

Battle Of Tewkesbury Re-Enactment - July 14

The rain stopped as we arrived in the morning so we were very lucky. (Mary Friend had a quiet word with Richard as she and Pat Parminter drove to Tewkesbury, and it paid dividends!)

Pat, Mary, Jane Tinklin, June Tilt and Pam Benstead went in the morning, meeting up at the Bell Hotel for coffee, tea and biscuits. Judith Chamberlayne and her friend joined us in the afternoon, then we bumped into Michelle Bennett and family in the evening. As we were walking away from the mock trial I heard a voice I recognised, and there they were next to us!

Pat wore her medieval costume in the afternoon and two strangers asked her to pose for pictures, plus she got numerous admiring glances. Mary and I were cowards!

The Worcestershire Branch has a place in the main marquee reserved for next year. The dates are Saturday and Sunday, July 13th and 14th, 2002. Stephen Goodchild, who is a member of the Tewkesbury Battlefield Trust, said we could have a corner, which is brilliant as it saves us having to hire a tent, and is an excellent position. The Trust have their table in there, plus Graham Turner displays his magnificent paintings of the Wars of the Roses. Stephen is booked to talk to us about the battle in November.

In the morning we did very well in the second-hand bookshop, with copies of Paul Murray Kendall's *Richard III*, Josephine Tey's *Daughter of Time*, A L Rowse's *The Tower of London*, Audrey Williamson's *The Mystery of the Princes*, and three Dorothy Dunnett novels! June picked up two old LPs as well.

The town looked wonderful with all the coats of arms hanging from the shops and businesses. An explanatory note in the window explained whose arms were displayed. We also looked round the restored medieval shop in the old buildings near the abbey and had a very interesting talk with the shop-owner. All the cloth he had on display was dyed according to medieval methods. His wife was in the

back preparing a medieval lunch, while upstairs was their tiny bedroom. Plenty of fresh air coming in through the unglazed windows!

Seeing all the delicious food reminded us that we should eat too, so it was back to the Bell Hotel for baguettes and jacket potatoes. It's very pleasant in there and prices are reasonable too.

We caught the battlefield bus outside the abbey. This is a free service which runs all day between the town centre and the fields where the battle re-enactment and medieval fair are held. We'd all parked in the town, but there is lots of car parking at the re-enactment site too.

The Lancastrians won on Saturday just for a change! The commentator did say they would get it right on Sunday - they'd better! It must be confusing for anyone who doesn't know the story of the battle.

The battle bus soon returned us to the Bell and pots of tea and biscuits revived us sufficiently to stay for the evening entertainment, which fortunately began earlier than advertised. The Yorkists all gathered in the abbey grounds, so we asked Edward and Richard to pose for us, and Margaret of Burgundy and her mother, Cecily! What do you mean, they shouldn't have been there?!

Then the action started. Some of the Lancastrians tried to make it to the abbey for sanctuary, fighting their way past the Yorkists. Edward IV argued with the abbot, who agreed to release the men for trial. The Lancastrian traitors were bundled into Gander Lane where a balcony served as the court. The Yorkists dealt quickly (and humourously) with the traitors, who were all sentenced to be beheaded. This was carried out in front of the abbey gates and a row of gruesome heads soon appeared on the spikes. It was all quite exciting and the crowd loved it.

It was a really good day out and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I'll definitely be back next year!

Pam Benstead