

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 9 July 1968

WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION

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

No. 9 July 1968

Edited by: Ron Shoesmith

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Saturday 27th July 1968 at 11.15 am

Hereford City Excavations

Margaret Gray will show members around the present site in Wall Street, on which excavations are progressing at the moment.

Tuesday 30th July 1968 at 8.00 pm

Informal Pottery Evening – Staunton-on-Wye Youth Hostel

Bob Thomson of Coventry will lead an evening considering Midlands pottery groups of the Medieval period. Various local wares from the Hereford Museum collection will be on display.

Sunday 29th September 1968 at 12.00 noon

Pottery Kilns in North Herefordshire – Meet at Mortimer's Cross Inn

Visits will be arranged to various late Medieval kiln sites in the north of the county.

OTHER PROGRAMMES

Thursday 15th August - Woolhope Club ½ day at Grosmont

Saturday 7th September - Woolhope Club at Coalbrookdale

August 12th to September 7th - Midsummer Camp Excavations. Visitors are welcomed.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Copy should be sent to me before 24th September.

RS

DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGES

Fine weather helped a group of members and guests who spent a full day examining deserted Medieval village sites in the Preston Wynne area on 19th May.

At Preston Wynne, in the fields west and south of the church, there are numerous mounds, of which some are rectangular, indicating the presence of house platforms. Local tradition has it that stone for the church (1727) was obtained from a deep hollow in the middle of the field – possibly the undercroft of an older building on the site as the underlying strata is of Dittonian Marls which could not produce building stone. The name of the adjacent farm, Lower Town, suggests this is the site of Preston Inferior, recorded in the Poll Tax returns with Preston Superior as having 75 men in 1377.

At Felton Church there were no signs of earthworks, while at Lower Hope the buildings of the farm house and gardens could well obscure any traces. It is possible that Felton Church (1853-4) was built to serve the two settlements of Hope and Felton recorded

in 1377 with 57 men. In this case, the village of Felton may well be near the moated site at Hinton Farm which has yet to be investigated.

Ullingswick had no obvious signs of earthworks, but the fields south of the church were under hay and could not be examined closely. No signs of earthworks showed at Little Cowarne either.

Moreton Jeffreys was more profitable, there being clear indications of a hollow-way and house platforms in the orchard east of Court Farm which extended north of the road also. Further earthworks are also visible in the field adjacent to the church. A green-glazed handle was found in upcast by the side of the road.

The last site visited was Ocle Pychard which has an interesting deep circular ditch around the church and graveyard, partly filled with water. Ocle Pychard had 107 men in 1377. The present village is scattered along the road from the church north eastwards and there are signs of earthworks in the fields between the existing houses, suggesting that it was previously more densely developed than at present.

Rosamund Hickling

Deserted village sites should shortly be more extensively studied in the county due to a course starting in the autumn in Hereford to study these programmes. Details are given in the programme attached to this newsletter.

Editor

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This was held in the Woolhope Club Room on 25th June. The following officers were elected for the 1968/9 year:-

<u>Chairman:</u>	Miss R E Hickling
<u>Secretary:</u>	Mr R Shoosmith
<u>Deputy Secretary:</u>	Mr A Greenhill
<u>Meetings Secretary:</u>	Miss M Thomas
<u>Treasurer:</u>	Mr L Skelton
<u>Committee Members:</u>	Mr P Leach, Mrs I M Slocombe

Treasurer's Report

Mr Skelton presented his report to the meeting, which was accepted.

Balance as at 26.6.67	£16.14.07
Subscriptions 1967/8	£10.00.00
Interest	06.03
Total	£27.00.10
Expenditure 1967/8	£7.15.00
Cash in hand and in bank	£19.04.10

After the business meeting Mr Philip Rahtz gave an instructive but lighthearted talk on his trip to Greece during Easter. This was enjoyed and appreciated by all members present.

The meeting finished shortly after 9.00 pm and was followed by food and refreshment at the Spread Eagle.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions for the 1968/9 year are now due. If you have not paid please send them as soon as possible to Mr Les Skelton, and ensure that you continue to receive this newsletter.

Subscriptions are still five shillings, and cheques and postal orders should be made payable to "The Woolhope Club Archaeological Research Group".

EDITORIAL

Archaeology in the city of Hereford has taken important steps in the last two months with large scale excavations on the defensive and pre-defensive phases, financed by the Ministry of Public Building and Works.

Mr Rahtz's interim report, which is attached to this newsletter, suggests most strongly that occupation began at this important river crossing well before the recorded date of 700 AD. The relatively undisturbed earlier layers have made this excavation one of the more important in the country for 1968.

Although this has also given more substance to the old idea of a Roman Hereford, this must be held as unproven unless and until stratified Roman levels are found in the city. It is sad to report that, whilst these important discoveries were being made, an early part of Hereford's history was being destroyed. The Old Church at Upper Bullingham has now been levelled down to such a height that the twelfth century windows and the square lintel to the north door have been removed. No archaeologist in the county was informed that this was imminent so no record was taken. No photographic record of the building exists in the City Library collections and it is very much hoped that the Ministry of Public Building and Works arranged for a full photographic survey to be made before they gave permission for the demolition to take place.

Ron Shoemith

BROMFIELD 1968

Excavations took place on the Roman Marching Camp at Bromfield prior to quarrying. A number of ditch sections were cut and this established the size firmly as being 20½ acres. The site was first observed from the air by Dr J K S St Joseph in 1948 and the NW, NE and SE sides were fixed by excavation in 1956 by Dr G Webster. The SW side was examined this year by
S C Stanford.

CREDENHILL

Several coins of the Roman period were recently found in an orchard between Kenchester Roman Town and the Hill Fort on Credenhill. As these were apparently scattered, they could be possible evidence for extra mural settlement to the North of Magna as well as that already recorded to the south and east.

GOLD STATER FROM STRETFORD BRIDGE

A gold stater of Corio was recently found in a hop field at Stretford Bridge, close to the line of the Roman Road from Leintwardine to Kenchester.

The coin, associated with the Dubunni tribe, is probably the most westerly coin of Corio in these latitudes, although one has been found at Wroxeter.

The scatter of this type of coin together with the association with known Roman works, suggests that they were often carried by the Roman army.

It is hoped that the coin, which is not treasure trove, will eventually find a home in Hereford Museum.

ADDITIONS TO LIST OF MEMBERS

Bainton, Mrs C,
Bemand R,
Berrett, A H,
Chouls, W H,
Haig, Mrs R B,
Lewis, Miss G,
Stevens, W,
Whitmarsh, G,
Yates, J M L,

HEREFORD 1968

Interim note on excavations, June 1968, by Hereford City Excavation Committee, with a grant from the Ministry of Public Building and Works; directed by Philip Rahtz for Committee and School of History, University of Birmingham.

Trenches in Victoria Street in 1967, on the SW sector of the town defences, had shown the existence of pre-Conquest ramparts. Demolition of a building at Easter 1968 revealed a sector of these standing to a height of 8ft, with stone features underneath. The June dig explored these over an area of about 80' x 40'. The result was one of the best sequences which has been demonstrated for any Saxon town in this country.

Seven periods can now be postulated; the first two are earlier than the town; there are five phases of defensive earthworks and walls.

Period 1 – Prehistoric; scatter of postholes, a gully and a ? ditch; no finds except flint flakes and a barbed and tanged arrowhead.

Period 2 - ? Dark Ages 5th-7th Centuries AD. Two large corn-drying ovens with large lateral flues, built of re-used Roman stone, including two altars; floor of massive wattle and daub; much carbonized grain and two knives. No other finds or pottery, but probably pre-Saxon.

Period 3 – Small bank and ditch, possibly no more than a boundary, the first definition of Hereford; or may be a marking-out feature for a small rampart. Probably early Saxon, 7th-8th Centuries AD. No finds.

Period 4 – Gravel rampart derived from ditch; back only survives, and ditch destroyed by later one; no finds; probably middle Saxon, 8th-9th Centuries AD.

Period 5 – Turf, clay and peat rampart, derived from surface clearance of a marshy area, not from a ditch. Timber wall set in substantial slot in front; upright timbers at 3ft intervals at back; rampart laced with large branches, placed at random at various levels; traces of lateral timbers at rear; capped by stone wall, lightly mortared, made of re-used Roman material, including millstones. This wall probably stood at the rear of a flat crest. Dating late Saxon, probably early 10th century. This dating comes from pottery found in levels accumulating on the back of the rampart. Several dozen sherds include Chester ware (dated at Chester to c 980 AD) and a previously unrecorded ceramic, possibly a French import. There were also two fine bone combs and a finger ring.

Period 6 – Gravel rampart overlaying much degraded remains of Period 5; derived from large ditch. Seals pottery which need not be post-Conquest, but could be.

Period 7 – Stone wall and bastions inserted into 6, which comprise surviving circuit of Hereford's defences; late 12th or 13th Century.

Excavations for a subway revealed the turn to the east of the line of the Period 4 and 5 ramparts, with their associated ditch; the Period 7 wall and probably the Period 6 rampart continue north, to enlarge the town. Within the area they enclose, a trench has shown the existence of late Saxon levels, presumably extra-mural at that time. A large area of these is threatened and will be excavated under Margaret Gray's direction in July.

For those who would like to relate the archaeological phases to documented events and people, we can provisionally suggest that Period 4 might be of Offa's time, the Period 5 rampart is probably part of the refortification of Mercian towns by Aethelfleda, and that the Period 6 rampart was built by Harold Godwinson after the Welsh sack of 1055.

I should like to thank my assistants, Margaret Gray, Catherine Hills, and Peter Berrett; the fifty or more volunteers who provided the labour force; Ron Shoemith who made us all welcome at his Staunton-on-Wye Youth Hostel; Frank Noble and Pat Moore,

who organized the excavation; the Hereford City Council and site contractors, who have given us the utmost co-operation; and especially Mr Graham Roberts, the engineer in charge of the ring road scheme, who has shown a keen interest in our work, and by his forbearance has made this very successful excavation possible.

P A Rahtz

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM DEPARTMENT OF EXTRA-MURAL STUDIES
Courses 1968-69

Hereford – Ancient Civilisations Fee: 32/-

E J Peltenburg, BA, R T Bundle Clark, MA, R A Tomlinson, MA and Professor D R Dudley, MA, FSA.

Mondays, 7.15 pm. 20 meetings starting 7th October.

An outline of the development of some of the ancient civilizations of the Old World and an assessment of their major achievements. Four members of the University will deal in turn with Western Asia, Egypt, Greece and Rome.

At the City Library (Woolhope Room), Broad Street, Hereford.

The Deserted Medieval Settlements of Herefordshire (Archaeological Survey Group)
Fee: 32/-

Miss R Hickling, BA, and others.

Thursdays, 7.15 pm, starting 26th September.

Much of the field evidence of Herefordshire's medieval settlements is being ploughed away.

This group's aim is to initiate a comprehensive survey of these sites. Eight background lectures and a field excursion in the autumn term will be taken by various specialists and followed by five field days in the spring.

First meeting at the City Library, Broad Street, Hereford.

Recording Old Houses (Research Group) Joint Committee with the WEA Fee: 20/-

J W Tonkin, BA.

First meeting 2.30-6.00 pm, Saturday 19th October. 5 double meetings.

Following the introductory lecture session, subsequent meetings will be held on Saturdays or Sundays in various parts of the county, studying and drawing old domestic buildings, including some that are threatened with destruction by new developments.

First meeting at the City Library (Woolhope Room), Broad Street, Hereford.

Ledbury – Prehistoric and Roman Herefordshire Fee:

S C Stanford, BA, FSA.

Wednesdays, 7.30 pm. 20 meetings starting 2nd October.

Herefordshire's evidence will be re-assessed against our changing understanding of prehistoric and Roman Britain. Local illustrations will be employed whenever possible and there will be special attention to hill forts like Midsummer Camp, currently being excavated under the tutor's direction.

At the County Secondary School, Mabel's Furlong, Ledbury. (In association with the Principal of the Ledbury Evening Institute.)

Leominster – Discovering Leominster
(Archaeology And Domestic Architecture) Fee 32/-

J W Tonkin, BA, & S C Stanford, BA, FSA.

Tuesdays 7.30 pm. 20 meetings starting 1st October.

A follow-up of last session's Local History studies, widening the field to include the region about Leominster.

Autumn (Mr Tonkin): Domestic architecture, especially timber-framed buildings, with special emphasis on the use of inventories.

Spring: Medieval settlements and place-names; the Roman occupation, local Iron Age hill forts (Risbury, Ivington, Bache Camp and Croft Ambrey) and problems of earlier prehistoric occupation.

At the County Branch Library, South Street, Leominster.

MIDSUMMER CAMP EXCAVATIONS

Visitors are welcomed during the third season of the dig – August 12th-September 7th. Camp accommodation is fully booked but volunteers able to assist for a minimum of one week and not requiring accommodation will still be welcomed and may obtain details from Mr S C Stanford, Ashfield Cottage, Luston, Leominster.