

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 6 November 1967

**WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

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**WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION
NEWS SHEET**

No. 6 November 1967

Edited by: Ron Shoesmith

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Thursday 14th December 1967 at 7.30 pm

Deserted Medieval Villages in Herefordshire

At 85 Beaufort Ave, Redhill, Hereford (NGR 501 377)

Talk and discussion on DMV's led by Rosamund Hickling.

Saturday 13th January 1968 at 1.30 pm

Working Afternoon

In the Woolhope Club Room in the City Library. We have now been able to borrow Mr Stanford's photostats of maps and details of Scheduled Monuments in the county. The details need copying onto the Group's maps and the comments noting. Please come and help.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

This News Letter is an easy one to write. Information and notes have been received in sufficient quantity to make an interesting and balanced news letter.

***** NB - VISITS TO MONUMENTS - NB *****

Because of the Foot and Mouth epidemic, the date for reports on the state of monuments given in the last News Letter should be ignored. Area correspondents are strongly advised not to visit monuments in country areas for the time being. A new date will be announced as soon as possible.

The CBA Group 2 (Wales) meeting at Shrewsbury on 21st October was attended by Nick Lancaster, Rodger Pye and myself. We had a useful and informative afternoon and helped (I hope) to put Hereford on the archaeological map by displaying finds and sections from the recent Hereford excavations and also photographs of the Roman Relief from Staunton-on-Arrow described in this News Letter.

We still need suggestions for the 1968 programme. If you have any ideas, please let Mary Thomas know.

REPORTS OF MEETINGS

28th October: Lower Lyde Area

Ten members braved a bitter wind to look at the Wergins Stone and a mound at Lower Lyde thought to be a long barrow.

The Wergins (or Worgins) Stone NGR 5295 4395

This is situated on the lower edge of a field by the River Lugg. It is an unscheduled monument which has never been satisfactorily explained. A roughly-worked upright stone, 4'10" high, is set by mortice and tenon in a nearly round base which somewhat resembles a

millstone. There is also a tooled-out cavity, 4" deep and sloping inwards, in the base stone. The Wergins Stone, said to have been moved 12 score paces in about 1652, has been explained as:-

- a. A place where rituals took place and later money payments were made.
- b. A floodwater mark.
- c. A boundary stone.
- d. A pagan mark point on trackways, foreshadowing Christian crosses.

Members made the following observations which have not previously been recorded:-

1. The socket in the base stone is almost square.
2. The top may have been broken off. It could in that case have been a primitive Celtic cross.
3. The inset stone and the base both come to a point towards the southwest.
4. The seventeenth century movement may have been from the boundary point of three parishes on the other side of the field.
5. The whole stone now leans towards the hedge and this may have caused the crack in the base.
6. The inset stone is packed with earth and does not fit tightly into the base. The line of the mortice is well above the top of the base stone.
7. The name of the stone is Saxon and, if this is so, the stone may have marked an assembly point within Grimsworth Hundred.

Members felt that the stone should become a Scheduled Monument.

Lower Lyde Mound NGR 513 439

The mound is in a triangular-shaped orchard, enclosed by the road to Munstone on the east and by lanes on the other two sides. It is on sloping ground, about fifteen feet high, and seems to have been taken largely from the hillside on the west side of the orchard. There are a number of trees growing on the sides of the mound. Not enough time was available for a detailed survey but the plan opposite was made.

Observations of the group are summarised as follows:-

Points against the mound being a long barrow:-

1. Site seems unlikely, low-lying hollow 250ft above sea level.
2. Sides very steep and high, and seem too sharp.
3. No evidence of stonework.
4. Suggestions of a continuation at the eastern end as a bank.
5. There has been excavation for gravel about 250 yards away.

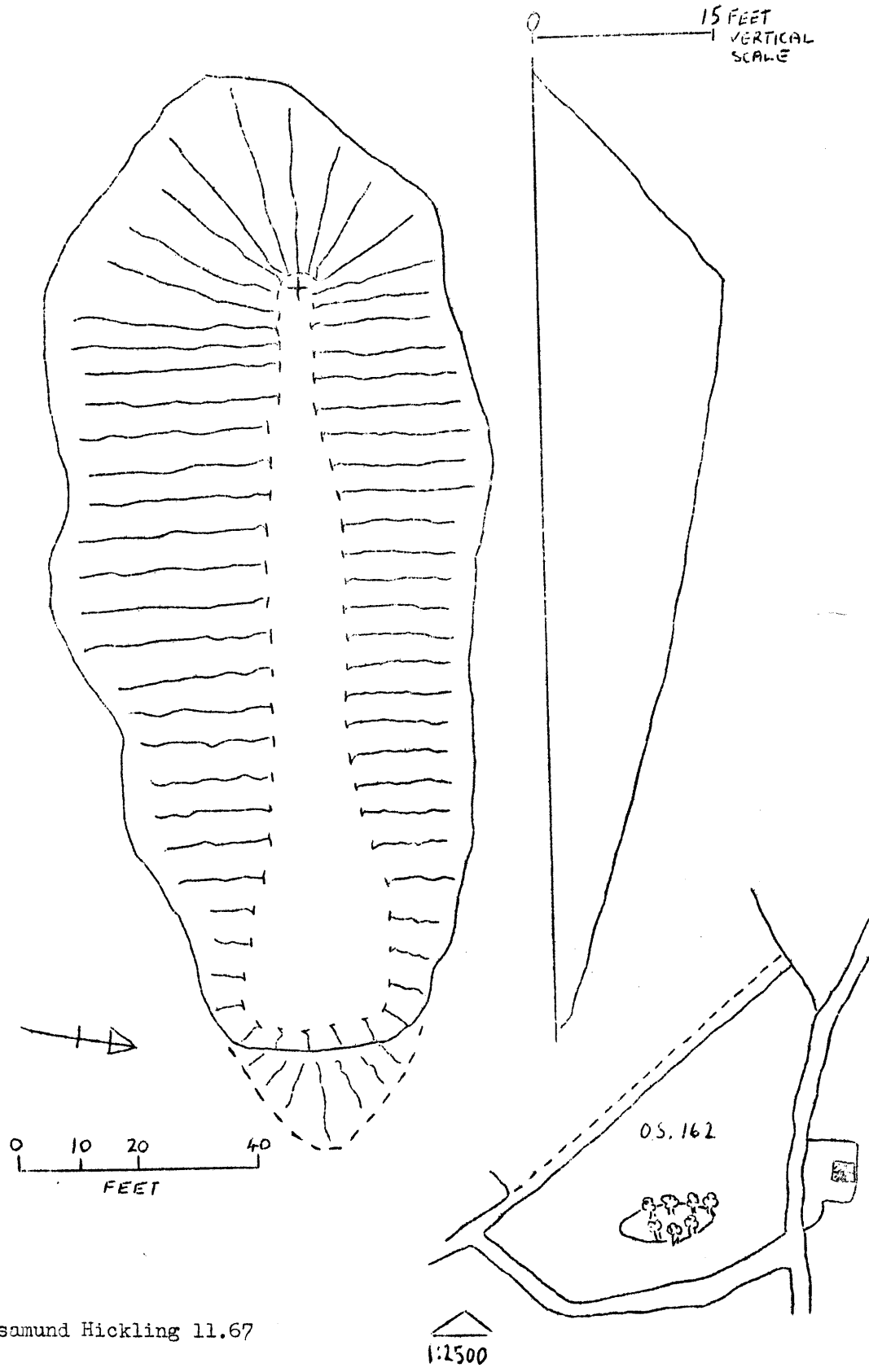
Points for:-

1. Mound does not look like a glacial feature.
2. Shape is similar to a long barrow.
3. It is on an east-west orientation like most long barrows, though the western end is the higher.

Members decided that it was impossible to reach a firm conclusion but that the site merited the opinion of an expert. It could then be decided whether excavation would be worthwhile in the future.

Pam Slocombe

MOUND AT LYDE, GR SO 513 439



The following notes are from Daniel's 'Prehistoric Chamber Tombs'

Severn Cotswold Type:-

"The average length of these barrows is 150ft and the average maximum breadth 65ft. Maximum heights recorded are ... up to 20ft. The broad "business end" of the Cotswold-Severn barrows is almost always towards some point of the compass between NNE and SSE and in a great number of cases it points dead east. ... None of the Cotswold-Severn barrows points to the west."

RS

ARICONIUM

I have had a couple of notes about this site from Alan Morris. It has been excavated recently by members of the Gloucester Archaeological Group, apparently as an emergency before the National Ploughing Competition, as in places the foundations of some walls have been recorded as about 7 inches only below the surface. The group opened several trial trenches. In one there appear to be two cobbled road levels, in another several iron smelting furnaces associated with a long T-shaped wall, partly robbed of dressed stone and refilled with coarse stone.

NEXT NEWS SHEET

This is due in mid-January, so please let me have any items for inclusion by 13th January 1968. This issue has managed to fill six sides, it would be pleasant to keep this record up.

REPORTS OF EXCAVATIONS

Dorstone Hill SO 326 423

Exploratory excavation continued at the above site, under the direction of C H Houlder and W R Pye.

Below the plough soil, a two-inch thick layer containing flint was found, which included two leaf-shaped arrowheads and a single piece of pottery of the Western Neolithic type, sealing a pit.

The pit, of the storage type, was approximately 3ft 6in wide and 3ft 2in deep from the surface (approximately 2ft 6in deep from its contemporary surface), and its excavated length was approximately 6ft. Indications, however, would suggest that its actual length would be about 10ft. It contained four pieces of Western Neolithic type pottery, a scraper, various unworked and one polished flint fragment, and a certain amount of charcoal.

According to a distribution map in the Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society for 1964, this would have been the only pit in association with Western Neolithic Pottery north of the Jurassic Ridge. Even now, it must be one of the very few.

W R Pye

Surface Finds

Lower Palaeolithic

Probably the most interesting surface find was that of an Acheullian Hand-Axe found by Mr Stevens of Sarnesfield, whilst digging a hole for a gatepost.

Upper Palaeolithic

On his fields, Mr Stevens also found a slender blade, with slight battering, of a type used during the Upper Palaeolithic period.

Mesolithic

Finds of the period were made from:-

Snodhill: a non-geometric point.

Vowchurch Common: a blade.

Neolithic

Finds of this date were from: Staunton-on-Arrow, Lyonshall, Hope-under-Dinmore and Letton where a large fragment of a polished stone axe accompanied the discovery of a large number of flint flakes and a leaf-shaped arrowhead.

Bronze Age

A barbed-and-tanged arrowhead of this date was found at Snodhill.

Miscellaneous Surface Finds

Under this category finds came from the parishes of:-

| | |
|-------------------|--------------|
| Welsh Newton | Buckholt |
| Whitchurch | Snodhill |
| Vowchurch | Pembridge |
| Staunton-on-Arrow | Titley |
| Kington | Ewyas Harold |
| Byton | Combe |
| Eardisland | |

W R Pye

ARCHENFIELD ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

Mr Kay reported at the last meeting that this group has now completely ceased activities. It is rather sad to see another "digging" group in the county ceasing operations, especially when a fair amount of its work has been reported in the Woolhope Transactions.

The next News Sheet will include a list of paid-up members. A slip is included with this issue if you are in arrears. Please let the Treasurer have this as soon as possible so as to save time and paperwork.

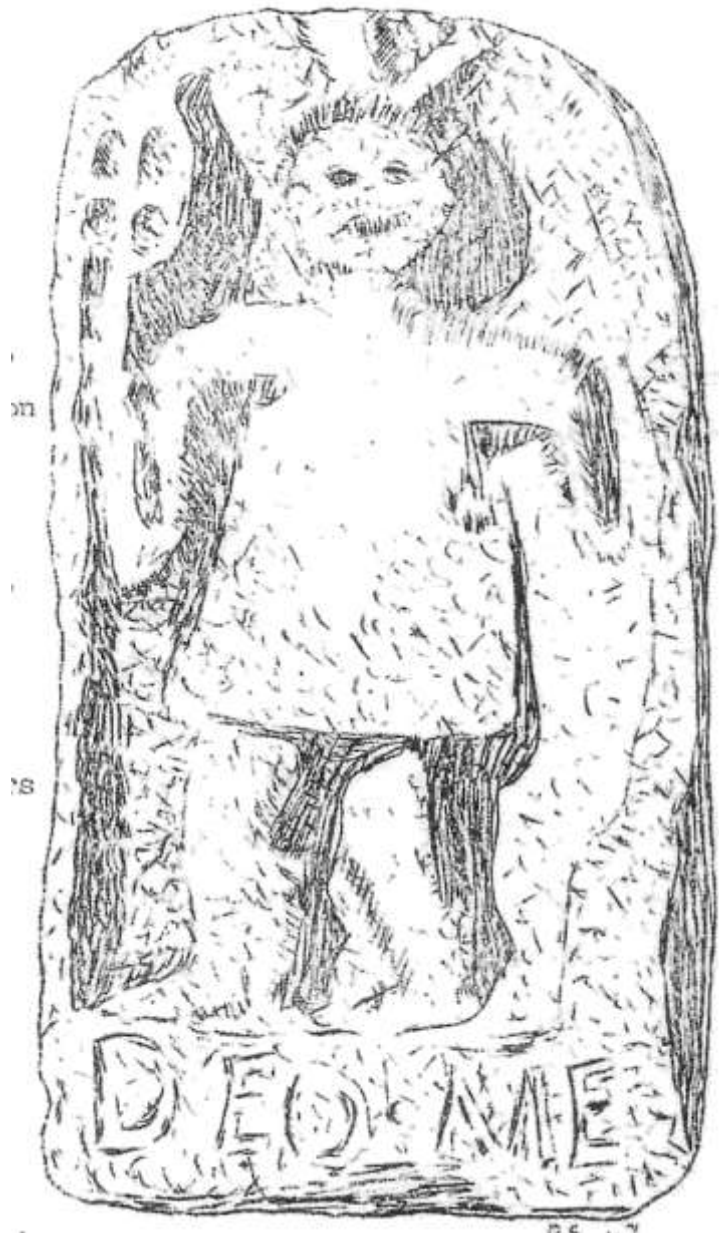
RECENT FINDS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Roman Relief from Staunton-on-Arrow

This relief, shown opposite, almost certainly came from the local churchyard, and was found by Major Ross of Staunton House, Staunton-on-Arrow.

It has now been examined by the British Museum and a letter from the Asst Keeper, K S Painter, states:-

"The relief seems very interesting. It is a representation of a native version of Mercury. It appears to be connected, in its

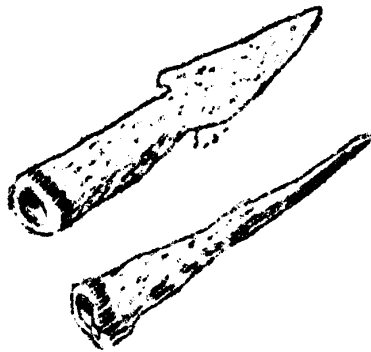


Celtic aspect, with worship of the Cernunnos type of horned god in the general area of the Severn basin, a parallel cult being the local version of the worship of Mars. Mr Ellis of the Natural History Museum has examined the stone from a geological point of view, and his conclusion is that it almost certainly came from the eastern part of Gloucestershire or South Worcestershire."

The stone is still in the possession of Major Ross, but it is to be hoped that a stone of this importance will eventually find a home in Hereford Museum.

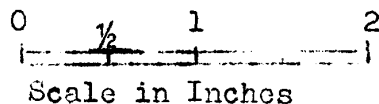
Arrow-head from Wigmore Castle

Alan Morris writes, "Southwest from the entrance to the castle and above the path leading to the church, was a field of kale (in March) which had been ploughed (in June). Following the line of the furrow I discovered a barbed iron arrow-head."



The arrow-head is 2 inches long with a head $\frac{7}{8}$ inch long. The socket, probably beaten out, gradually narrows and is $\frac{7}{8}$ inch deep.

The type is relatively simple and presumably long-lived during the early Norman period.



PRELIMINARY REPORT ON HEREFORD CITY EXCAVATIONS 1967 HEREFORDSHIRE – HEREFORD (SO 507398)

Preliminary excavations for Hereford Excavations Committee between January and June 1967 on part of the Western Defences of Hereford, levelled to within five feet of natural in the nineteenth century, indicated that the earthworks, which stand to a height of 16ft further to the south, were pre-wall in origin.

The complexity of the structure indicated the need for a complete section of these defences and this was cut in October 1967 by R Shoesmith and F Noble for Hereford Excavations Committee and MPBW as a five foot wide, 60ft long trench adjacent to the remains of a bastion tower.

Finds were sparse from the earlier periods, but features indicating a possible timber palisade were found. These were partially obliterated by a later, but little used, road surface and also by a rampart made with a gravel core covered by a thick layer of clean soil. Further additions to this rampart contained a hard pottery with some diamond rouletting, previously found and dated at Chester to 970 AD. Some walling may have been constructed about this period on the evidence of plaster and stone flecks in the rampart make-up.

After a period of disuse, the rampart was again strengthened with a layer of clean natural gravel and covered with a mixture of dirty gravel and soil. Two pits were cut into this later deposit, both containing thirteenth century pottery.

It appears that the rampart was used as a backing for the city wall and left to provide a rampart walk, as shown to the south of the area excavated.

A machine section cut in front of the wall line confirmed the ditch edge some two feet in front of the bastion. This had a thick, dirty gravel slip on the side.

Further excavations are proposed to discover more details of the defensive structures and the relationship of the late Saxon pottery to the reconstruction in 1055 described in contemporary chronicles.