

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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In this issue

2000 has certainly been a busy year for *Herefordshire Archaeology* and we report upon a variety of recent discoveries and work from around Herefordshire. From new discoveries revealed through the Historic Landscape Walks and the Countryside Stewardship schemes to the exciting excavation of an Iron Age hill-top enclosure at Cradley. The Sites and Monuments Record continues to uncover more previously unknown sites and medieval moats within Herefordshire are the focus of attention.

We also report on other work being carried out around the county with archaeological recording at Dinmore and a geophysical survey at Leominster Priory. The preliminary results from the Hereford Farming study are briefly reported upon, while the implications of the recently launched Governmental White Papers are considered.

If this year was anything to go by, I'm sure 2001 will be just as busy.

Forthcoming Events

The New Year will see some varied events organised by *Herefordshire Archaeology*. Here are some dates for your diary:

May 12th: Conference: The Archaeology and Historical Topography of Hereford: New Discoveries and Perspectives.

May 18th: *Herefordshire Archaeology* Lecture, John Barrett- Researching Iron Age Communities in the Central Marches.



The Strata Scan team during the November 2000 survey outside the rebuilt eastern end of the Priory church

Scanning the Choir

In early November, Peter Barker and Strata Scan returned to Leominster Priory to test new ground probing radar equipment that the company has recently acquired. Their previous survey, in 1987, was carried out on behalf of Lysette Davies when she was tourism officer for the Leominster District Council. That first Strata Scan survey was targeted at the eastern end of the original Priory church, to facilitate the provision of the on-site interpretation panels which (as mentioned in the last issue) have been recently been installed around the site.

The results of that survey were so good (for instance, in accurately identifying the location of the ancillary chapels to the Choir) that Peter chose the Priory as one of his test sites for the new equipment. The interim results have justified this decision, and have further provided detail of features of the Choir and Lady Chapel. The output was sufficiently precise to locate the site and form of the High Altar.

Keith Ray

Inside: Excavation ⇨ People ⇨ Moats ⇨ Farming ⇨ Historic Landscapes

“This is the first cropmark site to be subject to research excavation in the county”.

When a ‘Roman fort’ is not

In 1991 aerial photographs revealed a rectangular, ditched enclosure at Ridgeway, Cradley. Its size, shape and location suggested that this feature was a Roman marching camp, similar to that proven at Tedstone Wafer.

During February 2000, a trench was excavated near the northern corner of the Cradley enclosure. The aim was to ascertain its form, date and survival. No dating evidence was found, but a steep sided ditch with an internal bank was revealed.

A second trench close to the southern corner was excavated later in the year, in November. A geophysical survey was first undertaken, to locate the ditch accurately. The survey results were inconclusive suggesting that the enclosure had been subject to substantial erosion. Two trenches were then excavated to assess the survival of any internal features and to try to locate the ditch by more direct means.

Two eroded shallow pits were encountered within the enclosure, from which a fragment of Iron Age pottery was recovered. However the ditch was far better preserved, surviving to a depth of 2m below the present ground surface.

The ditch was 3m wide and had been deliberately backfilled with bank material and then with domestic and industrial waste. This was sealed with a dense ash spread and slag derived from smelting metal. The ditch deposits also produced a large assemblage of over 70 sherds Iron Age pottery, perhaps representing intensive occupation within the enclosure.

This is the first cropmark site to have been subject to research excavation within the county. It demonstrates that caution should be exercised when interpreting such enclosure sites by their surface shape.

Tim Hoverd



Work experience student, Sam Meadows records the excavated ditch section at Ridgeway, Cradley.

People

From the beginning of December Steve Bowyer joined the Conservation and Environmental Planning team as Historic Buildings Conservation Officer. After studying Ancient History and Classical Archaeology at Liverpool University Steve worked for English Heritage, from 1987, where most of his work related to grants and statutory work in the Conservation Department. In 1996 Steve decided to move to Worcester so he could develop his personal interest in ecclesiastical architecture and history, advising on the care of churches in the Diocese of Worcester.

His direct involvement in conservation work has proven to be an invaluable experience. This, together with his knowledge of conservation design has led to his employment with Herefordshire Council.

REMINDER to ‘subscribe’ to *Historic Environment Today*

This issue is the last in the Volume 3/ 2000 series and it is now time to re-new your ‘subscription’ for HET. To make sure you receive your four issues yearly:

Send four stamped self- addressed envelopes (A5 size manilla is best). Clearly number the back of each envelope consecutively, 2001/1, 2001/2, and so on. Send your envelopes to Rebecca Roseff, to the address at the foot of the front page.

Hamnish Park Link

A rare precise link between medieval documents and field remains visible today was made during a recent historic landscape walk at Hamnish Clifford. The documentary reference concerned was to Walter de Clifford's park at Hamnish in 1135. Most of the park has disappeared, but to the east of an area in which earthworks of the former Medieval village survive, a curving boundary feature can be observed (see photo, below). The form of this earthwork, with a deep ditch and high bank outside it, is characteristic of medieval deer park boundary banks. It is very likely this feature represents a part of the 12th Century park.



The outer edge of this part of the Hamnish deer park bank is followed by the modern lane.

The Hamnish Clifford Walk was one in the continuing series of monthly walks guided by *Herefordshire Archaeology* staff. Early in 2001 these will include walks in Hereford City, at Storridge, in the vicinity of Brilley, and along part of Offa's Dyke.

Hay in the Hills

The Ministry of Agriculture's agri-environment schemes routinely consider archaeological features and the historic dimension of the landscape. This sometimes occurs in the preparation of scheme plans, although mostly these concern work such as hedge restoration, the introduction of arable margins, and restoration of orchards. The county's archaeological team and environment planners assess the impact of each application.

A recent visit to a proposed scheme in the Craswall area revealed sites as diverse as a holy well and a rick platform. The latter is the first such

feature recorded through archaeological survey in the county. It represents a rare survival of what once would have been a familiar sight in the hills beneath Hay Bluff, when hay ricks would have been placed on raised level stone edged platforms, such as the Craswall example.

This year some eighty Countryside Stewardship schemes have been reviewed including several proposals for the reinstatement of historical features associated with estate parkland.

Keith Ray

“The Historic Environment is an integral part of the Government's vision”.

Town and Country

Last month the Government launched two White Papers considering the future of our urban and rural environments. What, if anything was announced about the future of the historical aspects of either townscapes or countryside?

The historic environment is presented as an integral part of the Government's vision for delivering an urban renaissance. Conservation work supported by English Heritage through grants and improvement schemes will contribute to this regeneration through repairs to the historic fabric. The hope is to attract people to live near their work in urban centres and thereby safeguard the rural environment.

The rural paper reaffirms the commitment to Countryside Stewardship Schemes and continued support for community projects through the Local Heritage Initiative. The white paper introduces a future consultation paper on applying environmental impact assessments to major new agricultural activities. It also places greater emphasis on protecting landscapes according to their bio- diversity, recreational, historic character and soil quality merits.

Dale Bristow, Assistant Conversation Officer

Farmers Surveyed

Consultants from the Centre for Rural Research at University College Worcester have been working on the Herefordshire Farming Study during the year for the Herefordshire Partnership team. The aim is to look at current social, economic and environmental issues in agriculture in the county. A questionnaire was sent to every agricultural holding in the county with many farms of different types and sizes replying, with farmers offering themselves for further interviews.

Many farmers who responded are members of FWAG and Stewardship schemes, or are investigating organic farming or want advice on diversification. The analysis of the results will prove important in establishing the role and possible benefits of conservation as a part of the modern agricultural landscape. A draft final report will be completed in the New Year.

Clare Wichbold, Herefordshire Partnership

Dinmore Discoveries

Current refurbishment at Dinmore Manor has given archaeologists the opportunity to investigate the house. The manor was established by the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. Although part of the original medieval church still survives, it was believed that any associated medieval buildings had been almost entirely destroyed by later modifications and rebuilds.



Work in progress on the eastern side of the Dinmore complex, with the medieval church beyond. The scaffolding lamp adds a curiously seasonal touch!

Recording by Marches Archaeology has revealed a greater degree of survival of original

structures than had been previously suspected. Not only are foundations for previously unknown medieval structures present, but it is possible that medieval masonry has been retained in the existing walls of the house. Some of the stone-built elevations of the house are particularly interesting and varied, indicating their long and complex history.

One pleasing feature of the conservation project is the amount of historic building data that has been produced. This not only concerns the construction and timbering of the house, but also that of the nearby threshing barn.

Julian Cotton

Medieval Status Symbols

A moat at Moor End, Much Cowarne has recently been added to the Sites and Monuments Record (SMR). This is just one of the many sites found during the ongoing map search of the 1964 OS map. Moor End was shown as a couple of ponds but when cross-referenced to the tithe map it could be seen that the ponds originated as a square moat about 50m across.

The majority of moats were built between 1250 and 1350 but were still occasionally constructed into the 16th Century. Wealthy individuals built them, usually as house sites. Moats are found all over England but the majority can be found in the Midlands and eastern England. There are now 105 moated sites listed on the Herefordshire SMR. They are scattered fairly evenly across the county but there is a definite concentration in the central eastern part of the county.

Though caution is required when considering the distribution of archaeological data, such as whether the moats are contemporary to each other, the distribution if believable does raise an interesting question. Why such a large number of wealthy medieval people in this part of Herefordshire? Is the concentration reflected in differences of size and tenure of landholdings, the presence or absence of market centres or centres of industry.

Rebecca Roseff