

The Black Pear Bulletin

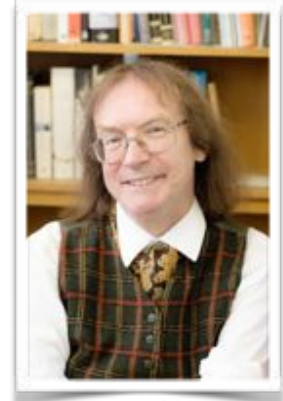
The Monthly Newsletter of the Battle of Worcester Society

Issue No. 9 ~ August 2014



A WARM WELCOME TO PROF. HUTTON

The Chairman writes: One of the country's leading academic historians and speaker at the final "Civil War Nights" evening at the Commandery has agreed to become a patron of the Society. It is a considerable honour for the Society to be able to add Ronald to our list of patrons. A familiar face on our television screens and voice on our radios, he has the rare gift of entertaining while informing. Our growing list of influential patrons reflects my desire to raise the profile of the Battle and Worcester Society.



Prof. Ronald Hutton

BATTLE OF WORCESTER DINNER

Our dinner has been a remarkable success in terms of ticket sales, although there are currently some still available from Vaughan Wiltshire. The Organising Committee agreed at the outset that the dinner would not be a profit making venture and whatever the number of attendees costs should be covered to break even. The number of applications has topped the 100 mark, so our next target is to get near the capacity figure of 140.

THE CARDINAL'S HAT AND THE FLEECE AT BRETFTON RENEW SPONSORSHIP

I am delighted that Nigel Smith of the Cardinal's Hat in Friar Street and The Fleece in Bretforton, with the support of Sadie Hughes, have renewed their sponsorship of the Society. Under the new arrangements members will see the logo of both warm and friendly hostelries at all Society events and on our various forms of correspondence.

There shall also be an increasing number of our events held at one or other venue. Please do have a look our Events page on our website.



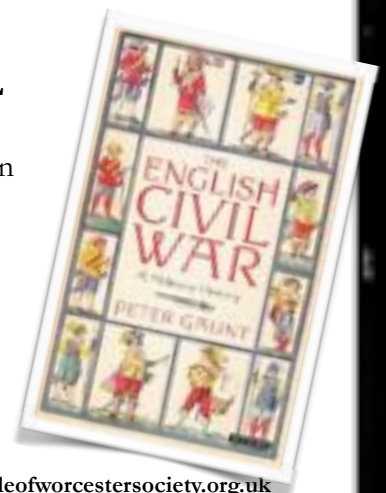
The Fleece



The Cardinal's Hat

ANOTHER EXCELLENT CIVIL WAR BOOK.....BUT IT STILL ENDS IN 1646!

Professor Peter Gaunt, academic historian and President of the Cromwell Association has written an excellent new book about the English Civil War. As always with Dr. Gaunt, it's a balanced highly readable account and I thoroughly recommend it to members. However, once again, the Second and Third Civil Wars are mere footnotes. Preston, Colchester, Maidstone, Dunbar and Worcester involved many thousands of combatants and could very easily turned the World upside down once again. Nevertheless, a terrific read.



GRANT SIMMONDS IN FOCUS

Grant Simmonds is the Chairman of the Battle of Worcester Society.

Q. When did you first take an interest in the English Civil War and the Battle of Worcester?

Like all boys of my generation, I played games in the playground and elsewhere such as "Cowboys and Indians" and "Knights in Armour" and that's when I became aware of "Roundheads and Cavaliers". Most lads wanted to be Cavaliers, but as one who always supported the "underdog" I soon became a staunch Roundhead.

Although we covered the Tudors and the Stuarts at school, unfathomably we didn't take in the Civil War. As a dyed in the wool conspiracy theorist I still believe we skirt the issue in our educational system because "the wrong side won".

I continued my great interest in history throughout my adolescence and early adulthood, but missed out on the Civil War until the ground-breaking work on Cromwell by Antonia Fraser published in the mid-1970s. Until then, like the majority of the population, (including Fraser by her own admission), I thought Cromwell a wicked man who cut off the King's head. History is always written by the (ultimate) victors! Cromwell became an instant hero and I've been a life member of the Cromwell Association for getting on for 40 years now.

The Battle of Worcester was one of the turning points in our history and when I moved from Cromwell Country, Huntingdon to Worcester, the county of my ancestors on my mother's side some eight years ago, it was natural that I join our bi-partisan Society, city of Cromwell's "Crowning Mercy".

Q. Is your passion shared by any of your family?

No! Though they all indulge me, particularly my wife, Sally.

Q. Are you excited by the prospect of the new strategy for the Commandery?

Hugely. At long last the County, the City and Museums Worcestershire have realised where the growth in our heritage and tourist trade will come from - though we desperately need a 4 or 5 star hotel for the likes of American visitors. Too late I'm afraid for a national centre, that will be at Newark, but the Civil War City is where it all began and ended! It's going to take time and there isn't the money about these days, but when we get there it'll be worth the wait. Everyone is now pushing in the same direction, albeit at different speeds!

Q. How do you feel about the the head of steam that is now behind the branding of Worcester as the Civil War City?

It's not so much a head of steam, more a leak from the shower cubicle at the moment. Why are we so shy about our heritage? There are few cities that can match Worcester. We are banging the drum constantly, but the authorities seem reticent. Is it concern about Elgarians or the Royal Worcester? It certainly shouldn't be. We are all part of the great history of the Faithful City. However, "The Civil War City" it is and I'm sure we'll see more of the branding after the Magna Carta celebrations and as the Commandery begins to look like its old self. Let's have signs off the motorway and around the city!!



Mr. Grant Simmonds MBE

Q. What changes would you like to see?

To get anything achieved in Worcester one has to go through a myriad of organisations and layers of bureaucracy, and just when you think you've got there someone will say, "Oh, you'll have to check with so and so or you'll never get it through". Streamline the unwieldy structure and have a proper pecking order, (just like Brussels!), and bring in a system for expeditious decision making. Mr. Eric Pickles, can you help?

Q. Are you looking forward to the Battle of Worcester Dinner on 5th September?

Very much so. It will be the first time Sally and I will have left our Golden Retriever puppy, Gooner, for a whole evening, but we've got a great baby-sitter!

It's the first dinner under the auspices of the Society, so I'm a tad nervous, but then I look at our team and think "wow". Supporting St. Richard's Hospice will add to what will be a terrific evening...and I will try to keep my speech brief and not *too* controversial!

Q. What other organisations do you belong to?

I've had to cut back since taking over the chairmanship of the Society - it's become a full-time job! I belong to the Worcestershire Archaeological Society; the Battlefields Trust and the Cromwell Association. I am currently busy trying to form a confederation of Civil War related societies, organisations and venues to act as a pressure group and educational resource; we would be stronger together.

Q. Do you have any long term plans or ambitions?

It looks like I won't be opening the batting for England or playing centre-back for Arsenal, at least in this life anyway. So more realistically, during my chairmanship I want to see the Society running as a well-established charity with a strong educational ethos. Get the Adams/Jefferson Monument built on Fort Royal and even the Sidbury Gate Monument appeal up and running. Commemorative plaques throughout the city and the county and Worcester recognised as THE Civil War City.

"CROMWELL'S ARMY" ~ STUDY DAY

25th OCTOBER 2014 at THE HUNTINGDON LIBRARY, CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Cromwell Association has arranged a "Cromwell's Army" Study Day on 25th October. (Travel by road to Huntingdon is about 2 hours). The cost is £35 and is open to all and includes a light lunch. (If there is sufficient interest from our membership it may be possible to arrange transport).

Programme:

The War Widows of Parliament's Commanders. **Speaker: Dr. Andrew Hopper**

The Importance of Archaeology in Understanding Civil War Battles. **Speaker: Dr. Glenn Foard**

The Dictionary of Parliamentary Officers **Speaker: Dr. Stephen Roberts**

Cromwell's Contribution to Parliament's Military Victories **Speaker: Professor Peter Gaunt**

Cromwell's Whels and Rebels: Disbanding the Old Army **Speaker: Dr. David Appleby**

Quite a programme, I'm sure you'll agree, and I will certainly be going. If anyone is else is interested in attending please let me know as soon as possible by emailing chairman@thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk

ANOTHER DISCOUNT OPPORTUNITY FOR MEMBERS

David Robinson, Society member, has kindly arranged a 10% discount on all jewellery at QUARTER JEWELLERY 26, The Shambles, upon production of a valid Society membership card. This now means members can get 10% discount at two City jewellers, as PEPLOWS are too part of our discount scheme.

WHO ARE DISCOVER HISTORY? By Paul Harding

Discover History was founded in 2003 by Paul Harding and Helen Lee. Both native to the not so faithful City and have both worked for the Museum Service at the Commandery, during the days of 'The Civil War Centre'. In 2003, after 11 years at the Commandery, Paul came up with a business plan which grew to form 'Discover History'.

Discover History is a full time professional historical interpretation business. A well established business which now works across Britain running event management, site specific living history, reminiscence work, interactive talks, and hands on school workshops, city walking tours, museum consultation, archaeology as well as film and TV work. We also cover every period from the Stone Age to the 1950's offering roles for both civilian and military.

Historical Interpretation is often described as re-enactment. There are many differences and a place for both. Historical interpretation is a career and most definitely not a hobby. Re-enactment can be a great spectacle with hundreds of re-enactors on a battlefield for example. However, historical interpretation is often small scale and calls for highly researched roles to meet the needs of the client. This means individuals act as specific characters with replica artefacts and clothing based only on archaeological evidence or primary sources.

Most of this work is done in first person. This is where you become the individual within the role you are representing, often with a back ground such as a period date of birth and family story. Third person is when you are an historian dressed as a character from that age but talk about the past on how they did their daily tasks instead of "this is how I complete my daily tasks".

Being based in Worcester and with backgrounds in Civil War history, one of the popular periods requested for Discover History to offer is the English Civil Wars (1642-51).

In the same year that Discover History was founded, we also created Civil War Day, an event held to commemorate the unique Civil War heritage across Worcestershire. This was created as there was no other event being offered in Worcester with the Civil War in mind. Previous venues for this event have included the Guildhall and last year, the Commandery. The event saw attractions, groups and societies exhibit and show their Civil War link. This included the scarred St John's Church, The Monarchs Way Association, the Archive and Archaeological Service based at the HIVE, and many more.

Site specific living history is what Discover History both specialises in and excels in. We have a very strong client base, predominantly with English Heritage and the National Trust. A couple of highlights for us last year include providing an accurate Royalist camp within the Commandery courtyard. A camp that was themed to The Duke of Hamilton's HQ before the battle in 1651 as well as providing strolling puritans at Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings for their candlelit Christmas. The aim for that evening was to upset (in a humorous way) as many visitors as possible about the ban on the fun things in life, including Christmas. The children obviously weren't happy but the men rejoiced in how many pennies would be remaining within their pocket! Discover History also offer a number of talks with a 17th Century theme. These are usually booked by Military History groups, Women's Institutes, Probus clubs, Townswomen's Guilds and many more. Three of the most popular talks include 17th Century weapons and warfare, The Skirmish at Powick and the Battle of Worcester.

We offer a wide range of hands on workshops for schools too including interactive half and full day festivals which immerse the pupils into the period of such upheaval. Children get to wear accurately made armour copied from originals and take part in training for war such as pike drill as well as both musket loading and cannon loading. More gentle activities include spinning wool and cooking the 17th Century way to the more gruesome medicine and surgery. A highlight of one of our school visits include training each class for a

military role then under the command of their officer (teacher), we had the full school, approximately 900 pupils in total, out on the school field where we recreated a non-combat recreation of the battle of Naseby. I explained the battle via a microphone and each class moved as a regiment including the acted actions of cavalry, pike and musket. This worked amazingly well and gave the pupils a great understanding of how regiments fought on the field as well as how easily things can go wrong. I still don't know who enjoyed it more though....the pupils, the teachers or Discover History.

In 2007, Discover History expanded their services to include City tours which were by the request of schools wanting this service as well as groups we had spoken to requesting if we could also show them the sites linked to the civil war in Worcester. Currently, we offer 28 themed tours of Worcester and the Civil War plays an important part in each tour on offer. Specific to the Civil Wars is the Faithful Story tour, which incorporates sites in the City Centre with links to the Civil War. For the more adventurous, we also offer the Battlefield Story, which is a half day tour across the fields where the fighting took place. This is led by Paul, who is also a registered Battlefield Guide with the Guild of Battlefield Guides.



Paul Harding of Discover History

In 2003, Discover History began with just two people and now has a good team of casual staff who help deliver the many facets that we offer. One of the first team members was Malcolm Atkin, who has become Musketeer Atkin of the New Model Army and citizen of Worcester Mr Atkin with fraudulent Insurance claims for horses lost to the Civil War! (based on a real incident!)

Discover History are more than happy to take bookings for your ventures be it a talk or walking tour and the team are always up for a challenge. Further details on the company can be obtained via the company website at www.discover-history.co.uk

So far this year, Discover History has met the Battle of Worcester Society to discuss ideas such as Chasing Charles Stuart and other future working. The future looks bright between the two organisations who aim to make the most of the historical environment around them.

THE ELMS SCHOOL, COLWALL 400th ANNIVERSARY FETE

Society members were out in force at the request of the Elms School to help them celebrate the school's 400th Anniversary on Saturday 5th July. Re-enactors and "those who don't" like me and Vice-Chairman joined in the fun with the kids and parents and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. Special thanks to Executive Committee members Roger Fairman and Brian Bullock, and also Simon Campbell for their fantastic contributions. A great day out and Colwall now knows all about the Battle of Worcester Society now!



OAK APPLE DAY CELEBRATIONS, CARDINAL'S HAT, FRIDAY 29th MAY 2015

Oak Apple Day was a national celebration to mark the Restoration of King Charles II. It was marked by a public holiday every year on the king's birthday by order of Parliament from 1660 and was only abolished in 1859. Some parts of the country still continue the tradition in some shape or form. Our good friends at Discover History mark the occasion annually at the Guildhall. However, having spoken to several key people within Worcester, it is high time that this City and this Society got its act together!

Accordingly, in 2015 Oak Apple Day will be celebrated at the Cardinal's Hat with live music and dancing and much bunting, with quite a few oak leaf sprigs too! There will also be an educational element for children to learn more about the Battle of Worcester and encourage all to take pride in Oak Apple Day again. More details to follow nearer the time.

A CAFE AT THE COMMANDERY FOR THE SUMMER!

If you visit the Commandery until early September you'll be able to refresh yourself at the "Pop-Up" Cafe. It sits by the side of the canal and is open to all. The day I went to try it out it was busy with canal boaters, local residents and tourists, and I can vouch for the high standard of service and cakes available; there's even a beautifully appointed room inside should the summer weather revert to typically English! Do give it a try, such enterprise benefits us all and deserves to be rewarded.

DR.GERRY DOUDS

Members will be saddened to hear of the death Dr. Gerry Douds. Gerry was former Head of History at the University of Worcester and Dean of Faculty, historian and Research Fellow, author, an avid supporter and piper to the Battle of Worcester dinners.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The society now has so many events that to include them in this bulletin would take up a huge amount of space. For up-to-date information please do visit the Events page of our wonderful website.

www.thebattleofworcestersociety.org.uk

SOCIETY PATRONS

His Grace The Duke of Hamilton ~ Lord Faulkner of Worcester
Prof. Ronald Hutton ~ Lord Selkirk of Douglas ~ Sir Tam Dalyell Bt.
The Hon. Lady Rosalind Morrison ~ Mr. Henry Berkeley ~ Ms. Diane Rappaport

President: Benjamin Humphrey FRSA
Chairman: Grant Simmonds MBE
Vice-Chairman: Richard Shaw

Executive Committee

Kenneth Potts FBWS ~ Roger Fairman ~ Brian Bullock ~ Vaughan Wiltshire