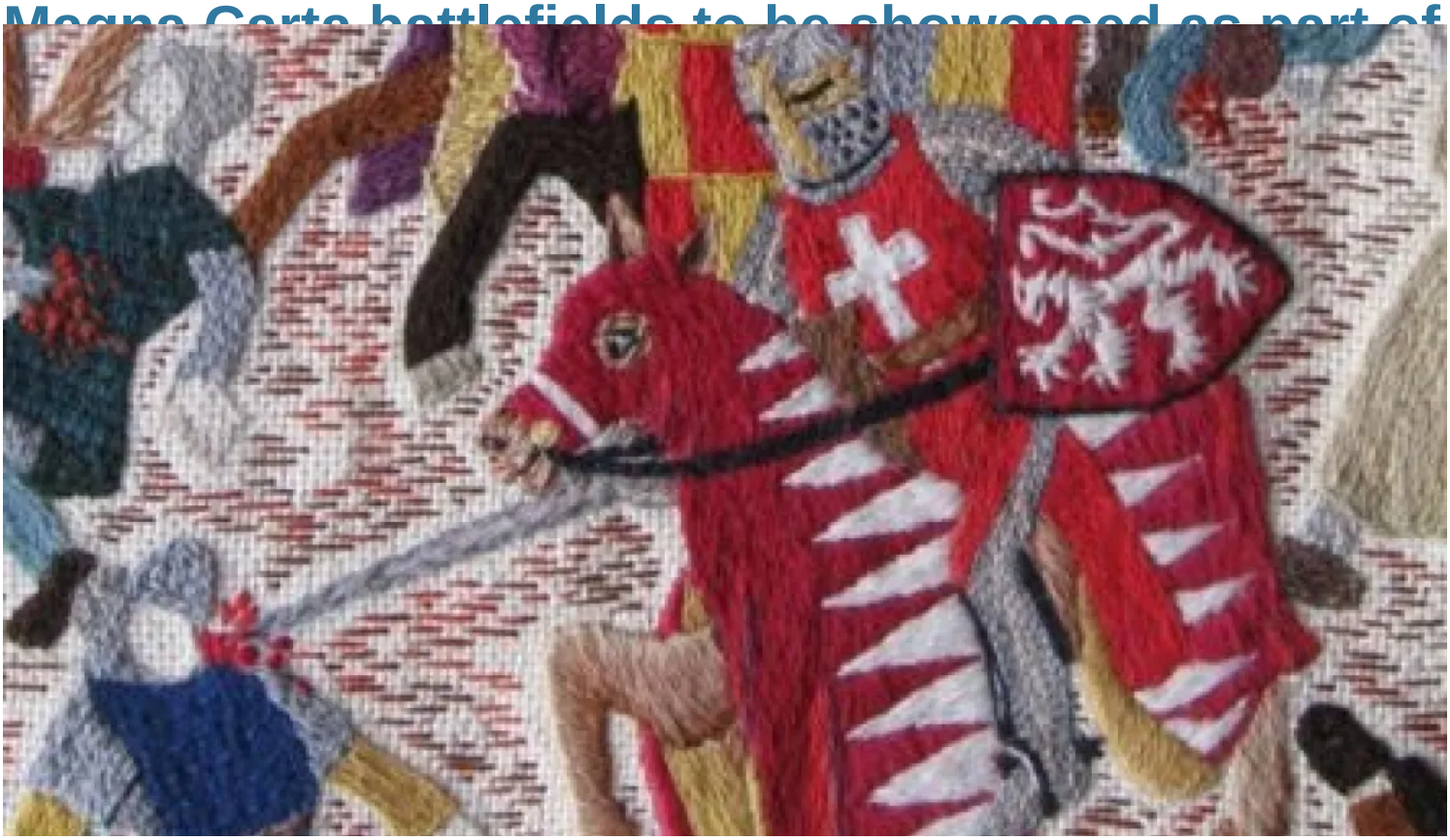
Magna Carta battlefields to be showcased as part of



Simon de Montfort depicted in the Battle of Lewes Tapestry Sussex Archaeological Society

Eight hundred years ago the Barons forced King John to seal the Magna Carta or Great Charter at Runnymede which created ‘the rule of law’ we know and enjoy today. Fifty years on a new generation of Barons under Simon de Montfort had to fight another Barons' War to confirm and secure the Magna Carta, and to start the process that led to our parliamentary democracy.

The project, awarded a grant of £98,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), will raise awareness of the battlefields and sieges associated with Magna Carta and the resulting Barons Wars. It will develop interpretation and educational resources to tell this story, including the development of an exciting battlefields trail that integrates with a nationwide Magna Carta Trail, which is being developed with the support of Visit England and Visit Britain.

Frank Baldwin, Chairman of The Battlefields Trust, said: “We are already in contact with local groups in places such as Bury St Edmunds, Odiham and Carham in Northumberland who are keen to develop interpretation for their local heritage. We are also working with the town of Lewes which will be commemorating the 750th anniversary of the Battle of Lewes this year. As part of the project we will produce interpretive and educational material which can be downloaded from the Magna Carta 800th website when developed.”

Sir Robert Worcester, Chair of the Magna Carta 800th Commemoration Committee, said: “Magna Carta is the foundation stone supporting the freedoms enjoyed today by hundreds of millions of people in more than 100 countries. It is an exceptional document on which democratic society has been constructed. The Magna Carta Trust is pleased to be working with The Battlefields Trust to raise public awareness of this important aspect of Magna Carta’s story and through recruiting volunteers to leave an important legacy for years to come.”

Culture Secretary Sajid Javid said: “The Magna Carta is the cornerstone of the British legal system as we know it. Its importance to the freedoms we all enjoy today cannot be overstated, yet its significance to our national history is not as widely understood as it should be. So it is timely - on the eve of the 800th anniversary of its sealing - that the Heritage Lottery Fund is making grants available to help put this right.”

Dr Bob Bewley, Director of Operations for the Heritage Lottery Fund, said: “The Heritage Lottery Fund felt it was extremely important to support this excellent project, exploring and explaining the history of Magna Carta through the many battlefields across the United Kingdom associated with it. As a document that has defined much of our democratic and constitutional history we are delighted this project will lead to many more people understanding and appreciating the importance of Magna Carta.”

The HLF grant is funding the appointment of Edward Dawson as Development Officer for the project, who will be working to the eminent medieval military historian, Dr Matthew Bennett, a Trustee, formerly of The Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. Edward comes from the Campaign to Protect Rural England bringing wide experience of protecting the countryside, and will now turn his energy to the Battlefields Trust and also work closely with the Magna Carta Committee.

Edward Dawson, MC800 Development Officer, said: “I am delighted to have joined the team at the Battlefields Trust working closely with local volunteers. The Barons’ Wars which led to the sealing of Magna Carta at Runnymede in 1215, and half-a-century later, Simon de Montfort’s rebellion, played a crucial role in our constitutional history, restraining the power of monarchy and building that of Parliament. I am determined to work to celebrate the historic significance of these advances of liberty. These fundamental changes were hard-won and continue to have an impact on all our lives.”

The Magna Carta 800th Anniversary Commemoration Committee has recently announced the first tranche of grants from the £1m funding provided by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne, during his Budget Speech on 18 March 2014. Further information can be obtained at the Magna Carta 800th anniversary website.

The Magna Carta Trust’s 800th Anniversary Commemoration Committee is charged by the Magna Carta Trust to co-ordinate activities, raise the profile of the anniversary and deliver a number of key national and international aspirations.

The reasons for commemorating the 800th Anniversary are summarised on the 'Why commemorate?' page.

For more information on the Magna Carta battles, visit the Key Magna Carta battles page.

Further information

The Magna Carta was sealed by King John at a ceremony on the meadows at Runnymede on 15 June 1215. The Magna Carta Trust believes that the grant of Magna Carta began the course of constitutional liberties for all English-speaking peoples, and created a common bond of peace between them. Aims of the 800th Anniversary of the Magna Carta include perpetuating the principles of Magna Carta; coordinating the Centenary Celebrations, and considering the legacy of 2015.

Edward Dawson has an extensive record of working in heritage and countryside projection areas, and has a strong interest in battlefields. He is a member of the committee of the Friends of Basing House, a Civil War site, and was a member of the Historic Environment Forum for the South East. He has served as South East Director and then London Director of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

The Battlefields Trust aims to save battlefield sites from destruction, and provide battlefield-related activities and information, including a quarterly magazine *Battlefield*, battlefield walks and conferences. The project will raise awareness of the battlefields and sieges of the Magna Carta and Barons Wars' story. This includes the development of the battlefield trail and the MC trail to be promoted by English Heritage. Further information about the Battlefields Trust can be obtained at the Battlefields Trust website.

There are some 25 sites of historic significance to Magna Carta. These are:

- 1214 Bouvines (battle) – near Lille, France
- 1215 Norham (siege)
- 1215 Rochester (siege)
- 1216-17 Dover (siege)
- 1216-17 Sandwich (landing and naval battle)
- 1217 Lincoln (siege and battle)
- 1264 Lewes (battle)
- 1265 Evesham (battle)
- 1265 Peatling Magna (peasant action)
- 1215 Ely (sacked)
- 1215 Exeter (siege)
- 1215 Northampton (siege)
- 1216 Barnard Castle (siege)
- 1216 Berkhamsted (siege)
- 1216 Berwick (stormed)
- 1216 Odiham (siege)
- 1216 Windsor (siege)
- 1224 Bedford (siege)
- 1264 Barham Down (muster)
- 1264 Northampton (siege and battle)
- 1264 Rochester (siege)
- 1264-5 Pevensey (siege)
- 1266 Kenilworth (siege)
- 1267 Ely (siege)

This is not an exhaustive list. There are many other locations around the UK.

Further information

The Battlefields Trust: Edward Dawson, MC800 Project Director, mobile: 07956 662 959, email: edward.dawson@battlefieldstrust.com.