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If you would like to know more about Simon de Montfort and the Battle of Evesham contact the Simon de Montfort Society: 01386 710514 (earlsimon1265@gmail.com) or visit the Society's website www.simondemontfort.org or the Almonry Heritage Centre, Evesham.



The Simon de Montfort Society

welcomes you to the

EVESHAM BATTLE TRAIL



This is a self-guided Trail, clearly signed by waymarked posts, which takes you over the general area where the battle was fought. It simply attempts to show you the lie of the land and leaves you to envisage for yourself what happened here on 4th August 1265. Besides exploring the scene of the battle, we hope this walk will help you to enjoy the beauty of this typical Vale countryside with its extensive orchards – a very important part of Evesham's later history. There are glorious views to Bredon Hill and (on a clear day) the Malverns.

The Battle Well Field is tenanted by the Society and is being actively managed with particular emphasis on conserving the flora and grassland.

IMPORTANT – PLEASE NOTE: The route of the Trail is entirely on private land. Access is strictly by permission of the landowner and tenants and at their discretion. There is no intention to dedicate any part of the Trail as a public right of way. Please keep strictly to the marked paths, do not enter any other land, respect all property and take your litter home.

The route is undulating and regrettably not suitable for wheelchairs.

NO DOGS ALLOWED ANYWHERE ON THE TRAIL

Now as you stand here on Greenhill imagine that summer's day – August 4th, 1265 interrupted by a heavy thunderstorm as Simon, Earl of Leicester and his men rode up to meet Prince Edward's mighty army. Simon de Montfort had challenged the King's power and thus paved the way for the beginnings of representative and democratic government, a model to which other countries would later aspire.

It had been a long struggle between the English kings and their barons over the acceptance of Magna Carta which decreed the king was not to be above the law. To enforce this was difficult and ultimately led to civil war. Simon had captured Henry III and his son Prince Edward at the Battle of Lewes in 1264 and governed England in the king's name for a year. He had even called Parliaments in June 1264 and January 1265. Edward however escaped and now allied with dissident barons led a formidable army determined to bring down Simon.

Simon had camped on the night of August 3rd at the Abbey in Evesham to rest and feed his army. His lookout had seen Edward approaching from the north and Simon decided to attack without delay although knowing he was heavily outnumbered. Here now began a massacre for Edward's vengeance was terrible. Simon was surrounded and unhorsed by Edward's men yet he continued fighting bravely on foot before being killed by one Roger de Mortimer. His body was cruelly dismembered. The dead and wounded lay everywhere and blood ran through the Abbey Church and stained the Monk's Choir. The Abbey and the town were pillaged. Robert of Gloucester described it as "a murder of Evesham for battle it was none." Simon's remains and the bodies of his son Henry and that of Hugh le Despenser were carried away by the monks and buried near the High Altar of the Abbey.

Soon after this stories of miracles began to circulate and many people made pilgrimages to the Abbey and to the Battle Well – said to be a source of healing. These were forcibly stopped and the stories suppressed. At some time a small chapel was built over the remains of the dead soldiers – called the Chapel of the Battle Well – a place of pilgrimage.

Remember then, Simon de Montfort who rose above his own frailties to pass on a heritage of principles, ideas and commitment to responsible government which has enriched us all.

Simon de Montfort



Prince Edward

