

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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Historic buildings issue

Herefordshire is justifiably famous for its historic buildings and 'black and white villages'. But, after the work of the Royal Commission in the 1920s and 30s, for several decades Jim Tonkin was almost alone in bringing an archaeological approach to this traditional preserve of architectural historians. Now, at last, archaeology is beginning to catch up and treat the analysis of standing structures as a mainstream activity. Much of this work, like contract excavation, takes place out of the public eye although the results can be every bit as unexpected and revolutionary for our view of the past. So, for a flavour of what's happening in this fast-developing subject, this issue of *Historic Environment Today* is devoted to historic buildings, their archaeological study and their conservation.

Nigel Baker, urban archaeologist & guest editor

A new understanding of Ledbury's timber-framed Market House

Documentary evidence indicates that Ledbury Market House was begun in about 1617 but not finished until around 1668. So, for half a century, it remained in some other form than that which we see today. This has always been a puzzle. During 2006 the building was encased in scaffolding for repair work and this offered the opportunity for a close study of the structure. This has revealed evidence indicating that there were two major phases of building construction.

'a single-storey structure'

The first phase, which came at the end of a major campaign of rebuilding in Ledbury, was a single storey structure with a large attic space that was used for grain storage with access probably from an external staircase – essentially a large version of the (earlier) Pembridge market house.



Ledbury Market House (as you've never seen it)

The second phase of the structure involved the removal of the roof, leaving the tie beams in place on which to build the slightly longer upper storey with jettied ends that required the installation of diagonally-set dragon beams (made of elm) and additional brackets along with rearrangement of the joists in the end panels. New tie beams were installed but the original principal rafters, collars and queen struts were re-used in the replaced roof. To give access to the new large upper chamber a substantial staircase, probably with a roof, was built at the north end of the building with access through a doorway in the north wall adjacent to the west side. The attic was also used, with a staircase rising within the upper storey. The chevron ornament on the Market House is in contrast to the close studding that is a characteristic feature of Ledbury's many late 16th-century timber-framed buildings.

Duncan James, Insight Historic Buildings Research.

Inside: Whitecross Monument ♦ The Masters House ♦ Building at Risk

The Whitecross Monument, Hereford

The Whitecross monument was erected around 1365 by Bishop Lewis Charleton to commemorate the last visitation of the plague in Hereford. The earliest known drawing of the monument, made in 1619, shows that at that time the cross shaft was broken and the cross missing. The monument was restored with a new cross and shaft in 1864 by Sir Gilbert Scott.



Damage to the Whitecross monument, Hereford

In 2006 the monument was damaged in a car accident. Dismantling, repair and restoration were essential, and it gave the opportunity to investigate the construction methods used in building the monument. During the 1864 restoration a vertical iron rod had been introduced, passing all the way up through the monument to hold the structure together. The rod has a splayed claw set within a lead plug that helped grip the base, while the top of the rod appears to have originally screwed into a bronze casting set into the base of the cross, and at the top of the shaft.

Andy Boucher, Managing Director, AIL

The Masters House, Ledbury

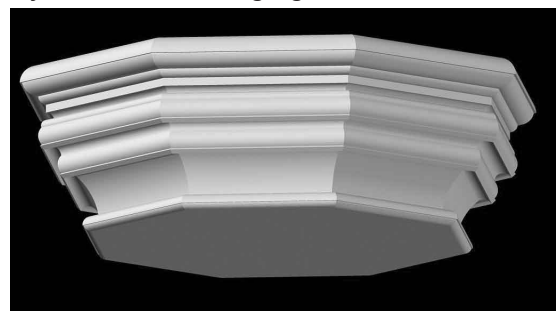
The Master's House was built in the 15th century and enlarged in the 16th with 18th-and 19th-century alterations. The main building is of two storeys, partly timber framed and partly brick. The plan is an irregular L-shape with wings extending towards the north and west. The original house formed part of the west wing, with a central hall and kitchen and solar wings at the east and west ends. AIL Ltd were commissioned to conduct a hand drawn survey of the roof timbers, recording details such as mouldings, reused timbers, peg holes and carpenters' marks. The detailed drawings were then transferred into a digital format using AutoCAD, to form part of the permanent record of the roof structure prior to the anticipated alteration to the building.

Restoration at Goodrich Castle

English Heritage commissioned AIL Ltd to undertake recording alongside the restoration of the "Solar" arch at Goodrich Castle. The north range and the north-west, or ladies, tower are separated by a two storey pillar with a double arch and capital between. The hall containing the arch was probably built in the second half of the 13th century and is believed to have been divided into two storeys in the 15th. The capital was originally intended as an internal feature and therefore probably contained details in its design that are easily eroded once exposed to the elements. The much eroded state of the stone resulted in a detective trail which ended in the tracking down of a good quality photograph from 1868 in an American archive. Using this and expert opinions from Richard Morriss, a stone moulding specialist, it was possible to combine the surviving profile of the stone and other information in a computer 3D model that could then be sectioned for the stone masons to carve the replica stone that is now in place.

For pictures visit www.archaeologists.tv

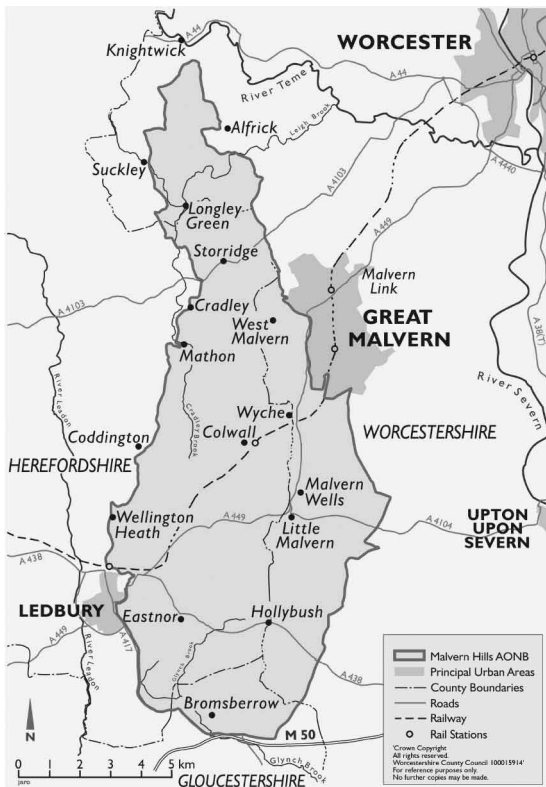
Andy Boucher, Managing Director, AIL



The Goodrich Capital

Malvern Hills AONB - surveys of historic buildings

The historic built environment is a key component of the exceptional character of the Malvern Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). As part of the strategic management plan for the area, Herefordshire Council, Malvern Hills District Council and Forest of Dean District Council have joined together to form a partnership with the AONB Unit to carry out a broad assessment of the condition of all its listed buildings, to be completed by April 2008, so that they can determine whether they can assist in directing resources towards their proper preservation.



In tandem with this assessment, work is being carried out to identify whether there are buildings and man-made structures within the AONB that have local historical importance. The survey is concentrating on buildings which either do not qualify for statutory listing because of their age or that are old enough but too altered. The primary cut-off date for listing is 1840, although buildings after that date can be listed if they have exceptional architectural or historic interest.

If you consider a building has local merit we would welcome details, including a photograph if possible, to be sent to Neil Robertson, Senior Conservation Officer, Herefordshire Council PO Box 4, Plough Lane Herefordshire HR4 OXH before 18th April 2008.

John Stagg, Team Leader, Building Conservation

Listed Building repairs grant success - The Old Vicarage, Orleton

Major repairs to the veranda of the Grade II listed former vicarage were completed recently with grant assistance from Herefordshire Council. Although not strictly original and suffering the effects of chronic neglect, the elegant timber veranda complemented the Regency building's character perfectly – so when a listed building consent application for its demolition arrived, a straight refusal was recommended.



However, the owners were persuaded to apply for a listed building grant, which offered 25% of the cost of repairs up to a maximum of £4000, suitable joiners were suggested and a roofing contractor found (with great difficulty) who had experience of zinc sheet roofs. The appointed joiners carefully dismantled the structure to undertake the repairs off-site and collaborated with the roofing contractor in its re-assembly.

The veranda restoration was a complicated, unorthodox job and despite being unable to quantify the repairs accurately, to their credit both main contractors stood by their original estimates. Furthermore the Council's contribution successfully illustrates the leverage which even small amounts of grant aid can achieve.

Chris Partrick, Senior Building Conservation Officer



Medieval shop row in Weobley

Secret Weobley

It is unusual in any building more than 100 years old to find that the original floorboards have survived so we were amazed to discover last year that two bays in a row of four medieval shops in Weobley had floorboards that were about 550 years old and still in place. Mind you, they are oak heartwood that is 3½ inches thick and on average 12 inches wide. They span the 13½ ft width of the cellar ceiling without any additional support although a 17th century beam has been inserted. About 110 cubic feet of oak were used to make the boards, which are contemporary with the building and have been tree-ring dated to 1461-1479.

*Duncan James.
Insight Historic Buildings Research.*

Contact for Herefordshire Archaeology

To book places for Herefordshire Archaeology events and walks and for general enquiries, contact Jacky Denovan, Herefordshire Archaeology's administrator, on 01432 260470 or archaeologists@herefordshire.gov.uk

Forthcoming events

Tuesday 15th April: Huntsham Hill historic landscape walk

Wednesday 14th May: Bradnor Hill historic landscape walk

Saturday 8th November: The Annual Archaeology Symposium, the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford

Herefordshire Walking Festival:
(contact Queenswood TIC 01568 797842)

Tuesday 17th June: Archaeology in the Olchon, 10.00 – 1.00

Thursday 19th June: Secret Kimbolton, 10.00 – 1.00

Saturday 21st June: Iron, rabbits, fields and deer – children's walk (Wapley Hill), 10.00-12.30