

# HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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## The archaeological assets issue

It is a commonplace of modern 'management speak' to talk of the need to maintain and sustain 'assets'. This issue of *Historic Environment Today* focuses on the care of archaeological assets in Herefordshire.

Very often archaeological assets are assessed by traditional archaeological excavations such as the recent work at Credenhill hillfort or at the Marks and Spencer store in Hereford. However, broader management studies like the Lower Lugg Archaeology and Aggregates Resource Assessment are an increasingly important tool for defining known and anticipated archaeological remains.

## "most important archaeological assets are not buried in the ground"

What should not be forgotten is that the most important archaeological assets are not buried in the ground or in dense management documents. Those assets are the people living today who believe that the remains left by previous generations are a valuable part of modern life.

The final article in this issue – written by a student who recently did a week long work placement with Herefordshire Archaeology - is therefore perhaps the most important. His enthusiasm and fascination give real hope that the long reports and management speak really are ultimately worthwhile.

*Ian Bapty, Senior Project Archaeologist & guest editor*

## Conservation area reviews

Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty to designate as conservation areas 'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'. There are 64 conservation areas in Herefordshire.

In January 2005 Herefordshire Council commenced a programme of conservation area reviews. Draft appraisals have been prepared for 13 conservation areas, with more in preparation. Public consultations will be held before any management proposals are undertaken.

Appraisals are prepared in accordance with English Heritage guidelines. They include a description of the conservation area's location and setting, a discussion of historic development, spatial and character analyses, and an audit of heritage assets.



*Wealden houses in Weobley conservation area*

Assets identified in the appraisals include scheduled ancient monuments, listed buildings at risk and unlisted buildings of local interest. The appraisals may also update the listings of the assets which are defined as part of the conservation area, and suggest alterations to the geographical boundaries of conservation areas.

*Richard Lello, Project Officer, Conservation Area Reviews*

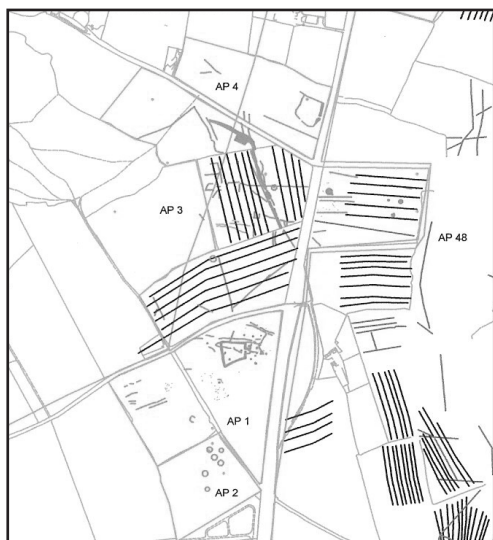
**Inside : Conservation Area Reviews ♦ Credenhill Hillfort ♦ Future Events**

## Lower Lugg Archaeology and Aggregates Resource Assessment

Herefordshire Archaeology's Lower Lugg Archaeology and Aggregates Resource Assessment stems from the archaeological discoveries made at Wellington gravel quarry since 1986. Unexpected finds such as two Saxon watermills have made clear the need for better understanding of the archaeological potential of a valley where gravel quarrying is likely to continue for many years.

The assessment was funded by English Heritage via the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund. Partners included the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service and Air Photo Services.

Key elements of the project involved digital mapping of archaeological features on aerial photographs, a full review of the Wellington discoveries and past archaeological fieldwork methods, and an analysis of past and present patterns of quarrying.



*Ancient landscapes near Wellington*

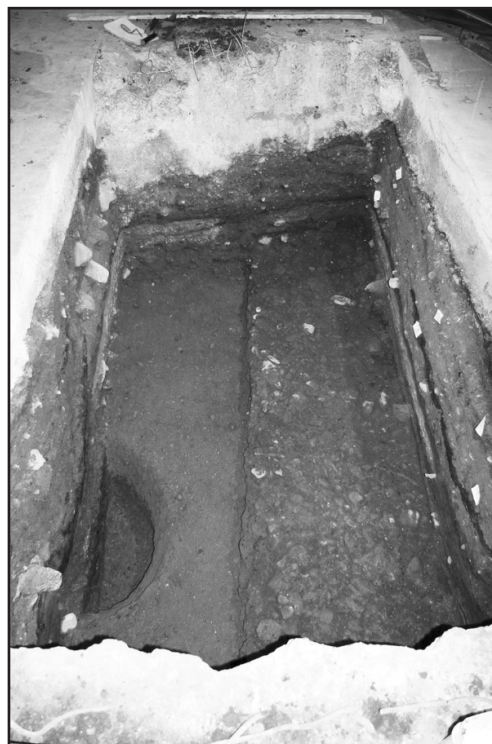
The assessment was completed in August. The results have emphasised the high significance of the archaeology of the valley, and the strong potential for further discoveries of all periods in the river flood plain where future quarrying will be focused.

Forthcoming 'roadshow' events in local village halls (see events listing below) offer a chance to learn more about the project results. Drop in to meet local archaeologists, to join a walk or talk, or to see some of the archaeological finds from the area.

*Ian Bapty, Senior Project Archaeologist*

## Marks and Spencer excavations, High Town, Hereford

In June 2007 Archenfield Archaeology Ltd carried out monitoring and excavation of two trenches during re-development of the Marks and Spencer store in Hereford.



*Trench in Marks and Spencer store basement*

The deposits excavated relate to the northern extent of the defences of the original Mercian town. A rampart and ditch are thought to lie just north of East Street, formerly known as 'Road behind-the-wall Street'.

In the first 5 metre deep trench, the northern edge of a large ditch was recorded. The ditch was cut by a later Medieval rubbish pit containing 13<sup>th</sup> century pottery. In a second 1.6 metre deep trench excavated into the basement floor, a deposit of very different character was explored. The sequence consisted of a timber, wattle and stone structure and layers of silt, sand and gravel overlaying a well laid stone surface. This deposit contained 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century pottery, and was cut by two pits of 13<sup>th</sup> century date.

The exact date of the large ditch and the relationship of the two excavated areas was not certainly established, though further analysis may help to resolve these questions. The excavation has confirmed that structures and occupation layers relating to the earliest development of the city of Hereford survive under the modern Marks and Spencer store.

*Daniel Lewis, Archenfield Archaeology Ltd*

## Big trench on site of Hereford's new flood defences

Many of our readers will be aware of the major engineering works that have recently been taking place across the Bishop's Meadow where new flood defences are being constructed by the Environment Agency.

As part of the pre-works, an archaeological excavation took place across the apparent end of the historic 'Rowe Ditch' monument. This excavation, undertaken by Archaeological Investigations Limited, demonstrated the remnants of a gravel bank and a massive west-east aligned ditch (4 metres deep and over 15 metres wide!).

Initial dating of this feature has suggested a 13<sup>th</sup> century date, adding firm support to the hypothesis that the principal medieval defended circuit of Hereford carried round to the south of the River Wye.

It seems therefore, in this location at least, that the Rowe Ditch cannot be Civil War in origin as is often supposed.

*Julian Cotton, Archaeological Adviser*

## Limekilns on the Wye

As part of the development of the Overlooking the Wye Project, a Heritage Lottery Funded project co-ordinated by the Wye Valley AONB, a number of limekilns within the AONB have been nominated for works to conserve and interpret them. The project, which is being submitted to the HLF this autumn, seeks to increase public awareness and involvement in the heritage of the Wye Valley.

About 250 limekilns are recorded on the Herefordshire Sites and Monuments Record. Limekilns were built throughout the county exploiting available limestones or lime-bearing rocks to produce lime for building and agricultural purposes. The majority were constructed in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Six limekilns in Herefordshire have been included in the project bid. If HLF funding is secured these kilns will be conserved and made accessible to the public.

More information on the Overlooking the Wye Project can be viewed on the Wye Valley AONB website ([www.wyevallyaonb.org.uk](http://www.wyevallyaonb.org.uk)).

*Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser*



*A Wye Valley limekiln in need of conservation*

## Excavations at Credenhill hillfort

During September and August Herefordshire Archaeology undertook a six week excavation within the massive Iron Age hillfort at Credenhill near Hereford. The work was carried out with the help of local volunteers and students from Cardiff University.

The project was developed in partnership with the Woodland Trust who own and manage Credenhill Park Wood. The archaeological work was designed to provide better understanding of the historical development of the site, and to assess the effect of tree roots on buried archaeology.

## “excavation revealed Iron Age and Roman occupation”

The excavation revealed Iron Age and Roman occupation, but found no evidence for pre Iron Age activity. A compacted stone surface found in one trench may have supported a building. Elsewhere large pits were probably used for storage and rubbish disposal. The excavation also showed that the archaeological layers have been significantly disturbed by recent tree growth.

Further archaeological investigations are planned in 2008 and 2009. The 2008 excavation will continue the examination of the features so far identified, and will also begin to assess other areas of the hillfort.

*Chris Atkinson, Community Archaeologist*



## A week as an archaeologist

My name is Alasdair Neilson and I am a student at Wigmore High School. As it is my final year, I am starting to think about what I might go on to do in the 'real' world. From an early age, I have been fascinated by history and archaeology. I was therefore delighted to get a week-long work placement with Herefordshire Council's archaeology service.



*The Old House, High Town, Hereford portrayed in an old print - it is little changed today*

On my first day, I had the chance to walk round Hereford with Dr Nigel Baker, the council's urban archaeologist. It was a brilliant experience. It was great to have a guide with Nigel's experience and knowledge. Every bump and crack told the story of how this amazing city was born and how it had evolved.

### “...an unnatural craving for hobnobs....”

Later on in the week I went on a trip to Monmouth with Dr Neil Rimmington. The morning consisted of a meeting of different archaeological and environment groups. Most of the meeting went straight over my head, but I did observe that archaeologists have an unnatural craving for hobnobs! We then went on an absolutely brilliant walk to a nearby hillfort. The sun shone through the trees, and as well as the great views, we got to see some fascinating archaeology.

These examples are just a taste of what I did during the week. The experience really helped me to get a proper idea of what being an archaeologist is all about. For example, it fascinated me to see how much archaeology affects processes like planning applications - it's a part of archaeology you don't really think about.

Overall, I had a fantastic week that I will remember for years to come. I would like to thank the archaeological team at Herefordshire Council for making it possible.

*Alasdair Neilson, final year student at Wigmore High School*

## Forthcoming events

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> November:** The Annual Symposium, Courtyard Theatre, Hereford (9.20 am to 5.00 pm, 7 illustrated talks by local archaeologists about recent archaeological work in Herefordshire)

**Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> November:** Lingen Historic Landscape Walk

**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> November:** Lower Lugg Local Archaeology Day, Bartestree Village Hall (10.30 am to 4.00pm – drop in any time, archaeological finds and displays, bring your finds for identification, local history walk 2.00pm – 3.30pm)

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> December:** Lower Lugg Local Archaeology Day, Moreton-on-Lugg Village Hall (10.30 am to 4.00pm – drop in any time, archaeological finds and displays, bring your finds for identification, local history walk 2.00pm – 3.30pm)

**Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December:** Leominster Historic Landscape Walk

**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> January:** Lower Lugg Local Archaeology Day, Bodenham Village Hall (10.30 am to 4.00pm – drop in any time, archaeological finds and displays, bring your finds for identification, local history walk 2.00pm – 3.30pm)

## Contact number for Herefordshire Archaeology

To book places for walks and for general enquiries, contact Jacky Denovan on e-mail at [archaeologists@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeologists@herefordshire.gov.uk) or telephone 01432 260470.