

Battle of Pinkie Cleugh commemorated



Scotland's forgotten bloodiest battle is brought back to life

A university has joined forces with local dramas groups to commemorate Scotland's near forgotten 'Battle of Pinkie Cleugh'.

The battle between the Scots and English at Pinkie in Musselburgh, is thought to be one of the bloodiest ever to take place on Scottish soil. However, although local historians know that 10,000 Scots died, most people are completely unaware of this tragic historical event which took place in 1547.

The play, which is called the 'Battle of Pinkie Cleugh' unveils an important time in Scots history known as 'The Rough Wooing of Mary, Queen of Scots'. It highlights a period of time when Henry VIII demanded the hand of the infant Queen Mary, for his son, Edward. However, the battle ensued as King Henry's request was denied.

Community drama students from Queen Margaret University have joined forces with local interest groups to put on the play at the Brunton Theatre. Students on the Costume Design and Construction degree have created stunning period costumes for the drama and the QMU student playwright, Rory Edrington, has developed the script.

Three different community groups make up the cast – The Brunton Players, The Brunton Senior Youth Theatre and the Prestongrange Players.

Irvine Allan, Lecturer in Drama and Performance at Queen

Margaret University, has worked with Lesley Smith, East Lothian Council's Principal Arts Officer and local interest groups to produce the new play. He said: "The River Esk ran red with the blood of both Scots and English soldiers, but yet most people know little or nothing about this fascinating event.

"This project has been a real eye-opener. Our playwright researched and wrote the play in association with the Pinkie Cleugh Battlefield Group advisers, so we have made great efforts to ensure historical accuracy."

English war ships, as well as Spanish and Italian mercenaries, joined the English land forces to take Musselburgh, and seize East Lothian. The aim was to force the Scots into the marriage of the infant Queen Mary to Edward. The resistance led to a vicious battle with heavy casualties, mostly borne by the Scots, who were defeated on the day.

Irvine Allan continued: "The play is a stunning linguistic, visual and musical commemoration of the event. Our students are really proud to be involved in such an interesting collaborative project which will bring an important period of history to the attention of a wider public."

Councillor Tim Day, Cabinet Spokesperson for Community Wellbeing, East Lothian Council, said: "This project has given our local community drama groups the opportunity to work with students from Queen Margaret University to bring a significant period of Scottish history to life through the medium of theatre. I am delighted that the play will be presented in Venue 1 at The Brunton and make use of the fantastic technical facilities that this refurbished venue has to offer."

In September 2013, The Pinkie Cleugh Battlefield Group will launch, The Battlefield Trail, which visits the key sites of the battle. It is hoped that the area will develop as a visitor attraction.

The Battle of Pinkie Cleugh will take place in the Brunton Theatre's newly developed Venue 1 (Musselburgh) on Thursday 18 April 2013, 7.30pm.

Tickets are priced at £6.75.

Box Office: T: 0131 665 2240.

Online booking
at: <http://www.bruntontheatre.co.uk/webpages/howtobook.php>