

# HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 24      February 1972

WOOLHOPE CLUB  
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION

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**HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS SHEET  
WOOLHOPE CLUB  
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**No. 24    February 1972**

**Edited by:    Ron Shoesmith**

**EDITORIAL**

The Annual General Meeting of the Archaeological Research Group was held in the Devereux Room of the Green Dragon Hotel on Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> of December 1971.

The following were elected:

Chairman:	Miss M Thomas
Secretary:	R Shoesmith
Asst. Secretary:	Miss Heywood
Treasurer:	P Cooper
Meetings Secs:	J G Calderbank, Miss R E Hickling, Mrs J O'Donnell
Committee:	W R Pye, L Skelton

Some concern was expressed about damage to monuments in the County especially due to deep drainage and levelling for farming operations. Members mentioned hill forts at Ivington and Kimbolton, the Roman fort at Stretton Grandison and the moated site at The Yeld, Pembridge as particular examples.

The meeting was followed by an excellent slide show by Nicholas Thomas of Bristol Museum entitled 'A Museum Man in the New World.

Further excavations will be carried out on Hereford City Defences over the Easter Period in the area at the corner of Mill St. and St. Owen St. A grant has been made by the Department of the Environment to cover the cost and it is hoped to investigate the Saxon Rampart, the foundations of a bastion and the ditch system outside the walls. The excavation will be directed by R Shoesmith.

The next newsletter will be published shortly after Easter, and contributions are urgently needed.

**Ron Shoesmith**

**EXCAVATION NOTES FROM 1971**

**HENTLAND (SO 543 262)**

The excavation of the first area has now been completed. This revealed the presence of three stone buildings:

1. A 17th century rectangular house, probably the manor referred to by documentary records.
2. A 15th-16th century building, the end wall of which remains.
3. A 13th century building, one wall of which was found, the remainder being in the unexcavated area.

These buildings stood upon a make-up layer which covered two sets of features, the first being several post-holes of timber buildings. The second feature consisted of two parallel ditches, which were exposed over a distance of 30 feet. The general depth below the former land surface for both was about 3½ feet and they were about 0 feet wide. The innermost had a V-shaped profile whilst the outer had a flat bottom.

Romano-British sherds were discovered during excavation, in addition to material from the stone building phases of occupation. (See Newsletter 19 for 1970 Report)

**N P Bridgewater for the Archenfield  
Excavation Group**

### THE YELD, PEMBRIDGE (SO 351 563)

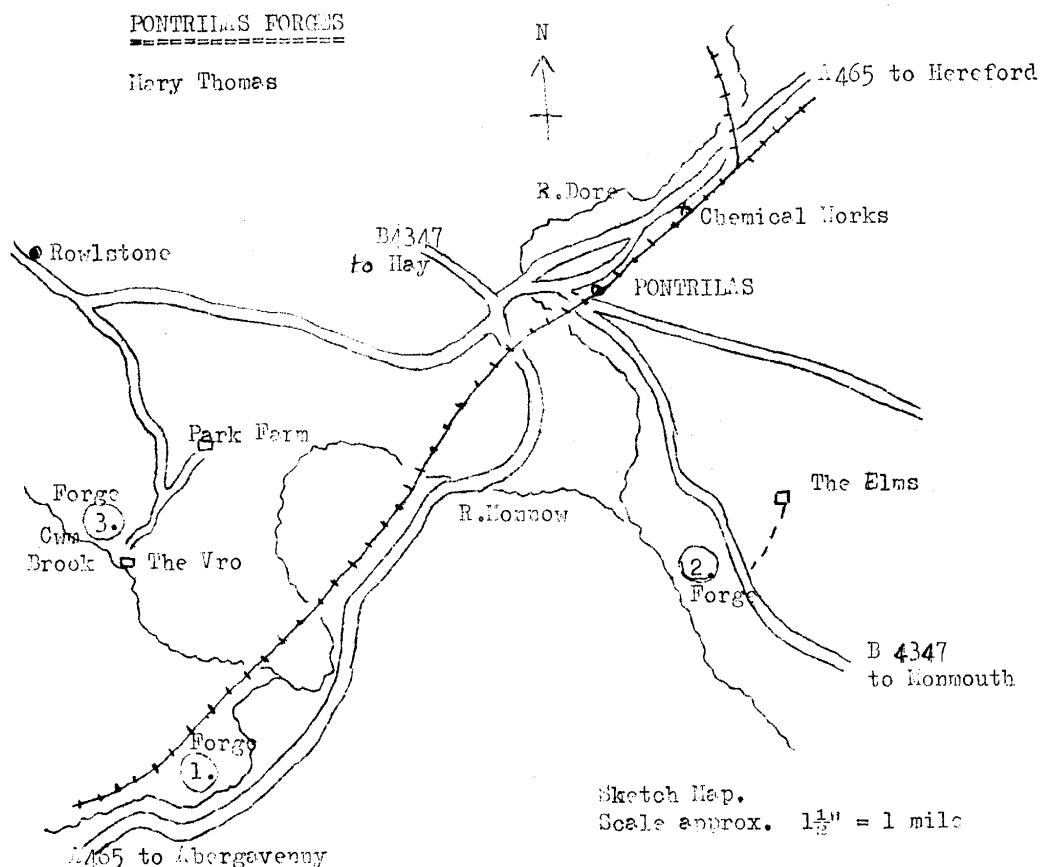
Shortly after members of the Archaeological Research Group surveyed this moated site (see Newsletter 22), the field was completely levelled and the circular ditch filled with material from the mound.

It was possible during the next few days to examine the levelled site and the remains of some structures and a few sherds of pottery were found.

One cess pit, containing large amounts of charcoal fragments of ash and some elderberry seeds, was found along with a stone lined pit of uncertain use. Most pottery, which indicated a 13th to 14th century date, came from around the stone foundations of a hut.

**R Shoesmith**

### PONTRILAS FORGES



On June 19th 1971, a small group of members met at Pontrilas to try to locate the sites of three iron forges. Our interest in the sites was aroused by Mr H H Parr of Chigwell, Essex.

He had written during the spring to see whether we could add to his research for a book he hopes to publish on industry and transport in the Wye Valley and Herefordshire.

Two of the sites were easily located, but we failed to find evidence of the third forge at the Vro farm.

### **Forge 1, Llancillo**

Documentary evidence dates back to about 1645 and in 1677/78 this forge produced 150 tons of bar iron per annum. Power was provided by the river Monnow and there is quite a network of leats and diversions around the site. The spread of clinker stretches for about 80 yards in each direction and a slag heap is still standing to a height of about seven feet. Two 19th century cottages have been built on top of this mound and a modern barn nearby is built against one old stone wall which could have well have been part of the forge buildings. Bryant (1832-4) marks the site as 'Old Forge' so presumably it was no longer working at this date.

(See bottom opposite page)

### **Forge 2, Pontrilas**

The earliest record of this forge dates back to 1632. It appears to have had a shorter working existence than No. 1 as there is no mention of it in a list of 1717. The site is on the north bank of the Monnow but there is no trace left of the harnessing of water power. The field has been ploughed and levelled fairly recently and the only remaining evidence of iron working is a spread of black earth and clinker extending to about 60 yards square.

### **Forge 3, The Vro Farm**

The only record of a forge here is on Bryant's Map (1832). The Cwm Brook, which runs past the farmhouse back door, has certainly been straightened. There are two mills upstream from the Vro and evidence of "drowning" in the lower meadows. The farmer had not heard of any tradition of ironworking and had found no clinker. After viewing the very obvious surface remains on the other two sites we thought it unlikely that a forge had ever existed here.

We ended the day with a quick visit to the old chemical works at Pontrilas. The buildings have been converted into cottages and the branch line from Pontrilas Station has been removed. The factory, which made charcoal and allied by-products, ceased to function in 1924.

### **CROP MARK AT STRETFORD, LEOMINSTER**

In August 1971, an excavation was carried out on the field known as Stone Chester (SO 527 583) on Stretfordbury Farm, Stretford, Leominster with the object of finding Roman material justifying the name. The site lies on the west side of the Roman Road leading from Blackwardine to Stockton Cross. Its northern side is on the road that leads to Tick Bridge.

A trench 25ft. long and 3ft. wide was dug at right-angles to the Roman Road starting at about 6ft. from the hedge on the east side of the field. The trench was designed to cut across a crop mark often noticed by Miss Moore who had once cultivated the field.

At about 26 inches below the turf a hard metalled surface was discovered after removing about 21 inches of cheesy clay. It extended to the western edge of the trench from a point about 6ft. from the east end. The level was reached by a slope upwards from 6ft. to 8ft. from the eastern end of the trench, so that it appeared to be quite deliberately broadly based. The thickness of the metalled surface was about one foot.

At 22ft. from the eastern end of the trench was found a carefully constructed gully filled with large stones. This gully was at right angles to the trench, was roughly parallel to the Roman Road and coincided with the crop mark noticed by Miss Moore.

No positively Roman finds were made. There were several pieces of coarse pottery of indeterminate date, one hand made nail, one whetstone and two round stones that may have been sling stones.

The work was carried out by a number of enthusiastic young people under the direction of Mr N C Reeves and Miss E V G Brown. The latter are grateful to the farmer, Mr R D Moore, and his wife, for their help and considerable hospitality.

The excavation could not be continued because the land was required for use.

## RECENTLY SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

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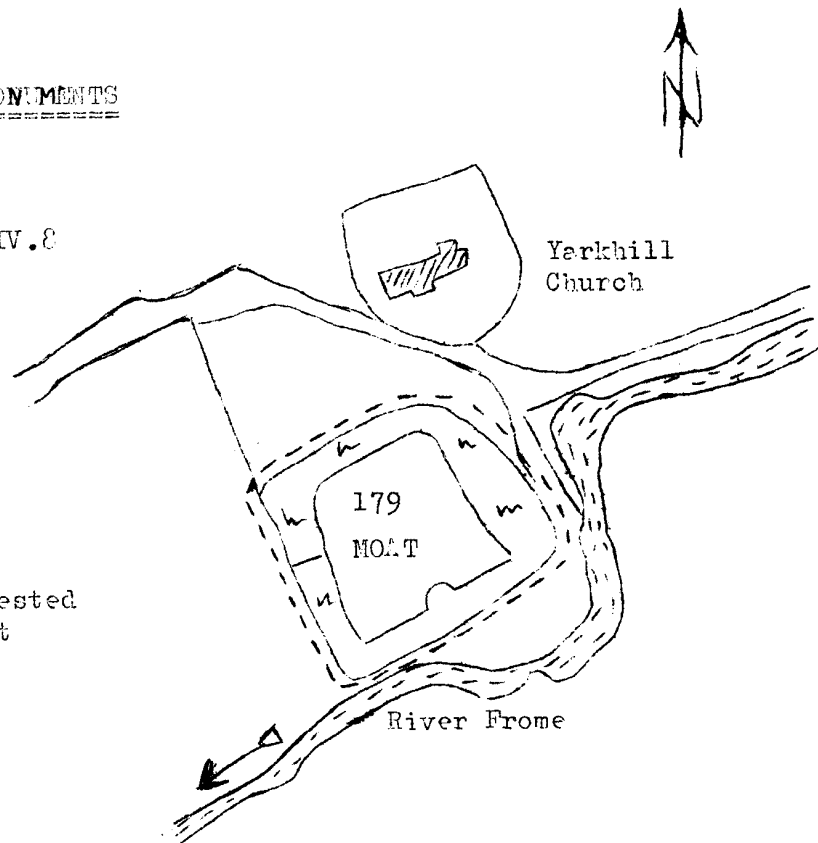
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(1:2500)

No.179

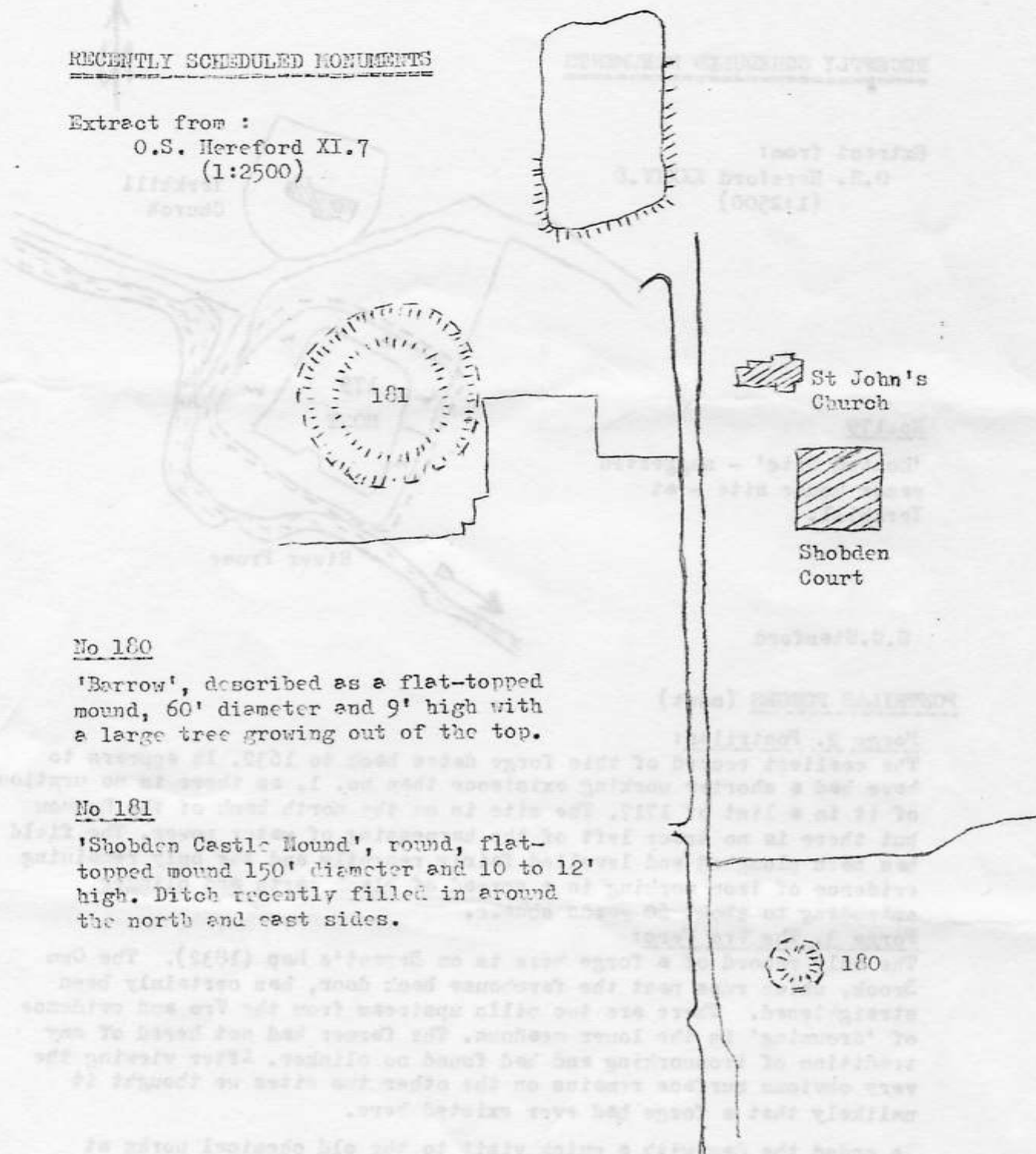
'Moated Site' - suggested  
manor house site - at  
Yarkhill.

S.C.Stanford



RECENTLY SCHEDULED MONUMENTS

Extract from :  
O.S. Hereford XI.7  
(1:2500)



No 180

'Barrow', described as a flat-topped mound, 60' diameter and 9' high with a large tree growing out of the top.

No 181

'Shobden Castle Mound', round, flat-topped mound 150' diameter and 10 to 12' high. Ditch recently filled in around the north and east sides.

S.C.Stanford.