

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 15 October 1969

WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION

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**HEREFORDSHIRE NEWS SHEET
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No. 15 October 1969

Edited by: Ron Shoesmith

SURVEY OF HOUSES IN GRIMEWORTH HUNDRED

Many of you will have had a note from Mr J Tonkin if you live in this area, concerning the proposed survey by the Research Group on Old Buildings to include all types of houses built before about the end of the nineteenth century.

The possible scope of this survey is very great, and the Old Buildings Group will need all the help possible. If you live in this long hundred, stretching from Moreton-on-Lugg through Yazor to Staunton-on-Wye and bounded by the river, and including Hampton Bishop and Wellington, then any help you can give will be appreciated. Interesting points and details in houses which you know may be missed, however careful the survey, without your assistance. Mr Tonkin's address is 'Chy an Whyloron', Wigmore, Leominster, Herefordshire.

The report on Bull Farm, Letton in this issue is the fifth which Mr Tonkin has provided for our newsletter – now it's your turn.

RS

GUIDE

The meeting to consider the production of a guide to the ancient monuments of Herefordshire was attended by 7 people. It was decided to go ahead with draft work under the editorship of Peter Leach. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 2nd December at 7.30 pm at the Community House, 25 Castle Street, and all interested should attend.

IN CASE YOU FORGET ...

The next two meetings of the group are:

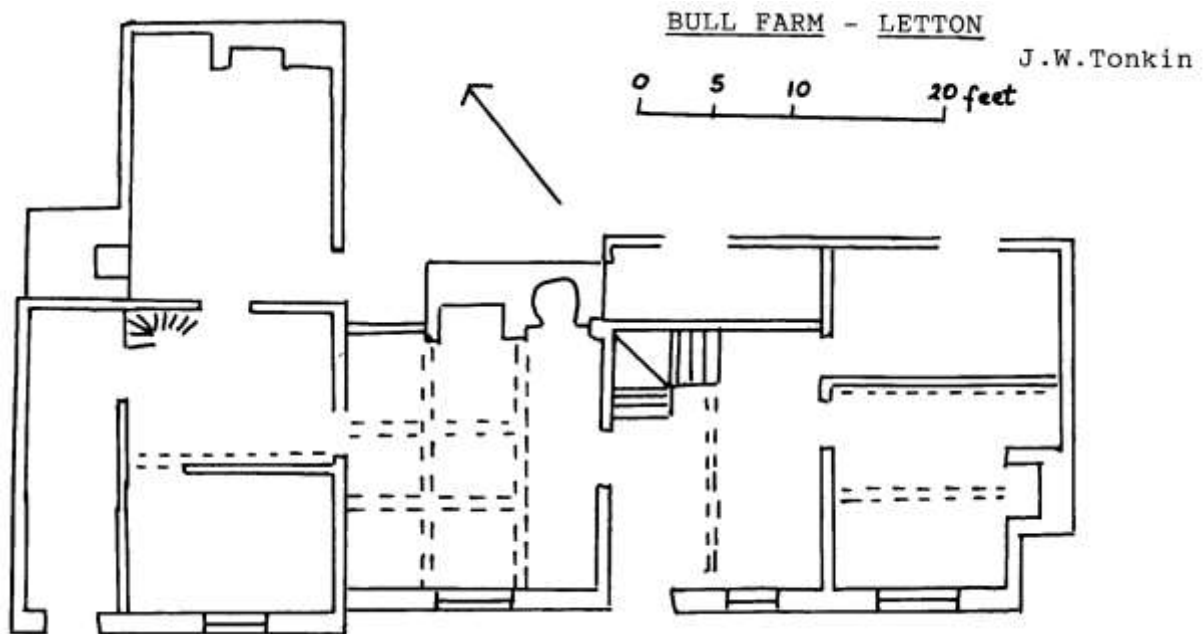
Sunday, 16th November at Weston-under-Penyard (meet Ross Market Hall 1.00 pm)

Friday, 12th December at 85 Beaufort Ave, Redhill, Hereford, Slides, at 7.30 pm.

Please send your subscription (7/6) to:

L Skelton, Esq.,

BULL FARM, LETTON



This quite big farmhouse has now been demolished and a new house built on slightly higher ground close by.

It was an interesting house, built probably in three stages during the 17th century. The earliest part was the middle which consisted of two rooms on both floors. The western, bigger room was about 17' square with quite finely stopped and chamfered beams dividing the ceiling into rectangular panels. This room had a big lateral fireplace and stack, while the other, 17' x 10', was unheated. There seems little doubt that these were the original hall and parlour respectively. The hall had a blocked doorway at the back by the wing and it seems quite likely that originally there may have been a doorway opposite it, but there is no proof of this. This would have given the typical screens-passage layout.

The western wing was separately framed from the main house but was probably contemporary with it. Originally it had two unheated rooms on each floor, and it is tempting to think of these as a parlour and little parlour with chambers above. However, it seems more likely to have been a service wing, the purpose for which it was certainly used later. Its beams were plainer than those in the main block, whereas if it had been a parlour, they would have been at least as ornate.

The eastern wing had been much altered in recent times, but seems to have been of two builds. The room nearer the road had a big out-built fireplace and may have been the main parlour if this wing was contemporary with the main and western parts.

Certainly there was a room added at the back of each wing later. That in the western wing was added in the later 17th century as a kitchen, perhaps replacing an earlier one in the same position. That on the eastern was perhaps added as an above ground cellar at the same time.

Lean-to additions were made at the back and western sides.

Some time in the 18th century the front was faced in brick, a fashion of the times. It would be interesting to know if this house or Bridge Farm a short distance away was faced first and which kept up with its neighbour.

Recently the eastern wing had been altered and given a false timber-framed appearance on the first floor. Apart from this and the brick front, the original timber-framing in square panels could be seen in the walls. Along the back of the main block was a series of carpenters' assembly marks formed of Roman numerals.

It appears that the main stairway was in the unheated parlour from the beginning. At some date, perhaps when the rooms were added to the wings, the back door in the hall was

blocked and it was probably at this time that a doorway was made into the unheated parlour making it virtually an entrance hall. This seems to have been a common feature and there was a similar layout at Bridge Farm.

Upstairs the rooms ran exactly above those on the ground floor. The roof trusses throughout were collar and tie-beam, queen post type with one through purlin on each side and a ridge purlin.

There was one puzzling feature. Why was the house built in a position which as early as 10th February, 1795, flooded to a depth of 6 feet? Presumably in the early 17th century this land did not flood in the way it has done for the last two hundred years, but what has caused the change is something of a mystery.

I would like to thank all those in the Old Buildings Group who helped in recording this house.

INTERIM REPORT – HEREFORD CASTLE EXCAVATIONS

At the conclusion of excavations in Redcliffe Gardens, Hereford, a brief summary of the work is presented here. A series of trenches were put down in the corporation gardens adjacent to Castle Cliff during the winter 1968-69, the preliminary conclusions are set out as follows:

Period I: Throughout the site, the natural gravel lay approximately 2ft below the ground surface. However, most of this was in fact absent, having been cut to a vertical face in a line curving roughly to the south west across the site. This cutting is presumably the edge of the ditch surrounding the keep. In trenches I and II a massive drystone masonry foundation was revealed, resting against the gravel face and extending outwards at right-angles to it. A lesser length lay at right-angles to this, parallel to the natural face and heading towards Castle Cliff. The masonry was nowhere higher than the top of the natural bank and continued downwards abutting at natural face for about 7ft, the lowest course resting on natural gravel. The gravel face is virtually unweathered in this area, suggesting almost immediate re-burial following the construction of these foundations. The material containing this stonework was a loose gravel, similar in composition to the natural and containing in its upper levels a dirty soil with a few potsherds. This mixture of coarse cooking pot and glazed Ham Green type ware was evidently deposited with or a little after the laying down of the stonework. The dating of such pottery is not accurate to much less than 50 years, but a date after 1250 seems most likely. It is suggested that these foundations formed part of an abutment for a bridge connecting the keep to the bailey. This work is presumably connected with Henry III's extensive works on the castle.

Period II: This is largely represented by a drystone wall seen in all trenches and running roughly parallel with the outer edge of the keep ditch. In trenches I and II this wall has been built into the earlier foundations, cutting across them at right-angles. The outer face of this wall was constructed of regular sandstone blocks. Many of these stones had mortar adhering to them and a handful were mouldings from a building, architecturally of 14th century date. The purpose of this wall is unclear, although a mid-seventeenth century date for its construction seems likely.

Period III: The Period II wall does not appear to have survived for long and its upper portion was evidently robbed, leaving the stone rubble and lower courses. The whole area was then filled quite rapidly with a great accumulation of soil and rubble. The material was evidently the same as that seen in the filling of the moat. A machine trench was cut on the present Bandstand site in March 1968, revealing this ditch fill, but without locating the ditch sides or bottom. A great variety of pottery and small finds came from this fill, ranging from 12th to 17th centuries. The approximate date for this deposit is indicated by numerous clay pipes c. 1660 to 1700, and in the top level a sixpence of William III, 1690. This deposit seems to tie in well with the final destruction of the castle in 1661.

Period IV: The upper two foot or so of deposit consisted of post 17th century accumulation, probably due in part to 18th century landscaping. Pottery and small finds from Medieval to Victorian were well mixed.

Despite the limited nature of the excavation, a little more detail has perhaps been revealed of two important periods in the castle's history; the 13th century reconstructions and the post-Civil War destruction.

The work was carried out on behalf of Hereford Excavation Committee, with the aid of a grant from the Ministry of Public Building and Works. I would particularly like to thank A H Berrett for his help and co-operation, as well as all volunteers. A full report will appear in due course in the WNFC Transactions.

P J Leach, Hereford Museum

SEPTEMBER FIELD MEETING – THE LEOMINSTER-MAMBLE CANAL

On Sunday, 28th September, a small party of members and guests assembled at Leominster Bus Station before proceeding to examine portions of the disused canal between Leominster and Little Hereford.

The first halt was made to examine the remains of the Leominster terminus at a point one mile distant from the town on the A49 road to Ludlow. Mr Prosser pointed out the remaining buildings, consisting of stables and demolished Machine House, the latter having been destroyed in recent years and probably having served to house the weighing machinery. He also drew our attention to an area of soil blackened by coal dust in the vicinity of the old wharf, which is no longer visible.

Next there was a brief pause to view an old lock-keeper's cottage which could be seen at some distance from the main road in the fields opposite to Endale Farm near Stockton Cross.

The group then moved on to look at a fairly well defined stretch of canal aligned west of Berrington Hall at a point on the minor road between Moreton and Eye. This section is partly terraced and embanked along the natural hillside contour, and despite almost total silting the bed appears still to retain a considerable quantity of moisture.

The major feature of the morning programme was next encountered at the Putnal Field Tunnel where some considerable time was occupied in examining both entrances to the tunnel, and the main dimensions and water levels at both portals were measured and noted. Several interesting features were observed which may well be related to the constructional troubles encountered before the successful completion of the tunnel in 1796.

The lunch time rendezvous at the Salwey Arms was achieved rather belatedly, so the group proceeded directly to Little Hereford and, after a hasty lunch, walked back (partly along the old canal bed) to examine the Teme Aqueduct.

Here again a considerable time was spent in measurement of the main dimensions of the northern arch with its associated river bed pier. We were greatly hampered by dense vegetation which has overgrown the aqueduct and which precluded successful photography. Lack of time prevented our return to the opposite river bank and the intact southern arch, since the main (centre) span was demolished in a wartime military exercise and we should therefore have been faced with a lengthy detour.

It was therefore resolved to return to the aqueduct at some future date, preferably when the leaves have fallen, and perhaps use a canoe if the river conditions are suitable.

The return walk to the cars brought an unexpected bonus in the discovery of some brickwork, channels and a dam at a point where the canal alignment crosses a small tributary of the Teme. This will have to be investigated in the future since it could well be the remains of a canal feeder and would thus furnish information on the method of water supply to the canal.

The meeting ended with a visit to the old bridge that carried the main drive to Easton Court over the canal before the latter was breached in favour of the modern direct entrance. The bridge is situated in the trees at the side of the Tenbury Road opposite the disused Little Hereford railway halt. Again the main dimensions were taken, and Mr Coleman drew our

attention to the construction of the tow path beneath the bridge (in contrast to the tunnels where the horses were led over the intervening ground to the opposite entrance. He also observed a pair of slots in the stone-faced channel adjacent to the bridge which served to take wooden boards across the channel. These would have formed a temporary coffer dam, thus isolating a section of channel for maintenance purposes.

It is evident that a considerable quantity of detailed information remains to be gathered throughout the full length of the canal, and the writer intends to implement further exploration and field work. Any interested persons are invited to contact him.

J G Calderbank