

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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Archaeology and Walking

The monthly Historic Landscape Walks organised by *Herefordshire Archaeology* will reach the 'mile-stone' of 50 this month. Since 1999 members of the county's archaeological service have lead walks around Herefordshire with the aim of introducing the public to the history and to the constantly changing aspects of the landscape. It also provides staff of *Herefordshire Archaeology* an opportunity to record previously unknown sites noted while checking the walks. Details of what we have planned for our 50th can be found in a separate feature inside.

Herefordshire Archaeology is once again contributing to this year's Herefordshire Walking Festival. The walks during last year's festival guided by our staff were well supported with people coming along from all around the country. We consider this event important to promote not only the history of the county but also to support the county's tourism and heritage. Find out more about our walks planned for this year's festival inside.

Opportune Sites opportunity...

A stop-press reminder that there are still tickets available for the second bi-annual Herefordshire Archaeology Lecture on the evening of the 16th May at The Courtyard Theatre in Hereford. We are fortunate to have David Miles, Chief Archaeologist at English Heritage, speaking on "Opportune Sites: Castles in the Landscape". The title is drawn from a statement about the castle-siting prowess of Duke William of Normandy (William I of England), and David will look on both sides of the English Channel to explain why especially our earliest Herefordshire castles are important on the European stage. Tickets are £8.00, and available from the Courtyard booking office (01432 359252).

Archaeology in Herefordshire: The Next Generation



Whitecross School pupils are shown the latest technology used by archaeologists for surveying

The Whitecross High School archaeology club led by deputy head Tim Knapp visited the Sites and Monuments Record office and participated in artefact sorting activities with Education Officer Toria Forsyth-Moser. Students learned how to handle, wash and sort a variety of 16th to 19th century artefacts.

During a follow-up visit on a cold and windy November afternoon, Tim Hoverd took the group on a walk about Hereford City and explained its history. Tim demonstrated the use of a Global Positioning System (GPS) and explained many of Hereford's interesting features, such as parts of the Saxon Wall and Hogs Mound on the Castle Green. Anecdotes from both history and the trials and tribulations of a field archaeologist brought Hereford's colourful past to life for this group of budding archaeologists. The teachers' pages on our website (www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk) contain information on a number of fascinating historic places suitable to visit.

*Toria Forsyth-Moser
SMR Education Officer*

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Long and high - walks, of course...

Herefordshire Archaeology is once again fully supporting Herefordshire's Walking Festival, being held this year between 14th and 21st June. In fact, we are organising more walks than last year! The first is on the opening day, when Tim Hoverd and Keith Ray are leading a sixteen mile walk looping around the Wye in the Foy and How Caple area. A walk at Brockhampton, reviewing some of the discoveries made during the recent estate survey, will be led by Keith Ray on Monday 16th, while Tim Hoverd will lead another walk in the environs of Hellens at Much Marcle on 18th June.

On the same day in the evening, we shall be leading a twilight walk at Merbach hill, and taking in Arthur's Stone. The next day, there will be an historic town walk in the afternoon around Leominster. The climax (!) of the series will be two simultaneous walks on midsummer's morning, at Midsummer Hill and at the Red Darren in the Olchon Valley. These involve ascents to see the dawn, and starting at 3am, with an inspection of dramatic prehistoric sites in each location after the daylight has arrived. Details of all the walks are in the Festival booklet, available at libraries and information centres. Booking is through Queenswood Tourist Information Centre.

National Trust promote Croft project

The National Trust have agreed further grant provision to support this season's work by *Herefordshire Archaeology* at Croft Castle. At the Trust's request, we are 'inserting' a further season of work on the site of the castle itself, discovered in last year's excavation. This will take place in August, and again there will be a full supporting programme of talks and guided visits, plus a project exhibition running concurrently with the fieldwork. The Trust are also promoting the project through their publications. Their Annual Archaeological Review No. 10, out this year, contains a detailed illustrated article about the project, and this summer the Member's Magazine, distributed free to its 3 million members, also contains a feature piece about our Croft Castle environs work.

Keith Ray
County Archaeologist

Historic Landscape Walks - 50 Today!



Photo courtesy of Penny Oliver

The guided Historic Landscape Walks are well supported come rain or shine

The next in the monthly series of historic landscape walks is at Colwall on 14th May. We meet at the church at 2pm for what will be the 50th in our continuous and unbroken series since April 1999. We calculate that, with a (conservative) average of 25 people per walk, over 1250 'person-walks' have been enjoyed in the last four years, widely and evenly spread across the county. So come and join us in our celebrations at Colwall....

Tim Hoverd
Archaeological Projects Officer

Multi-phase Moat

One of the discoveries made during the recent *Herefordshire Archaeology* survey of the Brockhampton Estate was that the present two moats at the site are a likely late medieval ornamental reworking of an earlier, larger, single defensive moat. This may explain why the manor house that stands on the site today is set at such an odd angle within the moated area. We have carried out a detailed earthwork survey of the site this spring, preparatory to further work in the summer. A feature of the latter work will be 'open afternoons' on the 9th and 10th July, at which the public can come a quiz the field archaeologists on site about the current investigations.

Early Cemetery at Moccas Church

Archaeological work at Moccas Church has revealed some exciting new information about the early history of the site. Moccas has been thought to be the location of a 'Dark Age' monastery, and now at last we have some evidence from the ground. However, an abandoned area of cemetery from around the time of the Norman conquest - or just after - has been found to the north and west of the church, beyond the limits of the present churchyard.

Amazingly, despite the poor conditions for preservation, a number of intact human skeletons were discovered, and there will be many more still in the ground. Just to show that nothing really changes in human history, several of the skeletons showed signs of arthritis and worn out teeth!

As always, however, there were some disappointments. No sign of any 'Dark Age' structures or early burials were discovered, so the search for the early monastic centre at Moccas is still not concluded. Ways of dealing with the site have been discussed, but what happens now will largely depend on the wishes of the landowners and the parish. Perhaps a way will be found to better preserve what is there, or to undertake some research excavation. It is intriguing to think what might lie within the curved earthwork bank observable in an adjacent field. Watch this space, as there may be further news on this fascinating site.

Julian Cotton
Archaeological Advisor

Have you found anything interesting?

Bring it along to the **Finds Roadshow** at the Ross-on-Wye Heritage Centre during the National Archaeology Week. The provisional date is Wed, July 16th. Contact Toria, our SMR education officer for more information on tmoser@herefordshire.gov.uk or tel. (01432) 383238. Look for more details in the next HET.

"It is intriguing to think what might lie within the curved earthwork..."

Church and Chapel



The chapel at Broxwood, Pembridge is one of many that can be found around the county

It is not just early churches in Herefordshire we are interested in (see the Moccas article opposite). As part of the Historic Herefordshire Online project we are currently focusing on post-medieval Herefordshire, specifically concentrating on the changing social and architectural landscape of the county and are investigating the chapel movement.

This was very strong in Herefordshire and we would be interested to hear from anybody who has information, records, photographs etc from any of the chapels or meeting houses of Herefordshire. Perhaps you are a member of a chapel and would not mind being interviewed for the website, or maybe you have an anecdote or memory from your childhood that you would like to share. If you think that you can help in any way with this topic please phone Miranda Greene, the Sites and Monuments Record Office new Audiences Officer, on (01432 383 238) or e-mail mgreen@herefordshire.gov.uk

Alternatively you can use the 'Contact Us' form on the SMR website: - www.smr.herefordshire.gov.uk

Miranda Greene
SMR New Audiences Officer

Parkland reveals varied past



The Deer Park at Moccas contains evidence of former land uses

Earlier this year *Herefordshire Archaeology* undertook an archaeological reconnaissance survey within the 139ha of Moccas Deer Park in partnership with English Nature. The survey involved recording various earthwork features relating to early woodland management, former industrial workings, park landscaping and previous land use.

The survey featured two fascinating principal findings. Firstly, the presumed medieval field system was found to be far more extensive than had been previously recorded. Secondly, the circuits of two former courses of deer park boundary (park pale) were also traced within the existing park. These are considered to be of medieval date. The park was then expanded at least once, during the late eighteenth century, after which it should be more properly regarded as a landscape park containing deer.

The known site of the motte and bailey castle at Moccas was also examined. However, there is very limited earthwork evidence remaining at the site, due to recent intensive arable farming.

The survey also identified an extensive area of ridge and furrow in the north-western area of the park. Areas of intensive charcoal production and timber processing was noted along the hilltop and the steepest slopes have been extensively quarried for building stone and the production of lime. A number of phases of woodland expansion, contraction and re-organisation were recorded illustrating the complexity of landscape change often found in areas of retained parkland.

*Tim Hoverd
Archaeological Projects Officer*

People

Several new staff members have joined the Conservation Team since the last HET. In February, David Williams and Richard Lello were taken on as job-share Field Archaeologists. They will assist Tim Hoverd, Archaeological Projects Officer, with his work but they will primarily focus on the archaeological surveys of woodlands as part of a Forestry Commission partnership study within Herefordshire.

Jess Allen is the Lifescapes Officer (see previous HET 5.2) and is funded by the LEADER+ Herefordshire Rivers project and English Nature. Geoff Perrott is working in the Conservation section as the Herefordshire Partnership Environmental Co-ordinator.

Laura Shakespeare is assisting the Sites and Monuments Office through a modern apprenticeship scheme. Laura will be with *Herefordshire Archaeology* for a year and will receive on-the-job training in using computers, working with detailed records and learning about archaeology.

Last month Cori Renfrew joined *Herefordshire Archaeology* as Project Archaeologist. Cori will assist Paul White, Landscape Archaeologist with the Arrow Valley Archaeology, Landscape Change and Conservation Project as part of the LEADER+ Herefordshire Rivers project, which has funding support from English Heritage. You can read more about the Arrow Valley in the article below.

Arrow Valley Update

During February and March the local community of Staunton-on-Arrow started scrub clearance on the castle mound located behind the parish church. Over several weekends, local volunteers helped by Tony Norman of The Leen Farm, Pembridge worked on the site management works. Over half of the undergrowth was removed and now splendid views along the River Arrow can be enjoyed from the top of the motte. You can find out more about the project and the latest discoveries from recent excavations at Keith Ray's talk 'The Arrow Valley before the Legions' at Pembridge Village Hall, Tuesday 20 May, 7.30pm.