

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 10 September 1968

**WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

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

No. 10 September 1968

Edited by: Ron Shoesmith

FUTURE PROGRAMME

Sunday 29th September 1968 at 12.00 noon

Pottery Kilns in North Herefordshire P Leach

Meet at Mortimer's Cross Inn

Sunday 20th October 1968 at 2.00 pm

Queen's Wood area

Meet at Upton Bishop Church, NGR 650 272

Bryant's Map of 1835 shows a castle in the area. Bring boots. L Skelton.

Monday 9th December 1968 at 8.00 pm

Area Correspondents' Reports

Evening meeting at Staunton Youth Hostel, NGR 365 450

OTHER PROGRAMMES

Saturday 2nd November, 1968, afternoon

Recent Archaeological Discoveries in the West Midlands

CBA Group 8 open meeting in Birmingham.

A coach is being arranged in co-operation with the WEA. Meeting fee 3.0d, coach 10.0 to 12.0d.

Contact Jean O'Donnell before 12th October if you are interested. (22 Oatfield Close, Hereford. Tel: Hereford 4904)

WOOLHOPE CLUB MEETINGS

16th November - Morgan Lecture

30th November - Sectional Editors' Report

14th December - Winter Annual Meeting

HEREFORD CITY EXCAVATIONS

HEC and WEA exploration of the Castle Green area starts on Saturday 5th October 1968 at 10.00 am. Contact Peter Leach at the City Museum if you are interested.

EDITORIAL – CHASING THE SUN

Your editor is departing for warmer climes during the winter, and will take part in an Archaeological Expedition to Iran. The site to be investigated is the ruins of Siraf on the Persian Gulf, some 220km south east of Bushire. This was a flourishing port (c 850 AD), with merchants dealing with India and South East Asia, eventually stretching from Madagascar to China. A decline set in after an earthquake in 977 AD, and by 1218 the area was in ruins.

This, the third of the series of excavations being carried out by Dr David Whitehouse, will include investigation of the great mosque and also a group of imposing private houses.

I hope to send some notes while I am in Iran, for inclusion in the next Newsletter, which will be published by Allan Greenhill, and issued about Christmas.

If anyone should wish to contact me, I will be away from Herefordshire from 6th October until the end of February. My address will be:

The Siraf Expedition, PO Box 73, Bushire, Iran, during this period.

NEXT NEWSLETTER

Please help Allan Greenhill by ensuring that he has sufficient material for a good Christmas number. Deadline for notes and articles is Friday 13th December 1968.

Best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Ron Shoemith

HEREFORD 1968

The interim report on Margaret Gray's excavations during July and August on the Brewery Site between Wall Street and Edgar Street is attached to this Newsletter. The copies are provided by Hereford Excavations Committee.

A second part of the City Wall collapsed on 18th September, close to the previous fall in Victoria Street. These collapses are due to the foundations having been loosened by the works for the new ring road. The wall on this stretch of Victoria Street will eventually be restored and will become an important part in the landscaping of the new road.

Hereford Excavations Committee intend to train and maintain an Archaeological Team of Herefordians which can be held at constant readiness to seize every opportunity presented to investigate sites and record findings.

They also intend to operate a long term programme of excavation employing this team, on sites in the city considered to be of high potential value.

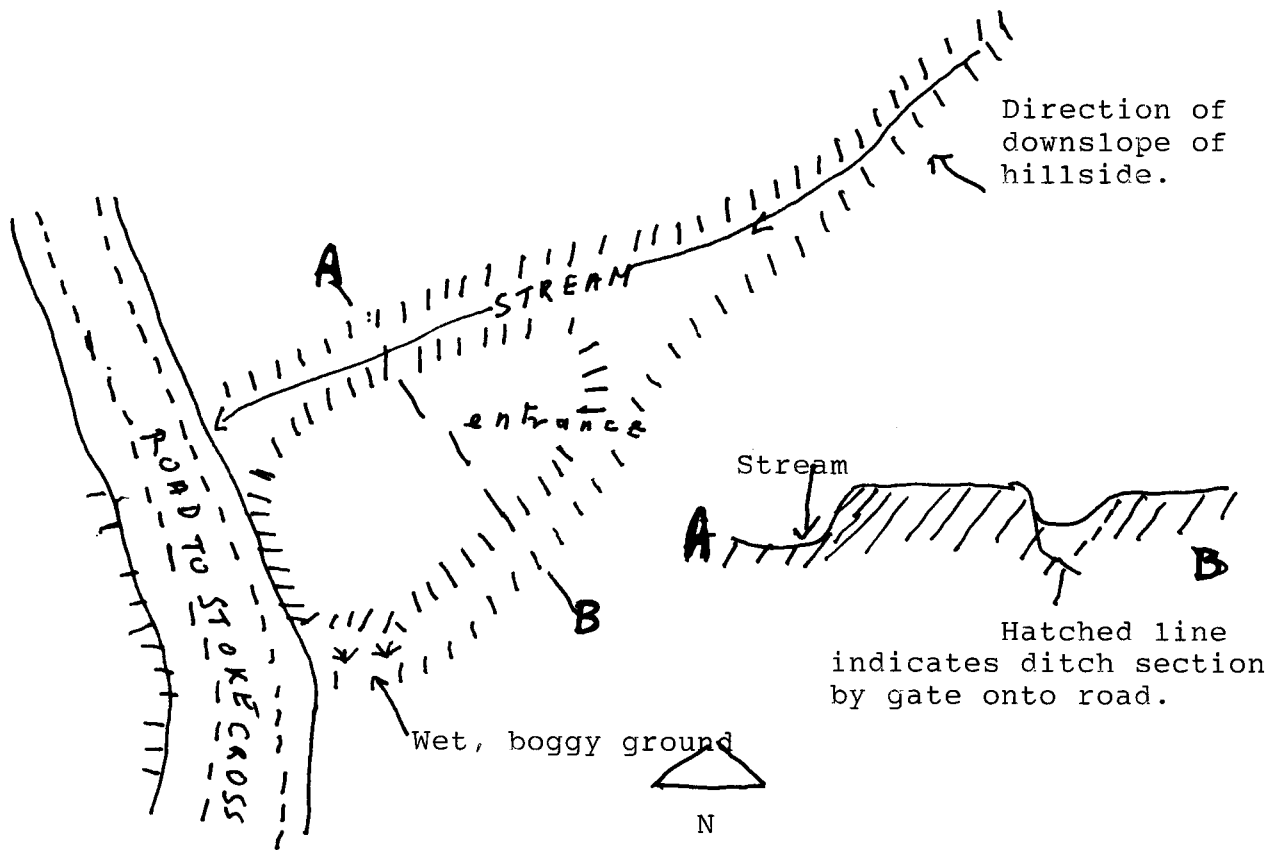
The programme begins with a dig on Hereford Castle site immediately adjacent to the new bandstand. The objects are to discover the unknown part of the history of the castle and of any occupation there may have been previously on that site, while at the same time using the operation as a training ground in basic Archaeology for beginners.

The programme starts on Saturday 5th October 1968 at 10.00 am. If you are interested, contact Air Cdre L P Moore, 12 Ferndale Road, Hereford (Tel: 5250) or P Leach, City Museum, Broad Street, Hereford.

NOTES ON A MOATED SITE – STOKE CROSS GR 625 505

1. The site is halfway down the NW facing slope of a hill, at a point where the slope steepens downwards. The slope has been artificially steepened and a ditch two to three feet deep cut at its foot and back into the hillside. The ditch is deepest on the south side by the gate. From the gate the floor of the ditch rises northwards to the entrance where it is only two to three feet deep and then it drops northwards into the stream.
2. A very small stream has been brought laterally along the valley slope from the main stream in the valley, and flows from NE to SW through the ditch in front of the scarp.
3. The top of the mound is very level with no indications of either upcast from the ditch or residual mounds from buildings.
4. The sides of the mound are very steep, and until recently covered with trees, undergrowth and hedges. The hedges along the road and southern field boundary remain.
5. The slope of the hill upwards to the south east of the site is quite shallow and significantly high ground is a good distance away.

NOTES ON A MOATED SITE STOKE CROSS G,R. 625505



Scale 1:500

R.E.H.dol. April 1968

POTTERY EVENING AT STAUNTON-ON-WYE 30th July

Members of the Group and those excavating in Hereford spent a very enjoyable evening examining pottery from Hereford Museum and also hearing a very instructive talk by Bob Thomson, profusely illustrated by slides.

AREA CORRESPONDENTS ONLY

On Monday 9th December 1968, an evening meeting has been arranged for area correspondents to present their reports on the various monuments for which they have accepted responsibility.

You are asked to co-operate in making this meeting a success, by attending if at all possible.

Written reports will be read at the meeting if you are unable to attend, and should be sent to the Deputy Secretary, Mr Allan Greenhill, before the meeting.

Area No. is your responsibility.

The following areas have no correspondent at the moment:

Numbers 5, 7, 12, 15, 18, 21.

RS

HEREFORD EXCAVATIONS: JULY AND AUGUST 1968: BREWERY SITE

Interim Report on excavations for five weeks by the Hereford City Excavations Committee with a grant from the Ministry of Public Building and Works. Directed by Margaret Gray with the assistance of B Thomson, G Lewis and A H Berrett. The labour force, averaging fifteen, was drawn from students of the School of History, University of Birmingham and volunteers, many of whom were local.

The excavation was initiated by F Noble, who with Miss R Hickling had found Saxo-Norman pottery in a machine trench here. It continued from major investigations of the Saxon defences under Philip Rahtz.

The site area was east of Wall Street, inside the line of the medieval City Wall and the earlier gravel rampart which Wall Street followed, in the east carriageway of the new Hereford by-pass.

Five periods are suggested:-

1. Features without pottery (pre-ceramic Saxon or Dark Age?)
Two gullies and one pit, a small V-shaped ditch running SW-NE at the extreme north of the site which was probably a boundary ditch, and a larger ditch 12ft wide cut 3ft below the surface of the natural and running SE-NW. Both the latter were filled with clean silt.
2. Features with only Chester Ware and Stamford Ware
These were in a layer lying directly on the natural throughout the site. At the north end this layer was more disturbed and contained a coin of Cnut (1017). In this period there was evidence of metal working; cut into the fill of the Period I Ditch and sealed by the rampart was a furnace, which had two flues and a central "fire-box" 2ft 6in in diameter with a complex baffle system. The complete profile of a "Chester Ware" cooking pot was found in the west flue. Also of this period were several large post-holes and a timber slot at the south end of the site.
3. Features with Chester Ware and other Saxo-Norman pottery

This was immediately pre-rampart and the pottery was in a black occupation dirt with further evidence of metal-working, including a "roasting hearth" and several bowl hearths. Part of a burnt timber building was found, which extended westwards under the rampart and under Wall Street. Also of this period were a series of very large intersecting cesspits and rubbish pits containing vast quantities of animal bones, mostly skulls, indicating the existence of a Shambles in the area.

4. The Rampart

Although this was removed by machine from the whole of the site, it showed in section as alternate bands of clean gravel and re-deposited natural clay.

5. Post-Rampart Features

Included several more pits which had cut through the rampart, with evidence that metal-working had continued here until at least the 14th Century. One pit contained a button-mould and the mould for a thistle-shaped dagger pommel, as well as a finely-carved piece of bone representing a castellated tower which may be an unfinished chess-piece. There was also a large pit with three unfired circular clay moulds, 3ft in diameter but only 2" deep and 1" thick, together with many different slags.

From these excavations it is now clear that the settlement at Hereford had extended into this area at least as early as the 10th Century. The features of Periods 1 and 2 would seem to be part of a roughly rectilinear layout which was disregarded by the curving rampart of Period 4.

The date of the rampart and the defence of the northern extension of the town is still an open question which goes with the dating of the pottery sealed beneath it.

This pottery included "Chester Ware" (glazed and unglazed), Stamford Ware, "Nottingham Splashed Ware", Winchester Ware and "early medieval" oolite-gritted and sandy wares. Some of these would be conventionally dated to the later 11th or 12th centuries and can be paralleled from "Norman" contexts, but there is no evidence that production of any of the fabrics or forms represented began after 1066.

All the pottery thus sealed could indeed be from before 1055, the date of Harold Godwinson's recorded construction of defences at Hereford; on the other hand the pottery could all be as late as 1189, the dating preferred by S C Stanford in his report on the northern rampart in Bath Street. It seems more stimulating at this stage to put forward the 1055 date and to invite detailed proof of a later dating for any of the types and forms of pottery which have been found sealed below this rampart. This can only be provided when it has been published in detail. The dating of this pottery is a matter of crucial importance, not only for Hereford but for the whole of the West Midlands, where evidence for late Saxon occupation may be disguised by "Norman" dating for much of the pottery which is found.

I should like to thank the contractors, Hereford Resurfacing, for their co-operation at all times, especially when it was found necessary to extend the duration of the excavation; also Mr Graham Roberts the City Surveyor, and Mr Pugh, Resident Engineer, for their help in making the work possible; also Mr R Shoemith for his work on the site and for boarding the volunteers at the Youth Hostel at Staunton-on-Wye, Mr Peter Leach from Hereford Museum who helped on the site for several weeks and Mr Norman Bridgewater for his advice on the early furnaces.

9th September 1968

Margaret Gray

Historical Note:

The suggestion that the statement in the A S Chronicle that in 1055 "Earl Harold had an earthwork ('dic') built around the town" refers to the original rampart along the Wall Street line seems to involve accepting a pre-Conquest town of over 90 acres. The 'Inner Ditch' and massive wall-topped rampart to the south, which were identified in the June and 1967

excavations, enclose 50 acres with a rough grid pattern of streets, representing the original Saxon 'burh'.

Domesday mentions burgesses living 'outside the Wall ('murus')' in 1066, and the 'Customs of Hereford' seem to show that the cutlers were still recognized as a special group among these at a later date (? 1154), but they may have been defended by an earthwork at this time. The burnt building underlying the rampart and the disregard for earlier rectilinear boundaries in its construction do fit in better with the 1055 earthwork, thrown up around a devastated city, than with the postulated extension of the city defences by the burgesses under their Charter of 1189.

F Noble 11.9.68