

HEREFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS



HAN 53 January 1990

**WOOLHOPE CLUB
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION**

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No. 53 January 1990

PROGRAMME FEBRUARY-OCTOBER 1990

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| Tuesday 27 th February | Archaeological sites from the air | Meet at Llanwarne Village Hall at 7.30 pm Talk by Howard Dudley |
| Sunday 4 th March | Capler and Oldbury Camps | Meet at Green Man Inn, Fownhope Leader: Elizabeth Taylor |
| Sunday 1 st April | Investigate chapel site at Middlewood | Meet at the Pandy Inn, Dorstone Leader: Rosamund Skelton |
| Saturday 19 th May | Industrial remains, Forest of Dean, cont. | Meet at the crossroads B4223, GR 613146. Same place as October 1989 meeting |
| Sunday 3 rd June | Visit to castles in South Radnorshire | Meet in New Radnor village, below church Leaders: R Kay & P Halliwell |
| Sunday 22 nd July | Joint meeting with South Worcs Arch Soc in the Dore Valley | Meet at Abbey Dore Church Leader: Mary Thomas |
| Saturday 11 th August | Garden party at the home of John and Beryl Harding, Aldermead, Llanwarne. Help in preparation beforehand would be much appreciated. Please bring a bottle and some already prepared food. From 6.00 pm onwards. To give some idea of numbers, please phone 0981 540473 or write before the end of July. | |
| Sunday 16 th September | Field walking, venue still to be arranged | Contact Elizabeth Taylor |
| Sunday 14 th October | Field walking, venue still to be arranged | Contact Mike Hemming |

ARS OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE FOR 1990

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| <u>Chairman:</u> | Mr P Halliwell |
| <u>Secretary:</u> | Mr M Hemming |
| <u>Treasurer:</u> | Mr J Harding |
| <u>Field Secretary:</u> | Mr M Hemming |
| <u>Editor:</u> | Mr P Halliwell |
| <u>Assistant Editor:</u> | Mr J Kirkwood |
| <u>Committee Members:</u> | Mrs R Richardson Mrs R Skelton Miss M Thomas Mrs B Harding Mrs E M Taylor |

Mr R E Kay
Mr G Sprackling
Mr C R Attfield
Mr W T Jones
Mrs M U Jones

Subject Recorders

The following are Subject Recorders for the main Club:

| | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| Mrs B Harding | Ornithology |
| Mrs R Skelton | Deserted Medieval Villages |
| Mr G Sprackling | Parish Field Name Survey |

Disclaimer

The views expressed in articles represent the opinions of the writers, and not necessarily those of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club or the Archaeological Research Section. The accounts of Field Meetings are as faithful a record as possible of events and what was discovered.

EDITORIAL

This is the "slim" edition after the much larger than anticipated September Newsletter; copy for that was received at the last moment which the editor felt had to be included because of its archaeological importance.

It is hoped to introduce as a regular feature 'Letters to the Editor', and letters or comments on the Newsletter or any archaeological topic would be most welcome. The Editor reserves the right to select or shorten letters if necessary.

The editor apologises for any imperfections in the duplicating of No 52, he had to cut the duplicating skins and do the actual duplicating himself, and learned from his mistakes. There are many tricks he had to learn the hard way. An apology is due to Mr W F Attwell for the poor reproduction of part of his article on Blackwardine (pages 19 & 20 in the original Newsletter). The date of the AGM on Page 1, when the subscription was increased, was of course 1988 and not 1989.

A special word of thanks to Mike Hemming, who addressed the envelopes for both Newsletter No 52 and this issue. The editor would like to thank those contributors who typed their copy; it makes my work much easier and keeps down the cost of duplication. Please leave a margin of ¾" on the left hand side and sufficient room at the bottom of the page for the page number to be added. This also applies to pages of maps and diagrams, the darker the print or drawing the better the duplicated copy.

COUNCIL FOR INDEPENDENT ARCHAEOLOGY

At the third Congress of Independent Archaeologists, organised by Andrew Selkirk, the Editor of Current Archaeology, held in September at York, a split apparently developed between professionals and amateurs. About half the delegates walked out when a Constitution for a Council for Independent Archaeology was introduced. Many of the delegates that walked out were professionals.

The delegates that remained approved the Constitution, and the Council was formed, and the first AGM held. There are two main objectives: to create a united force for amateurs, to enable them to better work with professionals, and to set up a national database to collect and store information on all aspects of local archaeology.

PRH

NEXT WOOLHOPE PRESIDENT

The Archaeological Research Section is most happy to learn that one of our members, Dr F W Pexton, is to be the next President of the Woolhope Club. Before joining Woolhope and the ARS, Frank Pexton was an active member of the Maidenhead Archaeological and Historical Society, being the Treasurer as well as the Field Secretary, and contributed many articles for their magazine. We wish him all the very best for his year of office.

Chairman

THE HEREFORDSHIRE VALLEYS SURVEY

An illustrated lecture was given by Mr James Dinn of the County Archaeology Section on the work done so far in this survey, which in the main covers the valleys of the Wye and the Lugg. The talk was given in the Llanwarne Village Hall on Tuesday 12/1/90 at 7.30. Members of the ARS were joined by the Llanwarne Local History Group. 32 people attended the lecture.

Mr Dinn first outlined the work of the SMR at Warndon, and emphasised the importance of recording accurately all archaeological sites and artifacts discovered. The general public, and especially members of archaeological societies, were invited to assist in this important and vital work. All information is plotted on 6" maps with overlays for the various archaeological and historical periods, and is also being fed into a computer, which will eventually be able to extract information as required, as a printout.

James Dinn then outlined the existing known major sites in Herefordshire from the Stone Age to Mediaeval times, including Wapley Camp, Brandon Camp, Leintwardine and Combe. Air photographs were shown of enclosures, and the problems of Glacial Lake Beds and sediments were discussed. This led into the main problem covered by the survey: to what extent did sites exist beneath and within the alluvium? This is highlighted by the problem of the gravel workings at Wellington, where a licence to extract gravel was issued before the existence of archaeological sites was known. Fortunately, the gravel extraction company was helpful in this matter. The Herefordshire Valleys Survey was set up by the Hereford and Worcester County Council early in 1989.

At Wellington itself two layers of Roman occupation were discovered, and a possible Iron Age or earlier level. It is also envisaged that gravel will be extracted at Withington and Sutton St Nicholas, where a much closer watch will be maintained. The Roman site at Wellington consists of a farm with an attached barn containing a corn dryer. James put forward one interesting suggestion that perhaps it was not a corn dryer but was used for malt. Between the three occupation layers, which could be easily distinguished, were deposits of river alluvium and detritus. In the alluvium, former stream beds could be recognised. It was felt that it was only after the beginning of farming that the great quantities of alluvium were produced from the soil left exposed by agriculture.

A Roman knife with an iron handle and tang, with a bone handle, was discovered. This has now been preserved and will be on display in the future. At the moment a Birmingham University student is working on the problem of dating alluvium and this, if successful, will be invaluable for the Wellington site. A ploughed out Bronze Age barrow, leaving only the ring ditch, was also discovered on the site.

Phosphate levels in the soil were being used to try and help determine previous occupation levels. It was thought that the Wellington site eventually had trouble with the rising water table, and the original edges of the slightly higher mound were reinforced with stones and slag to raise the height of the site, together with stakes driven vertically in the earth. The slag indicates early iron working.

At Yarkhill in the Frome Valley a line of auger borings was taken across the valley to discover the depth and extent of the alluvium covering of the old surface. Further lines of auger borings were made further north in the Frome Valley towards Bromyard; traces of Roman occupation were discovered. Augering has also been done at Kingsland. Two crude

statues were discovered in the Frome Valley, possibly from a Celtic Water Shrine. By means of augering it is hoped to determine where the original surfaces have been overlain by alluvium. This will help especially in preventing occurrences such as Wellington, and allow arrangements to be made for rescue archaeology as appropriate.

James Dinn finished his lecture at 9.15, when light refreshments were served, and many members talked to James and took away copies of his leaflets on the work of the section at Warndon, and photographs of sites and artifacts. The meeting finally concluded at 10 pm after a very impressive and informative evening.

Beryl Harding must be thanked for arranging the hire of the venue and for arranging the refreshments.

PRH

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Richard Kay writes as follows on articles in issue No 52:

Blackwardine, p 16

“The fort (or rather fortlet) at Tedstone Wafre is unlikely to have outlasted the earlier campaigns connected with the stabilisation and consolidation of a frontier with the Silures and neighbouring tribes to the north and west, and connected with following subjugation, and as such it would not have been a focus, or even need be on an alignment of later road systems.”

Leintwardine, p 21

“The bibliography is incomplete, see various articles in JRS, Britannia, Arch Camb, etc, the later giving a reinterpretation of material found on earlier excavations etc lend support to the fact that it began as a military fort, possibly run down on a cool and mathematical basis, or even under-utilised during periods of its later history and re-garrisoned from time to time as circumstances and strategy warranted. The military requirements were always very fluid, as were the politics, and requirements of the 1st century would be quite different from those of the 2nd-4th centuries. The puzzle of the rapid change of site in a short period of time. Jay Lane, Buckton has not been satisfactorily solved to date.”

Richard Kay

A Roman road has recently been postulated northwards from Tedstone Wafre towards the Teme Valley. Another road southwards from the fort/fortlet at Sapey Common, Clifton-upon-Teme (703635) has been suggested. Has the Roman site at Stow (Stowe) SO 309734, buildings possibly a villa, any connection with Leintwardine?

Editor

Tom Jones

We were very sorry to hear of the sudden illness of one of our committee members, Tom Jones, on Tuesday 16th January, 1990, and we wish him a speedy recovery. Our sympathy goes out to Margaret in this difficult and worrying time.

Chairman

Greetings

Cdr M B Hall, RN is no longer able to attend Field Meetings, but wishes to be remembered to all his friends in the ARS. Cdr Hale was very active in the early days of the ARS.

Editor

Herefordshire Field Name Survey

The Field Name Survey Committee wish to thank all those who have contributed to the survey, people who extracted the field names, typists, checkers, etc. They wish to remind

members that more volunteers are still urgently needed to complete the survey, which at the moment is just over half completed.

Members are reminded about the second part of the survey, which is to collect alternative field names from other and perhaps older sources, charters, documents, title deeds, diaries, personal memories, etc. These should be sent to Graham Sprackling at Ewyas Harold.

Notes from Warndon

Hereford Bypass

Field work has started on the route of the Hereford bypass.

Leominster

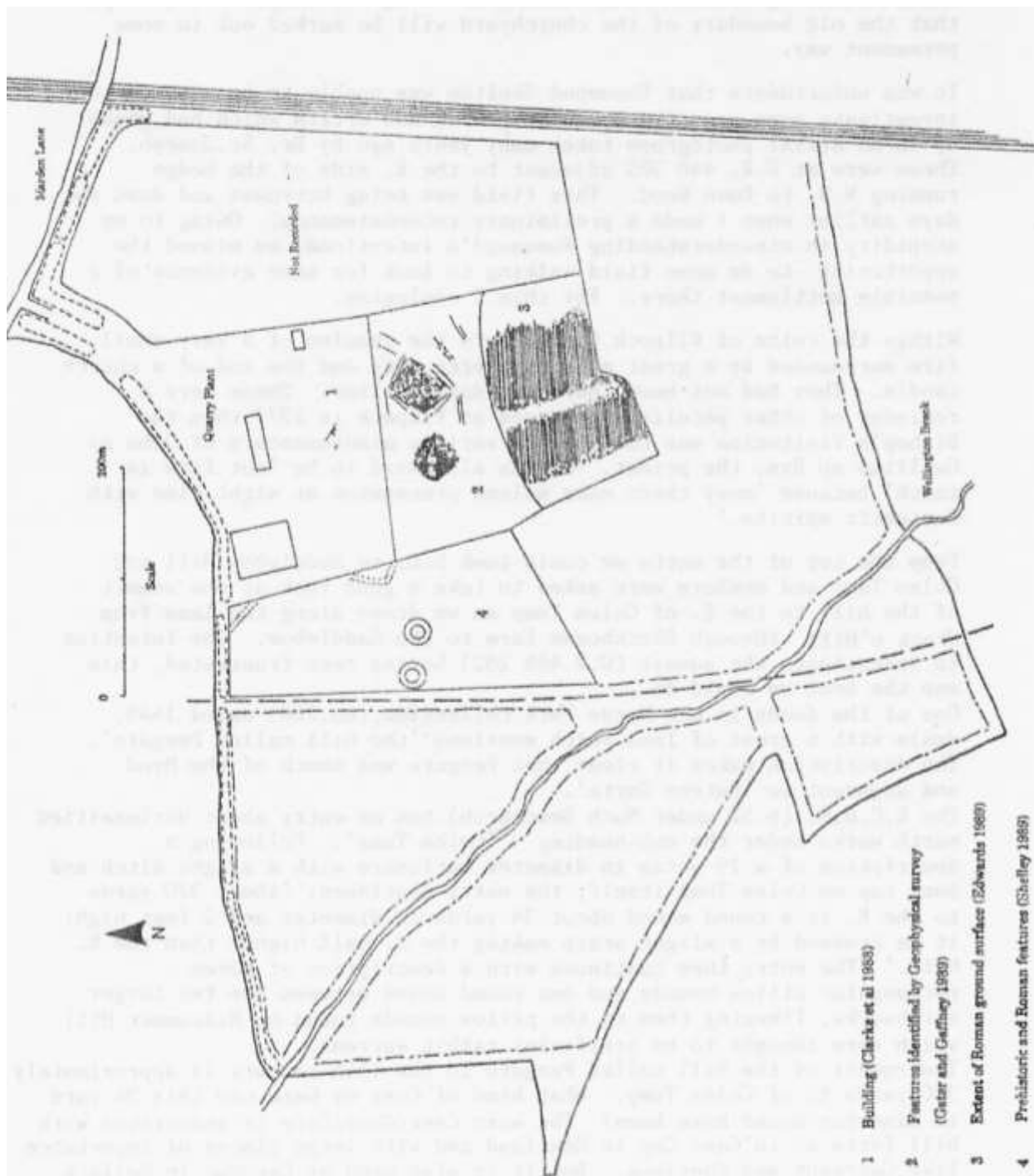
An evaluation exercise is being undertaken on the site of the Buttercross development at Leominster.

Riverdale

Air photographs taken in 1989 by Chris Mussen would tend to indicate the possibility of a Roman fort at Riverdale in the Golden Valley.

Wellington

A Roman field system has been revealed in the salvage excavations at the quarry site in Wellington, together with possible Bronze Age ditches. These were referred to by James Dinn in his talk.



- 1 Building (Clarke et al 1988)
- 2 Features identified by Geophysical survey (Gater and Gaffney 1989)
- 3 Extent of Roman ground surface (Edwards 1989)
- 4 Prehistoric and Roman features (Shelley 1989)

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KILPECK, ORCOP, ST WEONARDS – FIELD MEETING 10TH SEPTEMBER, 1989

Seventeen members met at Kilpeck Church, where the opportunity was taken to look at the new extension to the burial ground which was nearly completed.

Kilpeck has a circular churchyard and its shape is of great historic importance, showing that it was the site of an earlier Celtic church before the present beautiful little Norman church was built. We were therefore disturbed to see that the extension has been made by raising the new area to the same level as the old churchyard, burying the stone retaining wall and thus hiding the original shape. It is hoped that the old boundary of the churchyard will be marked out in some permanent way.

It was unfortunate that Rosamund Skelton was unable to be with us to investigate some possible house platforms and crofts which had shown up in an aerial photograph taken many years ago by Dr St Joseph. These were at GR 440 305, adjacent to the E side of the hedge running NW to Dawn Wood. This field was being harrowed and sown two days earlier when I made a preliminary reconnaissance. Owing to my stupidity in misunderstanding Rosamund's intentions, we missed the opportunity to do some field walking to look for some evidence of a possible settlement there. For this I apologise.

Within the ruins of Kilpeck Castle were the remains of a very small fire surrounded by a great many cigarette ends and the end of a church candle. They had not been there two days earlier. These were a reminder of other peculiar practices at Kilpeck in 1377 when the Bishop's Visitation was told of the various misdemeanours of John ap Gwilliam ap Rys, the priest. He was also said to be 'not firm in faith' because 'many there make solemn procession at night time with fantastic spirits'.

From the top of the motte we could look SE to Saddlebow Hill and Coles Tump, and members were asked to take a good look at the summit of the hill to the E of Coles Tump as we drove along the lane from Crack o'Hill through Blackhouse Farm to the Saddlebow. The intention to investigate the summit (GR 466 282) having been frustrated, this was the best we could do.

One of the deeds in the Mynde Park collection (No 288), dated 1448, deals with a grant of land which mentions 'the hill called Pengare'. The description makes it clear that Pengare was south of the Mynd and adjacent to 'Buters Corte'.

The RCHM (p 52 under Much Dewchurch) has an entry about unclassified earthworks under the sub-heading 'Coles Tump'. Following a description of a 19 yards in diameter enclosure with a slight ditch and sunk top on Coles Tump itself, the entry continues: 'About 320 yards to the E is a round mound about 34 yards in diameter and 2 feet high; it is crossed by a slight scarp making the S half higher than the N half.' The entry then continues with a description of seven rectangular pillow mounds and one round mound between the two larger earthworks, likening them to the pillow mounds found on Midsummer Hill, which were thought to be artificial rabbit warrens.

The summit of the hill called Pengare in the 15th century is approximately 320 yards E of Coles Tump. What kind of Caer or Gare can this 34 yard in diameter mound have been? The word Caer/Gaer/Gare is associated with hill forts, as in Gaer Cop in Hentland, and with large places of importance like Caerwent and Caerleon. But it is also used at Caradoc in Sellack, which was always called Cayr or Caer Cradock until the mid 17th century when the Caer was dropped. As no-one has ever succeeded in finding this particular Caer, it was presumably small enough to have been covered by the house, outbuildings and garden. The early form of Corras was Cauros, which may be a similar derivation⁽¹⁾.

The glorious summer weather decided to change on this particular day, which was cold and dull with poor visibility. This was a pity because the magnificent views and beautiful scenery went largely unappreciated, obscured by a dreary greyness. Our route took us along Orcop Hill then south to Orcop, where our thanks are due to the Morris family of Moat Farm for allowing us to visit the Castle Motte. This is Roger Sterling-Brown's province, and he will be telling us about the Baskerville castle in November. But knowing that by November the motte will be again inaccessible, with the moat full of water, we thought we

should have a look at it while the moat was dry. To our surprise, even after the long drought, half the moat was covered in water and we had to tread carefully over soft mud at the driest place. The motte is extremely steep, needing hands as well as feet to reach the top where we were pleased to find a fair amount of stonework visible even through the undergrowth and between the trees.

Taking the road southwards past Orcop church, Treferanon⁽²⁾ and Trolway, we reached Garway Common and lunched at the Garway Moon. Ruth Richardson had brought with her the Soil Survey map of Herefordshire and her own map of the Hill Forts and known Roman sites. When this was laid over the Soil Survey it showed with startling clarity the correlation between the best agricultural land in classes 1 & 2 with these early sites. This work was part of Ruth's thesis and we were fortunate to be given this preview of her work. It gave us a valuable insight into the choice of places which were used as hill forts. However unpromising the actual fort might seem to us as a habitation, it was always sited by an area of the best farming land.

Afterwards we made our way to the A466 south of St Weonards, stopping near the standing stone. This was moved when the road was widened and now stands against the hedge on the W side of the road (GR 497 235). The hill behind the standing stone and W of the road is called Bury Hill. In the Tithe Apportionment of 1840 the fields were called Upper, Lower and Far Berry Field and Standing Stone. Seen from further south on the main road, the area seemed to me to bear a strong resemblance to the ploughed down hill fort of Gaer Cop in Hentland. There is a high bank between the top field and the lower ones on the western side which might have been a rampart.

The members dutifully examined the 'rampart' but very little stone was found, and having plodded around for a while they remained totally unconvinced that any hill fort existed outside of my imagination.

The day ended with a quick visit to the motte near St. Weonards church. Unlike the motte at Orcop, so well protected by its moat, St. Weonards has suffered greatly from the excess of attention it received in the 19th century when mottes were confused with barrows. Local legend said that this one contained a warrior in golden armour – labour was cheap – so this one was 'excavated' as if by a JCB.

1. If anyone has any ideas on this subject or knows of other examples of Caers (other than hill forts) in Herefordshire, I would be very interested to hear of them.
2. Treferanon, or Trevrannin, together with Penrose were the sites of two Medieval chapels which belonged to St Weonards. The site at Treferanon has now disappeared and is part of the farmyard but the churchyard walls of the Penrose chapel still exist though the site has been used as a garden (GR 488 218).

Our thanks to Joan Fleming-Yates, who gave us space at her house in order to unroll the very large maps and discuss them with Ruth Richardson in comfort.

Elizabeth Taylor

Woolhope Club Winter Programme of Lectures

The first lecture of the 1989/1990 programme was given in the Woolhope Room, City Museum, Hereford on Saturday 7th October at 2.15 pm by Mary Thomas and Elizabeth Taylor on the Excavations at Corras.

Mary Thomas dealt with the actual excavations and the attendant problems, and Elizabeth Taylor with the historical background and the actual finds. Both sections were illustrated with well chosen slides.

The story of the architectural development of the church was told with the aid of built-up cut out coloured plans to illustrate each of the four development periods. An intriguing

problem was posed by the discovery of small pieces of Roman tiles on the site, perhaps from the newly discovered Roman fort at Castlefields Farm in Garway only about a mile away.

The finds were on display for Woolhope members to examine, and photographs were also displayed. There was a particularly fine set of drawings by Richard Kay, the photographs were excellent and the photographers are to be congratulated on their results.

Mary and Elizabeth gave an excellent, understandable and informative account of the excavations, and are to be congratulated on a job well done.

PRH

The definitive Corras Report will be printed in the main Club Transactions, and will not appear in the Newsletter. It is to be hoped that as many as possible of the photographs and drawings on display at the lecture will be included.

Editor

Book Review

'The Castles of Herefordshire and Worcestershire', Mike Salter, Folly Publications, 68 pp, 2 maps

An excellent short account of the castles of both counties, treated separately, with drawings, photographs and plans for many of them. The major moated sites for both counties are also included. The majority of the book is devoted to Herefordshire. There is also a companion booklet on the old Parish Churches of Herefordshire by the same author.

In the same series there are also volumes on the Castles and Churches of Shropshire and Staffordshire, and the Churches of Worcestershire, all at the same price. The same author has also produced a gazetteer of Scottish Castles – 'Discovering Scottish Castles', published by Shire Publications.

The great advantage with Mike Salter's booklets is that every site mentioned has a Grid Reference.

PRH

LEOMINSTER PRIORY

Work is currently being undertaken to bring to publication the report of recording carried out on the Old Priory building at Leominster in 1979-81. This building consists of a 13th century range of monastic buildings, two storeys high (although a 19th century third storey has been superimposed over much of it) lying to the north of the Priory Church. The Pinsley Mead picnic area makes it a pleasant place to visit.

The building is tripartite, probably reflecting the progressive way in which monastic complexes were built. The western part, being closest to the cloister, seems to be the earliest, since indications of original 12th century construction are present, incorporated into later walls. These include an arcade giving access to the Pinsley Brook at ground floor level. The remainder of the building, and much of the rebuilding of the western part, took place in the 13th century.

The ground floor was built to span the Pinsley Brook, which passed beneath the whole length of the building, the culvert for which can still be seen at each end. However, in the western room the stream seems to have been left open to the air, and has more recently been enclosed by the insertion of a brick culvert. The use to which this room was put is suggested by the location of the building within the layout of a typical Benedictine monastery. It is ideally situated to represent the *reredorter*, or monks' toilet, situated in close proximity to the *dorter* or dormitory. Access from the latter, at first floor level above the chapter house and warming room in the east range of claustral buildings, would have been at first floor level, where the toilet seats would have been situated.

The remainder of the ground floor has no certain purpose assigned to it, but may represent a variety of storage and accommodation functions within the monastery. On the first floor the central chamber was a large room heated by a fireplace, the chimney for which is represented in an illustration by Stukeley dated 1722 (see figure). At the east end of the range on the first floor was a small, well-lit room with a three light window at its east end. Access into the large central chamber was through a broad finely-moulded arch. This combination of features suggests the infirmary building and its associated chapel, with a good view of the altar for those monks unable to attend the required services in the church.

This building has a complex history, including use as a manor house, a gaol, a fulling mill, the mansion house of Leominster Corporation, function rooms, a workhouse and more recently a hospital, while it is now used as a base for the social services department of the county. Although much of its structural history has already been reported by historians from the 17th century to the present, a great deal of the detail can be filled in by a structural analysis of the kind which has been carried out. This includes a stone by stone recording of the exterior fabric of the building, and detailed recording of the interior fabric where exposed during the refurbishment programme. This has indicated additional Medieval structural phases, as well as more recent phases not already indicated in the historical record.

It is part of my job to identify phases within each element of the building, to assess whether there is a functional reason for construction or alteration, and attempt to link these phases to dates, architectural styles and known historical events affecting the Priory. I have some help with this last task from the dating provided by a small excavation within the building, which has particularly helped with the earlier structural phases here.

The Pinsley Brook was a canalisation of a stream which may originally have run in the current course of the Kenwater. It probably supplied the monastery with drinking and washing water, a water supply for the fishponds, formerly situated in the gasworks and on Pinsley Mead, an effluent outflow, and finally the power source for water mills, the site of one of which may have been preserved by the site of the disused Pinsley Mill. Leats for water mills were also taken from the course of the Lugg; one or more mills were situated on Mill Lane to the north of the Priory, while Marsh Mill and Crowards Mill are also attested to the north of the town. Mills and other elements associated with monastic estates have been examined in great detail by C J Bond in association with Evesham Abbey (see Vale of Evesham Historical Society Research Papers IV, 1973, 1-62). Such a study in relation to Leominster would be of great value and I would be interested to hear from anyone who has done, or would like to do any work in this field.

Duncan L Brown, MA

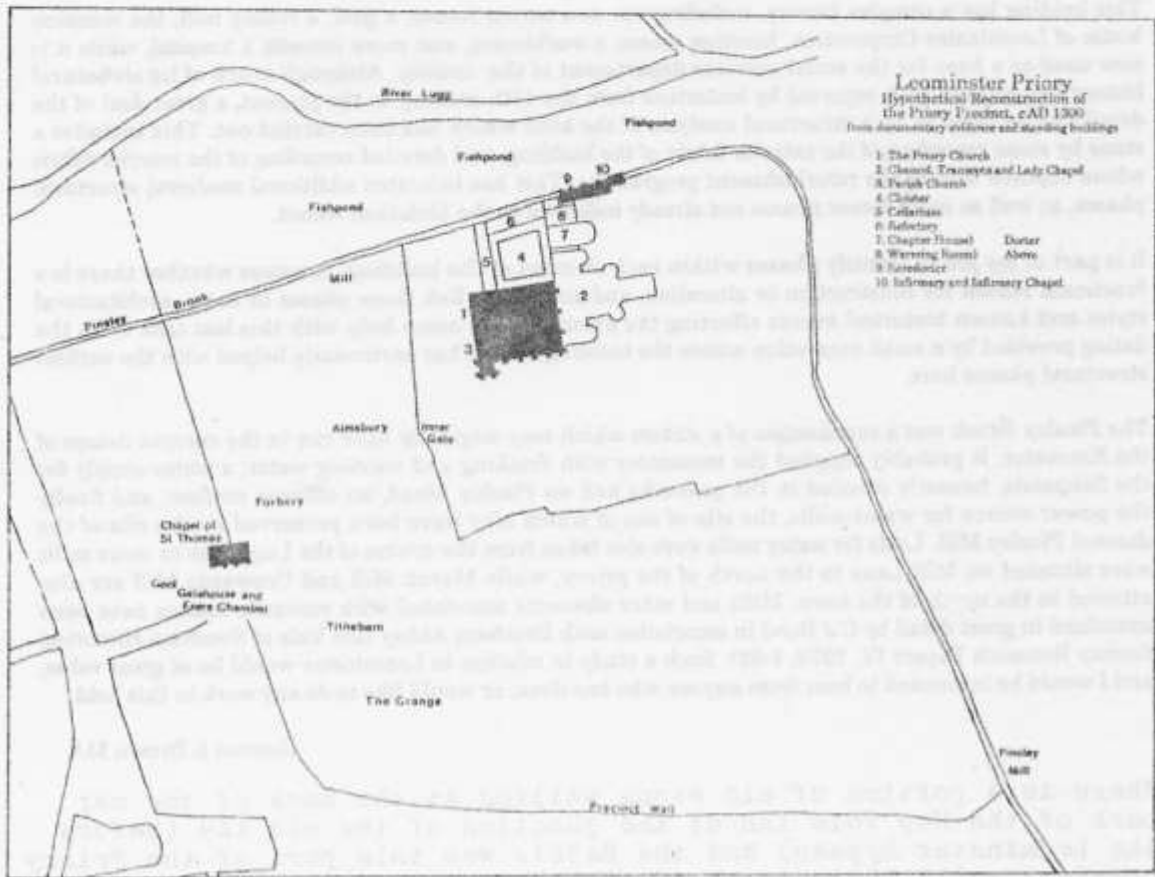
There is a portion of old stone walling at the back of the car park of the Hop Pole Inn at the junction of the old A49 (before the Leominster Bypass) and the B4361. Was this part of the Priory precinct wall? It is north of the Lugg and would be at right angles to a NW continuation of the wall shown on the plan.

Editor

RELIGIOUS RUINS'



Remnant of the Priory of Leominster Sep. 14. 1722.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND DINNER

The AGM and Annual Dinner were held at 8.00 pm at the Golden River Restaurant, Hereford, on Monday 4th December, 1989, attended by 19 members. The Chairman, Treasurer, Editor and Field Name Survey all gave their reports. All office holders were unanimously re-elected for the forthcoming year.

There had been a change in the monthly field meeting programme for January and February of 1989, where successful evening lectures at Llanwarne Village Hall had been substituted. The weather in winter is so unpredictable that it is better to have evening lectures. It also makes a change and it is useful to have theoretical knowledge for use on field trips. The chairman thanked Beryl Harding for organising the use of the hall and for arranging the refreshments. John and Beryl Harding also organised the annual Barbecue on 27th July 1989, an evening to be remembered not only for the excellent food and company, but also because the prolonged dry weather broke with a vengeance.

The section has received a very generous gift of 48 25" maps of Herefordshire from the Offa's Dyle Association through Mr & Mrs Kay of Guildford, whom we understand will be moving back to the county in the near future. We look forward to seeing them at field meetings.

On 11th November 10 members attended a get-together, at the Caer Llan Conference Centre, of the Monmouth Archaeological Society, the Dean Archaeology Group and ourselves. The conference, hosted by the Monmouth Society, was an informal get-together of members of the three groups to cement friendships and exchange experiences. The evening was a great success and the ARS agreed to host the meeting in 1990.

The question of the binding of copies of the Newsletter, first raised at the 1988 AGM, was brought up again. The Chairman expressed regret for the lack of progress but felt that it would be expensive, and it was agreed to approach the main Club for assistance.

The Chairman thanked all office holders for their help and support during the past year, and also Mike Hemming and Estelle Davies for allowing the Committee to use their homes for meetings and for providing refreshments. Finally, the proprietors of the Golden River were thanked for allowing us to hold our AGM in their restaurant. The meeting closed at 9.30 pm, to be followed by the usual enjoyable Chinese meal.

PRH

Gift of Maps

The ARS would like to thank the Offa's Dyke Association and Mrs & Mrs Kay of Guildford for their very generous gift of 48 25" maps of Herefordshire. We understand that the Kays are hoping in the future to move back to the Welsh Border from Guildford, and we may then have the pleasure of seeing them on field meetings. In the meantime, we can assure them that their maps will be put to very good use.

Chairman

'CASTLES' FIELD MEETING, SUNDAY 5TH NOVEMBER, 1989

On Sunday the 5th of November, only slightly interrupted by rain, the Archaeological Research Group visited Kilpeck Castle and three of the minor castles at Walterstone, Llancillo and Bacton as Part 1 of what will hopefully be a long term programme of investigation and recording of the remains of the minor castles of Herefordshire.

From the information recorded below, it is obvious that many new and interesting discoveries await the researcher in this, until recently largely neglected, sphere of archaeology. Because of the weather and shortage of time, Rowstone was not visited but I have included my notes on the site.

KILPECK CASTLE, SO 444305

New Information

The shell keep seems to have been a 20-sided polygonal structure with sides roughly 14 feet long, with a wall with a battered base 7 feet high to the top of the batter, without a string course, built on a roughly-built foundation 5 feet 6 inches high, partly trench built by cutting into the former earth rampart. The width of the wall at the base is 7 feet to 7 feet 3 inches, thinning in stages to about 5 feet at the top with the exception of the one standing section on the N side, which seems to have been rebuilt at a later date (possibly a Civil War repair) and is very thin at the top (probably too thin to support a wall walk). The shell wall was approximately 100 feet in diameter and would have been 25-30 feet high, possibly with a wooden hoarding on the wall top, as we now believe that most of the early castles, especially in a troubled border area, would have been permanently hoarded.

The interior seems to have been well fitted for comfort, with sink and drains, an oven, well-made fireplaces and what may have been a garderobe access. Some of the facilities may have been added at a later date, possibly for the regular visits of King John, who enjoyed comfortable living. These facts, and the lightness of the structure above the battered base, lead me to believe that this shell was built earlier, rather than late in the 12th century as was previously thought.

What was thought to be the stump of a gate tower to the former entrance to the bailey seems to be a mound of earth made from the spoil from a new entrance cut through the bank for access by farm machinery. The original entrance seems to be on the east side, where there seems to be a buried basement which may mark the position of the hall or a room flanking the possible entrance, or it could possibly be a drawbridge pit in a gate tower. The buried foundations of the curtain wall show up here and there behind the bailey bank. The low ramp from bailey to keep may cover remains of a barbican.

Over time the bailey was first thought to be not walled in stone, then partially walled in stone. Now, even though John Sawle found no sign of stonework on the bailey bank top, we have recently found signs of a possible tower in the N corner of the bailey and signs of buried walling on the S side of the bailey. I am inclined to believe that the whole bailey was walled. With its known long period of occupation this is most likely. I would think the bailey was unlikely to have had stone walls before the end of the 12th to early 13th century, though I can't be certain of this as there does not appear to be much in the way of flanking towers. A lack of flanking towers is usually a sign of an early building date.

This was certainly a very strong castle, probably founded with powerful earthworks soon after the Conquest, with a planned borough added to it, though it may be on the site of an earlier Saxon settlement.

The large outer bailey may have been walled in stone and added to accommodate the large entourage of the King. There is a considerable quantity of loose stone lying about the banks and no sign of ramparts, though these may have existed in the past and been removed by later owners for agricultural purposes.

The wall of the shell keep where the foundations are exposed appears to be built on a base course of inclined vertically laid stones. This method was used by the Romans and is found on several early castles in the area, notably on the curtain at Bredwardine Castle (SO 335444).

Notes and References

For a plan and general description see RCHMH Vol I, pages 158-159.

Mentioned Pine Rolls 1189. Chapel given to Gloucester Abbey 1134.

For details of a small excavation on a proposed graveyard extension, see Hereford & Worcester County Council Archaeology Dept: Excavations at Kilpeck Castle 1982, Interim Report, by John Sawle, BA.

ROWLSTONE CASTLE, SO 375272

Formerly described as a motte approximately 120 feet in diameter, earthwork only.

New Information

This site presents more questions than answers. The top of the motte is flat over most of its surface. There is no sign of stonework; very few pieces of loose stone and these are small.

There seems to be no sign of compression on the motte top, such as one would find if there had been a stone wall in the past. A child's den dug into the side of the motte on the south side shows no sign of buried stonework, mortar or ash. There are no obvious signs of a bailey, though bailey earthworks are often destroyed when a farm is nearby, as is the case at Rowlstone. Indeed, any former bailey could have been under the present farmyard.

The sides of the motte are very steep for most of its circuit, so there is a possibility that the sides were revetted in timber or stone which has long disappeared. There are one or two large pieces of stone partially exposed at the foot of the motte in the ditch bottom, but these could be part of the bedrock showing through.

So until further information can be recovered, I am inclined to believe that this motte only had timber structures and possibly only short term habitation. In fact, the site may never have been completed, despite having tenancies through to the 14th century. Nearby Court Farm, of the 14th century, probably indicates an early move from the castle.

Notes and References

For details of history, by Mr Bruce Coplestone-Crow, plan and notes on a previous visit, see HAN No 40.

RCHMH Vol I, South West, page 223.

WALTERSTONE CASTLE, SO 339250

Formerly recorded as an earthwork-only motte and bailey site.

New Information

I was informed by our member Mr David Whitehead that there was a considerable quantity of loose stone on and around the motte, indicating a possible stone structure on the motte top. Close examination showed that there had probably been a stone building of some sort on the motte, although it is not certain that it was a stone keep or tower but there are several signs that show the possibility of a stone tower. The area on the top is fairly small, only leaving room for a small tower, perhaps like the polygonal tower at Snodhill. The stones present on the site are the usual thin, shaley slabs of sandstone used locally for castle building. Around the stone-filled hump on top of the motte there are patches of loose stone at roughly similar distances apart; one could speculate on the possibility of an oval polygonal tower with pilaster buttresses on the angles. Only further investigation could confirm this. One angle of partially-exposed wall alignment I photographed on my previous visit had frustratingly disappeared under a carpet of leaves on our present visit. A more certain pointer to stonework is the hump of earth and loose stone crossing the motte ditch on the possible entrance position. On the bailey side there are signs of laid stone in situ in the bank and amongst tree roots, with some mortar, particles of lime and sharp sand, and gravelly soil which is probably old mortar with its lime destroyed or used by plants, a usual sign around

old overgrown masonry. Sand and gravel is not naturally found on this site, whose natural soil is boulder clay. In this position, this is possibly all that remains of a barbican and stair to the keep. There is much buried stone in the upper bailey, whose ditches and banks have largely been destroyed by the later farm buildings. The ramparts of a fairly large lower bailey have been virtually ploughed out.

There is a distinct similarity in design to Ewyas Harold and the other Fitzosbern castles. This early and important site merits further investigation.

Notes and References

For details of history, plan and notes on a previous visit, see HAN No 40.

In my castle list of HAN No 50 under Walterstone, I mentioned the possibility of a shell keep. This was secondhand information, supplied before I had examined the site myself. I am now more inclined towards the possibility of a tower, as any shell keep would be extremely small. People talk of roofed-over shell keeps; this is a distinction which I do not accept, as a shell keep is a ring wall on the motte with a suite of rooms arranged around the inside, with a light well or courtyard left in the centre. Any structure with a complete roof is a tower in my book.

THE CASTLE AT LLANCILLO COURT, SO 367256

The castle site has long been known to have masonry remains on the motte top, but there has been much confusion about the structure. Alfred Watkins thought it was oval, 39 feet by 48 feet, and that it stood to 5 feet high in places. David Cathcart-King, who encouraged me to follow in his footsteps in castle research, thought it was firstly a round tower and later describes it as a ring wall. Derek Renn, whose researches generally have done much to advance our knowledge on early Norman castles, thought it was either a round tower or a roofed-over shell keep, 50 feet in diameter, although it has been on several lists as a round tower. Renn goes on to compare it with Wiston in Pembrokeshire, which is a polygonal shell keep, and throws doubt on whether it was ever completed.

The remaining structure was much clearer and stood higher 10 years ago, or has a deeper covering of debris.

New Information

This is definitely a polygonal keep (probably a shell keep as it is rather large for a tower) with what appears to be 12 sides, approximately 14 feet long externally, about 50-51 feet external diameter and approximately 37 feet diameter internally.

Whether it was roofed over entirely we can't say, but most keeps of this type has a small internal courtyard forming a light well. The walls appear to be 7 feet thick.

We have discovered signs of two small semi-circular buttress towers flanking the entrance, and possibly two more on the circuit, as indicated on the plan. There could be a third tower on the east side, but I am now more inclined to think that the piece of wall protruding from the keep may be the end of the bailey curtain butting onto the keep.

There appears to be the footings of a garderobe shaft on the east side. The internal buildings would probably be timber framed but could have been stone.

The surviving wall of the gate tower has one stone keyed into the main structure in 7 courses. This may or may not mean that the towers were added to an earlier shell, though this is likely. The stone seems to be smaller than the shell wall stone, but difficult to confirm without excavation.* Derek Renn thought that it was uncompleted, but stone roofing tiles lying about on the motte seem to confirm that it was completed.

There may be a small tower on the end of the counterscarp bank on the west side connected to the bailey. Faint traces of scarping on the south edge of the bailey may mark wall foundations or the edge of a filled-in ditch. The low mound at the west end of the bailey

is probably the site of a hall block, as a few courses of an internal angle of what appears to be a rectangular building approximately 40 feet by 30 feet externally were visible amongst brambles a few years ago before the site was tidied up.

The bank of the stream on the north side of the bailey appears to be partially revetted with a stone wall. The stream forms the main defence on this side. The stream was probably dammed lower down and was diverted to feed the moats and ditches around the main defences.

There are other ditches and banks around the site forming further enclosures or baileys; one or more of them could have enclosed a village.

Tenancy

The Esketot family, who were closely associated with the Lacy's, followed by the Eylesfords after 1243. The site and possibly existing church and settlement were given to Richard de Esketot I, great uncle of Richard II who held 3 knights fees of Hugh II de Lacy in 1166; two of these were at Howton and King's Pyon (both have mottes), the other was probably here. Richard III, grandson of Richard II, was father of Walter, who died around 1243 leaving two heiresses. Richard I probably built the motte and bailey, the stonework attributable to either Richard III, 1160-1220, the most prominent member of the family, or to his son Walter (d. ante 1243). The Eylesfords seem to have neglected the place.

Notes and References

Mentioned 1216-25, H III, p 255, Cal Pat Rolls.

*Small round towers of smaller masonry have been added to the polygonal tower at Snodhill. Additional towers were added at Wigmore and possibly at Much Dewchurch.

On our visit this time, we noted that a section of outer bailey ditch or sunken road has been leveled by bulldozer and filled in (X on plan).

For further details of history, by Mr Bruce Coplestone-Crow, plan and notes on a previous visit, see HAN No 40.

'The Round Keeps of the Brecon Region', by D F Renn.

Archaeologia Cambrensis, 1961, Vol CX, pages 129-143.

CASTLE AT NEWCOURT FARM, BACTON, SO 371335

Formerly classed as a small, weak, damaged, earthwork-only motte and bailey or strong house site. Naturally strong only on the north, south and east sides.

New Information

To the west of Newcourt Farm is what appears to be the largely complete ground plan of a small knightly castle, probably of the late 12th to the mid 13th century on a site which may be earlier.

What was thought to be a damaged motte appears to be the stump of a round keep with an apsidal buttress and what appears to be a forebuilding or defended stair to it, connected to a small triangular bailey with a hall, gatehouse and ancillary buildings, and possibly one or two small towers on the curtain.

The round keep (1 on plan) appears to be 32-34 feet in diameter and approximately 18 feet internal diameter, with walls 7-8 feet thick with what appears to be a thicker section facing the forebuilding/defended stair (2 on plan). The apsidal buttress on the east side

probably contained the stairs or garderobes and chimneys. A forebuilding or defended stair to a round keep is rare, but a good idea on a cramped site like this where any additional defence to slow down a sudden assault would be useful. The structure appears to be approximately 26 feet square.

The curtain wall appears to be 6-7 feet thick. The rampart on the west had only one small section of exposed masonry but a lot of loose core stone in the top. Without excavation, we couldn't ascertain the thickness of this wall but it appears to be thicker than the rest.

A length of partially buried curtain on the south side gave us a width of 6 feet.

The possible hall block at 3 appears to be approximately 32 feet by 56 feet externally. There could be possible entrances at 4, 5 and 9 on plan, possibly small towers at 6 and 8 on plan and what appears to be another block of buildings at 7 on plan.

This site should be compared with Welsh castle design at Dolbadarn, and Anglo-Welsh castle design at Dinewr and Melte Castle, Ystradfelte.

The keep can be compared with the round keeps at Caldicot, Skenfrith and its giant neighbour at Longtown.

Tenancy

A Gilbert held this and Hampton Court at Dinmore in 1086 of Roger de Lacy. This Gilbert was possibly the ancestor of a family calling itself de Bacton or de Hampton. William de Bacton held two knights fees of Hugh de Lacy of Weobley, one here in 1166. Richard de Hampton had it as an old fee in 1243.

The builders of the present remains were probably William de Bacton and Richard de Hampton.

Speculation

The site itself could be earlier than the Conquest as it has the look of a small promontory fort, and there has been an abundance of springs on and near the site. This unusually dry summer of 1989 is the first time, apparently, that no surface water has been present on the site.

The early (circa 1086) structure on this site was probably the stone-filled rampart and water-filled ditch on the west, weaker side of the site, strengthened by a palisade with probably some sort of hall house inside.

There is an outside chance that the forebuilding at 2 on plan could have been an earlier small square keep (Goodrich keep is only 28 feet square), but only excavation could confirm this.

It is not possible to tell if the possible hall block at 3 on plan is built into the former rampart wall or is a freestanding structure as the western foundation is buried.

The partially buried foundation at 4 on plan looks like an internal gatehouse with a pit for a tilting bridge with counterweights, similar to the gate on the early shell keep at Tretower. On the west bank opposite this structure is some loose and buried stone, possibly covering a former bridge abutment.

This is a very interesting little site which merits further investigation as there may be further outworks beyond the western rampart, because although the area is overgrown with scrubby woodland it is obvious that the ground is much disturbed and there is a lot of loose stone lying about the area, which could be covering an outer bailey and possibly an associated settlement.

References

RCHMH Vol I, SW, pages 20-21.

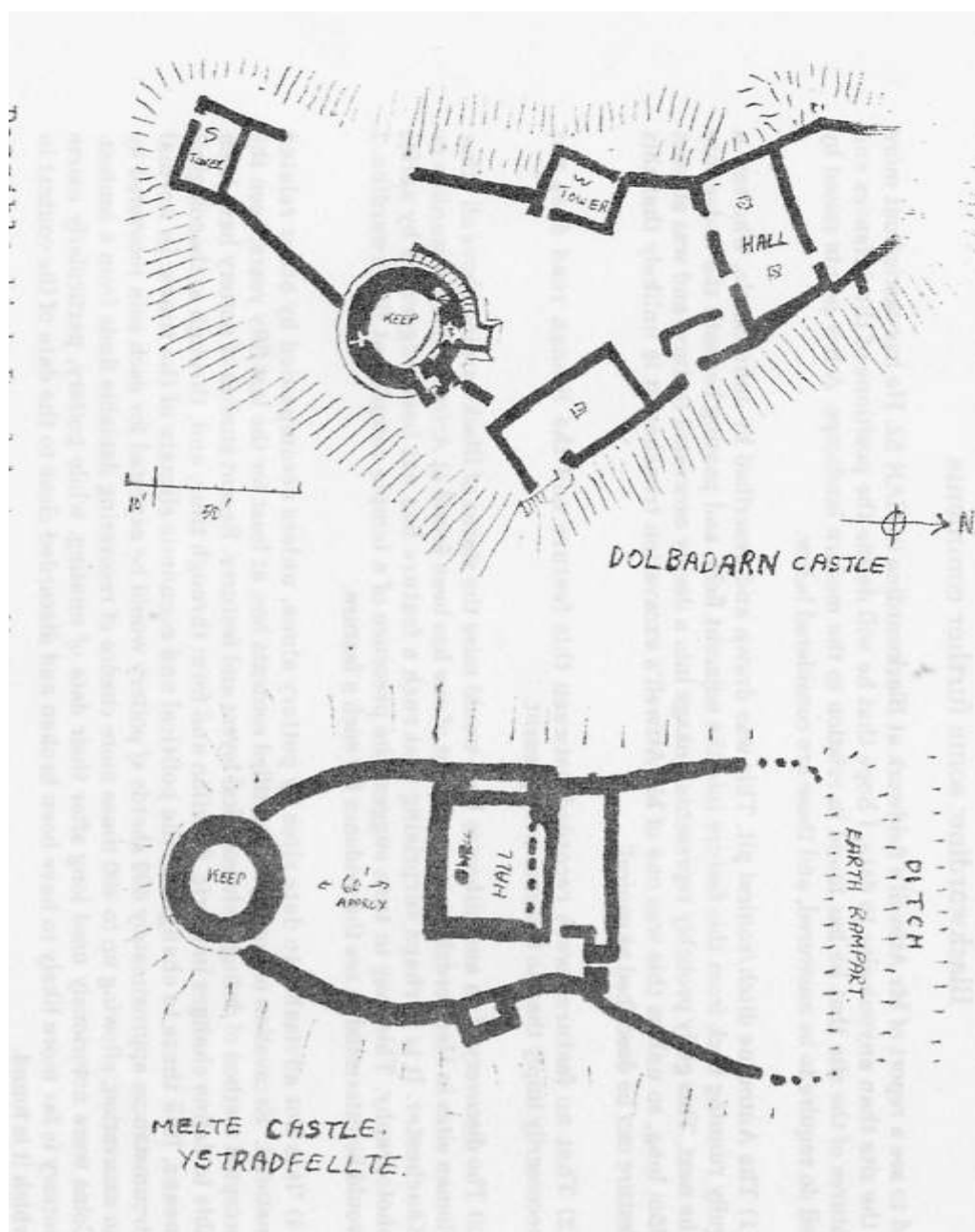
'The Round Keeps of the Brecon Region', by D F Renn.
Archaeologia Cambrensis 1961, Vol CX, pages 129-143.

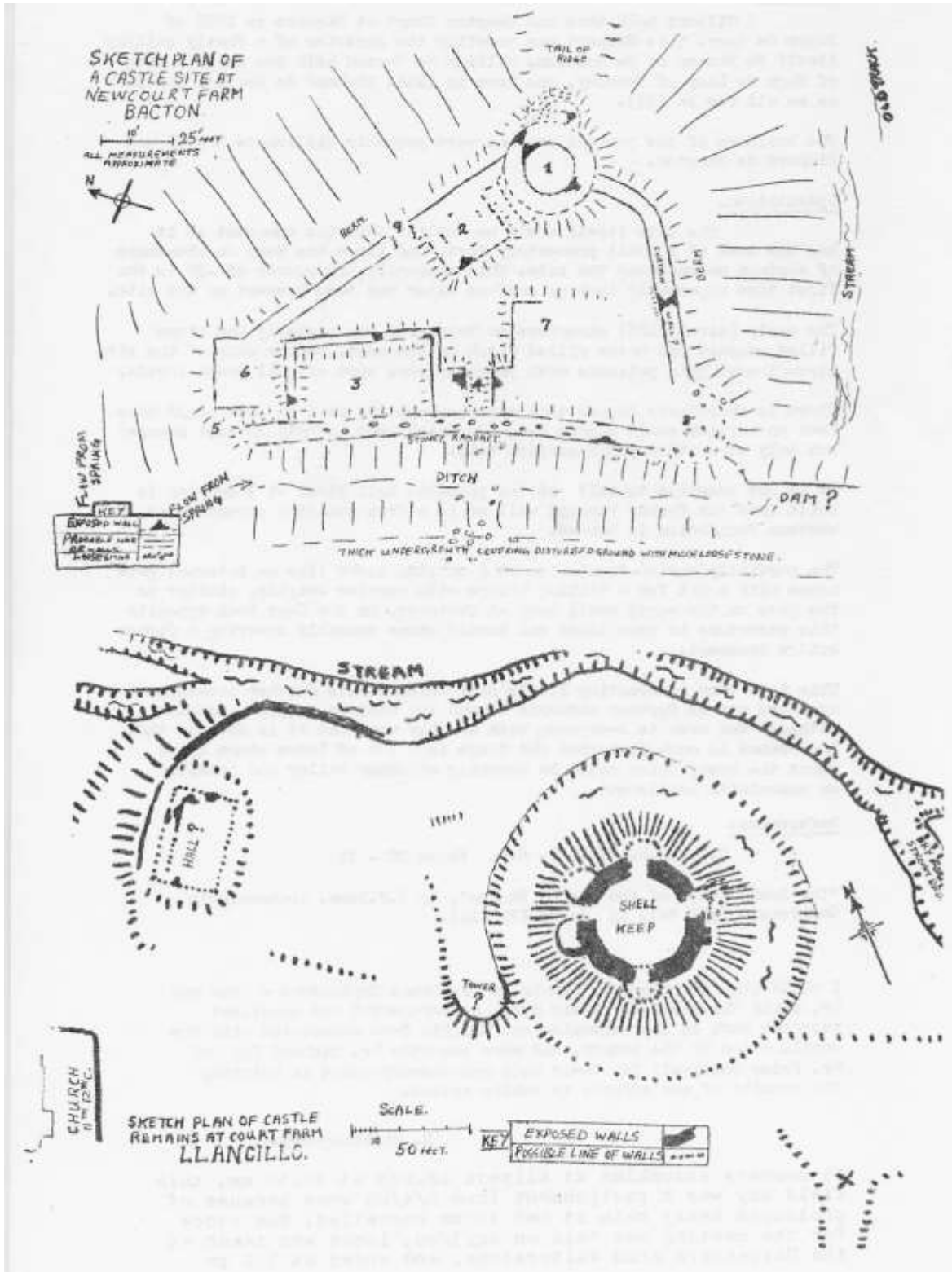
I would like to record my thanks to Mr Bruce Coplestone-Crow and Mr David Whitehead for their help, encouragement and excellent research work on the tenancies and knights fees associated with the castle sites in the county, and more recently Mr Richard Kay and Mr Peter Halliwell for their help and encouragement in bringing the results of our efforts to public notice.

R Sterling-Brown

15 members assembled at Kilpeck Church at 10.30 am. This Field Day was a postponement from 8/4/89 when because of prolonged heavy rain it had to be cancelled. The recce for the meeting was held on 28/3/89. Lunch was taken at the Carpenter's Arms, Walterstone. The meeting ended at 5.00 pm.

Editor





POSSIBLE LINK ROAD BETWEEN WATLING STREET WEST AND HAUGHTON'S NORTHWARD EXTENSION OF MARGARY'S 613

Members may remember that on 23/6/85 a field meeting was held at Leintwardine led by Rosamund Skelton, where among other things we tried to find a possible west-east Roman road linking Watling Street West to the northward extension of Margary's 613. The results were inconclusive.

Dr A V J Haughton postulated an east-west link a little north of where we were looking. Starting at Lower Toddington, then to Mocktree Farm, then to Fiddler's Elbow on the A4113 and presumably eastwards to Bromfield. Haughton's road is from Shelderton (405777) on Watling Street, to Shelderton Rock, along Green Lane to Whittytree and thence to Onibury where traces of the old ford across the River Onny were observed by Haughton.

The northward extension of 613 was also postulated by Haughton, as was Margary's 193 from Greensforge (Stourbridge) to Caersws, crossing Watling Street West at Craven Arms and the 613 extension at Greenway Cross.

PRH

F C MORGAN LECTURE, 1990

This will be given by Dr P J Reynolds on Saturday, 10th March at the St Martin's Parish Centre, Ross Road, Hereford, at 2.15 pm. The subject of the lecture will be 'Butser Ancient Farm – A Research Tool for the Future'.

BLACKWARDINE – SOME FURTHER COMMENTS

I was glad to see a report of Mr Attwell's fieldwork at Blackwardine in HAN 52. He has carried out more work on the site than anyone else to date. I hope that he will define the positions of the defences and major features of the site that he has found in relation to the modern landscape. A few points raised by Mr Attwell do require to be answered, and these are considered below.

1. The Antonine ditch/conical pit. This was drawn and described by John Sawle, who saw a gully running back from this feature into the adjacent field and passing beneath the hedge into the next. This gully probably represents sinkage into a deeply excavated feature, and was at least 25m long, so unless this was one of Mr Attwell's excavation trenches it is unlikely that this feature can be described as conical!
2. That no features were recorded between this feature and the Roman road does not necessarily imply that no features were present.
3. The discovery of an amphitheatre here would raise the status of Blackwardine above all other Roman sites in Herefordshire, since no hint of one has been found at Ariconium, Leintwardine or Kenchester. It is perhaps surprising that such a feature has not been suggested by aerial photography. This may in turn suggest the presence of a temple complex at Blackwardine. I would be interested to see the evidence for such a feature.
4. "It is not advisable to date sites by pottery alone, unless accompanied by other related material." Excavation of pottery in stratified contexts has, at least for the last fifty years, been the accepted method of dating archaeological layers and features. Recent studies of pottery have been able to define changes in fabric, function and form through time and, through archaeological means, link these to changes in the political and economic climate of the times. In normal circumstances approximately 400 sherds of pottery would be expected for each coin recovered by an excavation, allowing up to 400 times more chance of recovering dateable finds from a context.

Coins were notoriously used long after their date of minting, while pottery, particularly coarse pottery, is far more likely to have been broken and discarded close to the date of the context in which it is found.

5. A study of the whole assemblage of coins, and the frequency of coins present for each Emperor's reign, can assist the specialist in assessing the date of origin, the demise, and also the status of a Roman settlement. Coins of Constantius III are comparatively rare nationally, and to my knowledge only one other coin of Valentinian III has ever been recovered by excavation in Britain. *Æ* minimi were not minted in any numbers after the end of the fourth century AD, and may have gone out of use before the sub-Roman period. In the later fourth and fifth centuries payment in kind, assessment of value of copper-based coinage by weight and use of coins of gold and silver were the accepted means of commercial exchange, making the *minimus* redundant.
6. Pottery kilns in the county and the region as a whole are a particularly rare and important class of site, and require very careful excavation and recording. It is to be hoped that Mr Attwell will publish his findings here with a full range of vessel forms and fabric descriptions to allow expert assessment of this kiln in relation to others in the West Midlands and elsewhere.
7. Romano-British Amphorae are not known to have been made other than in the southeast.
8. The military finds are an equally important group, and should also be carefully drawn or photographed and published to allow a specialist assessment of the date and type of unit stationed here to be made.

I look forward to reading a more detailed account of Mr Attwell's excavations, which are of major importance to the status of this site. I would also happily put him in touch with the acknowledged experts in all the fields I have mentioned.

Duncan L Brown, MA

FIELD MEETING IN THE FOREST OF DEAN

19 members assembled at 10.30 am at the car park on the B4234 just south of the A4136 (Grid Ref 613146) to examine industrial remains in the Forest of Dean under the leadership of Rosamund Skelton. A very short business meeting was held first, when information about the First Annual Shovellers Shindig and Mini Conference at Monmouth and the 'dig' at Ariconium was given. It was also decided that if at all possible the day's programme would include a visit to the Ariconium site.

Cars were left in the car park and we examined the nearby Serridge Junction and the Mierystock Wharf (loading platform) of the mineral railway which served the nearby coal mines, linking them with Lydbrook, on the Wye, to the north and Lydney, on the Severn, to the south, the coal being taken down to the ports and mainly shipped away by river and sea. We also took the opportunity to look at the Mierystock Bridge and to examine the remaining traces of the tramroad, sleepers and rail fixing bolts still being visible. After some diligent searching, the 713 yard tramroad tunnel entrance was located by Rosamund.

The actual tramroad was of the L-type tramplates for horse-drawn wagons with flangeless wheels, built in defiance of the "Crown Officers". The original tramroad was later replaced by a mineral railway on a slightly different alignment. We also examined several loading banks or platforms and their stone retaining walls. On our return we discovered the openings of some adits and shafts in the side of the cutting. Later we crossed the B4243 and examined more workings and mineral lines at Brierley Sidings.

Lunch was taken at the car park, and the customary visit to a local hostelry was foregone in order to fit in the Ariconium visit. After a visit to the Forest Information Centre we went to the Cannop Pond to look at the large leat which supplied water to power the waterwheels at Parkend, where the iron furnaces were situated.

Parkend, south of the Cannop Valley, was the centre of a charcoal iron furnace as early as 1612. A coke furnace was built in 1799 but was shortlived and was rebuilt in 1825, and was used until 1877. We examined the leat running off the Cannop Pond and also the earlier attempts to draw off water for water power. We speculated about the nature of enigmatic 'ponds' (hollows) and tried to determine the course of the earlier leats. We again looked at the mineral line remains from Serridge down to Lydney. There is still a stone-cutting works in operation at Cannop Pond.

We then made quite a lengthy journey to Ariconium to see the Dean Archaeology Group 'dig' under the direction of Brian Walters, on the B4224 about one mile south of the M50 underpass GR 643249. We were greeted by Brian, who explained the dig so far.

ARICONIUM-BROMSASH – MILITARY PRESENCE CONFIRMED

By Brian Walters

Fort sites at or near Ariconium have been sought for, in vain, for many years. Our President, Dr Graham Webster, suspected that the ideal place for a fort would be on the high ground to the north of the civil and ironworking settlements, and above the Rudhall Brook (see 'Rome Against Caractacus', p 116, Batsford, 1981). The recent aerial survey by Mark Walters has confirmed his forecast. Parch marks showed the ditches of two, near square, single entrance fortlets and at least one adjacent fort. Others may be in nearby fields on which crop marks were not showing. The two fortlets, one overlying the other and closely aligned, are small, about 53 metres square enclosing an area of about .6 of an acre. They could have held a detachment of tenting troops up to about 120 men.

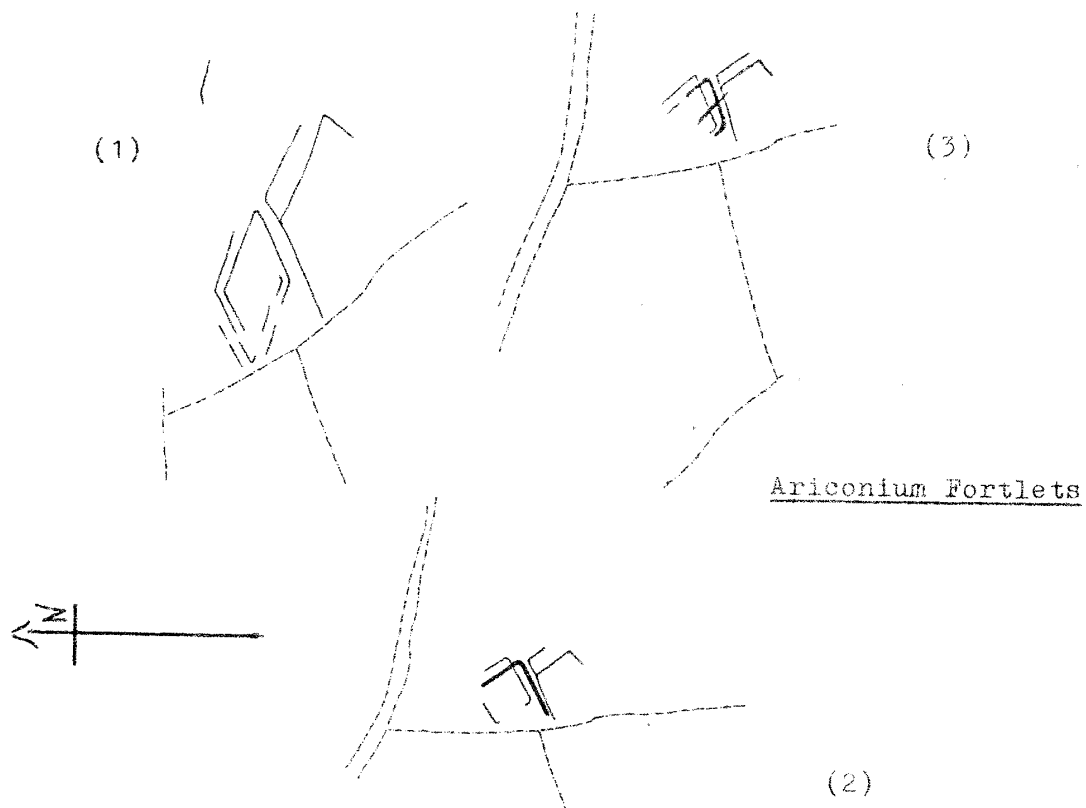
With the kind permission of the landowner, Mr John Pugh, the area was fieldwalked in mid-September and several hundred rims and sherds of mainly 1st century Severn Valley Ware were picked up from the plough soil. The finds did not conclusively prove a military presence, so an excavation to determine the nature of the ditches and to try to secure some stratified dating evidence became necessary. Mr Pugh kindly agreed to this so a 2 metre wide traverse over three ditches was set down on October 1st. To the time of writing this report, three weekends have been spent at the site. The first ditch excavated was of the earlier of the two fortlets and suitably produced the traditional V shape with a slot at the bottom. The pottery was predominantly of 1st century native ware forms, some grog tempered, others with limestone or heavy quartz tempering. Some of the SVW storage jars and drinking vessels could be paralleled in the Gloucester military series.

The absence of Claudio-Neronian samian and early Rhineland fine wares would best place the fortlet, on present evidence, in the Flavian period and identified with troop movements under Frontinus in his successful Silurian campaign of AD 74/75. The quantity of pottery from the first ditch indicates a camp open for some considerable time.

Between the ditch of the earlier fortlet and the ditch of the later one there is a late 2nd century intrusion which quarried away the outer edge of the earlier fortlet. Various late 2nd century pottery forms including samian form 31 (late Antonine) were encountered in the intrusion. The intrusion may be civilian but there is no reason to exclude a later military presence. Forts to the north and west of Ariconium were in use up to the 4th century, and Ariconium as a first (and last) staging post from Gloucester could well have been used for overnight stops. It is to be hoped that evidence from the remaining two ditches to be sectioned will include some datable materials to enable a chronology to be established.

It is interesting to theorise about the relationships of the fort to the later civil settlement, and comparisons can be drawn with Stretton Grandison/Canon Frome and the Leintwardine group of forts.

The meeting dispersed about 4.30 pm, with promises of assistance to the Dean Group to help with the excavations.

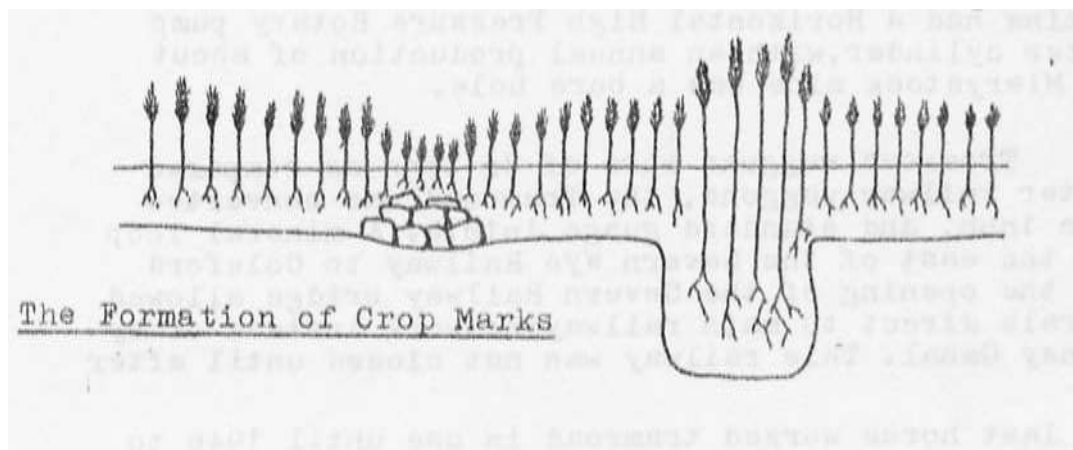


The crop marks are a composite drawing from three different air photographs taken from various angles.

Nos 2 and 3 were taken in June 1989.

No 1 was taken in July when the crop was ripened.

No 3 shows the line of excavation through three ditches.



Appendix

The technical details of the Forest visit have been included the form of an appendix to avoid cluttering up the main text.

Tramroads – The track was laid with cast iron plates of L section, set upon stone blocks. In section the L's were 'back to back', the wagon wheels had no flanges being kept on the line by the upright flanges of the plates. The motive power was usually horses or other animals. The gauge was normally 3' 6", but in later years the stone blocks "spread" and the gauge widened to 3' 8" or more.

The tramroads linked the mineral-rich uplands with either the Severn or the Wye. From 1800 onwards the following lines were built:

1. Bullo Pill Railway – Bullo Pill on the Severn to Cinderford.
2. Severn and Wye Railway – Lydney Canal, then tramroad to Lydney.
3. Monmouth Railway – From the Forest via Coleford to Monmouth. Mierystock was on the Monmouth Railway.

Railways – The tramroads were later replaced by railways. The first steam railway was the South Wales Railway, a broad gauge extension of the GWR, and ran parallel to the Severn from Chepstow to Gloucester.

The Bullo Pill Railway (Tramroad) was sold to the SWR in 1826 and converted to a broad gauge railway. The Severn and Wye Tramroad continued in operation, and in 1869 a broad gauge railway (mineral) line was built beside the tramroad.

In 1872 the SWR was converted to standard gauge. The Monmouth Railway (Tramroad) continued till the 1860's, when the railway from Pontypridd was extended across the Wye at Monmouth. The old tramroad was finally removed by 1880.

Coal Mines – The coalfield was free from fire damp (gas) but had tremendous amounts of water, e.g. Cannop had 3,000 gallons per minute. It did not close till 1960. In 1841 there were 69 individual or composite coal works. In 1766 the "Stay and Drink" coal mine opened under Serridge. The "Go On and Prosper" mine used strip and adit methods of working. The Arthur and Edwards (Waterloo) mine had a Cornish Beam Condensing engine with a 60" diameter cylinder to pump out the water. It produced 12,857 tons of coal in 1856, closing in 1959 with its shaft abandoned.

The Trafalgar mine had an underground Direct Acting Manchester pump with two 75" diameter cylinders, and in 1880 produced 88,794 tons of coal. This mine had a shaft 200 yards deep, and closed in 1925. The Speculation mine had a Horizontal High Pressure Rotary pump with a 24" diameter cylinder, with an annual production of about 18,694 tons. The Mierystock mine was a bore hole.

Mierystock Site – Tramroad wagons were of 2¼ tons as compared to 10 tons in later railway wagons. The Tramroad was converted to broad gauge in 1868 and standard gauge in 1872. A mineral loop line was laid to the east of the Severn Wye Railway to Coleford by 1875. In 1879 the opening of the Severn Railway Bridge allowed shipment of minerals direct to the main railway network instead of by boat via the Lydney Canal. This railway was not closed until after the last was.

Bixslade was the last horse-worked tramroad, in use until 1946 to supply stone to the local stone works at Cannop Ponds. The Mierystock Railway Tunnel was 242 yards long, compared with the tramroad tunnel of 713 yards. The Brierley Sidings opened in 1887 and remained till 1936. Because of the steep incline a limit of 9 "trams" to one horse was the rule. Iron ore was taken to Lydbrook and coal to Lydney.

RS and PRH

CAER LLAN CONFERENCE

Over 60 members of the Monmouth Archaeology Society, the Dean Archaeology Group and the ARS met at the Caer Llan Conference Centre at Lydart just south of Monmouth at 4.30 pm for the first of what is hoped to be an annual get together.

The first "Shovellers Shindig", held on 11th November, 1989, was hosted by the Monmouth Society under the chairmanship of Steven Clarke. Eight participants gave short reports on the various activities of their groups, including Roger Sterling-Brown on Castles, Ruth Richardson on the Field Name Survey and Mary Thomas on the work at Corras.

There was some general discussion between members of the three groups at tea time, served when we first arrived, and during the buffet supper, on mutual problems and ideas. The mini-conference broke up at about 10.00 pm after a very successful evening, and the ARS provisionally offered to host the second annual meeting in 1990. There was also some unofficial discussion about stronger bonds between the three groups, and how this might be brought about.

SURVEY OF NON-CONFORMIST CHAPELS

Members will remember a very cold day in November 1988 when we surveyed three non-conformist chapels in Hereford as part of a county survey initiated by Ron Shoesmith. In the meantime, John Kirkwood has worked steadily away and has looked at chapels at Ruckhall, Eaton Bishop, Clehonger, Kingstone, Madley and Shenstone.

Editor

HEREFORD AND WORCESTER SITES AND MONUMENTS RECORD

Unbeknownst to the majority of people in Herefordshire, perhaps the most important archaeological initiative with reference to the county is taking place in a school on the outskirts of Worcester: the county Sites and Monuments Record is being computerised and at the same time checked and enhanced in a systematic way. This is the first time a comprehensive index of all known archaeological sites of all periods has been compiled for the county and while it is an enormous task that will take several years of full time work to complete, it will be an enormous aid to all archaeological researchers and will cause a major revision of the image of the county's past.

The work is currently being funded by English Heritage as part of their "Monument Protection Programme" which is intended to update the current schedule of ancient monuments (i.e. those that have legal protection). To do this they need to compare monuments on a countrywide basis, so accurate records of sites are needed.

All known sites are uniquely numbered and then recorded with details covering 40 aspects of their setting, for example grid reference, parish, district, site type and period, finds, survival, legal status, geology, topography, archaeological history, significance, a basic bibliography and a description. Computerisation means that data can be extracted on sites by using one or a combination of these aspects.

What exactly is a site? It can be anything from earthwork remains, finds spots, a cropmark, documentary or cartographic reference, or a standing building; for any period from the remote past of the palaeolithic or earlier up to the current century which is of archaeological or historic interest. Sites recorded on the county Sites and Monuments Record have a recognised legal status and can therefore be accorded a higher level of protection than those not on the record.

It all sounds wonderful doesn't it? But what are the problems? First, it is an ongoing programme; there are over 9,000 records in the system now, but there is still a long way to go and some site types are specifically excluded from the work programme by English Heritage and so will have to be identified by volunteers if they are to be added to the record in the near future. The second problem is the sheer size of the task: the county covers a

million acres and one person just cannot identify all archaeological sites in a short period of time. Thirdly, much information on archaeological sites in the county is not published and resides in the heads (or lofts) of members of the public and amateur archaeologists who have to be persuaded to share their knowledge.

What can you do to help? First, if you are requesting data from the record you need to be patient, especially if you want large searches: the more time spent extracting data, the less time we have to add new sites. Second, it would help if people could come and check the areas they know well to help us add any missed sites. Thirdly, if anybody doing fieldwork could pass the data direct to the record it would be quicker and easier for us to update it, and thus the sites are offered more immediate protection and up-to-date information is readily available to researchers.

If you wish to help us, or require advice or data (please note that an appointment system is in operation for personal callers), we can be contacted at:

HWCC Archaeology Section, Cranham School, Tetbury Drive, Worcester WR4 9LS.
Tel: 0905 58608.

Hilary White, SMR Officer

FIELD NAMES WITH POSSIBLE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE

This meeting was arranged to check names which had come to light as a result of the Field Name Survey. 17 members assembled at map reference 389359 on the B4348 on Saturday 8/7/89 at 10.30 am. In view of the heavy rain on the previous Thursday and Friday, and the threatening nature of the weather on the actual day, it was a very good turnout. Although it was overcast all day, with even a few spots of rain, we did not get wet.

Elizabeth Taylor brought along the Roman pottery collected on the Lugwardine Field Day on 12/5/89 (see article on this field day in the last issue). The pottery was examined with interest and Elizabeth gave explanations.

After examining the pottery we doubled up in cars and proceeded via Vowchurch to Pont-y-Pinna where with the kind permission of the farmer, Mr Layton, we looked at a series of fields which all contained the word "street" in their names. Today some of the fields as shown on the Tithe Award map had been combined. Because of the growing crops we walked along the edge of fields No 48 & 49 and across the field, following in the tractor tracks. The farmer had told us that he had turned up with the plough dark patches of soil in the otherwise red clay. Although we did not get wet from the rain, we did get very wet from the crops and our trousers and skirts were soaked. We must have walked across (in a line) the possible route of any road but nothing could be discovered. We tried to locate a mound which had been reported previously. This possible Roman road could link up with the possible junction on the Golden Valley road discovered when the Golden Valley road was investigated. The Pont-y-Pinna, if such it is, would run east-west from the possible junction on the Golden Valley road (Margary 631) to the Kenchester to Abergavenny road (Margary 630). The significance of "Rail" in field names in connection with Roman roads was discussed: there are two "rail" meadows east of Pont-y-Pinna, in addition to the ("street" names to the east.

We had lunch in the Nag's Head Public House in Peterchurch and then went up the Golden Valley to Dorstone, and en route to Pen-y-Moor Farm stopped to examine Arthur's Stone, a Cromlech monument. We were very kindly received at the farm by Mr Walker and family who most kindly showed us round their old farmhouse. The reason for visiting Pen-y-Moor was to look at two field names which looked promising, The Rings and Cae Maen (Field of Stones). Nothing definite could be deduced from our examination of The Rings field, except that there were a lot of rock outcrops, which were more exposed because of the recent drought which had made the grass die back.

In the Cae Maen field was a large mound which could be a Long Barrow. Mr Walker Jnr said that there were a lot of loose large stones which were sometimes visible, but not on our visit. We also looked at several large flat stones which could possibly be marker stones.

It then being 5.15 pm it was decided to close the field meeting. Further visits might be arranged in future to check out other field names for possible archaeological sites.

PRH

It was not possible to produce the report of this field day in time, so these notes of the day are included. It is hoped to include a full report on the archaeological significance in the next issue.

Editor

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Printed below is a copy of a leaflet issued to members of the main Woolhope Club to interest members in joining the ARS. If we could increase our membership from the present 80 to about 100, it would make our financial position much more secure. Please show this to any of your friends who might be interested.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH SECTION

The Archaeological Research Section was formed in 1966 on the instigation of Frank Noble, of Offa's Dyke fame, by members of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club who had a particular interest in Archaeology. It encouraged members to make an active contribution to archaeological research in Herefordshire. Originally the main work of the Archaeological Research Section was to record county archaeology sites, and to report regularly on their condition. This function is now the statutory duty of the Hereford and Worcester County Council, and the Section now concentrates on new and unidentified sites, and those which might be in danger.

The 'Herefordshire Countryside Treasures' published by the old County Council was based upon the records of the Section. Recently the Archaeological Research Section has produced the Field Name Parish Survey, to date nearly two thirds of the county parishes have been covered. Woolhope members may remember the first lecture of the Woolhope Winter Lecture session on 7th October, 1989, when Mary Thomas and Elizabeth Taylor gave an illustrated account of the Section's investigation of the Medieval Church at Corras, Kentchurch in the Monnow valley.

Every month there is a Field Day when members investigate, check and record archaeological features in the county. As a result of the Parish Field Name Survey, it is anticipated that there will be a great increase in sites to be checked. The inner man is not forgotten on field days, we usually manage to be able to visit a hostelry at lunch time, and each year we have a Summer Barbecue and an Annual Dinner.

Currently about 80 members of Woolhope are members of the Research Section. A Newsletter is published twice a year which records the activities of the Section, in addition to articles of general archaeological interest about Herefordshire. A small additional subscription of £2.50 is charged to cover the cost of the Newsletter and its distribution.

COME AND JOIN US IN THIS EXCITING AND REWARDING WORK

