

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 23 October 1971

**WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

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No. 23 October 1971

Edited by: Ron Shoesmith

EDITORIAL

The group has had a very mixed, bag of summer visits, which will finish off with the one to Eaton Tregoes on Sunday 17th October (meet at Hole-in-the-Wall at 2.00 p.m.).

Visits have been made to Twyn-y-Gaer, the Ariconium area, Lyonshall, Pontrilas, Kimbolton, Parc Grace Dieu area and a survey of the line of the projected Oil Pipeline across the north of the county.

The next newsletter, which will be issued as soon as material is available, will include reports on the later meetings, and will also have details of the Winter Programme. If you have any ideas for meetings, please let me know before the end of the month and then they can be included in the programme.

A further excavation is planned in Hereford for the area of the City Defences bounded by Mill Street and Cantilupe Street. The dates for this are still uncertain, but will probably be during the winter months. Please let me know if you will be able to help in any way.

Ron Shoesmith

NEW BOOKS

Facsimile editions of two more local books may be of interest to members, so brief details follow:

HEREFORDSHIRE - WNFC

This is a series of chapters written to celebrate the Centenary of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club in 1954, and has been very scarce for quite a few years.

The chapters, by various noted Woolhope Club members, give a concise resume of the natural history, archaeology and history of the county.

The book is published by S R Publishers Ltd., and is available from them at East Ardsley, Wakefield, Yorkshire, at £2.75.

AN HISTORICAL ACCOUNT OF THE CITY OF HEREFORD - JOHN PRICE

Price's book on Hereford was published in 1796, and was 'Embellished with Elegant Views, Plans etc' and included 'Remarks on the River Wye and the natural and artificial Beauties contiguous to its banks from Brobery to Wilton'.

This is certainly one of the better period guides to the city.

It is published by the Tabard Press of London and costs £2.10.

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SUMMARY OF 1971 EXCAVATIONS

With the slightly limited labour force available during the 1971 season, the main task was to join the 1969 and 1970 trenches as far as spoil disposal and trees on the site allowed. Buildings 1 and 2 along the western edge of the site were examined in more detail and the terracing associated with building 3 and the tufa wall was cleared.

Period 1

It is still suggested that the whole area excavated consists of made ground, artificially raised as a defensive feature.

Period 2

The timber work in the east of the excavation, below the terrace, was left until a larger area has been opened.

Period 3

Quarried stone and coursed masonry standing 6-7 courses high in building 2. This building also has a large stone step on the east and a drain (3), with a door/window opening above it in the west wall.

Building 4 (extensively robbed) and possibly building 2 may be of this period.

Building 2 is built into the terrace with an entry down from the terrace in the north-western corner and has evidence of a rough plaster face on the inside.

Period 4

The tufa wall, which has so far not been tied with a building, is on the same terracing as Building 4, but appears to be a little later. A coin of Edward II was found in 1970 in the associated occupation layer.

Period 5

Building 1, and possibly a replacement of Building 4, poorly constructed of about two courses of river pebbles and re-used stone, are presumably the remains of a set of farm buildings. Walls of Period 3 were re-used during this period, which also produced most of the pottery and many cut and moulded roofing crests.

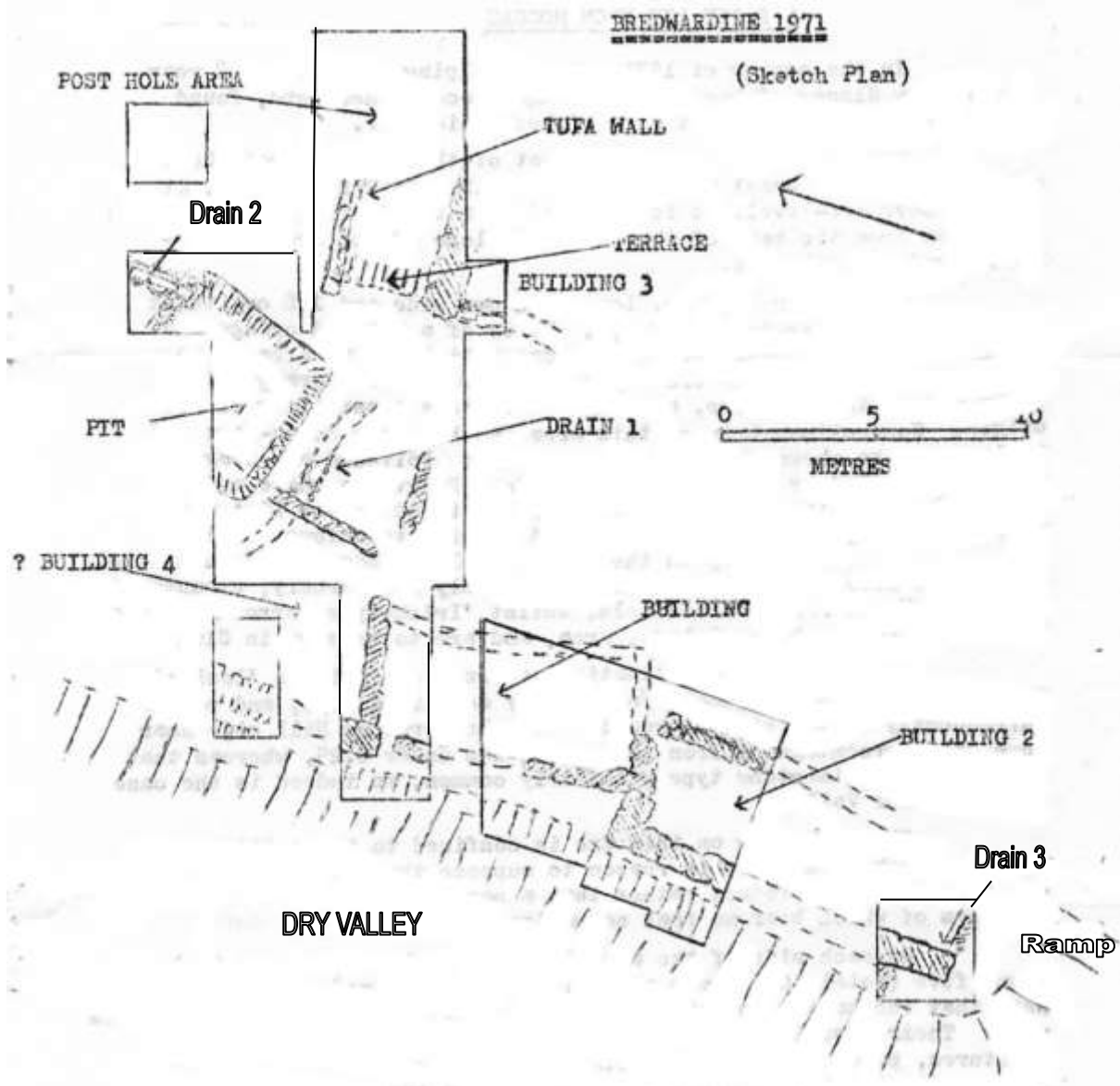
Period 6

The pit, to the north of the excavation, was cut through tumble of period 5 and is possibly of 16th century date.

Further robbing of walls and drains on the site took place in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Future Programme

It is hoped to continue work in 1972 and clear buildings 2 & 3 as far as standing trees will allow.



A FLINT AXE FROM MOCCAS

By W R Pye

In the spring of 1971, while helping his father, 8 year old Andrew Slaney of Moccas Park Lodge, Moccas, Hereford, found a partially polished flint axe of Neolithic date.

The site of the find was that of the former Moccas Castle, of which only one small mound remains (OS Grid Ref 348 425). At 275 feet above sea level, it is situated on a fairly flat terrace which stretches from the base of the northern slope of the Bredwardine-Madley ridge to the Wye.

The axe is 12.4cm long, 5.4 cm wide and 2.8 cm thick, and weighs approximately 0.17 Kg. It is of a mottled orange and black flint with cherty grey inclusions, which, in an area of re-touch, shows through the iron-type patination. This orange/black flint occurs in Berkshire although there is a possibility of Irish origin. Connections between this area and both the South-East and Ireland can be shown through various finds: Polished axe fragments found in the Radnor Valley originated from Buckinghamshire and the Throne

Farm Weobley axe is paralleled by one found in the Linton district near Maidstone, both in flint type and working technique. Irish connections occur locally in the Radnor Valley finds of C J Dunn, also in various sites found by the writer, notably Lee Nursery, Staunton-on-Arrow and Hyatt Farm, Sarnesfield, whilst "Irish Type" arrowheads occur frequently in the Clun, Salop area, and are to be seen in Clun Museum.

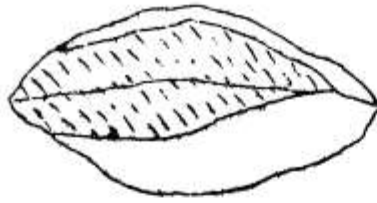
The creamy iron patination occurs frequently in lowland Herefordshire, on the glacial/alluvially deposited soil, and very infrequently on the higher ground. At the Dorstone Hill site near here, the percentage of iron patination was under 0.25, whereas that of the normal limestone type was fairly common, as indeed is the case in the Radnor Valley.

The polishing on this axe is confined to the cutting edge and its check, and there is reason to suppose that this finely-worked axe is a finished product rather than a partially-polished rough-out, examples of which bear no real comparison.

On each side of the axe, towards the butt end, are to be found five (total 10), areas of silica-gloss (lustre). These tend to show that the handle to which the axe was hafted was just over 2 inches wide. Their positions, mainly in the depressions of the concoidal fractures, point to the gloss being produced by material for packing the axe (leather?), rather than by the wooden handle itself.

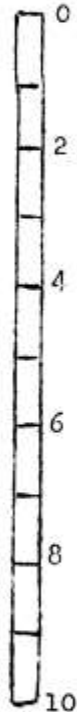
It is interesting to note that the axe was polished by a right-handed person. The striations from the polishing could only have been produced with the utmost difficulty by one who was left-handed.

The axe, an extremely interesting example, has been presented to Hereford Museum by Andrew Slaney (Acc. No. 9607).

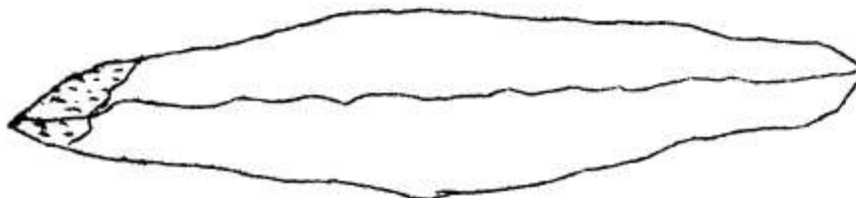


FLINT AXE FROM

MOCCAS



Scale in cms.



HEREFORD CITY EXCAVATIONS
Hereford Liberal Club, 1971 - Interim Report

Archaeological excavations, supported by the Hereford Excavation Committee of the Woolhope Club, were carried out during the first fortnight in August in the grounds of the Hereford Liberal Club. The site, next to the Wall Street rampart and wall was selected to try and answer a number of problems:

- The date of the building of the extended rampart running on the line of the City Wall.
- The extent, if any, of the late Saxon/early Norman, occupation outside the Saxon defences before the extended rampart and ditch were built.

The site, between Eign Gate and Widemarsh Gate, is on the tail of the rampart, the main part of the rampart being under Wall Street. A single trench, 6 x 2m, was laid down at right angles to the city defences. The north end of the trench, nearest Wall Street, showed the gravel rampart (Rahtz, period 6) with an earlier phase of rampart building (Rahtz, period 5?), which included a piece of Chester ware under the gravel. Above the rampart material were Medieval and later occupation layers which yielded a number of clay pipe bowls, pot sherds and a 17th Century ½d token of William Bateman, of Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire. The token was identified by J Parry of the Hereford City Museum, who comments that it is unusual to find a token so far from its place of origin.

Sealed by the rampart was an occupation layer with a post hole and a sleeper beam trench cut into natural. The large amount of bone, cooking pot sherds and iron nails suggest that prior to the building of the rampart there was considerable occupation outside the earlier Saxon defences. This confirms the excavations of Mrs Margaret Gray at the Brewery site, near Eign Gate, in 1968.

We should like to thank the Directors of the Hereford Liberal Club for permission to excavate in their grounds, the Hereford Excavations Committee of the Woolhope Club for financial support and the volunteers who slaved so well.

J S R Hood, Trinity College Dublin
R Shoesmith, Director, Hereford City Excavations.

Rahtz, P, 1968. Hereford. Current Archaeology, No.9, 242-246.
Noble, F, and Shoesmith, R, 1967. Hereford City Excavations, 1967.
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