

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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Archaeology and commemoration

The recent bi-centenary of Trafalgar provides a context for thinking about what is commemorated in society, why and how. In this issue there are articles about monumental commemoration of people and events both in the past and the present.

Commemorative art is - and has been - most usually connected with death, and the construction of monuments connected with death rituals has been with us at least since the earlier Neolithic 6000 to 5500 years ago. So archaeologists are inevitably studying such remains and discussing their significance. The commemoration of individual deaths has its origins in the later Neolithic - at least 4500 years ago. Fashions have changed, but commemoration with mausolea first became widespread in the Roman period, 1600 to 1950 years ago locally.

Individual commemoration with 'permanent' grave-markers (headstones and so on) only became common in the eighteenth century, however. The monuments discussed in this issue are from different periods - and all in Hereford. They range from the medieval White Cross in the eponymous western suburb, to the Nelson memorial column on Castle Green, to the newly-installed Elgar in Hereford memorial on the Cathedral Green.

As we reflect on 'archaeology and commemoration', therefore, we are pondering a basic human desire - to mark, sometimes monumentally, the lives and actions that have characterised the political, social and cultural life of different eras in our history. The markers themselves are not only visual cues to memory in the present - they are also part of the heritage of the future.

Keith Ray, County Archaeologist

About Nelson's urn



The newly refurbished Nelson Memorial on Castle Green, replete with (Trafalgar Blue) railings.

In 2004, David Whitehead was commissioned by Herefordshire Council to prepare an historical study of Castle Green to support its restoration initiative there. In 2005, he submitted his report, and we have learned from it more about the origins of our own 'Nelson's Column'. It would appear there was some dispute about the dimensions and iconography of the monument, and in the end only an urn and not a statue could be afforded. Nonetheless, the Hereford memorial was one of the first to be put in place following the hero's death.

Also in 2005, Noel Knight, surveyor with our historic environment services in Planning, has masterminded a modest restoration programme that was completed in time for the Trafalgar commemoration. Repairs were made to stonework (where deemed essential), and the inscription was remade. In addition, new railings were put in place to replace the originals removed c.1900, and two cannon of the four originally present were taken out of storage in Shropshire and reset.

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Inside : Elgar in Hereford ♦ New Designation procedures ♦ White Cross

Kington Camp wartime memories

During World War II, Herefordshire was host to a number of 'support' activities. Several of these had to do with incoming supplies, especially resources brought in by air to new airfields – Shobdon and Madley being prominent among these. Rotherwas was of course an important munitions factory, and Moreton Camp a supply depot.

Elsewhere, country houses and their estates were used as accommodation and training bases for troops preparing to re-open the western Europe front, while others provided venues for POW camps – or hospitals. Each of these activities has left traces that have become familiar landmarks – and archaeology.

In the present day, the decay path of the last 60 years has left the remains in variable condition. At Rotherwas, year on year another area of the site is erased for new industry. We have reported in these pages attempts to which we have contributed, to preserve a remnant. In 2005-6, the last vestiges of the wartime supply buildings at Moreton have gone to gravel quarrying, and there has been controversy in the pages of the *Hereford Times* about the fate of Baron's Cross Camp, Leominster. In all these cases, we have arranged for recording of the structures before demolition.

At Rotherwas, a major 'memories' study in recent years has recorded the detail of the individual lives affected by its wartime use. Now, there is news of a funding for a project not only to record the remaining structures of Kington Camp at Hergest (a major American wartime hospital), but also to document memories of their active use. A group of local historians led by Cressida Fforde has successfully applied to the Heritage Lottery Fund 'Home Front Recall' programme to carry out a three-year study of the site. Besides doing full archaeological recording, it is planned to collect both objects and memories relating to the site, and to explain its significance on both sides of the Atlantic.

“Besides full archaeological recording, it is planned to collect objects and memories”



The Elgar statue on Cathedral Green.

Elgar in Hereford

A very different kind of commemoration has been debated hotly in recent years – both in terms of its tardiness, and due to the competition that led to the form of the memorial. This is the 'Elgar in Hereford' statue/sculpture now installed on the Cathedral Green.

Sir Edward Elgar lived in Hereford in the years 1904-12, composing key works in that time such as the renowned Symphony No.1. Elgar was throughout his musical career also a regular participant in the Three Choirs Festival, and remarkable film footage exists of his presence - along with such other luminaries of the age as George Bernard Shaw – at the Festival here in 1932. A Society was established in 2000 to commemorate that presence.

Worcester commissioned a statue to the great composer that was put in place in 1981, and since then there have been regular calls for a memorial to Elgar in Hereford. After much debate, fund-raising and determined effort, this has now been achieved. The portrait in Hereford could not however be more contrasting to that in Worcester.

The Worcester memorial is in the grand civic manner. Hereford's sculpture, meanwhile, is disarmingly informal – and to this reviewer quite remarkably affective. Here we see a somehow very familiar pose – the young middle aged man leaning on his bike to gaze wondrously at the magnificent medieval architecture of the Cathedral. No monument this – instead we can now enjoy a wonderful but subtle tribute: to person, place - and time.

Keith Ray, County Archaeologist

People

Peter Dorling has been appointed as 'Senior Projects Archaeologist (Landscape Archaeology)'. In effect he replaces Paul White, formerly Landscape Archaeologist. With prior experience working for Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust, a degree in archaeology from Cardiff University, and seventeen years as National Park Archaeologist for Brecon Beacons National Park, Peter is no stranger to Herefordshire. He joins us to take up a portfolio of projects that will include both the Herefordshire Aerial Archaeological Survey and the Lugg Valley Archaeology, Landscape Change and Conservation project (see below, 'Launching the Lugg').

Meanwhile, the urban archaeology programme for Herefordshire has been given a boost by a successful funding bid both to the Council and to English Heritage. This has enabled the recruitment of a 'Senior Projects Archaeologist (Urban Archaeology)', in the first instance to deliver an Urban Archaeological Database for Hereford city. The appointee is Dr. Nigel Baker of Shrewsbury, who will take up his post in February 2006.

Last but certainly not least, we also bid a sad farewell to Alexandra Millward, our Conservation Technician. Alex is one of the 'unseen' staff, serving public services like ours, but rarely in the public eye. Alex joined Herefordshire Council from the old Leominster District Council in 1998. Over the past seven years, she has helped design and produce a myriad of exhibitions, guidance documents and publications for Conservation – including original design and current production co-ordination for HET itself. Alex is joining Wychavon District Council in neighbouring Worcestershire, where she will fulfil a wider role, for the whole of their local planning service.

Heritage Protection Review – new Designation procedures

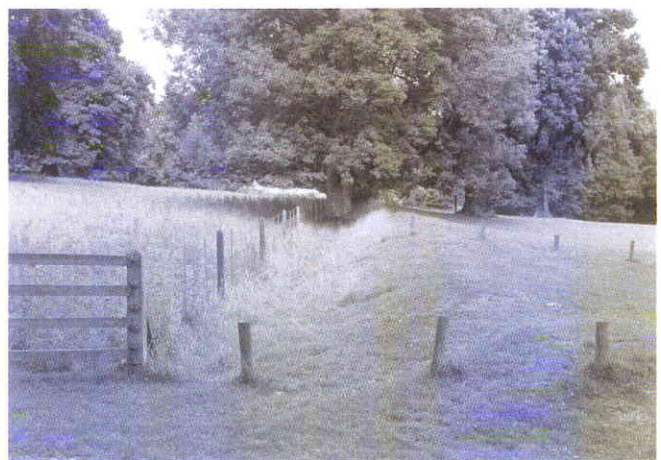
In issue 8,3 we noted the current proposals for reforming the way in which the archaeological and historic built heritage will in future be protected. This short entry is the first in a series of articles that will outline the substance of the planned changes.

'integration of designations will be a key feature of the new system'

The main plank of the planned simplification of the historic environment designation system will be a unified Register of historic 'assets'. This will mean that instead of several different categories of asset (such as Listed Buildings, Scheduled Ancient Monuments, Registered Parks and Gardens), there will be a single designation, 'heritage asset'. In this way, the integration of the various different kinds of current designation will be a key feature of the new system.

The idea is clear, but the detailed implications are still being devised. It seems likely that there will for instance be a simple 'migration' of historic building designation (minus the 'Listed' term), but with a streamlining to just two 'Grades' – I and II. There will also no longer be 'Scheduled Ancient Monuments'. Instead, the archaeological component of the 'assets register' will likewise simply become heritage 'assets', probably also (for the first time) graded 'I' and 'II'.

In many cases where multiple designations exist in the same locality, there will (where historically supportable) be a landscape 'envelope' containing the assets concerned. The most obvious cases are where presently 'Listed' structures and Scheduled Ancient Monuments sit within a Registered Park. Although simplified as a single entry, there will nonetheless remain different levels of protection for assets. These will, as today, range from a presumption against development (or the requirement to fulfil potentially onerous 'consent' conditions) through to the designation being 'a material consideration in the planning process'.



Croft Estate parkland: a new heritage envelope?

“the idea of moving the cattle market to the west of Hereford creates a curious echo of the city’s medieval plague years”

White Cross

The third commemorative monument noted in this issue, is the celebrated medieval White Cross, that gives its name to a suburb of the city to the west on the road towards Brecon. This impressive stepped structure is said to commemorate the Black Death in Hereford.

Alfred Watkins noted, in his *The Old Standing Crosses of Herefordshire* (1930), that one of the panels of the elaborate ‘architectural’ base supporting the shaft of the cross bears the lion rampant coat of arms of Bishop Lewis Charlton (1361-9). Tradition holds that during the third major visitation of the plague to the city, Charlton decided that the market should be removed to the countryside. He therefore ordered the High Cross (in what today is ‘High Town’, accordingly) to be temporarily ‘closed’ as the site of the market. He then set up a new market cross at the western (and up-wind) boundary of the city - at ‘White Cross’.

Thanks to a ‘flying’ visit by a young driver in 2003, we recently almost lost this outstanding piece of our local heritage. After much delay (no, we can’t find out the exact reason, either), the cross is now under restoration by Hook Mason conservation builders. We’ll hopefully soon see the hoardings removed and the monument better protected from modern driving ‘practices’. Talk of historical ‘removals’ of the market reminds us of the cyclical nature of historical events. How ironic now, that the talk is of the livestock market – still a ‘civic asset’ – being relocated to the western margin of the city.



The medieval ‘White Cross’ (undergoing restoration)

From the Annual Symposium

We have noted in these pages for several years running now the ‘menu’ for the forthcoming Annual Symposium, but have rarely reported any of the ‘highlights’ after the event. Some ‘gems’ from this year are therefore as follows!

Firstly, though no ‘rotunda’ was present, we now have the first secure evidence for middle Saxon Leominster, from (presumed) monastic rubbish dumps under what became the medieval Priory cloister. Secondly, we now know that 38% of Herefordshire’s Ancient Monuments are formally acknowledged to be ‘at high risk’.

Next up, we discovered that the earliest All Saints church in Hereford had smoky blacksmithing neighbours. And then we learned that some Whitbourne houses featured grand staircases while being built of home-made bricks...

To round off, it seems that whenever Worcestershire’s medieval Malvernian pottery industry slackened, Herefordshire’s local potters got building their kilns and trading their wares. Conversely, whenever the Malvern potters scaled up their enterprise, it spelled the demise of the local product. Apparently, it was all down to the durability of the product – and having the right temper...

Thanks to Bruce Watson (Museum of London), Jenni Marriott (English Heritage), Cath Crooks (AIL, Hereford), Duncan James (Leominster), Tim Hoverd (Herefordshire Archaeology), and Dr. Alan Vince (Lincoln) for these insights. And thanks also to Bruce and to Dr Katherine Lack (of ‘People of Old Whitbourne’) for chairing the two sessions.

Launching the Lugg

Lastly, here is a ‘trailer’ for the next issue. For the first ‘HET’ of the new year, we shall be focusing upon the Lugg Valley. Along with the Wye and the Frome, in many ways the Lugg forms the ‘spine’ of our county. Many individual sites and landscapes in the valley have been studied archaeologically, including in recent years. However, 2006 will see the first co-ordinated examination of the whole valley within Herefordshire.