

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 8 April 1968

**WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

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**HEREFORDSHIRE NEWS SHEET
WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

No. 8 April 1968

Edited by: Ron Shoesmith

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Saturday 20th April 1968 at 10.30 am

Hereford City Excavations, Easter 1968

Frank Noble has agreed to show members of the group round the Easter Excavations and explain their significance. Please note, this is a MORNING meeting. Assembly point is now the Victoria Street car park.

Sunday 19th May 1968 at 11.00 am

Deserted Medieval Villages – Full Day

Rosamund Hickling will lead a walk in the Preston Wynne area, including Felton, Livers Ocle and Ocle Pychard. Meet at Preston Wynne Church at 11.00 am (559467). Bring packed lunches.

Tuesday 25th June 1968 at 7.00 pm

Annual General Meeting of the Research Group

Venue and details will be sent out later, but please keep this evening free.

OTHER PROGRAMMES

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| 6 th April | - | Woolhope Club Spring Annual Meeting |
| 2 nd May | - | Woolhope Club ½ day visit to Mountain Centre, Brecon |
| 18 th May | - | Woolhope Club ½ day at Hergest |

Fri 31st May to Sat 29th June inclusive, Hereford Excavations, details from Air Cdre L P Moore, 12 Ferndale Road, Hereford.

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| 15 th June | - | Woolhope Club visit to Forest of Dean |
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NEXT NEWSLETTER

I hope to send the next newsletter out after the AGM in June, and include an up-to-date report on the June excavations in Hereford.

Please let me have copy before or at the AGM.

RS

DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGES

A small group met to discuss Deserted Medieval Villages in Herefordshire in December last, and a summary of the introductory information prepared by Rosamund Hickling is given below. Considerable interest was shown in a one-inch map of the county on which sites for which there is documentary evidence of a village in Medieval times were marked by coloured pins.

It was agreed that the Group could do so useful research on this subject by compiling information gleaned from visits to sites and reports on the evidence in the field. A plan recording sites is being prepared by Mr Calderbank and a list of sites and a questionnaire is being produced. If you are interested in helping with the fieldwork on this project please fill in the attached form, and details will be sent as soon as possible.

Introductory Information

Miss R Hickling

Hereford has eleven sites recognized as deserted medieval villages by the Deserted Medieval Village Research Group (DMVRG), of which one has had some excavation, Hampton Wafer (Interim Report by S C Stanford, Woolhope Transactions XXXV, Part 3, Page 337-44).

Apart from some work on the Lay Subsidy Rolls for 1334, no systematic investigation of these sites in Herefordshire seems to have been carried out.

DMV's are described by Professor Beresford as "those where is clear evidence of their existence as communities in the Middle Ages, but where we now have no more than, at most, a manor house, and a farm, and a church."

The DMVRG has classified settlements so as to show evidence of shrinkage, i.e.

6 dwellings or less – very shrunk.

Now more than 6 dwellings – shrunk.

Large villages with gaps or earthworks – slightly shrunk.

It is proposed that we consider the completely deserted and very shrunk settlements for which documentary evidence seems to indicate some 200 in the county.

Documentary evidence is most easily drawn from three sources, the Nomina Villarum of 1316, the Lay Subsidy Rolls of 1334 and the Poll Tax Receipts of 1377. (Miss Hickling has indicated that she is examining these sources, Ed.)

Two different theories of settlement have been postulated for Herefordshire, the first being the compact medieval village with houses in close proximity along the roads, and operating an open field system of agriculture. This is prevalent in the West Midlands, a good example in the county being Kilpeck. The second type is that represented by an original settlement consisting of a "villein" farm as represented in the Domesday Book by one villein and one ploughland. It has been suggested that this is likely to be applicable throughout the Highland Zone of Britain, and could be indicated in the county by the present scattered pattern of settlement. Both the Nomina Villarum and the Lay Subsidy Rolls seem to support the more compact type of settlement, which should have left some evidence on the ground.

Indications of settlements can often be gained from the following:-

1. Isolated churches.
2. Hollow-ways.
3. Present use of land. Indications from the plough.
4. Moated sites. There may be further settlements.
5. Ridge and furrow in fields. Former extent of open-field arable.
6. Fishponds may well have supplied a local settlement.
7. Dovecots, windmills and watermills may well give further indications of a settlement. The latter may often have its own earthworks.

KENTCHURCH MEETING Saturday 23rd March

A few members arrived at Kentchurch to investigate sites at Corras on a very wet and windy day.

1. Mound 418249

An interesting mound in the garden of Twyn-y-Corras inspired much discussion. It rises steeply to a height of about twelve feet and has a flat top measuring some twelve feet across. The area has been somewhat disturbed by gardening operations and two large trees stand one on the summit and one on the north slope.

A war-time Home Guard dug-out has also interfered with the profile.

It is, however, not a natural feature – suggestions that it might have been a collapsed lime kiln or the site of a windmill were at last discarded and members thought that a motte was a more reasonable idea. There is no evidence of a bailey, but the site is in a good defensive position.

2. Earthworks 416247

This site lies a few hundred yards south west of Twyn-y-Corras on a high ridge in a loop of the River Monnow. The feature is roughly square with what appears to be a ditch on the east side (this tapers out as it rounds the north east corner). The “enclosed” area is very much disturbed and huge blocks of sandstone are exposed in places. There is definite evidence of quarrying and members decided that even the “ditch” and terraced track leading to the site could well have been due to these operations.

Local tradition holds that this is the original site of Grosmont Castle, which stands about a mile westwards on the opposite side of the river. We found no evidence for taking this very seriously.

3. As we returned to the road, we crossed an orchard, immediately opposite the entrance to Great Corras Farm. Many interesting ridges and “bumps” led us to think that this could be a small DMV. A quantity of stone lies on the ground surface and the presence of a pond and what could have been a well made us decide that the area certainly needed more detailed investigation.

4. We later spoke to Mr Watkins of Great Corras and he invited us to look at his sixteenth century barn. This proved to be a welcome shelter from the rain, and a very enjoyable half hour was spent admiring the structure of this enormous building. All members agreed enthusiastically that a barn of such age and proportions should be preserved at all costs.

It had been hoped to visit the earthworks on Garway Hill, but as it was in cloud and the weather so bad, it was decided to reserve this for some later meeting.

Mary Thomas

INSPECTION OF SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

This was curtailed because of the Foot and Mouth epidemic, but now seems the time to continue.

I would be grateful if Area Correspondents could let me have completed forms before the AGM in June so that a report can be given to the meeting.

ARICONIUM

The following notes are abstracted from the recent West Midlands Annual Archaeological News Sheet for the interest of members.

“Field work has produced, for reference, a map of fields, north, south and west of Ariconium, indicating the limitations of industrial activity and positions of ploughed-out building materials.

SO 647238

Trial trenches were dug on the slopes immediately below the 400ft contour line. Here Roman accumulation levels were found to be considerably disturbed by cultivation, and only 1st Century deposits remain.

Native A/B ware was found in quantity, and three main forms were distinguished:-

A plain or burnished cooking pot with an everted rim, a globular pot with a flaring rim and high shoulders usually decorated with oblique lines between two encircling lines, and a wide mouth bowl with a heavy rim.

These finds were associated with a denarius of Mark Antony and two early Roman brooches.

SO 645241

A rescue dig was undertaken to record the possible remains of a mosaic floor, where quantities of tesserae had been observed in the plough soil. However, the main building was not found, and time did not permit further investigation.

Excavations revealed a robber trench of an external wall, forming a T-junction with the footings belonging to a cross wall. Associated finds were a follis of Diocletian and sherds of orange ware of West Midland type.

On the old turn line, partly damaged by the erection of the cross wall, were the remains of five bowl furnaces. A 1st Century pennanular brooch and a sherd of native fabric were found on this level.

Garrod & Moss

HEREFORD – KINGS HEAD SITE SO 508399

Demolition of the old Kings Head was rapidly followed by the clearance and enlargement of the cellars to include the whole of the site, to a general depth of about ten feet from the modern surface. At this depth, natural gravel was found over the whole area, except for one or two points where cesspits or later walls continued deeper.

This extension of the original cellars left several sections which had suffered little recent disturbance. In no case was it possible to obtain plan features, and only in one or two cases was it possible to cut back the section further before the modern walling was inserted, or a collapse occurred. Finds were thus very few and their position was not always certain.

The lowest layer on the site appears to be a section across a road with three layers of metalling, some 8 or more feet across. This, and the whole south section, was covered with a charcoal layer which covers and partly fills several presumed post holes. This appears to be the result of an extensive conflagration, although the charcoal layer does not continue to the north.

Little disturbance occurred in this layer before it was covered with a layer of yellow clay, mostly quite clean and up to two feet thick. This appears to be of the same period as, or overlying, a thick layer of redeposited natural gravel which showed on the north and west sections. This could well be the remains of the rampart of the postulated defences on this line. The rear part of this rampart, on the south section, is heavily cut into by pits, one of which contained at the bottom a sherd of Saxo-Norman Chester Ware. Above this, many metallated layers indicate the previous surfaces of West St.

It seems possible that the burning can be associated with that of 1055 and the rampart would then be the one constructed by Godwin in 1056. It appears similar to the first rampart found in Victoria Street (Newsletter No. 6). It seems that both in Victoria Street and the Kings Head site there is evidence for the use of Chester Ware after the primary rampart was built.