

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

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A View into the Future

The purpose of this issue is to highlight some of the forthcoming projects planned for next year. These include the commencement of a three-year aerial survey project and the start of the Arrow Valley Archaeology, Landscape Change and Conservation project as part of the LEADER+ Herefordshire Rivers programme.

Some of the fascinating results from this year's projects are also described. It is hoped the investigations at Croft Castle, Lyonshall and Weobley (see opposite) will continue into the future and will provide an opportunity for the local community to get involved.

But it is not just the short-term that is the focus of this HET. The long-term future of the historic environment is also considered with articles on the Herefordshire Archaeology Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan for the county.

A Date for the Diary: 16th May 2003 Herefordshire Archaeology Lecture

One of the most important and influential archaeologists in the country is coming to Hereford next year to present the Herefordshire Archaeology Lecture. David Miles, the Chief Archaeologist of English Heritage, has agreed to talk at the second Herefordshire Archaeology Lecture. The title of his talk is 'Opportune Sites: Castles in the Landscape'.

The county archaeologist, Dr. Keith Ray, said, "this is a marvellous opportunity for local people to hear an entertaining and interesting perspective on one of Herefordshire's most prominent historical features". To find out more about this event closer to the time continue to subscribe to Historic Environment Today.

Finding more than Weobley Castle



The earthworks remains of the castle at Weobley

A Local Heritage Initiative (LHI) project is investigating the close environs of Weobley Castle. George Nash, of Border Archaeology is directing the project. George and his team of specialists carried out their field studies in the late summer and autumn, which included geophysics by Richard Tabor and measured survey of earthwork features by Mark Corney. George, Richard and Mark all teach at the Department of Archaeology at Bristol University. In parallel, a team of historic buildings enthusiasts, led by Jim Tonkin, looked at the nearby standing buildings.

The survey located the sites of a series of fishponds leading down from Garnstone Park, and the possible site of the castle mill. North of the castle, they may have traced the location of burgage plots aligned onto the former street, now represented by the track leading up from the market place. However, the real surprise was the location of an apparently ditched enclosure to the west of the fishponds, close to the Norton Canon road. This is thought quite probably to be the remains of a hitherto unrecorded Iron Age or Romano-British settlement. George hopes that, with landowner's permission and more support from the Countryside Agency's LHI panel, this site may receive further attention in the not too distant future.

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“Foremost will be a detailed profile of the archaeology and landscape history of the area...”

All change in the Arrow Valley

The Herefordshire Rivers LEADER+ project is being jointly funded by DEFRA and the European Commission. Its aim is to achieve a better understanding of, and to celebrate, the rich natural, historical and cultural heritage of the rivers Wye and Lugg and their major tributaries the Arrow and the Frome. The aim is for communities of all the parishes that have one of these rivers actually flowing through them to generate their own projects, or to join in partnerships with those that can help them to create such projects.

Herefordshire Archaeology has secured agreement from English Heritage to provide contributory matched funding (along with contributions in-kind from the local community and Herefordshire Council) to carry out a pilot archaeology project. This will be focused on the Arrow Valley, in partnership with Arrow Valley Farmers, many of whom are members of the Farmers and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG).

The Arrow Valley Archaeology, Landscape Change and Conservation project is one of the first seven projects approved by the Local Action Group. It will run from February through to October 2003, and will have a variety of elements. Foremost will be a detailed profile of the archaeology and landscape history of the area, including a series of ‘whole farm audits’ and a preliminary study of the ancient environments of the river catchment.

Limited archaeological field evaluation of sites in the arable landscape will aim to gauge rates of erosion. Meanwhile, the practical conservation aims will be met by site-based vegetation clearance works and seminars on site management. The tourism potential of the heritage will be boosted by the provision of interpretative literature and panels.

Paul White
Landscape Archaeologist

New views from above



Flying high.....

A partnership project has been agreed this autumn, between English Heritage and *Herefordshire Archaeology*, to begin a new phase of systematic aerial archaeological survey of the county. The three-year project will involve some twelve sorties each year flown in a four-seater light aircraft operating under the recently introduced more stringent Civil Aviation Authority regulations. Chris Musson will again be the principal aerial archaeological photographer, but an important element of the project is a course of instruction for Tim Hoverd, our Archaeological Projects Officer.

The funding from English Heritage will also secure rapid logging of the results so that they can be fed directly into the SMR. The systematic programme of flying has a number of particular target categories, including recording the landscape features noted in the Historic Landscape Characterisation project and monitoring the condition of Scheduled Ancient Monuments. The work will also aim specifically to complement other project work, and sorties will begin early in 2003.

Tim Hoverd
Archaeological Projects Officer

People

This month saw the appointment of two historic building conservation officers. Gillian Amos and Heather Royle will job-share the post and replace Steve Bowyer who left earlier this year. Gillian and Heather will contribute to the work of the historic building conservation section, concentrating on the northern part of the county.

Swords into Ploughshares at Rotherwas

Back in 2000, staff from the archaeology division of Gifford and Partners (Consulting Engineers) carried out a study of the historic structures and archaeology of Rotherwas Industrial Estate, the former wartime munitions factory on the south-eastern outskirts of Hereford. As a follow-up to this study, the then estate manager Andrew Terry invited me to meet various of the principal stakeholders on the estate to talk to them about how some of the important surviving structures might be adapted for re-use to meet current needs. Phil Collins of Collins Engineering now occupying the old Thorn Lighting site agreed to look into the adaptation of an old shell loading building into workshops.



Some of the munitions buildings remain in use at Rotherwas

At the end of October this year, we met up again at Rotherwas to review progress and happened also to meet Lawrence Walker in one of the adapted workshops. The building has a very high ceiling and many windows set high in the walls. The height and light, and the loading gantry was especially useful to Lawrence for his one-man company Contemporary Forged Iron, because it enables him to move his sometimes bulky architectural and domestic metal works around the workshop without assistance. He does so, using the hooks and chains that once upon a time were used to load munitions onto trains here....

*Keith Ray
County Archaeologist*

“It includes a full series of archaeology, built environment and landscape policies”

Deposit Draft UDP

After a long gestation, Herefordshire’s Unitary Development Plan has now appeared as a Deposit Draft version. This weighty two-volume tome is out for consultation until 12th December 2002. It includes a full series of archaeology, built environment and landscape policies, and identifies a number of places that are the subject of proposals for housing and business development. The Council will provide responses to comments received in the consultation exercise, a number of which are likely to become formal objections. These will then be the subject of a local plan public inquiry, and a planning inspector will make recommendations to the Council for it to consider. A final published version will be produced for formal adoption by the Council, probably in 2004. The ‘use-life’ of the Plan will then run up until 2011.

*Julian Cotton
Archaeological Advisor*

Herefordshire Archaeology Strategy

The Archaeology Strategy is a document that outlines the objectives and programme of work for *Herefordshire Archaeology* through to the end of 2005. A lengthy earlier draft went out to consultation in 2001, and the comments received (mostly from consultees external to the Council) have been assessed carefully since then. During 2002 a more concise version has been produced that is based on the first part of the draft. This Strategy document will now be considered formally for adoption by the Council and publication early in 2003. A number of consultees expressed appreciation of the detail about the working of the county archaeology service in the previous document, and this will now be incorporated into a separate ‘handbook’, also in 2003.

“Could a plague explain this...”

Romans or countrymen

In the previous HET, the excavations undertaken by Dr. Peter Guest of Cardiff University were highlighted. At the annual symposium Peter presented some of the results of the dig. Two cropmark sites of rectangular enclosures were investigated at Moorcourt Farm and Cold Furrow near Lyonshall. Both of the sites were occupied during the Roman period and revealed what was happening in this corner of the Roman Empire, nearly 2000 years ago.

At Moorcourt Farm, the excavations revealed the enclosure was divided in two internally by a ditch. No evidence for buildings, other than postholes for a gateway, were discovered within the enclosure. All of the pottery recovered was made locally with no sign of imported wares that often occur on Romano British sites. The pottery suggests the site could have been deserted by the end of the 2nd Century AD.

Peter said, *“This date is intriguing and we have been puzzling over it. There is no obvious reason why the site was abandoned then. Could a plague explain this date for the decline of the settlement?”* Roman authors document plagues in other parts of the empire at this time and they were more common than we think.

A small-scale excavation at Cold Furrow tested the potential of the archaeological remains. A trench located across the enclosure ditches revealed that although the field is ploughed there is evidence for the banks created by the digging of the enclosure ditch surviving around the site. This implies there is a good possibility of archaeological features surviving within the enclosure. The few artefacts that were recovered also suggest this site was abandoned by the end of the 2nd Century.

One of the most remarkable discoveries at Cold Furrow was that the southern end of the enclosure appears to be demarcated within the current landscape by the hedged field boundary. Dr. Guest is now looking forward to returning to Herefordshire in the near future so that he can continue his investigations.

*Paul White
Landscape Archaeologist*

Croft Castle: No, the earlier one!



Excavations at Croft Castle reveal the buried remains of earlier buildings below the west lawn

One of the specific objectives of the late summer Croft Castle field project this year was to see whether anything remained of the medieval castle. It was thought likely that the Castle itself dated from sometime in the period c.1580-1630, and that it replaced a fortified manor noted (from a distance) by Leland in 1535. The excavations in August west of the castle were designed in part to locate such traces of earlier buildings.

By the end of August, it was clear that we were either on or near the site of an earlier series of structures, since a robbing trench along the line of a major wall had produced a good assemblage of (rejected) finely worked masonry. Early in September, the excavation area was extended slightly. This revealed not only the in-situ foundations of part of the undercroft to a medieval hall, but also indicated that there was an upper and lower ward to the medieval castle. Part of a heraldic tile linked up directly to those re-laid in the nave of St. Michael's Church, and a medieval oven was shown to have stood within the outer ward.

As a bonus, there was evidence of a substantial rebuilding of the hall to incorporate a new south elevation fitted with extremely fine mullion windows, dateable to c.1580. This makes the reading of the succession of buildings here really quite intriguing, not least since the dendrochronology by Ian Tyers of Sheffield University dates all the earliest timbering of the present-day mansion to the period 1662-3, immediately after Herbert Croft had become Bishop of Hereford.

*Keith Ray
County Archaeologist*