



**Herefordshire
Council**

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT TODAY

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Eaton Camp Community Project



© Neil Rimmington, Herefordshire Archaeology

Early in January 2011 the Eaton Camp Historical Society successfully won a bid through the Heritage Lottery Fund to carry out investigations of the suspected Iron Age hillfort at Ruckhall, Eaton Bishop. The core aim of the project is to improve access to the hillfort as well as to clear scrub and improve views from the hillfort interior to the surrounding countryside. As part of these works Herefordshire Archaeology has been employed to teach and guide the Historical Society, local volunteers and pupils through a series of archaeological investigations across the interior of the scheduled hillfort under ownership of the National Trust and within the gardens of consenting homeowners where earthworks relating to the western edge of the defended site survive.

The initial phase of archaeological works began in February and commenced with a general walkover survey, followed by a detailed survey of the visual earthworks. It became apparent that the hillfort has altered considerably over time, particularly along the southern edge where past mineral extraction followed by terracing for the purpose of planting an orchard has seen the removal of

a large area of the hillfort which potentially included a defensive bank. Within the interior of the Iron Age site earthworks relating to an interned entrance and track were identified close to the southwest corner as well as subtle house platforms.

The next stage of the investigation is to carry out small scale test excavation to identify datable evidence for when the site was constructed and subsequently abandoned. What happened to the Eaton Camp following the Roman invasion? The end result of the project will be the production of a booklet detailing the history of the area and advertising a circular walk that will lead visitors around the site.

Christopher Atkinson, Community Archaeologist

A Prehistoric Knapp

As part of the project '*Beneath Hay Bluff*'; a project that involved the collaboration of Manchester University and Herefordshire Archaeology. A hilltop site (*known as The Knapp*) occupying a promontory overlooking the village of Bredwardine was investigated with the aim of improving our knowledge of early settlement within south-west Herefordshire during the Neolithic and Bronze Age.

The site was first identified during the 1970's during a process of ploughing to improve pasture. As a result of ploughing activity a large assemblage of flint tools, which included blades, scrapers and arrowheads were uncovered. Associated with these were two fragments of stone axe head.

The assemblage was clearly of Neolithic date and hence indicated '*The Knapp*' as a site of settlement or religious activity. Over the

course of three weeks the hilltop was investigated through the excavation of five trenches. The dig involved not only students of Manchester University and Hereford Sixth Form College but also members of the local community and volunteers, some of whom had travelled from as far away as Bromyard and Monmouth.



© Chris Atkinson, Herefordshire Archaeology

The excavations uncovered further flint tool assemblages as well as fragments of Neolithic pottery, awaiting specialist reporting. Unfortunately, with the exception of the base of two pits, no further features of Neolithic date were identified; as such the site type cannot be determined.

The current understanding is that the site was largely removed and truncated in order to plant a small wood upon the hilltop to act as a landscape park feature associated with Moccas Estate during the 18th century.

The report discussing the results of 'The Knapp' excavation is currently being produced by Herefordshire Archaeology and Manchester University.

Christopher Atkinson, Community Archaeologist

Afganistan and Offa's Dyke?



© 12th Mechanized Brigade

Over the course of three days, 50 army officers from the 12th Mechanized Brigade completed an imaginative exercise along Offa's Dyke, with support provided by two archaeologists and two historians.

Dubbed "Exercise Offa's Ace," the exercise used the turbulent history of the Welsh borders to give a fresh perspective on some of the complex issues and challenges the Brigade could face in their future deployment to Afghanistan.

"Although we now think of the Welsh border area as an idyllic and tranquil rural landscape, the many surviving ancient fortifications such as prehistoric hillforts, medieval castles, and the massive 1200 year old bank and ditch of Offa's Dyke speak of a complicated and troubled past which has much relevance to the modern situation in Afghanistan," said Ian Bapty, Herefordshire Council's senior project archaeologist.

Under the guidance of Ian, Chris Atkinson (Herefordshire Council's community archaeologist), the Zurich University historian Max Lieberman and the Cambridge University historian Andrew Spencer, the officers walked some of the best preserved sections of Offa's Dyke, and explored how community relationships, ideas of national identity and patterns of conflict had played out at different periods in the past

"This has been a really interesting and instructive exercise," said Major Simon Childs, of the 12th Mechanized Brigade, "the historical example of the Welsh borders cannot, of course, be simplistically transferred to Afghanistan, but the themes we have examined here with the archaeologists and historians certainly will help to focus our work to promote more stable patterns of local political and community life there."

Ian Bapty added: "We were delighted to be approached by the army to assist with Offa's Ace. It has been extremely rewarding to spend time with such dedicated professionals and thoroughly nice people, and to support, at least in some degree, the incredible and difficult work that they do. The officers' military expertise has also suggested significant new ideas about how a structure like Offa's Dyke might once have operated, and that insight is really exciting for me as an archaeologist".

Brigadier Justin Maciejewski DSO MBE Commander 12th Mechanized Brigade, said: "Offa's Ace has been an innovative way to build new understanding of the issues we face in Afghanistan, and it has been very positive for us to work with the specialists from Herefordshire Council and Cambridge University to help achieve that. It has also been a very good experience for my officers to visit this beautiful area and to receive such a warm welcome from local people."

Ian Bapty, Senior Project Archaeologist

Dinedor's Origins, a plan for the future

Over the last few months the Dinedor Heritage Group, under the leadership of Barbara Ferris have been working with Herefordshire Archaeology to come up with a plan to investigate the medieval origins of Dinedor village and the surrounding parish.

Their interest was sparked following the discovery of prehistoric activity within the region during the construction of the Rotherwas Relief Road as well as works across Rotherwas Industrial Estate and the site of the old military camp of Bradbury Lines.

The aims of the project will be to firstly collate all of the documentary evidence for the parishes of Dinedor and Lower Bullingham in order to produce a popular publication that will inform the reader of the rich and varied history of the region. As well as to document the history, it is planned that a series of archaeological investigations will take place through the village of Dinedor that will involve survey and excavation in order to build on a picture of how Dinedor has developed through time. Further investigations will centre on the surrounding landscape and evidence for past field systems and areas of possible prehistoric settlement.

The project will also look to improve the current status of Dinedor Camp, a hillfort popular with walkers and groups. The aim is not only to improve on the information made available at the site and thus heighten public awareness, but also to improve the views available across the surrounding countryside through the clearance of scrub that currently

blocks any such view and in places prohibits access to the Iron Age monument.

It is hoped that the project will receive support from both English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund so that it can begin during the autumn of this year.

Christopher Atkinson, Community Archaeologist

And now for something completely different!

Well almost ... we're back to the Neolithic except this time it is the Neolithic in Turkey.

Since the identification of Çatalhöyük, Konya, a Tell site of considerable Neolithic settlement discovered by James Mellaart in 1958; the site has been under the gaze of international archaeologists ever since. Current investigations at the site are led by Professor Ian Hodder of Stanford University and University College London; which have been ongoing since 1993.

Over the course of 2009 and 2010, Herefordshire Archaeology's Community Archaeologist, Chris Atkinson spent a total of nine weeks working as a supervisor leading investigations within particular locations and training students from across, Germany, America, Britain and Turkey in all matters of archaeological recording and excavation techniques.



© Chris Atkinson, Herefordshire Archaeology

The site dates from approximately 7500 BC and 5700 BC and is represented by tightly packed buildings of similar layout and shape. The tightly packed nature of the structures means that the buildings had no windows and were accessed from the roof by ladders.

Some of the structures excavated over 2009 and 2010 indicated that they had once stood at least two storeys high, in accordance to the volume of collapse material far exceeding that expected for a single storey structure.

Preservation across the site is extraordinary, with wall plaster, paintings, crawl-holes linking rooms, benches and platforms as well as ovens surviving in good condition. The mud-brick walls still stand well over 3m high in places, and within numerous structures wall and bench mounts consisting of bull horns suggest their religious/social importance within Neolithic society.

Discoveries made across Çatalhöyük include crouched burials beneath the platforms within each house and the charred remains of wheat and barley, preserved following the collapse of structures through fire. Other finds include clay balls, clay and stone figurines of both male and female characters (the female figurines suggested to represent a fertility goddess) as well as figurines of animals. The presence of both flint and obsidian tools also indicate trade to a wider community.

Investigations at Çatalhöyük are set to continue into the future with the site having been put forward as a possible world heritage site due to its importance in relation to early settlement, farming, religion, trade and social structure.

For more information visit:
<http://www.catalhoyuk.com/history.html>

Christopher Atkinson, Community Archaeologist

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

- **Wednesday 14th September, 10am – 1pm:** Weobley : 150th guided walk with celebrations after.
- **Wednesday 12th October, 10am – 1pm:** Birley/Ivington Green.
- **Tuesday 15th November 10am – 1pm:** Mortimer Forest
- **Wednesday 14th December 10.am – 1pm:** Hereford City
- **Saturday 3rd December** – Herefordshire Archaeology's 14th Annual Symposium (held at the Hereford Sixth Form College). For tickets please contact Moira Cassidy on 01432 260470 or mcassidy@herefordshire.gov.uk