

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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Archaeology and Regeneration

Because Herefordshire Archaeology are part of the Regeneration Directorate of Herefordshire Council, there is a strong sense in which our focus is not only the conservation and protection of the historic environment, but also in helping to steer appropriate development within it.

In this economically difficult period, it is therefore good to know that there are a number of strategic developments in the county that are either well advanced in their planning stages, or are shortly to take place in the field.

As is often the case in Herefordshire, some of the strategic areas are of great archaeological interest, and there are many challenges in accommodating the needs of the historic environment within development of these locations.

Included in this latest edition of Historic Environment Today are archaeological items relating to particular development and regeneration areas, such as ESG. and Rotherwas Futures. Also included are items relating to 'enablers' such as the proposed Park and Ride schemes for Herefordshire. Finally we consider the broad proposals for substantial new housing and employment areas in the county, as shortly to be put forward in *The Local Development Framework*.

Julian Cotton, Guest Editor

ESG - Masterplanning

Herefordshire Archaeology have recently completed an *Archaeology Masterplan* for ESG Herefordshire Ltd. This provides a framework to guide the archaeological response to all parts of the regeneration process, summarising the constraints that will be encountered (such as the presence of sensitive waterlogged deposits, industrial monuments, medieval suburbs and so on).

It also considers the opportunities that the development process will create for enhancing heritage assets, particularly the sometimes overlooked but important Blackfriars site.



Part of Blackfriars overlooked? © Herefordshire Council

In a 1986 Transactions of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club article, David Whitehead mentions the (very rare) survival of a stone marking the ancient boundary of the fee (manor) of the medieval St John's Hospital, predecessor of Coningsby's. HA staff noticed, on the north side of Coningsby Street, a group of three stones on the pavement edge, on the

line of the boundary. Why three together? Have two been re-located from elsewhere? Are there any other boundary stones out there? HET readers who know the answer – please get in touch with Herefordshire Archaeology...

Nigel Baker, Urban Archaeologist

ESG - Recent Archaeological Work

A series of investigations have continued within the area of the proposed ESG development, this time focused on the proposed route of the new link road running from Commercial Road and railway station to Edgar Street. This was formerly an area of poorly drained ground, part of Widemarsh, containing numerous channels of both man-made and natural origin.

The proposed route misses most of the waterworks associated with the Monk Moor mills (beneath Morrisons). However, it does cross the site of the former canal basin that predated Hereford Railway Station. The buried location of this basin lies just south of the position of the extant railway buildings.



The former canal basin

Trenching in this area failed to locate any surviving traces of these features and it is possible that 20th century re-landscaping of the area removed any vestige of the former canal system at this point.

Further westwards the route is known to traverse an area of Bronze Age peat bog fed from pure springs beneath the Police Training Field. Investigations focused on the edge of this area and may have identified an

associated ancient land surface. However, no archaeological remains were observed in this location.

The western end of the link road route passes to the north of the football ground. At this location other peaty areas were identified associated with earlier channels or stream courses. In the case of the two trenches where these were located it would appear that in this case the peat dates from the Medieval or later periods.

The investigations succeeded in developing an understanding of the nature and depth of deposits in the area so that any future potential archaeological impact from the scheme can be adequately assessed and allowed for.

Andy Boucher, Archaeological Investigationa Ltd

Rotherwas Futures, Archaeology and Development

Herefordshire Archaeology staff have been involved in a considerable amount of work this year, helping to steer the proposed development programme within the 'Rotherwas Futures' redevelopment area in south Hereford.

This has involved among other things recording projects to update the evidence relating to buildings of the historic munitions base that was in operation through two World Wars. It has also involved the trial excavation of proposed development areas, to try and ascertain - and take account of - any below ground archaeology.

One of these areas, the site of the former magazines in the south part of the site, produced evidence of a large prehistoric enclosure, likely to be Neolithic- Bronze Age in date. Also found here was an enclosure likely to date to the Iron Age, and the very poorly preserved (but still exciting!) remnants of what is believed to have been a monumental structure, of likely Roman origin.

'A monumental structure, of likely Roman origin'

As ever with trial excavations, other areas turned out to have only limited archaeological potential, at least in terms of prehistory and the earlier historic periods. In general it seems to be the case that the extensive lower areas (which would have been more prone to flooding) have the least potential in that respect.

Of course this does not really apply to the twentieth century military remains, which can be found in many locations, irrespective of the environment.



Wartime pillbox - one of many remains © Herefordshire Council

Julian Cotton, Archaeological Advisor

Park and Ride, Archaeology and traffic

Herefordshire Council have for some time been considering the options available for developing park and ride schemes around the city. The principal zones that have been looked at are in Holmer, to the west of Hereford Racecourse, and just to the south of Hereford on the Ross Road.

In relation to the first of these zones, early archaeological assessment and evaluation has provided a rather 'mixed bag' of results. Ancient channels have been identified passing through the middle of the proposed development area and these are likely to preserve some evidence of prehistoric activity. However, other parts of the proposed development area appear (on current evidence at least) to be largely sterile, archaeologically.

In relation to the second of these zones, our readers may well be aware of the proximity of the recently constructed Rotherwas Access Road to the south, and the very major archaeological finds that were made in 2007-2008 during construction of this road.

Although the majority of these finds were made some distance to the east along the road corridor, it is still likely that the whole zone will be very sensitive. No field evaluation has been undertaken as yet, but aerial survey suggests a suite of archaeological remains in the vicinity.

Watch this space!

Julian Cotton, Archaeological Advisor

Archaeology and the 'LDF'

As readers may be aware, Herefordshire Council is currently coordinating the development of Herefordshire's Local Development Framework (LDF).

The LDF will determine the pattern of residential and commercial development in the county up to 2026, and will replace the current Unitary Development Plan (UDP) in 2011. The LDF must take account of national legislation and the development targets set for Herefordshire within the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (including provision of 18,500 new homes in the county by 2026), and must also involve public consultation at all stages of the process.

A key objective of the LDF is to ensure that new development achieves acceptable standards of environmental sustainability. For the historic environment, sustainability means not just minimising impacts on historic landscapes and features (ranging from buried archaeological remains to buildings and settlements), but is also about positively enhancing the quality of the county in these respects.

To help achieve this goal, the council's historic environment staff have been undertaking a range of 'evidence base' assessment work which will inform the LDF process. Work undertaken so far includes an assessment

of the built character of Hereford (Building Conservation team) and a complementary Central Hereford Historic Townscape Assessment (Herefordshire Archaeology, with funding from English Heritage).

In addition, Herefordshire Archaeology staff have undertaken an initial historic environment sensitivity mapping and analysis of the environs of Hereford and the market towns (the first component of Herefordshire Archaeology's Historic Environment Development Impact and Design Studies (HEDIDS) input to the LDF).

The historic environment evidence base work so far compiled inevitably reveals the challenge which future development will pose to achieving historic environment sustainability in Herefordshire. However, the initial HEDIDS sensitivity analysis conclusion is that, by emphasising the importance of good design linked to observed historic environment character, there is actually a positive creative opportunity to use Herefordshire's rich heritage as a tool for shaping innovative and successful new places in the county.

To keep in touch with the overall LDF process and the opportunities to get directly involved in this important local planning initiative, see Herefordshire Council's website:

<http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/housing/planning/24311.asp>

Ian Bapty, Senior Project Archaeologist

Excavations this autumn

Herefordshire Archaeology, in partnership with The Woodland Trust and with English Heritage and AONB funding, has been undertaking a small scale excavation on the hillfort at Little Doward. This was prompted by damage caused by a fallen tree and is focused upon two platforms in the 'lower' enclosure.

HISTORIC LANDSCAPE WALKS

Tuesday, November 10th at 10am - 1pm:
Welsh Newton

Wednesday, December 16th at 10am - 1pm:
Allensmore

The Annual Herefordshire Archaeology Symposium, will be held on October 17th at the Courtyard Theatre, Hereford.

Featured items this year are as follows:

Roman finds at Ross Prospect

Credenhill, Little Doward and Dinmore

Excavations at St Katherines, Ledbury

Prehistoric finds at Rotherwas 'Futures'

Works to the west of Kenchester

Archaeology in the ESG area

For further details of all these events please contact Moira Cassidy on 01432 260470 or mcassidy@herefordshire.gov.uk