

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

Herefordshire Council's Historic Environment Newsletter

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Participating in archaeology

This edition is all about participating in archaeology. Many of the activities of the archaeology service involve people, or alternatively, it is because people are interested in our historic environment that the service is involved in so many activities.

The range of ways that individuals can get involved in archaeology varies. It can be getting together as a community group to look at their local area, or as an individual joining a group on a historic landscape walk or by oneself visiting a site and reading the information provided.

This edition of Historic Environment Today provides some examples of the ways that we all get involved with archaeology.

Also, in this edition is the announcement of proposed changes in the way we deliver Historic Environment Today and we would be interested to hear your views on these changes.

Neil Rimmington, Guest Editor

We can do it together...

Getting together as a community is a great way to get involved with archaeology. With the recently started Bredenbury project and more being developed with other communities it is a very busy time for these types of project.

The Bredenbury project, which started in March this year, focuses on the land to the southeast of Bredenbury Court. This land formed part of the parkland of Bredenbury Court and contains the earthwork remains of a former settlement.

Through the project, the community will investigate the archaeology using survey and excavation. As well as local people taking part, two local schools are involved and the results will be made available online and in a booklet.

Chris Atkinson, Community Archaeologist



Surveying at Bredenbury © Herefordshire Council

Read all about it...

Many archaeological sites across Herefordshire are now in Environmental Stewardship. Working with the archaeology service of Herefordshire Council and landowners, Natural England have installed a number of interpretation panels at some key sites in the Higher Level Stewardship scheme.

The sites range from the well known medieval town and castle of Kilpeck to one of our more common monuments, a limekiln at Rowlestone Court Farm that can be enjoyed alongside some of their fine ice cream.

We hope you enjoy visiting the sites and reading the new panels.

Imogen Sandbrook, *Natural England*



New interpretation panel at a site near Bredwardine Church © Natural England

Historic Environment Today - Tomorrow

Historic Environment Today has endured in pretty much the same form – except with the addition of colour three years ago – since its first issue in the autumn of 1998 soon after the county archaeological service was created. From that time until now, it has been available through public libraries and has been posted out to a circulation list of some 350 ‘destinations’ (mostly to private addresses) throughout the county. Since 2007 it has been available electronically via our website as a PDF.

Times change, and we have just completed an internal review of the newsletter. Three principal conclusions have been reached. The first is that the feedback we continue to receive suggests to us that HET is still valued by its main target audience of interested local residents as a ‘news digest’ of discoveries and historic environment developments. Secondly, with a squeeze on core budgets and activities, we can no longer justify producing four issues a year. Thirdly, given rising print costs, we can no longer justify the cost of printing for circulation.

From Volume 13, Issue 1, therefore, we are proposing the following:

- To produce two issues each year (in the summer and in the winter), with the same editorial team as for recent issues, but on a longer rotation of guest editorship
- To make the primary means of availability via a downloadable file on the website
- Nonetheless, to undertake to send out a PDF version of each issue by email to whomsoever contacts us by email to ask us to do so
- To undertake, for a trial two-year period, to provide a colour copy printed from file to anyone who writes in to us to request such a copy of each of the two issues per year, to a nominated address (residents in Herefordshire and neighbouring counties)

If you want to write to comment upon these proposals, you are most welcome to do so by Friday 28th May 2010, please, via archaeologists@herefordshire.gov.uk, or to me at: kray@herefordshire.gov.uk. If you wish to be emailed a PDF version of each issue, or alternatively to receive a copy printed from file, please write to either of these email addresses or to Dr. K. Ray, HET Editor, Herefordshire Archaeology, PO Box 230, Blueschool House, Hereford, HR1 2ZB, by Friday 4th June 2010, please.

Keith Ray, *County Archaeologist*

Offa exposed

Volunteers with Herefordshire Archaeology and Herefordshire Nature Trust’s Community Commons Project came together on the 23rd September 2009 to bring one of Herefordshire’s major monuments back into view (see images over page).

One of the best preserved Herefordshire sections of Offa’s Dyke is present on Herrock Hill, but has been rendered invisible by a dense covering of bracken and gorse.

Working together for a day the group were able to make the impressive bank visible again and with the assistance of a local commoner it is hoped that this can be maintained in the future.



Offa's Dyke on Herrock Hill before and after clearance
© Herefordshire Council

A second day of volunteering is planned for June 16th this year. Come and join us to help make one of Herefordshire's major monuments stand out again.

Judy Hart, Community Commons Project and
Neil Rimmington, Countryside Adviser
(Archaeology)

A Walker's View

So: why do we go on Herefordshire Archaeology's Historic Landscape Walks? Why do we look forward to them? Why do we turn out in all weathers? Why do we enjoy them so much?

Maybe it's because we love walking and its easy to walk with a knowledgeable guide – the Historic Landscape Walk leaders are excellent, they know so much and they point out features that most of us would pass by in innocence. It is amazing to find out that a favourite place is actually a lost smallholding or that an often trod path is an ancient routeway and that you never knew this until one of the Herefordshire Archaeologists pointed it out.

Maybe it's because we want to know more about this quietly beautiful and varied county, more about places we are familiar with, places that are well known, places we've never heard of – the Historic Landscape Walks are planned throughout the county in all its moods from lowland to high hills, from country to town, from farmland to woodland to industrial sites. *It is so good to learn more about your own patch, to get a new perspective on a popular location and to (boldly!) go somewhere that you would probably never visit except for a Historic Landscape Walk.*

Maybe we're curious about the past, maybe we have a 'need to know' about those folk who went before, people who left clues in the landscape about their way of life, the way they worked the land, their dwelling places, their burial places and ritual sites – the Historic Landscape Walk leaders interpret the clues and explain them and so we get glimpses of the past. *It is such a good feeling to walk in a holloway in the steps of those earlier people, or to stand in a ruin and know it has been a home, or on a charcoal hearth and realise that it was once a busy place of work.*

'those ridges were made when we used to grow hops'

Maybe it's the company of the other walkers, those constantly changing participants of Historic Landscape Walks. There are some who come often, fascinated about all aspects of their county and there are local people particularly interested in their own place and also visitors to



Lord's Wood and New Weir Landscape Walk delivered in partnership with the Overlooking the Wye Project
© Herefordshire Council

the county intrigued by the unique flavour of this little known borderland – the Historic Landscape Walks attract a wide range of walkers who each bring their own experiences to the walk. *Local people can often give explanations such as ‘those ridges were made when we used to grow hops’ and ‘my great granny lived in that cottage’, regulars become friends and once it was amazing to find that a visiting Londoner encountered his former neighbour who now lives in Hereford; what a coincidence!*

But especially it might be because slowly we are being gently schooled in the clues left on the landscape by our ancestors: we are learning to recognise them for ourselves. So that whenever we are out and about, on our own or with friends and family, we are more in touch with where we are and with those who were there before we came. We are becoming familiar with the traces of our ancestors and this makes any walk we do more satisfying and enjoyable.

And all this is because the County Archaeologist and his team organise the annual series of Historic Landscape Walks and more than a few extra ones for special projects. We must thank them for it.

Maggie Laycock, One of our regulars

The next **Herefordshire Archaeology Historic Landscape Walks** are on:

- **Wednesday 14th May, 10am - 1pm:** St Weonards
- **Wednesday 16th June, 6pm - 8.30pm:** Titley

Forthcoming opportunities:

In addition to our regular monthly historic landscape walks we are planning some partnership projects

Tuesday 4th May for 4 weeks
New Weir Ironworks Excavation

Wednesday June 16th, 10am
Herrock Hill: Vegetation clearance on Offa's Dyke

For further details of the landscape walks and the additional events please contact Moira Cassidy on 01432 260470 or:

mcassidy@herefordshire.gov.uk

National Mills Weekend, 8th and 9th May

Once again a number of Herefordshire Mills will be open to the public on the weekend of the 8th and 9th May. For details of mills open in Herefordshire and surrounding counties visit the news section of the archaeology service's Herefordshire Through Time website at <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/htt>.



Arrow Mill, Kingsland: One of the mills that will be open to the public on National Mills Weekend © Alan Stoyel