, and surrounded on three sides by houses, it would be impossible to find unless one knew it was there. But for Civil War buffs like me it was such a wonderful discovery.

James explained how the field work, which is a raised artillery platform surrounded by a deep ditch, was used by the besieging Parliamentary forces in 1646. Though the views into the City were obscured by self-sown trees and other impedimenta, it was easy to imagine how shots could rain down into the City from the vantage point. James said there was a similar structure, (there would have been several), built on what is now Rainbow Hill, and pointed out how easy it would have been to send signals from one battery to another.

It is hoped that as part of the proposed Sheriff's Gate development that the site will get a general "spruce up" and an interpretation panel situated overlooking the City.



Inspecting the 1646 earthworks at Tamar Close. From left to right: Vice-Chairman, Richard Shaw; City Archaeologist and Chairman of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, James Dinn; Cathedral Archaeologist, Chris Guy and from the Battlefields Trust, Tony Spicer.

Photograph by Chairman Grant Simmonds.

END PIECE

For the next few years, quite rightly, all other conflicts including the Civil War, will play second fiddle to events commemorating the Great War. Any gaps in the programme will be filled by the likes Bicentenary of Waterloo and the 600th anniversary of Agincourt. All this is absolutely right and proper. But against this background the Society must continue to educate and inform the people of Worcester, the country and the World of the significance of what happened here in Worcester on 3rd September 1651. Let us always remain as conscious as Presidents Adams and Jefferson were of the importance of the final and decisive battle of the English Civil Wars.

Grant Simmonds MBE OStJ
Chairman

WORCESTER - THE CIVIL WAR CITY

WHERE THE CIVIL BEGAN AND ENDED 1642 - 1651

Contact Details

Membership Enquiries: membership@thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk

Academic Research: chairman@thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk

Publishing / Black Pear Journal: publishing@thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk

Fundraising: bhumphrey@thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk

The Battle of Worcester Society, The Commandery, Sidbury, Worcester,
WR1 2HU

www.thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk