

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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Archaeological Fieldwork

The summer was once almost exclusively the time for archaeological fieldwork. Nowadays, excavations take place according to the needs of the development cycle. Winter is also now recognised as the best time for some kinds of field survey, when the vegetation is low. This fourth issue of *Historic Environment Today*, however, looks at some of the fieldwork that has been going on in Herefordshire in the last summer of the twentieth century.

Several of the projects and discoveries described here have been as a result of work by staff of *Herefordshire Archaeology*, the Council's own archaeological service. Unlike the equivalent service in Worcestershire, we do not operate a field unit, carrying out contract work for developers. It is, however, important for a county-based service to have a field capacity and to be actively engaged in study of the local archaeology. This forms much of the reasoning behind the appointment of an Archaeological Projects Officer (Tim Hoverd) early in 1999. Since taking up his post at the start of March, Tim has been monitoring small-scale development projects that it would be unreasonable to ask some applicants for planning permission to pay archaeological contractors to do. But much of Tim's work is of a more strategic nature. One strategic aim is to support local community based researchers, as at Eardisland, noted below.

Some of this wider work is introduced here, and some will be described in a future issue. Also described briefly here are some of the current contract excavations in Hereford City, a new section responding to letters from readers, information from collaborative projects and news about a research project in the north of the County.

Keith Ray



A guided tour of Leominster historic town on one of the National Archaeology Days on July 24th and 25th. The SMR was visited by 90 people and parties were also taken around Leominster Priory.

'New' Iron Age Fort

In late July, Herefordshire Archaeology announced the discovery of an earthwork enclosure thought likely to date to the Iron Age. This was located during a day's reconnaissance survey, looking for a possible early cave site in the Aymestrey area. The enclosure occupies the edge of a steep scarp above the River Lugg, near the top of Mere Hill. It consists of a bank standing in places three metres high above a surrounding ditch.

A detailed earthwork survey was carried out in August. This involved making a record of the position of the bank and ditch, and other features inside the enclosure. These include small level platforms and mounds, and more extensive level areas near the scarp edge. A magnetometer survey transect from east to west across the long axis of the monument has revealed much activity inside the enclosure. Further investigations are planned in late September, and an open day will be held (phone 01568 614931 for details). Tim Hoverd will present the interim findings at the Annual Symposium in Hereford on Saturday 27th November (see page 4 below).

Inside: Roman town ⇔ Field Kilns ⇔ Pipe Aston ⇔ People ⇔ Hereford AAI

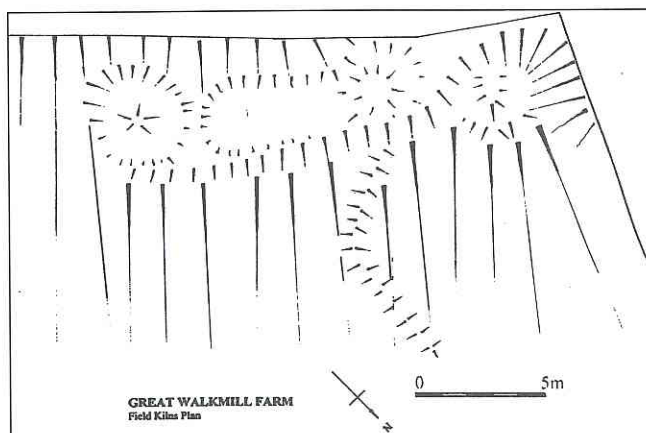
“Kilns like this would have been used for production of small amounts of brick or tile”.

Field Kilns Discovered

In a previous issue of *Historic Environment Today* (Volume 2, Issue 1), Countryside Stewardship Schemes were described. In previous years, Sites and Monuments Record information was provided to the Farming and Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) to enable archaeological interests to be taken into account when deciding the benefit of schemes to the rural environment. This year, *Herefordshire Archaeology* has enhanced its involvement, with detailed responses to over 70 consultations. The County Archaeologist and Archaeological Projects Officer have also provided survey help to some applicants.

In February, on a visit to Great Walkmill Farm, features of archaeological importance were noted, including the remains of two circular bases of field kilns. Identification of the kilns was confirmed by finds of burnt clay and charcoal from mole casts. Such kilns would have been used for the local production of small quantities of brick or tile for immediate building purposes until the early nineteenth century, when it became easier to obtain bricks industrially. Each kiln, of ‘bonfire’ type, was probably only used once. Sites of this type have not been recognised before in Herefordshire, but since the visit they have been found at several other locations in the County. Below, we provide a plan of the Walkmill kilns, and on page 4 a photo of the survey in progress.

Keith Ray



Plan of kilns at Great Walkmill Farm

People

Herefordshire Archaeology staff have another archaeological colleague, who works as Collections Officer, Human History, at Hereford Museum. She is Judy Stevenson, who used to work at the Museum of London, and who joined Herefordshire Council early last autumn. Judy works closely with us on matters of mutual concern, such as the government's Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Sadly, Judy's boss at Hereford Museum, Isabel Churcher, Heritage Services Manager, is leaving the County. Isabel is to become Head of Museums Services at Birmingham City Council: an outstanding achievement, and one which reflects her very considerable success as Head of Museums Service, Hereford City Council from 1996 and with Herefordshire Council since 1998.

Your letters

Not as yet a big mailbag, but some of you have been moved to respond to some of the items in the May issue. Several calls were received about bell towers. A letter from Mrs L. E. King of Ledbury sums up the mood nicely: "...I must hasten to point out that there are more than two detached Bell Towers in Herefordshire", and she mentions those at Ledbury and Bosbury as examples. What we didn't point out in the piece was that we meant that there were two timber ones (Pembridge and Yarpole). We agree with her that up to seven detached towers in total can be counted in the county, including those built mostly in stone.

Meanwhile, Andrew Stobart of Orleton has contributed information in response to the 'stone roof slates' article. He tells us of methods of splitting Collyweston slates in Northamptonshire: although the quarry had ceased slates production due to lack of winter frosts, "The new owner bought a large butcher's cold room, and split the stone he needed every 24 hours, all the year round". Mr. Stobart also told the story of his father's discovery of sheep's bones (most likely phalanges – ed.) used as pegs to pin down roof tiles at medieval Lanercost Priory!

Thank you both: keep them coming.....

Pipe Aston Rural Industry

For the last several years, Dr. Allan Peacey, a lecturer in ceramics from Gloucestershire, has been researching evidence for clay pipe manufacture in the Herefordshire - Shropshire borderlands. The industry flourished at Pipe Aston on a family basis between the late seventeenth and early nineteenth centuries. In addition to pipe bowls and stems, pieces of wig curlers (also manufactured from pipe clay) have also been found in excavations.

This season, Dr. Peacey has also retrieved fragments of kiln architecture, including parts of a baffle re-utilising broken pipe stems in its fabric. Analysis of stamps and moulds has enabled much of the social geography of the makers to be reconstructed. Dr. Peacey will describe the background to the project and the recent fieldwork at the Annual Symposium.



The south-east corner of the defences at Stretton Grandison (a Scheduled Ancient Monument), on 27th July. Copyright Chris Musson/ Woolhope Club Field Name Survey.

Garway Area Monuments

Three parishes in the south-west of the county are the subject of a study looking at sites which do not currently enjoy statutory protection as Ancient Monuments of national importance, but may do so in future. These sites range in scale from Roman forts to medieval pottery kilns. After field assessment of sites from SMR information, they will be reported on for Julian Heath. He is the regional fieldworker for English Heritage's Monuments Protection Programme, reviewing the contexts of the Schedule nationally.

Tim Hoverd

Roman Stretton Walled

Late one evening in July, Chris Musson was completing one of his flights for the Millennium Air Survey organised by the Woolhope Club Field Name Survey and supported by *Herefordshire Archaeology* and English Heritage. As he flew over Stretton Grandison he photographed in low sunlight what he thought was a Roman fort. The printed photos were sent to the County Archaeologist for checking against existing records. Chris' new photos, compared with older ones and records of finds in the area, enabled me to deduce that his 'fort' was in fact the south-east angle of the defences of the Roman town known to exist here. It is remarkable that such large-scale works had not been recognised before. They help to define a rectilinear walled town larger in size than Kenchester west of Hereford. Fieldwork is now planned to map its full extent.

Keith Ray

"The new aerial photos help to define a town larger in size than Kenchester"

Norman Hereford Unwalled

While one town in Herefordshire was found to have unsuspected Roman defences, another has been found to have had none: at least apparently, in the twelfth century. Excavations by Archenfield Archaeology in advance of the construction of new housing by South Shropshire Housing Association at Harrison Street, Hereford, may cause the medieval history of the city to be rewritten. Underneath eighteenth and nineteenth century structures, Huw Sherlock and his team uncovered a succession of metalled streets with timber houses fronting them, dating to the period c.1050 - 1150. The medieval defences were constructed across this area c.1190, completely dislocating the buildings on the north-south street from the rest of the Norman borough. Deep pits at the back of the plots produced some fine examples of twelfth century pottery. The area was then abandoned and left as open ground for over seven centuries. Huw will present a talk on his excavations at the Annual Symposium in November.

Julian Cotton

To the Manor Buried

A visit early in August by the County Archaeologist and the Archaeological Projects Officer to Burton Court to meet members of the Eardisland History Group produced surprises, not least for the owners.

The fields immediately around the Court appear to contain traces of more extensive formal gardens than existed by the late nineteenth century. A visit to the main house revealed that the fourteenth century hall had been extensively re-assembled in the seventeenth century and raised in height. A new floor had been inserted, and in the cellars the old foundations and floor levels had been buried, and so preserved, under tons of imported soil and rubble. A west wing of the medieval manor house, hitherto unrecorded, was also traced in the cellars.

The landscape around the Court was also visited briefly, and was found to contain further unrecorded sites, including a deserted medieval settlement, farmstead platforms and park features. The History Group plan a study project here, over at least the next two years, assisted by Herefordshire Archaeology.

Diary dates:

Saturday 25th September -

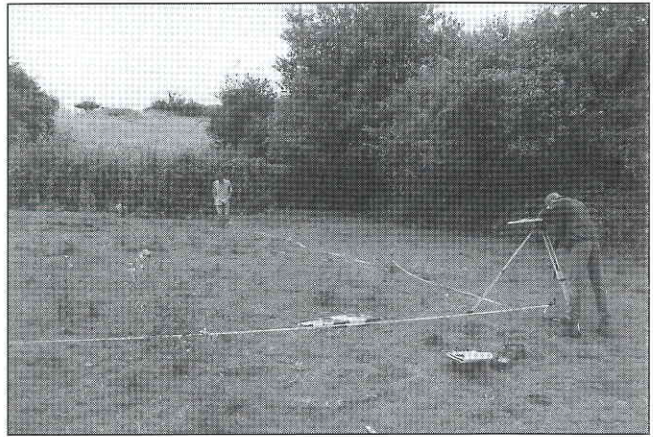
Open day at Mere Hill fort excavations
(Phone 01568 615079 for details).

Saturday 23rd October -

Worcestershire Archaeology Service day
school: details: 01905 855499.

On Top of the Malverns

The Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty archaeological survey was introduced in Volume 2, Issue 1, of *Historic Environment Today*. The Royal Commission on the Historic Monuments England has now merged with English Heritage, and staff of its Survey Division have started surveying the AONB area. Aerial survey has led to the discovery of several new sites, but most work has been concentrated so far on the first detailed survey of the hillforts and other earthworks that crown the Malvern Ridge. At Midsummer Hill, for instance, many more platforms have been noted than previously recognised, as well as complexity in the phasing of the hillfort defences. Mark Bowden will introduce these and other discoveries in his talk at the Annual Symposium in November.



Survey of field kilns in progress at Great Walkmill Farm in August.

Castle Pool Hotel

The former hotel at the east end of Castle Street is now just emerging from beneath the scaffolding that has encased it for the last twelve months. While works were being carried out inside the building, archaeologists from Archaeological Investigations Ltd led by Andy Boucher excavated and recorded several areas below ground. These included investigations below the cellar floors. A surprise here was that medieval rubbish pits had been dug so deep that their lower deposits still survived after the later insertion of cellars. A metalled roadway, predicted by Ron Shoemith to run towards the main gate to Hereford Castle was found outside the former Hotel, now Castle House, next to the Castle Pool itself.

Annual Symposium

The Second Annual Symposium on Archaeology in Herefordshire will be held on **Saturday 27th November 1999**. A varied and interesting line-up is promised, including presentations on the Pipe Aston, Mere Hill, Harrison Street and Malverns projects as introduced in this issue. There will also be round-ups of recent projects by Archaeological Investigations Ltd, Worcestershire Archaeology Service, Border Archaeology, and Marches Archaeology. Robin Jackson will describe the Ariconium Project, Chris Musson will present the latest results of the Millennium Air Survey, and Julian Heath will introduce the work of the Monuments Protection Programme locally. The venue is again Brockington House Council Chamber in Hereford, and the day starts at 9.45 a.m. For future details, contact Rebecca Roseff at the address on the front cover, or telephone 01568 614931.