



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society

No. 71, Spring 2011

**Website:** <http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk>

**Newsletter Editor:** Hugh Hannaford, Archaeology Service, Historic Environment Team, Shirehall, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

**Membership Secretary:** William Hodges, Westlegate, Mousecroft Lane, Shrewsbury, SY3 9DX

## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society will be held at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury, on **Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010** at 9.00am. The AGM will be followed at 10.20am by **The Dark Ages in Shropshire** Dayschool. Dark Age Day School – **Now fully booked.** Many apologies to all the members who were unable to get a place at the Dark Age day school. This has proved far more popular than we imagined, to the extent that we reached the maximum capacity of the Shirehall a month before the meeting. By contrast, the previous two day schools that we have organised had places available for those who turned up unbooked on the day. Whilst it is nice to report on a sell-out, it was very frustrating to have to turn away so many members (and thank-you to all of those who took the news from me with such good grace!) **David Poyner**

**Subscriptions:** A reminder that subscriptions to the Society for 2011 were due on 1st January. The current rates are £14 Ordinary Membership; £15 Family Membership (two or more people living at the same address); £14 UK Institutions; £18 Overseas Institutions. Cheques/POs should be made payable to "Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society" and sent to the Membership Secretary at the above address.

### Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society website

The Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society's website can be found at <http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk/> .

The site is hosted within the Discovering Shropshire's History website -

<http://www.shropshirehistory.org.uk/> You can find details of all the Society's events and publications on our site, as well as links to a wealth of information about Shropshire's archaeology, history, and landscape. If you have any suggestions for content on our pages, please contact me, preferably by email at: [archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk) or by phone on: 01743 252575

**Hugh Hannaford**

**Circulation of newsletter etc..** If you would like to receive the AGM papers and *Newsletter* electronically, please contact George Baugh (Secretary) by email at: [s.baugh@virgin.net](mailto:s.baugh@virgin.net)

## SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL

After over 30 years service with Shropshire Council, Michael Watson, the Historic Environment Officer (until 2003 the Head of Archaeology) is taking early retirement and will be leaving the Council at the end of March 2011. From 1 April 2011 Hugh Hannaford, the Community Archaeologist, will transfer to the Historic Environment Team within Shropshire Council at Shirehall as part of the ongoing restructure within the Council.

## NEWS FROM SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES

### The Shropshire Manorial Register.

28 February 2011 saw the launch of the online Shropshire Manorial Register. Over 70 people attended the event at Shropshire Archives which was the culmination of an 18 month project funded by the National Archives. For the first time details of Shropshire Manorial

Records can be searched online at [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/mdr). The register includes all records regardless of where they are held so for Shropshire the information covers records held at Shropshire Archives, the National Archives and in other archives and in private hands. Although they are a key resource for local and family history, manorial records are not the easiest records to use, and we hope this project will help to unlock their secrets. We are very pleased to be the first West Midlands archive service to complete their online Manorial Documents Register, and hope other West Midlands services will follow very soon. Thanks must go to Sara Downs, the project officer, who has worked extremely hard on the project, and also to the volunteers who have made an important contribution to the project's success.

## EVENTS

### Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society

*See enclosure for details of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society's Programme for Summer/Autumn 2009*

**AGM Saturday 9th April 2011** at 9.00am at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury.

**Saturday 9th April 2011 The Dark Ages in Shropshire** Dayschool 10.20am – 4.15pm.

### Royal Archaeological Institute & Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

#### WEEKEND CONFERENCE

**Shropshire and West Mercia: recent discoveries and research**

**Friday May 6th 2011 to Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2011**

The weekend will start on the Friday evening with a keynote lecture by Dr Leslie Webster on the Staffordshire Anglo-Saxon hoard, at 6pm in The Glass Classroom, Coalbrookdale, with refreshments from 5.30pm. On Saturday, papers are to be presented at the Fusion Building, Jackfield Tile Museum, showcasing new and emerging results from the region. The

cost of the weekend (all lectures, field visits and tea, coffee and lunch on Saturday 7th May, but excluding accommodation) will be £82; Conference Dinner (optional) £25. All bookings and payments to be received by Friday 22nd April 2011. If you would like to book a place at the conference, please visit the RAI website at <http://www.royalarchinst.org/conferences> and download and complete the booking form, returning it with your payment to the RAI administrator.

**Roger White**

### National Association of Mining History Organisations

**Mining History Conference in Shropshire Friday 29th- Sunday 31st July** The National Association of Mining History Organisations (NAHMO) is holding its annual conference in Shropshire this year at Preston Montford from Friday 29<sup>th</sup> - Sunday 31st July. There will be a programme of lectures on the Saturday and Sunday with surface walks and underground trips (for those with the necessary skills). There is a strong Shropshire theme; talks include: Mining in Shropshire 50 years ago (Ivor Brown), The archaeology of Shropshire mines (Colin Richards), Early lead mining in Shropshire (James Lawson), Oswestry's forgotten coalfield (Gordon Hillier), The Clee Hill coalfield (Alf Jenkins) and Excavations at Pitchcroft engine house (David Poyner). Details and booking forms are available at <http://namhoconference.org.uk> or contact myself (Tel 01562 68638)

**David Poyner**

### Shropshire Council

**Archaeology Day** Saturday 12th November 2011, 10.00am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Further details and a programme and booking form will be included with the autumn Newsletter.

*(Copy deadline for the Autumn 2011 Newsletter is Friday 5th August 2011. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter editor at the Archaeology Service, or emailed to [archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk))*



# SHROPSHIRE

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Newsletter No. 72  
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**Website:** <http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk>

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**Membership Secretary:** William Hodges, Westlegate, Mousecroft Lane, Shrewsbury, SY3 9DX

## SOCIETY NEWS

If you would like to receive the Newsletter and AGM papers etc. by email, please contact George Baugh (Secretary) at: [s.baugh@virgin.net](mailto:s.baugh@virgin.net) This would also help us to keep you informed by email of Society events and activities.

**Meetings Group:** The Society's meetings group is looking for members to assist with the practical side of our events programme. If you would like to help out, please contact the newsletter editor.

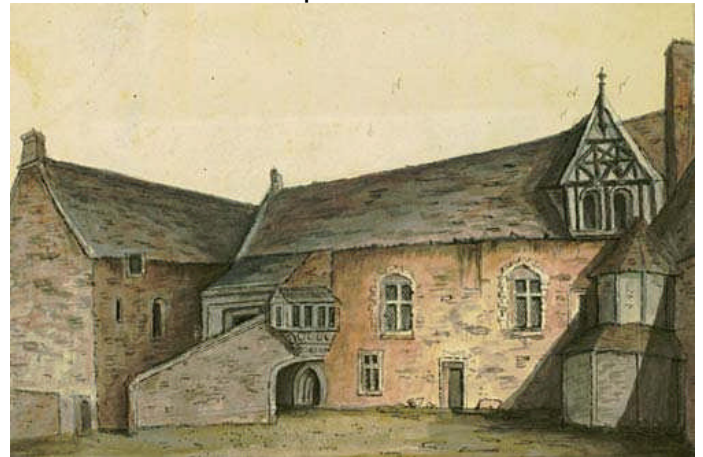
**Website:** The Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society's website can be found at <http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk> You can find details of all the Society's events and publications on our site, as well as links to a wealth of information about Shropshire's archaeology, history, and landscape. If you have any suggestions for content on our pages, please contact the web editor, preferably by email at: [archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk) or by phone on: 01743 252575

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## SHROPSHIRE MUSEUMS SERVICE

Shropshire Council is undertaking a major restoration and refurbishment project of Shrewsbury's Music Hall and a series of associated historic buildings including

Vaughan's Mansion, a medieval merchant's house which make up the site.



Vaughan's Mansion (courtesy Shropshire Archives)

This complex of buildings will house a new museum and provide a new special exhibitions space for visiting temporary displays. There will also be a shop, information centre and café on the ground floor. A programme of events and activities will make up an important part of the work of the museum including innovative uses of archive and film material. Entry to the museum and art gallery will be free.

As part of this development the Museum Service has commissioned, from professional model makers 3D Perfect of Ludlow, a 1:160 scale model of the medieval English Bridge, Shrewsbury. The two metre long model will be exhibited in the medieval gallery within the hall of Vaughan's Mansion. The English Bridge actually comprised two bridges. The structure seen in most old illustrations, with its gatehouse, was the Stone Bridge. This was roughly on the site of the present English Bridge, and 'terminated' on Coleham Island. This island was destroyed at the time of the construction of the new bridge in 1768. Another, larger adjacent, island on which stands

the United Reformed Church and houses in Coleham Head, also no longer exists as an island. The branch of the River Severn that went behind it, and allowed access for boats directly to the Abbey precinct, had silted up by the 19<sup>th</sup> century; but it reappears during times of flood.



Coleham Island (© 3D perfect)

The second bridge – the Monk’s or Abbot’s Bridge - crossed this branch of the river from this island almost to the Abbey precinct. Silting probably also accounted for the covering up of a length of the Stone Bridge from close to the foot of the ‘The Wyle’ (the central section of Wyle Cop) to today’s bridgehead. In total the length of the combined structure was originally nearly 1000 feet.

The aim of the model is;

- To complement paintings of the old medieval English bridge on a graphic panel behind it.
- To show that the weak points of the town’s defences – the routes in from north, west and east - were heavily fortified.
- To emphasise the technical excellence of the medieval builders of the bridge
- To show how much the townscape of the English bridge area has changed since the old bridge existed.
- To allow the visitor to explore the complexity of the structure and realise that it was not only a bridge but a defensive work, an opportunity for trade and, later, a means of propelling water into the town.

The model includes the three main elements of the old medieval bridge; the Stone Bridge from Wyle Cop to Coleham Island, Coleham Island itself and the Monk’s Bridge from Coleham

Island to the precinct of Shrewsbury Abbey. It sets the bridge in its original context by including the River Severn and it’s, now disappeared, tributary and also that part of the Rea brook which entered the Severn downstream of the bridge prior to 1768. The bridgeheads at the town and Abbey ends are also included.

The bridge is modelled as it existed between 1705, when the waterwheel was constructed, and 1732 when the drawbridge was replaced by an arch. Inevitably, given the paucity of views of the bridge, some aspects of the model are conjectural but every effort has been made to glean information from written and cartographic sources to ‘fill the gaps’.

The research of A W Ward, much of which appeared in the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society, combined with 18<sup>th</sup> century paintings and engravings of the bridge, was the basis for ensuring the accuracy of the model. Dr Nigel Baker and Bill Champion also advised on a number of issues. The model maker offered essential insights into bridge construction and was an excellent partner in the project. He has created web pages on which the construction of the model can be viewed along with the completed model and comparison views of old images and parts of the model:

<http://www.bridge.cd2.com/index.htm>

### **Phil Scoggins**

Interpretation Officer, Music Hall Project ,  
Shropshire Museums Service

## **NEWS FROM SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES**

### **Volunteering for Shropshire’s Heritage project**

I am pleased to tell you that we have been successful with our funding bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund to support this project. Starting in the autumn this 3 year project will enable us to support and develop 250 volunteers at Shropshire Archives and Shropshire Museums Service. We will be appointing 4 member so of staff to recruit, train and support volunteers working on conservation, cataloguing, digitisation and research into the archive and museums collections. The Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society is supporting this project with a contribution of £1,000.

The archive collections to be worked on comprise:

- *Photographic collections:* We aim to complete cataloguing of 75% of the photograph collection and at least 50% will also be digitised.
- *Much Wenlock Borough Collection:* This collection will be completely catalogued.
- *Shrewsbury Borough Collection:* The following series have been selected for cataloguing and conservation work:
  - Subsidy and tax records 13th -18th century;
  - Cataloguing and Digitisation Mayors' and bailiffs' accounts 13th century – 1819;
  - Cataloguing Militia records 14th century – 1821;
  - Cataloguing and Conservation of Records of cattle and horse fairs 1525-1674;
  - Cataloguing and Conservation of Quarter Sessions records 1564-1664;
- *Miscellaneous Archive Collections (MIs):* This collection will be fully catalogued.
- *Printed pamphlet collections (vfs):* 60% of the collection will be catalogued.

Please look out for more information about the project once we get started in the autumn.

### Social media

Shropshire Archives has taken its first steps into the world of social media using Flickr and Facebook to reach out to people across the internet. These new services can be found via our website.

On Flickr you can find collections of images, including scenes of snowy Shropshire (in case you need cooling down in the hot summer), Leisure in past times, and Market Towns. These aim to give people a taste of the resources we have. We hope you will comment and add information to the images which we can then incorporate into our catalogues.

On Facebook you'll find information and opportunities to comment and discuss issues with us. If you're already a member of Facebook please visit our page and 'like' us, or if you haven't joined yet, perhaps this is the moment to take the plunge!

Please send any comments on these to: Mary McKenzie, County Archivist, Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, SY1 2AQ  
email: [mary.mckenzie@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:mary.mckenzie@shropshire.gov.uk)  
website: [www.shropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk)

**Mary McKenzie**

## EVENTS

### Friends of Shropshire Archives

**Sunday 2 October 2011** 10am-4pm at St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury: Friends of Shropshire Archives and Shrewsbury Drapers Company Day School: 'Shrewsbury Drapers Company: origins and years of success'

**Tuesday 8 November 2011** 7pm at Shropshire Archives: Friends of Shropshire Archives Annual Lecture: 'Making the Medieval Book' Dr Brian Davies

**Saturday 24 March 2012** 10am-4.30pm. Friends of Shropshire Archives History Day, at the Silvester Horne Institute, Church Stretton. Speakers include: Dr Peter Toghill, Dr Ian Dormor and Tony Crowe.

Please contact **Shropshire Archives** for tickets and further information for these events: tel: 01743 255350, email: [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk)

### Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society

*See enclosure for details of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society's Programme for Summer/Autumn 2009*

**AGM Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2012** at 11.00am at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury. The afternoon speaker will be Dr Vince Gaffney, Professor of Landscape Archaeology and Geomatics at Birmingham University

### Shropshire Council

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<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/archaeology.nsf>

(Copy deadline for the Spring 2012 Newsletter is Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2012. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter editor at the Archaeology Service, or emailed to [archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk))



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**Membership Secretary:** Bill Hodges is retiring as the Society's Membership Secretary after 5 years. We need a replacement to keep the records, collect subscriptions, and help with the mailings to members. If you are willing to do this essential job for the Society (no need for great knowledge of archaeology or history required!) please give Bill a ring on 01743 231357

**Newsletter Editor:** Likewise, Hugh Hannaford is stepping down as Newsletter Editor after 19 years. Again, if you would be willing to take this job on, please contact Hugh at:

[hugh.hannaford@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:hugh.hannaford@shropshire.gov.uk) or by phone on: 01743 252575

**Meetings Group:** The Society's meetings group is looking for members to assist with the practical side of our events programme. If you would like to help out, please contact the newsletter editor.

**Subscriptions:** The current rates are £14 Ordinary Membership; £15 Family Membership (two or more people living at the same address); £14 UK Institutions; £18 Overseas Institutions. Cheques/POs should be made payable to "Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society" and sent to the Membership Secretary at the above address.

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## Iron-working sites around Cleobury Mortimer and Stottesdon

The Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society recently gave a grant of £400 to the Four Parishes Heritage Group to investigate a number of iron-working sites around Cleobury Mortimer and Stottesdon. The group has been investigating the iron industry in this part of Shropshire since 2007, in collaboration with Dr Tim Young of GeoArch. The first technology used to smelt iron was the bloomery. In this the iron was heated to around 1,200°C with charcoal. This was hot enough to produce a liquid slag containing the impurities in the ore, but the iron itself remained as a solid lump. At the very end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century this technology was replaced by the blast furnace, where the temperature was now hot enough to melt the iron. Blast furnaces could produce far more iron than bloomeries and so spread rapidly.

Two of the earliest blast furnaces in the Midlands were located in the Wyre Forest and date from

around 1570. The group recently carried out a geophysical and topographical survey of one of these and as an extension of our project, used some of the society's grant to carry out a chemical analysis of the slag from the furnace. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century large quantities of limestone were added to blast furnaces to act as flux; however, our chemical analysis has confirmed that in 1570 this technology had not fully evolved and the iron masters used much smaller charges of limestone.

We have also discovered a number of bloomeries. For two of these, the dating was problematic and so we used the remainder of our grant to pay for radiocarbon dating. A charcoal sample from one of the furnaces dates from 1400-1440; a sample from the other is 1300-1400. To this can be added evidence from pottery that dates a third furnace to 1200-1300. Thus it seems that iron was being made in this area for much of the Middle Ages.

**David Poyner**

## **NEWS FROM SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES**

**Victorian Entertainments exhibition** The Victorian Entertainments exhibition at Theatre Severn and The Old Market Hall in Shrewsbury has been a great success. The exhibition showcased our collection of Victorian entertainment posters, and provided a fascinating insight into both Victorian music hall acts and the art of Victorian advertising posters. Dating from the 1840s, a stunning array of touring acts was represented. Acrobats, hot air balloons, magicians and menageries of animals from around the world were just some of the spectacles which visited Shropshire in the Victorian era. These entertainments reflect Victorian society in all its diversity, as performers attempted to astonish, inform and entertain their audiences. We are very grateful to the Eyton family for their permission to exhibit items from their collection.

**After Offa project** Shropshire Archives has supported the recently completed Heritage Lottery funded After Offa project organised by the Bronygarth Social Committee. The project has celebrated life along the English and Welsh border by collecting memories and stories of those who live there. All the memories have now been deposited at Shropshire Archives and will be available for research in due course. For more information about the project see [www.afteroffa.org](http://www.afteroffa.org)

**Shelton Heritage project** We are also working with the Shelton Heritage project which will explore the history and heritage of Shelton hospital as the

hospital itself moves to new premises on its existing site. Shelton hospital is one of the last Victorian asylums still being used for its original purpose. The project will explore existing archives and collect memories and stories from both patients and staff. For further details about the project and if you are interested in getting involved please contact Dave Reeves, Project Officer at [shelton.heritage@sssft.nhs.uk](mailto:shelton.heritage@sssft.nhs.uk).

**Mary McKenzie**

## **EVENTS**

### **Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society**

*See enclosure for details of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society's Programme for Summer 2012*

**AGM Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> April 2012** at 11.00am at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury. The afternoon speaker will be Dr Vince Gaffney, Professor of Landscape Archaeology and Geomatics at Birmingham University

### **Friends of Shropshire Archives and the Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage project**

**Discover Shropshire Day** Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2012 10.30am-4.00pm, at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury. This year the day will celebrate the success of the Volunteering for Shropshire's heritage project, with displays, talks and demonstrations highlighting the wonderful variety of Shropshire's outstanding archive and museum collections. Come along to meet local enthusiasts and experts, to learn more, and to share your own knowledge. Come and enjoy....At 11am talk by archaeologist and author, Nigel Baker: 'All the answers? Medieval Shrewsbury from archives and from archaeology'

- Displays and talks from local history and heritage groups
- Opportunities to find out more about volunteering at archives and museums

### **Shropshire Council Archaeology Service**

**Archaeology Day** Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012, 10.00am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Further details and a programme and booking form are included with the autumn Newsletter or will be available from August for download from the Archaeology Service website:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/archaeology.nsf>

*(Copy deadline for the Autumn 2012 Newsletter is Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 2012. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter editor at the Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council, or emailed to [archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@shropshire.gov.uk))*



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**Tel:** 01743 271706. **E:** shelagh228@msn.com

**Membership Secretary:** William Hodges, Westlegate, Mousecroft Lane, Shrewsbury, SY3 9DX

## SOCIETY NEWS

**Special General Meeting of the Society:** As authorized by the A.G.M. on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2012, a Special General Meeting will be held at 2p.m. on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> October 2012 before that afternoon's lecture (see the 2012-2013 winter programme), for the single purpose of receiving the accounts of the retiring Hon. Treasurer for the 15 months January 2011 – March 2012. Please accept this notice as a formal summons to attend. The accounts will be distributed at the Meeting and circulated with the 2013 A.G.M. papers. A member wishing to have them before the October Meeting should apply to George Baugh, Hon. Sec.

**Newsletter Editor:** Hugh Hannaford has stepped down as Newsletter Editor after 19 years service. His place has been taken by Shelagh Hampton and any information for inclusion in the newsletter should be sent to her at 7, Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or shelagh228@msn.com

**Membership Secretary:** Bill Hodges has done this absolutely essential job for many years and is hoping to retire from it before too long. The Hon. Sec. would therefore be glad to hear from any potential volunteer to take over the work. Anyone interested should contact George Baugh at s.baugh@virgin.net or at Glebe, House, Vicarage Road, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9EZ (tel: 01743 236914)

**Members' email addresses:** The society is very grateful to all those members who have given their email addresses to the Hon. Sec. This saves the Society a great deal in postage. The email addresses are kept quite confidential by the Hon. Sec. and the Hon. Membership Sec. Any change of email address should be sent to George Baugh at s.baugh@virgin.net

**Meetings Group:** The Society's meetings group is looking for members to assist with the practical side of our events programme. If you would like to help out, please contact the newsletter editor

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### Glazeley Church

A priest was recorded at Glazeley in the Domesday survey and a church was certainly present around 1155 when the incumbent claimed power over the neighbouring settlement of Deuxhill where Wenlock Abbey had just established a chapel. However, the present church dates from 1873-5, built to replace a building that in itself was possibly largely a 16<sup>th</sup> century reconstruction of the medieval church. The current church contains a fine late 16<sup>th</sup> century brass to Thomas Wylde and his wife; outside are two fonts (one medieval and one possibly 18<sup>th</sup> century), a medieval stone coffin and two medieval coffin lids. There is additionally a late 18<sup>th</sup> century memorial slab to the Rev Charles Wylde and his son that seems to have been mounted on the wall of the demolished church. The current church, designed by Sir Arthur Bloomfield and with stained glass by C.E. Kemp, is grade II listed, due to it being a largely unaltered example of a rural Gothic Revival church retaining its internal fittings.

Recently the church roof suffered serious damage and serious consideration was given to closing the church; indeed a farewell closing service was held. However, this stimulated enough interest in the local community to raise the funds to repair the roof and to reopen the church. Thus the future of the building and its fittings is now looking much brighter.

### Billingsley Church

Billingsley Church was established by c.1140. It was largely rebuilt in 1875 by G.E. Street but this seems to have been a sympathetic restoration, preserving or accurately reconstructing original features as

far as possible. The current church has a blocked Norman doorway in the middle of the nave, an early 14<sup>th</sup> century Easter Sepulchre and a piscina in the nave and a wooden carved porch, dating from the late 14<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Recently, major repairs have taken place including rehangng of the bells. One of these is by Abraham Rudhall, dated 1707; the other seems to be 14<sup>th</sup> century and is a rare example of a narrow-waisted design. As part of a community project to discover more about the history of the church, the carpet at the back of the nave was removed to reveal around 40 medieval floor tiles and three memorials dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. These had been reset at the time of the 1875 rebuilding. The earliest memorial is to Jane, the daughter of William Bradley of Worcester who died May 1637. The Worcester St Swithin parish registers record the baptism of Jane, daughter of William Bradley in 1623; thus she was 14 when she died. The size of the second memorial to two members of the Smythes family from 1655 and 1694, suggests it may have originated as a chest tomb. The third memorial, to Edward Broadfield, from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, was probably mounted on the wall. The floor tiles are most likely to be of 14<sup>th</sup> century date. The Easter sepulchre can be tentatively ascribed to Alice de Beysin, widow of Walter de Beysin (an MP for Shrewsbury) and a coat of arms that once was in a window were those of her great grand-daughter, Julianna de Crewe. A wall painting of St Agnes, noted during the 1875 reconstruction, may have been commissioned by Julianna to commemorate her mother, Agnes.

**David Poyner**

## NEWS FROM SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES

### **Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage project:**

The project is going very well with the target of volunteers already exceeded! Volunteers are working on cataloguing, conservation and digitisation work on archive and museums collections. For further details contact [john.benson@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:john.benson@shropshire.gov.uk)

**Shelton Heritage project:** We are also working with the Shelton Heritage project which will explore the history and heritage of Shelton hospital as the hospital itself moves to new premises on its existing site. Shelton hospital is one of the last Victorian asylums still being used for its original purpose. The project will explore existing archives and collect memories and stories from both patients and staff.

**Online catalogue:** You may have noticed that our online catalogue on [www.shropshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.shropshirehistory.org.uk) has changed. If you click on the advanced search button you'll see the new version, which now holds over 260,000 archive records. We are still working on the presentation of the catalogue but we hope this represents a big improvement on what we had before. Please let us know what you think. We'll keep you informed of progress;

**Mary McKenzie**

## SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

**Cancellation:** Due to circumstances beyond the control of the Archaeology Service the Archaeology Day scheduled for Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2012 will not now be taking place.

*(Copy deadline for the Spring 2013 Newsletter is Friday 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com))*



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 75, Spring 2013

**Website:** <http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk>

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society will be held at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury, on Saturday 14th September 2013 at 9.30am. The AGM will be followed, at 10.20am by the **Prehistory in Shropshire Day School** (for details see the enclosed Meetings Programme).

**Membership Secretary:** Bill Hodges has stepped down as Membership Secretary after many years of service. His place has been taken by Penny Ward (contact details at head of Newsletter). We are pleased to report that Bill has agreed to be co-opted to the Council of the Society.

**Subscriptions and Mailings:** The subscription rates remain at £14 for Ordinary Membership; £15 for Family Membership (two or more people living at the same address); £14 for UK institutions and £18 for overseas institutions. Cheques / Postal Orders should be made payable to Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society and sent to the Membership Secretary at the address at the head of the Newsletter.

Costs, of course, continue to rise and we will be most grateful if as many members as possible sign up to pay by standing order and if all members make an effort to pay their subs by the end of March each year. Chasing up unpaid subs is becoming increasingly expensive and we would like to keep any

future increases in membership rates to a minimum.

Another big help to the Society's finances will be if more members agree to receive the Newsletter and other Society papers and notices by email. Everyone is aware of the 2012 increases in postal charges and we are certain to see further increases so communication via email which already saves the Society a great deal of money will save even more in the future. We are currently trying to expand the Newsletter to include more news of projects and events taking place around the county and to cover activities being organised by some of the many local societies in Shropshire and this will, inevitably, involve some increase in costs.

Members' email addresses are kept completely confidential by the Hon. Sec. and the Hon. Membership Sec. so please – if you have the facility and are willing to join our distribution list or if you have changed your email address – contact George Baugh at [s.baugh@virgin.net](mailto:s.baugh@virgin.net)

**Meetings Group:** The Society's Meetings Group would like to hear from anyone willing to join the group and become involved with the development of the Society's events programme. The task is not onerous and offers a chance to put forward suggestions for events, activities and topics you would like us to cover. If you would like to help please contact the Newsletter editor.

## Christmas Social meetings

The recent December meeting in the new Visitor Centre at the Acton Scott Museum was but one in the long line of such social gatherings, which have taken place over the last twenty to thirty years with a similar formula: different venues, a talk about it, time to chat, refreshments and entertainment thrown in.

The tradition first arose from two ideas. Firstly the need for a slot in which members could make their own contributions with short talks or displays of material. Secondly, when normal meetings were held in central Shrewsbury it was desirable to escape from the busy Christmas shopping weekend. The spirit of Christmas nevertheless added refreshment and some light entertainment.

With these criteria in mind a great variety of venues have been used, ranging from large institutions such as Attingham, Acton Burnell and Adcote School to much smaller interesting farmhouses. Many of these were studied and published by Madge Moran and her Whitchurch Group. We are most grateful for all those owners who not only allowed the group to crawl over their private homes, but also to invite



more inspection and invasion by our Christmas gatherings. Fortunately we had the resources to help them out with plastic chairs and cups if needed!

In return, many owners were proud to show off their successful restorations of historic properties such as The Hayes at Oswestry or the Stone House by Grinshill. The Community Group at St Anne's church Lea Cross likewise were proud to show off their improvements for public use.

The general aim over the years has been for such meetings to be self-financing, but costs and income can vary so much with donations, cost of catering and numbers attending. When society's funds have been needed to 'top up', it has been normally been no more than routine room hire costs anyway.

Many regulars have supported the meetings over the years and obviously appreciate the formula, so that we must try to continue. This means finding suitable venues and therefore ideas would be welcome. Please contact David Pannett, Merton, Shepherd Lane, Bicton, Shrewsbury, SY3 8BT. Tel: 01743 850773; E: [jessicapannett@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:jessicapannett@hotmail.co.uk)

*David Pannett*

## **Shropshire Archives News March 2013**

### **Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project**

The Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project started in December 2011. So far the volunteers have contributed an astonishing 2,953 days' work across the archive and museums services. Although I knew how much interest there was in Shropshire's heritage across the county, I have to admit to being slightly overwhelmed at the enthusiasm and commitment the volunteers have shown over the last year or so. The result of all this enthusiasm is that almost 40,000 records and objects have been catalogued and over 26,000 items have been digitised or conserved.

This is a great achievement and shows what can be done with a dedicated resource to support volunteers. As well as thanking all the volunteers, I'd also like to express my thanks to the project team who have been key to this success, and of course to the Heritage Lottery Fund for supporting the project. We look forward to seeing what can be done in the next two years!

### **Digitisation of records:**

Work on digitising parish registers and other records of interest to family historians is progressing to target and will be completed shortly. This work has been funded by Shropshire Council. Following the completion of the digitisation work, we will be investigating the options of working with a commercial partner to provide on-line access to the records on a paid for subscription basis.

The income from this will provide key financial support for the archive service. Free access to the records at Shropshire Archives itself will not be affected by this development, and we hope that allowing access to digital copies will improve the service we can offer. We are currently exploring the options both for access at Shropshire Archives and online, and will keep you informed of developments.

### **Thursday evenings at the Archives**

From April to September this year we will be running a series of informal hands on workshops at Shropshire Archives. These will provide opportunities to find out more about the wide range of fascinating documents held by the service.

In order to accommodate these activities, the search room will be closed from 5pm on these evenings. The reading room will be open as normal.

Please check our website for further details, [www.shropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk)

### **Friends of Shropshire Archives AGM**

7pm Thursday 13 June at Shropshire Archives

'Shropshire Archives 2013 update - a look behind the scenes and into the future', Mary McKenzie and John Benson, Free - refreshments available

*Mary McKenzie*

*Shropshire Archives*

## **Shropshire Museums Service: working towards a new museum for Shrewsbury**

The restoration of the Music Hall has presented huge challenges relating to the complex nature of the building whose history stretches back to medieval times. However, these very problems have revealed previously unsuspected aspects of the site's history and have contributed greatly to the significance of the building. The external scaffolding has been removed in recent months and the restoration work to the Market Square frontage has been exposed. Behind the scenes delicate stonework restoration has also taken place within Vaughan's Mansion. This includes the stabilisation of original 13<sup>th</sup> century windows as well as plaster repairs and restoration of historic joinery within the Music hall auditorium and to the oak frames of Vaughan's Mansion. Work on the installation of new internal staircases, a lift and link walkways is now underway and the new museum and art gallery will be opening to the public later this year.

A number of recent donations form welcome additions to the, already fine, collections and some will feature in the new displays. The largest Roman coin hoard ever discovered in Shropshire has been acquired by the county thanks to grant aid from a variety of sources and local donations from our society (which contributed £500) and from the Friends of Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery. The hoard of 9,236 coins, together with the storage jar in which it was buried, will be one of the highlights of the new Roman Gallery.

Another feature of the new displays will be a selection of finds from the Tong area including some of the finds made during excavations at Tong Castle nearly 40 years ago as well as a range medieval finds from Tong which have been donated by a local detectorist.

*Emma-Kate Lanyon, Shropshire Museums Service*



## **Archaeology Service News**

### **The Shropshire Minerals Resource Assessment Project**

Shropshire's geology is considered to be more varied than any similarly-sized area in Britain - and this has in the past given rise to a variety of industries based on the exploitation of these rich mineral resources. The Archaeology Service of Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Team, is undertaking a Minerals Resource Assessment of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin for English Heritage. The project will assess the impact of past, current and future mineral extraction on the historic environment in Shropshire. The project is being funded by English Heritage and Shropshire Council, and is due to be completed in March 2014.

*Hugh Hannaford*

*Senior Archaeological Projects Officer, Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council*

## **Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings**

There will be a Community Archaeology Project run by Oxford Archaeology North at the Ditherington Flax Mill from 15<sup>th</sup> April 2013 for two weeks followed by a further week when there will be post-excavation activity for visitors to see and participate in.

The Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings are holding an Open Weekend at the Flax mill on 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of May 2013.

Further details at <http://www.flaxmillmaltings.co.uk>

*Penny Ward*

## Notes from the finds desk of the PAS

The Portable Antiquities Scheme has been recording archaeological finds made by the public in Shropshire for almost 15 years. Since 2003 we have shared our own reporting officer (Finds Liaison Officer) with Herefordshire. Peter Reavill has held this post from the beginning – being based with the county museum with an office in Ludlow. He updates us now with some of the most recent/important finds discovered in the past 6 months:

Although the weather has been truly 'British' people are still out and about finding really fascinating things and he updates us now with some of the most interesting/rare finds from the past 6 months:

A rare flaked/knapped flint axehead (LVPL-FE45E5), of similar Neolithic date, has been reported from the parish of Stanton Lacy (South Shropshire). The discovery of high status flints here is not surprising as several older finds from the area are held in the museum's collection and, of course, the Bromfield barrow complex is close by. This type of axehead is relatively uncommon in Shropshire – most recorded examples are of polished stone. This example has been knapped from an oval nodule and small areas of cortex are present on the outer surfaces.



A very fine and well-preserved Middle-Late Bronze Age 'trunnion' chisel has been reported from Bridgnorth (HESH-51B7E2). These tools are extraordinarily rare but this find fits the known distribution pattern very well. There is a cluster of similar examples from the northern Marches and North East Wales (e.g. Wrexham). A good parallel for the latest find can be seen in the hoard from Edgbold Brickyard (Meole brace) discovered in the 1920s. The term 'trunnion chisel' is applied because of the little projections of the edge which prevent the blade being driven into its haft when in use.



The county is well-known for its Roman archaeology and three noteworthy finds have been made recently. The first is a 'Polden Hill'-type brooch which is particularly fine and shows just how good



roman casting techniques were. This style of brooch is the most common seen in the Marches and the West Midlands and lead patterns for casting have been found within the county. This example was found on the slopes of Clee Hill (South Shropshire)

The second example is a zoomorphic place brooch in the form of a cockerel (WMID-F66333) from Sheinton (well known to many because of the recent project organised there by Hugh Hannaford.



The cockerel is often associated with Mercury (the messenger of the Gods) because cockerels herald the arrival of the new day. This form of brooch is securely dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and is a very rare find not just from the county but from the region.

The final Roman find is a stylised Eagle Mount (WAW-OAEOC4) from the Bridgnorth area. The mount is most probably from either a piece of horse harness or from a piece of furniture. It is likely to have been associated with the military – a very similar example was found on a military camp on the Rhine in Germany.



The last find in this round-up is from the Telford area. It is very fragmentary but can be identified as part of a chip-carved strap end (HESH-B84126) dating to the 10<sup>th</sup> century AD. Its decoration is in the Viking/Anglo-Scandinavian Borre style and is known to specialists as 'vertebral ring chain'. Although broken it is hugely important to the county and reflects the later dominance of Viking-looking finds in the north of Shropshire. This suggests that people in those parts were taking their lead (stylistically at least) from the Danelaw to the north east rather than to the Saxon/Wessex kingdoms.



*Peter Reavill*  
Finds Liaison Officer

## 2012: A BUSY YEAR AT UPTON CRESSETT

Archaeological work at Upton Cressett has not featured in a Shropshire Archaeology and History Society newsletter for many years, although the Roman site was first formally mentioned in this publication by Geoff Toms in 1970 and 1973. These reports sparked my initial investigations of the site, under the aegis of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project. A visit to the Pugh family's farmhouse confirmed the importance of the site with over 1000 sherds collected up to that point ranging in date from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> century. In addition there were metal finds of many dates, but predominantly Roman, as well as flints of Neolithic and Bronze Age date. A geophysical survey and small excavation was carried out on the site in 2009, the former identifying the parallel ditches of what looked like a Roman roadside settlement with plots running at right angles from the road, similar to excavated examples from Shropshire at Heath Road, south of Whitchurch and Meole Brace. Good groups of stratified pottery were recovered that demonstrated occupation dates consistent with the material recovered from fieldwalking. One of the features was a large industrial pit related to iron working (or at least containing the waste from the process of iron working) while others may have been structural. A further geophysical survey, carried out in March 2012, attempted to trace the roadside ditches into the field to the north, Moor Barn field, but without success. Surface survey in this location – between the hedge and the site of the collapsed Moor Barn itself (a timber framed structure of unknown date) – located sherds of 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century pottery and some ceramic building material perhaps related to the occupation of the building. This may be masking the underlying Roman evidence. It is hoped at some point that a survey can be carried out north of the spinney now planted around the site of Moor Barn. Here, the edge of the Upton Cressett plateau is approached, giving commanding views down to Morville and across to Brown Clee, the Wrekin, Wenlock Edge, and towards the Clent Hills. This spot seems an ideal location for a Roman fort, which would explain the road and its roadside settlement in what might seem otherwise a backwater. It would also explain the highly significant cluster of abundant pottery which includes coarse wares but also fine imported beakers and decorated samian, unusual in a rural context in Shropshire. Latterly, in December 2012, fieldwalking was carried out on the site with a small group led by the author and John Sunderland of Allfield, Condover. The latter is studying for a PhD in Photography at the University of Northampton and bases his work on landscape archaeology. In this instance, the process and discoveries of fieldwalking formed the focus of his study, the results of which will be incorporated into the new galleries at the re-launched Shrewsbury Museum when it opens in its new venue in the Music Hall. Among the finds located on this occasion, in addition to more Roman pottery, were a bloom base of presumably Roman date and a glazed and decorated sherd dated to ca. 1250-1350. It is important to note that as a review of the heritage assets of Upton Cressett, the Roman site in Parlour Coppice has now been listed as an ancient monument (List Entry Number 1409733). The generous help of the Pugh family in these researches is greatly appreciated.

A planned excavation in Moor Barn field did not, in the end, take place. Instead, work was relocated to the former orchard opposite the gatehouse of Upton Cressett Hall on land owned by Roger Cantrill, whose assistance is gratefully acknowledged. The work was supervised by Henry Chapman and Kristina Krawiec for the University of Birmingham with the author as advisor. The aim here was to assess the supposed site of a deserted medieval village presumed to be associated with the 12<sup>th</sup> century Church of St Michael, adjacent to the site and to Upton Cressett Hall. The excavations, assisted by Andy Johnson, found that the site is heavily disturbed but from a single ditch came stratified cooking pot of a similar date to the sherd found in fieldwalking 500m away. This site too has now been listed, (Entry Number 1409739) while Upton Cressett Hall, its gatehouse and the Church have also been separately upgraded to Grade 1.

*Roger White*  
*University of Birmingham*



*'Mystery object' – possibly a tankard handle – found at Upton Cressett)*



*Mr Pugh's grandson with one of his finds*

## Newport Butter Cross

Recent archaeological investigations by SLR Consulting Ltd and Newport Historical Society around the Butter Cross (or Puleston Cross) in the High Street, Newport (Figure 1), are the first archaeological excavations within this historic town. They have demonstrated the survival of archaeological deposits and features at a shallow depth below the existing ground surface and thus illustrate the great potential the town has for containing a wealth of archaeological information.

The Butter Cross is constructed of a five-course Old Red Sandstone stylobate block base, and according to documentary sources, was erected in 1286, as a memorial to Roger de Pyvelesdon (hence the name Puleston Cross). During the English Civil War the cross was severely vandalised resulting in the upper section of the cross being removed.

The investigations have revealed the presence of a largely forgotten building, the Butter Market (Figure 2), in which the Cross was contained, and a deposit sequence that corroborates the historical record of Cross, Butter Market, Great Fire, reconstruction, and demolition.



Figure 2

This OSL dating has established that the cross was built upon a buried soil of probable 12th century date, which is perhaps a century before the cross was erected, with subsequent activity in the 17th century (Figure 3). Artefactual evidence also appears to exist for later disturbance, perhaps repairs (or the possible movement of the cross), during the 17th century. It is unsurprising that artefacts earlier than the 17th century were not recovered due to the very minimal investigation beneath the Cross plinth that was possible during this watching brief, so virtually all finds have come from the disturbed area surrounding the plinth. It is probable that the artefacts are associated with the construction of the Butter Market and related contemporary maintenance works to the Cross. Based on archaeological evidence in the form of surviving brick foundations (Figure 4) this 17th century Butter Market building appears to have enclosed the Butter Cross, before being demolished in 1866 when it fell out of use and was replaced by a general market hall, located south of Middle Row.

The Newport History Society have a theory that the cross could have been moved in 1633, following the construction of a market hall (built by William Adams<sup>1</sup>). Around this time a butter and cheese market building was constructed

<sup>1</sup> Adams left money for the Butter Market to be moved.

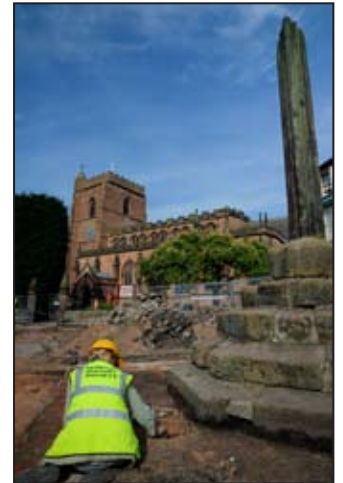


Figure 1

that corroborates the historical record of Cross, Butter Market, Great Fire, reconstruction, and demolition. The excavations also revealed the foundations for terraced houses set against the churchyard precinct. In addition a sample was taken from the buried soil beneath the cross base and this was dated by Optically Stimulated Luminescence (OSL) to AD 1095 (AD 916 – 1205), but interestingly a possible disturbance event was also detected, dated to around 1635 (AD 1577 - 1698).

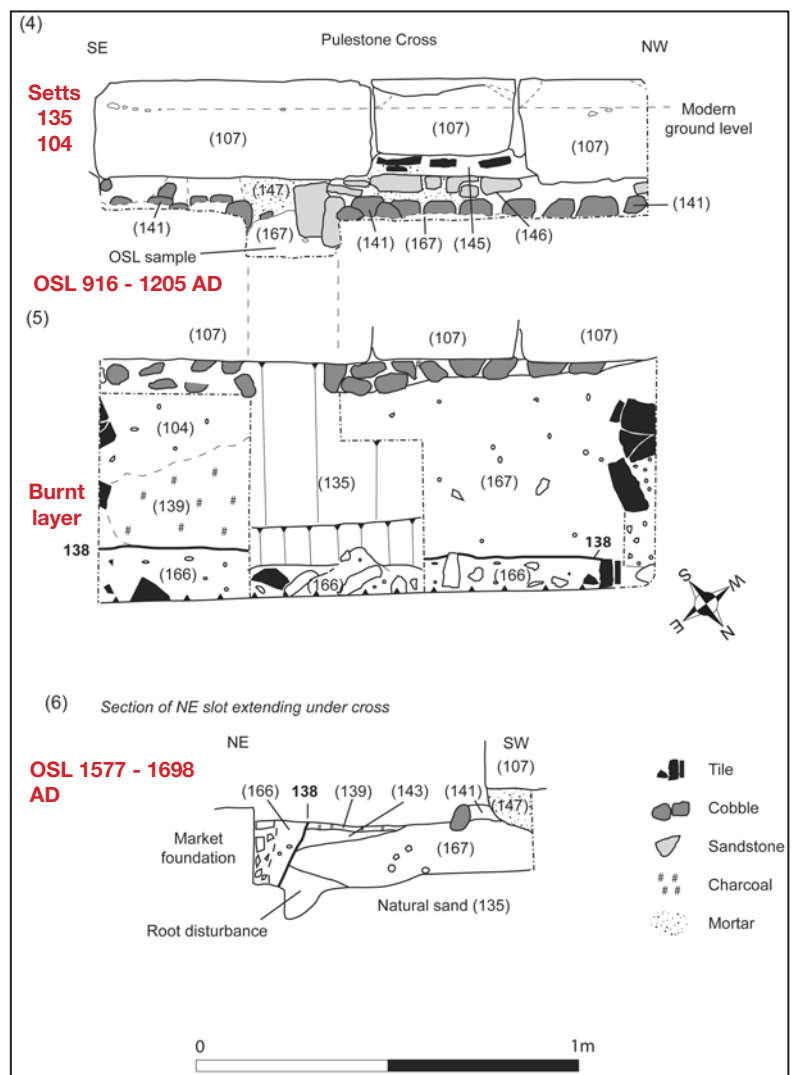


Figure 3

within the vicinity of the cross by Richard Barnefield.<sup>2</sup> The cross may have been rebuilt within a replacement building in 1665 by Thomas Talbot of Longford House.

The key historical dates below seem to correspond with the evidence revealed by our investigations (which are outlined in bracketed italics):

- Roger de Pynelesdon d.1272 - cross erected by son (OSL date 916 – 1205 AD)
- 1292 Nicholas de Audley granted land for day to day trading in Newport 40 x 30ft from wall of churchyard (house of Richard Blakelow (Middle Row?)) to Highway and from churchyard wall to Cross erected for Lord Roger de Pyneslesdon (This corroborates the original position of the Cross as the location where it now stands)
- 1309 Richard Attebruggehend conduits water from Walls Head Spring, Church Aston with four cisterns, including at Upper Bar, at the south end of the Market Hall, at the Butter Cross, and at Lower Bar (the sequence of all four progress from south to north placing the Butter Cross next to the church)
- 1632 William Barnfield built timber-frame house to sell butter and cheese near Pulston Cross (perhaps this is represented archaeologically by deposit 143 of 17th Century date (see Figure 3))
- 1665 Great fire of Newport – 162 houses destroyed including Barnfield’s Butter Market (perhaps this is represented archaeologically by deposit 139, ash and charcoal (see Figure 3))
- 1665 Thomas Talbot had Butter Market rebuilt out of stone
- 1681 Wm Hill’s estate map includes Newport High St and shows Butter Market
- 1840 Tithe map shows Butter Market building
- 1866 Butter Market demolished (perhaps this is represented archaeologically by deposit 104, of 18th/19th C date)
- 1902 OS map shows Butter Cross and Northern Terrace buildings surviving
- 1920s OS mapping shows Northern Terrace has been demolished



Figure 4

Although the possibility exists that the cross could have been moved to its present location in 1633 by William Adams, such a hypothesis is unlikely because without the protection of the cross, the buried soil beneath would have been disturbed and exposed to light and therefore would not have produced a much earlier OSL date. In addition this location within the market square adjacent to the church, would be the expected position in which a medieval market cross should be found.

Market crosses were erected as the symbol of a borough’s right to trade, usually located in the centre of the town where the main streets crossed. Symbolically they are also referred to as the omphalos, a Greek word meaning “navel” i.e. the centre of the community. They were thus closely associated with the prosperity of that community and it is therefore no co-incidence that the church at Newport is dedicated to St. Nicholas, who was the patron saint of merchants and traders, as well as many other groups such as sailors and fishermen. The existence of Newport Pool and the documentary evidence that the town supplied fish to the king’s court, may have been another reason for this dedication.

*Tim Malim and George Nash*

*SLR Consulting Ltd.*

Acknowledgement: the work was funded by Telford and Wrekin Council as part of a Market Town Improvement Fund and the writers would like to thank Guy Biddulph, lead engineer for the works, who arranged payment for the archaeology.

<sup>2</sup> The Newport History Society suggests that a Butter Market existed before the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and was located to the south of the town. However, following the Great Fire of Newport in 1665, Barnefield’s Butter Market was destroyed. It is presumed that this building was located within the eastern or southern part of the town where the focus of the fire occurred.

## Watchmen's huts on the Lilleshall Company Railways

Jim Cooper (Independent Researcher) and Shane Kelleher (Archaeology and Monuments Officer at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust) are currently carrying out research into some very interesting and intriguing structures which, historically, were located on the Lilleshall Company's mineral railway. These domed or beehive-shaped cabins are believed to have housed crossing keepers at road or rail crossing points. However, initial research has shown that these 'watchmen huts' were also found at other locations such as rail junctions, sidings, yards or even adjacent to industrial buildings such as the Priorslee and Lodge Furnaces.

We understand that none of these interesting buildings survives today. Do you know if any do survive? Do you have a photograph of one of these 'huts'? Can you remember where one might have been located or what they were used for? Do you know of any previous research on the topic?

If you can help with any of these queries please contact Shane Kelleher at [ironbridge.archaeology@gmail.com](mailto:ironbridge.archaeology@gmail.com) or tel: 01952 435900

Shane Kelleher, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust

## Book News

**'Deeds of the Palmers' Guild of Ludlow', (xxxvi + 329pp), (2012), edited by M.A. Faraday, MA, FSA**

Ludlow was a flourishing town in the Middle Ages, making the fortunes of many of its citizens at first from the wool trade and later from the woollen cloth trade. Ludlow castle was also the centre of increasingly important lordships, first that of the Lacys, and later of the Mortimer earls of March, becoming one of the main bases of the House of York, and eventually of the Council in the Marches of Wales. In the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century its leading burgesses founded the Palmers' Guild, which became the leading institution in the town until its dissolution in 1551, supporting an important chantry in the parish church and a college of chaplains who provided many services, both spiritual and secular, in the town, financing building and ornamentation work in the church, providing a kind of mutual insurance service for its members who came from all over the country, including at one time Richard, duke of York himself. At Pentecost it also held an elaborate annual feast for its members. The college of chaplains was financed from the rental income derived from rent-charges and from the Guild's large number of properties within the town and in some of the parishes outside; these rent-charges and properties had been acquired over the space of 300 years from donations, bequests and purchase. The guild rented them out; at first leases for lives were usual, but later leases for terms of years became more typical. The Guild's archives included the title-deeds for these rent-charges and properties, often demonstrating the donor's own title, so a pre-Guild history can be described for many of them. The Guild came into existence in the late 1250s, but some of the deeds in the archive date from the very early 13<sup>th</sup> century. Leases subsisting at the time of the Guild's dissolution in 1551 and the surrender

of its properties to the Corporation of Ludlow were often kept after their expiry. This edition of English abstracts of some 1,495 deeds of various kinds, mostly in Latin, some in Norman-French or English, demonstrate the extent of the Guild's interests, but also provide the most important extant source of information about the families of the town and other places, their descents, the derivations of their names and their occupations. The witness-lists to the deeds evidence the holding of offices and show the order of precedence, even of kinship-groups, of these persons at different times. The edition is fully indexed with extensive cross-referencing of variant spellings of names. The collection contains roughly 13,500 references to named individuals living in and around Ludlow, with some in Leominster, Marlborough and other places.

This book may be purchased from the Lulu GB website for £24 (hardback) plus postage, or £16 (paperback) plus postage. Purchasers in the UK may buy directly from the editor for £34 (hardback) or £24 (paperback) including postage – these prices apply until Royal Mail tariffs increase (prob. in April 2013). e-mail: [f2594255@gmail.com](mailto:f2594255@gmail.com), payment by cheque to M.A. Faraday, 47 York Gardens, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 3EW. If a purchaser wishes to buy from the editor for delivery at the same time copies of 'The Herefordshire Chantry valuations of 1547' and/or 'The Herefordshire Musters of 1539 and 1542' some savings on postage can be achieved.

**More Images of Alveley (£10.00 plus p+p from Tim White on 01746 1182)**

A new book of 170 photographs has just been published by the Alveley Historical Society. *More Images of Alveley* covers the period from about the 1930s to 1960s and contains many images of local scenes and families.

(Copy deadline for the Autumn 2013 Newsletter is Friday 19th July 2013. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com))



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No. 76, Autumn 2013

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society will be held at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September 2013 at 9.30am. The AGM will be followed, at 10.20am, by the *Prehistory in Shropshire Day School*. With a wide-ranging programme this meeting will provide an opportunity to catch up with the latest research on this fascinating, but often enigmatic, period. Places are still available at the very reasonable cost of £15.00 for members and £20.00 for non-members. This includes lunch and afternoon tea. A booking slip can be found at the bottom of the enclosed Meetings Programme leaflet.

**Subscriptions and Mailings:** The subscription rates remain at £14.00 for Ordinary membership; £15.00 for Family Membership (two or more people living at the same address); £14.00 for UK institutions and £18.00 for overseas institutions. Cheques / Postal orders should be made payable to *Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society* and sent to the Membership Secretary at the address at the head of the Newsletter.

Unfortunately, costs are continuing to rise and, reluctantly, the Council has decided that an increase in annual subscriptions will be soon be necessary. At the 2013 AGM it will be recommended by the Treasurer, on behalf of the Council, that annual subscriptions should be increased by £3.00 from January 2015.

One way in which members, who are UK taxpayers, can assist the Society financially, at no extra cost to themselves, is by filling in a Gift Aid Declaration Form to cover their membership subscriptions. This will allow the Society to reclaim, from the Government, the tax that the member has already paid on that subscription. A Gift Aid Declaration Form is enclosed with this newsletter and we will be most grateful if any tax-paying members, who have not already done so, sign up today.

**Meetings Group:** The Society's Meetings Group is still looking for new members to assist with the development of the Society's events programme. The task is not onerous and offers the opportunity to put forward suggestions for events, activities and possible lecture topics at the informal meetings of the group. If you would like to help please contact the Newsletter Editor.

**The Future of our Past:** Members of the Society's Council have been keeping a very close eye on recent events in our neighbouring county of Herefordshire. All local councils are facing budget cuts and the future remains bleak. In Herefordshire it was proposed that major cuts should be made to the libraries and museums budgets (including the archaeology service budget) affecting jobs, resources, services and public access and virtually wiping out some aspects of these services. There have been *some* temporary amendments to the proposals resulting in a *partial* reprieve – for the moment – but draconian cuts in the near future are still on the cards. The same services in Shropshire have already suffered year-on-year cuts and we are concerned that it will only be a matter of time before similar far-reaching proposals are made here which could mean an end to many of the facilities and services which have been built up painstakingly over the years and – of course – an equivalent loss in jobs and expertise. It does not take long to dismantle departments but it takes years to build them up again. We will keep our membership informed of any such proposals which come to our attention and will do our best to rally opposition!

### Heritage Open Days 12<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013

The 2013 Heritage Open Days weekend will include open days at Ditherington Flax Mill and the Drapers' Hall in Shrewsbury.

There will also be events and activities elsewhere in the county e.g. at Snailbeach Mine and at the historic canal yard at Ellesmere.

For further information, a full list of venues involved and details of booking requirements visit [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

## Archaeology Service News:

### The Pitchyard Pottery, Benthall

Clay tobacco pipes were made in Benthall from the later 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier using local clays. There are no records of when pottery or pipe-making began at the Pitchyard site next to the New Inn on Bridge Road, Benthall, but the pottery may have been founded in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Pitchyard Pottery, also known as the Benthall Bank Pottery, was leased to Jasper Cox in 1800 and was run between 1814 and 1826 by William Lloyd of Pitchyard House, and from 1826 by his widow. An Elizabeth Lloyd was also landlady of the adjacent New Inn in 1829-35 and this may be the same person. (Benthall, 1957, p159; Stamper, 1998, p251; Piggot, 1829 & 1835.)

The Roden family, who lived in Benthall village and were churchwardens there, had been pipemakers and potters in Benthall and Broseley since at least the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and had operated from a number of sites, including the King Street works and the Legge's Hill works in Broseley. Noah Roden I (1770-1829) had perfected the long pipes or "churchwardens" in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and supplied London clubs and coffee houses (as well as the local trade). In c. 1829 the Roden family were operating from the Pitchyard Pottery site, and in 1835 Noah Roden II also became landlord of the adjacent New Inn, on Bridge Road. A map of 1835 (Hitchcock 1835) shows the works with a kiln on the site. (Correspondence in HER files for HER 11733; Higgins, 1987, p141; Hitchcock, 1835.)

Edwin Southorn was the younger of two sons of William Southorn, another Broseley pipemaker. The Southorns operated from the nearby Legge's Hill works on the other side of Bridge Road in Broseley Wood where, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> / early 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Rodens had been manufacturing clay tobacco pipes and slipware pottery. Edwin joined Noah Roden II at his factory on the Pitchyard Pottery site, probably around 1850, apparently following a dispute in the Southorn family (but the Rodens and Southorns were also connected by marriage). After Noah's death in 1855, the Pitchyard Pottery was initially operated by his widow, but in 1858 Edwin Southorn took over the business, which by this time was producing clay pipes. Edwin brought about a number of revolutionary changes, and produced some of the finest English pipes of the period. In 1861 the works, then known as the "Broseley Pipe Works", employed 28 people, and in 1871 40 (Hannaford, 1992; Higgins, D, 1987, p141).

Edwin Southorn died in 1876, and in the late 1870s the factory was run by Hopkins & Co. as the Raleigh Tobacco Pipeworks. By 1882 the Southorn family seem to have taken charge of the site which continued to operate as the "Raleigh Pipe Works" and was said in 1885 to be one of the largest factories of its kind in England. Production on the site apparently ceased sometime between 1895 and 1909. The works, labelled as a "Pipe Works", are shown on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition Ordnance Survey 25" maps of 1882 and 1902 as two parallel ranges of buildings joined with a kiln at their northern end. (Stamper, 1998, p254-5; Hayman & Horton, 1999, p91; OS, 1882 & 1902.)

Whether the works were abandoned or whether there is simply a gap in the records for the early 20<sup>th</sup> century is unclear. Much of the history for the site in the later 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries has been compiled from trade directories, and it may be that the Bridge Road works were operating under Southorn's "Broseley Pipe Works" from their address at the King Street works in Broseley. Whichever, from about 1922 Wolfson Rowe & Co., operating as the "Salop Pottery", was making earthenware on the Pitchyard site. On the 1927

OS 25" map, a second kiln is shown on the west side of the main factory buildings, as well as the kiln at the northern end. Between c. 1929 and 1937 the works were operated by the Leigh Pottery Co. Ltd. for the production of decorative wares. From the late 1930s the Benthall Stoneware Co made sanitary pipes at the works until the 1950s. Pottery production was also restarted here by a Stoke-on-Trent firm in about 1950, but this was a short-lived enterprise. The site is still shown as a "Pipe Works" on the 1954 OS 1:10,560 (6") map of 1954. (Benthall, 1957, p168-9; Clarke, 1993, p63; OS, 1927 & 1954; Stamper, 1998, p254-5.)

From 1959 until at least the late 1980s the site was used as a garage and chemical store. By 1973 the kilns had gone, though the east and west ranges of the former pottery buildings still stood. The remaining buildings were demolished in 2011. (Clark & Alfrey, 1987, p190; OS, 1973; Hannaford, 2012a.)



*Pitchyard Pottery, Benthall*

There have been several archaeological interventions on or in the immediate vicinity of the site. In the early 1950s finds were made in the gardens across the road from the works of slipware plates, dishes and drinking vessels "with crimped edges sometimes known as Welsh dishes". The slipware included pieces of a "fireclay body, covered with a red or brown slip which in turn was decorated with a white slip poured on with a slip kettle and quill or a comb of quills" (Benthall, 1957, p169). The area was included in the Nuffield Archaeological Survey of the late 1980s carried out by Ironbridge Institute. The two central units of the east range buildings were still relatively intact, though altered in the later 20<sup>th</sup> century. The west range had been partly demolished by this time, though some walls survived, and a chimney still stood against the west wall of this range. No kilns survived. (Clark and Alfrey, 1987, p190). In 1983 construction work for the garage on the pottery site revealed a large underground chamber. This was recorded by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Archaeology Unit (archive: Benthall, The New Inn, BE83B) and interpreted at the time as an old water cistern. 18<sup>th</sup> century clay pipes, earthenware pottery wasters and saggar fragments were also recovered. (Trueman, 1988, p29.) An archaeological watching brief was maintained on the demolition of the remaining structures on the Bridge Road site in 2011 (Hannaford, 2012a) and the remains of part of a 19<sup>th</sup>-century kiln floor were recorded, indirectly associated with deposits of industrial waste, including pottery wasters and kiln furniture during re-development of the site in 2012 (Hannaford, 2012b).

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- Pigot, 1829:** *Pigot's Directory for Shropshire and Staffordshire, 1829* [www.broseley.org.uk/miscfiles/pigot%201829.htm](http://www.broseley.org.uk/miscfiles/pigot%201829.htm) Date accessed 27/09/12
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- Hugh Hannaford, Senior Archaeological Projects Officer, Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council*

## Shropshire Archives News July 2013

### Digitisation and on line publication of records

Work on digitising parish registers and other records of interest to family historians is now complete. A procurement process is underway to find a commercial partner to make the parish and non conformist registers accessible on line through a subscription service. It is hoped contracts will be signed later in the summer with material going on line later in the year. We will keep you informed of progress.

### Oswestry cemetery project

This 18 month project led by Oswestry Town Council and supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund will work on the cataloguing, conservation and digitisation of the records of Oswestry cemetery dating back to 1862. The records, which are relatively complete, are currently in poor condition and inaccessible to researchers. The project will also support volunteers who will create a photographic record of the surviving gravestones, transcribe the information on them, and research the lives of those recorded to create an online resource. The oldest stone at the cemetery will also be conserved and interpretation added to the cemetery itself. Project staff are currently being recruited and work will start later in the summer.

### Arts Council volunteering project

Shropshire Council has been successful in a bid to the Arts Council to support development work across museums and heritage services. Shropshire Archives will be most involved in an 18 month long 'Virtual Volunteering' project which will complement the Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage project now into its second year. The project will support volunteers who prefer to work on material at home whether for access or geographical reasons. Digital copies of archives and other heritage items will be created to support this work.

### Thursday evening workshops

We have been very pleased with the response to our Thursday evening workshops which started in April. So far all the sessions have been fully booked with some very positive feedback from those taking part. We will be running further workshops later in the year, please look out for further details.

### Alison Healey.

Alison, our longest standing member of staff, retired at the end of March. She worked for the service since 1968 in a number of roles including most recently as our genealogical researcher, so

she has seen many changes in archives and record offices over the years. Alison was always the person we asked when faced with an enquiry or questions we thought no one else would know the answer to. Her research work and delivery of courses and training for staff has benefited so many people in Shropshire and across the world. We will all miss her helpfulness and professionalism.

### Whitchurch History Day

Saturday 12th October sees the Whitchurch History Day, jointly organised by the Friends of the Shropshire Archives and the Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage project. This is going to be a day of celebration about the town's heritage and that of its hinterland. Expect talks, presentations, music, historic walks and tours. The venue is Brownlow Community Centre, Claypit Street, Whitchurch SY13 1LF. More information from [john.benson@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:john.benson@shropshire.gov.uk) 01743 255377.

### Friends annual lecture

7.30pm Wednesday 13 November at Shropshire Archives, Matt Williams (ex Time Team) details tbc

*Mary McKenzie, Shropshire Archives*

## Shropshire Museums Service:

### working towards a new museum for Shrewsbury

With work progressing at the new Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, staff have started to move collections out of Rowley's House. Most of the natural science and social history collections which will not be displayed are now being added to the study collections at Ludlow Museum Resource Centre and the archaeology archives from fieldwork around the town are being moved off-site.

We will soon be at the point where we will have to start closing galleries to pack up the exhibits and have some professionally cleaned or conserved but we hope to keep this closure period as short as possible. We are still on track to open the new Museum at the end of the year and are looking forward to seeing both old favourites redisplayed to their best advantage and new items on display for the first time.

To find out more about the new museum visit our website [www.shrewsburymuseum.org.uk](http://www.shrewsburymuseum.org.uk) Up-to-date news is also posted on our Facebook page [www.facebook.com/shrewsbury.museum](http://www.facebook.com/shrewsbury.museum), Pinterest board <http://pinterest.com/shropmuseums> and twitter account [@shropmuseums](https://twitter.com/shropmuseums)

*Emma-Kate Lanyon, Shropshire Museums Service*

## Notes from the finds desk of the PAS:

Archaeological artefacts from Shropshire have been coming into the museum at a steady rate since the last newsletter, which is surprising given the snow, then rains and now full blown heat wave. I have picked one of my favourite newly discovered objects for this newsletter's PAS roundup

### Enamelled heraldic pendant from Horse Harness discovered in Waters Upton, North East Shropshire ( PAS record: HESH-C85A60)

The pendant is generally well preserved although the edges are abraded eroded and corroded. From the centre of the top edge of the pendant an integral cast suspension loop, this would have been attached to a mount allowing the pendant to swing. The front face of the pendant has an inlaid white enamel design of a moth or butterfly with outstretched wings. The design is well achieved and relatively in scale - filling the entire front face. Small traces of gilt surface is present on the area outside the white butterfly - suggesting that the entire front face was gilt and that the butterfly was shown on a field of gold.



*enamelled heraldic pendant*

Heraldically this emblazoned shield can be described *Argent Butterfly volant en aiere on field or*. The device is linked with the Audley family who used the device as a familial badge (rather than their heraldic badge). The butterflies can be seen on the battle pennon of the Audley family which was flown at the Battle of Blore Heath (1459) (during the War of the Roses) where James Turchet (Lord Audley) fell in battle. At this time the Audley family had many lands in Staffordshire, Cheshire and North Shropshire. The findspot of this example is near to Blore Heath - although predates the battle by at least 150 years. The symbol of the butterfly in medieval thought is often linked with the psyche or soul - the colour white (argent / blanche) is also know for purity. Other harness pendants have been recorded with moths or butterflies similar to this - interestingly this holds a distribution associated with the landholdings of the Audley family - with a small concentration in Cheshire / North Shropshire. A further example has also been discovered at the excavations of a monastic site at Poulton, Cheshire.

The full PAS record can be found here

<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/549351>

Peter Reavill

Portable Antiquities Scheme

Ludlow Museum Resource Centre, July 2013

## Bitterley Hoard Appeal.

The Bitterley coin hoard dates from the English Civil War and was deposited at some point after July 1643. It is the largest civil war hoard found in Shropshire in modern times. 'Shropshire Museums / Ludlow Museum' and 'The Friends of Ludlow Museum' are currently raising money to acquire the hoard, fully clean and conserve it and display it within the County.



*Bitterley Hoard – Close up of Hoard in the ground*

The hoard consists of 137 high denomination silver coins and a single gold one. These were discovered by a metal detectorist on farm land near Bitterley, on the slopes of Clee Hill, South Shropshire. The detectorist reported the hoard within hours of its discovery and had resisted the urge to excavate it himself. This allowed staff of the Portable Antiquities Scheme to excavate and lift the hoard thereby preserving any internal stratigraphy. The hoard was excavated at the British Museum and fully catalogued. We now know that the hoard was originally placed within a very fine leather purse which had then been pushed into a blackware pottery tyg (multi-handed drinking vessel) and buried in the ground at a depth of c. 14 inches. The coins date from the reigns of Edward VI - Charles I with the youngest coin being a Bristol Mint Half Crown struck between July 1643 and March 1644. The face value of the hoard is £9 11s 6d.



*Bitterley Hoard – Charles 1  
Bristol Mint copy*

If you are able to make a contribution toward the preservation of this hoard for the people of Shropshire then please contact Lottie James, Chair of Friends of Ludlow Museum - 01584 872685 [lottie\\_james@btinternet.com](mailto:lottie_james@btinternet.com) or you can make a contribution to their online fund which can be found here:

[www.justgiving.com/friendsofludlow/Donate](http://www.justgiving.com/friendsofludlow/Donate)

Full details of the discovery, excavation and investigation of the hoard can be found here:

[www.dayofarchaeology.com/author/preavill/](http://www.dayofarchaeology.com/author/preavill/)

Peter Reavill, Portable Antiquities Scheme

## The work of Heritage at Risk Project Officers (HARPOs) in Shropshire:

### Caus Castle: a case study

Following an extensive restructuring over the last 12 months, English Heritage has come through its metamorphosis with a team of dedicated professionals working to combat the threats to our designated heritage assets (scheduled monuments, listed buildings, parks and gardens) with archaeologists, historic buildings advisers, architects and landscape architects all collaborating to safeguard the heritage values of such places, i.e. what makes them significant.

The Heritage at Risk Project Officers (HARPOs) work with local authorities, private landowners, community groups and others to examine ways of lowering the risk status of heritage assets across the region. They will advise on where to apply for funding, day to day management and longer term management agreements or other improvement strategies that will help assets to achieve low risk status.

The Heritage at Risk Register (published annually) provides a list enabling HARPOs to prioritise assets that need the most help and target assets which are at risk of being lost either partially or in their entirety to deterioration, aggressive agricultural practice, lack of funds or other threats. By working with partner organisations such as Natural England, funds can be channelled into management of rural monuments, supporting the natural and historic environments that make up our beloved countryside. One of the aims of this, alongside safeguarding the future of such assets, is to facilitate and enhance the enjoyment and understanding of these sites.

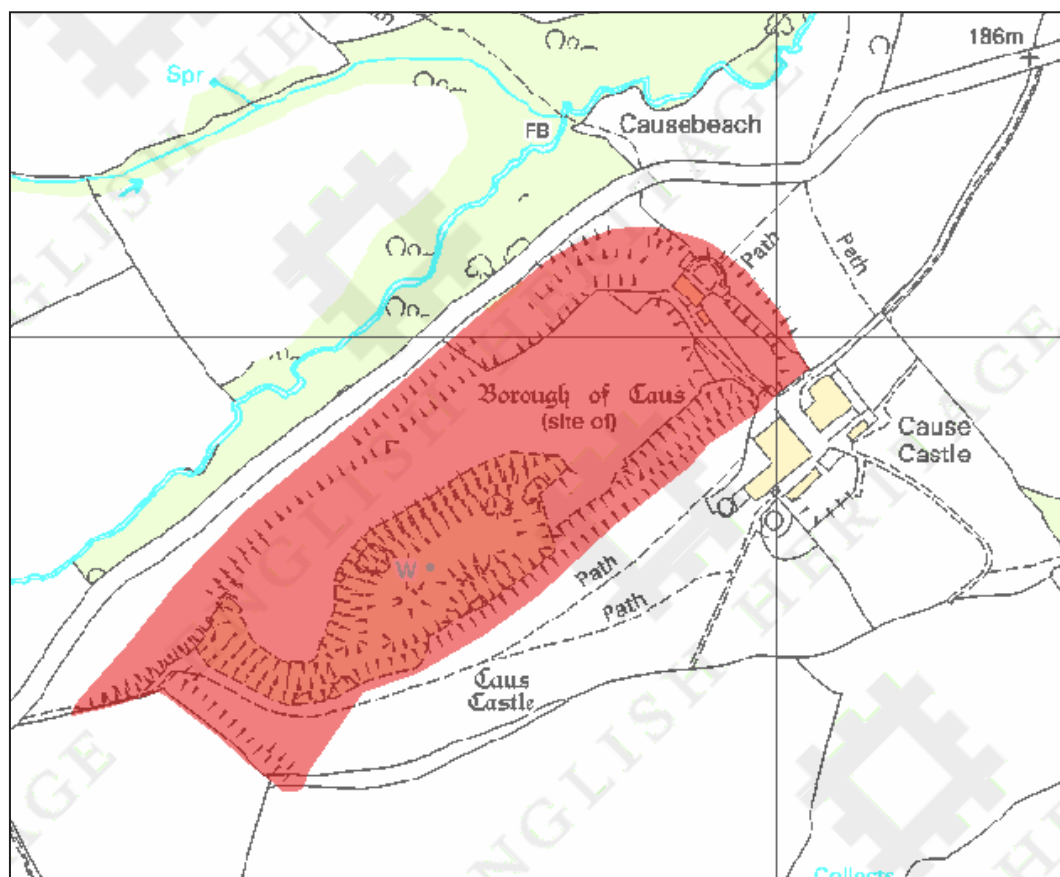
A current example of this partnership working, and a splendid heritage asset quite prominent in the Shropshire countryside, is Caus Castle near Westbury. This site is a small multivallate hillfort, with a motte and bailey castle inside it, all within a medieval borough; a truly fantastic example of British pre-history and medieval history rolled into one. The size of the area enclosed by the Iron Age ramparts around the hill make it one of only around 100 such sites recognised nationally. The post-conquest motte and bailey which sits upon the hill top and extends its natural altitude by several metres would have been surmounted by a palisade and a timber (and later stone) tower; it is thought to have been constructed by Roger Fitz Corbet, a marcher lord, in the late 11<sup>th</sup> to early 12<sup>th</sup> century, as the 'caput' (the principal residence, military base and administrative centre) of his barony. This is not much of a stretch as Caus takes its name from the Pays de Caux area of Normandy, the ancestral home of Roger Fitz Corbet. The hillfort was evidently reused in medieval times and comprised a strong communal as well as military focal point for the surrounding settlements. Further information on Caus Castle's history is available under its scheduling description.

The monument had fallen into slow decline, principally due to serious tree root damage of the masonry footings which resulted in crumbling and loose wall footings. English Heritage liaised with Natural England as the monument became the focus of a Higher Level Stewardship application and, now under stewardship, a programme of measures is being discussed along with a local forester and Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Team to manage issues on the monument. In terms of the site's enjoyment, there is a lack of visibility and stable vegetation cover at ground level; self seeding saplings and trees grow up on the site but a meeting with a forester has led to a strategic plan to manage the worst area of scrub regeneration in the centre of the bailey around the base of the motte. Although there is no right of way on the monument, this will hopefully mean that local walkers and residents will be able to see more of the site from distant views and appreciate its setting in this archaeologically-rich and significant area.

The site of the monument is shown on the attached map extract.

It includes a 2 metre boundary around the archaeological features, considered to be essential for the monument's support and preservation.

*Imogen Sambrook | Heritage at Risk Project Officer*  
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## Beneath the forest

A few years ago, the Forestry Commission undertook a major project in the Wyre Forest. Part of this was to examine the history of the forest. The one substantial outcome was an aerial archaeological survey of the forest, using the (then) new technique of LiDAR.

Aerial surveys, using photographs taken from aeroplanes, has been used in archaeology for almost a century; indeed there are 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs taken from hot air balloons. Today of course it is a trivial matter to get hold of any aerial photograph from Google Earth; in the correct lighting these can give excellent images of archaeological features, including old mines. However, there is an obvious problem in using aerial photography to look at woodland; the photos simply show the tops of trees. This is particularly unfortunate, as woodland tends to preserve earthworks much better than open country, where they are likely to have been ploughed out. LiDAR is a way round this. The technique involves firing laser pulses from the aircraft at the ground and recording the time it takes for them to bounce back and return to the plane. If the laser pulse hits an elevated feature, it will take a shorter time to return to the detector than if it is reflected by a depression. LiDAR works in woodland because the laser beams are so focused that they can pass between the branches of trees to hit the ground, so it is possible to see beneath the canopy. The technique can distinguish between features that differ in height by only a few inches and that are around a foot or so in diameter.

The initial output is a very detailed contour map. This is normally visualised by feeding the co-ordinates back into a computer and then creating an image that would be produced by the sun shining over the landscape from any given direction. Typically, images will be created showing the illumination from the four points of the compass; by comparing these, it is possible to build up a full picture of the landscape. Of course, not every feature that is shown on LiDAR is of great interest; a mound might be a tip from a small mine or quarry; it could also be a pile of logs or sawdust. Thus it is necessary to walk over the survey area on foot to identify exactly what has been found.

After some delay, the results of the Wyre Forest LiDAR survey are now available on-line. The resolution is not as high as the data still held by the Forestry Commission and the images only show illumination from one direction, so some features are invisible. None-the-less, the images that are available show the majority of archaeological features in sufficient detail for most purposes. One of the most spectacular set of images is of an enclosure around Lower Kingswood Farm in Kinlet at SO734770. This may mark a medieval manorial enclosure or correspond to a small deer park known from contemporary documents.

However, a number of 19<sup>th</sup> century antiquarians recorded what would seem to have been an Iron Age fort at Kingswood. In recent times it has not been possible to identify the structure that they saw; however the LiDAR images suggest that it may have been this enclosure and it is possible that it may indeed be prehistoric in origin. The technique has also been used recently, with great success, to map the Roman fort at Walltown (Clebury Mortimer) and its environs.

LiDAR is an expensive technique. However, it is widely used by the Environment Agency to map streams and rivers and their data sets are steadily growing. Thus LiDAR images will become more common and accessible and they will be of great use to archaeologists.

David Poyner

## Berwick House and Chapel: new light.

The late Professor Andor Gomme attributed the design of Berwick House to Francis Smith of Warwick and identified fine carving there as the work of Smith's in-house carver, Edward Poynton. The client was Thomas Powys, a member of the Shrewsbury Draper's Company and merchant. At much the same time as the house was building Berwick Chapel, built in 1672, was refurbished and provided with a baroque tower. The normally quoted date is 1735. Gomme ascribes the tower to the Trubshaw's, a Staffordshire family of masons. In the formal garden of the house there was a fine wrought-iron screen and gates which were transferred to Newnham Paddox, Warwickshire in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. The wrought-iron communion rails in the chapel were probably by the same hand. Both have been ascribed either to the Davies family, gatesmiths of Wrexham or to Robert Bakewell of Derby who was occasionally employed by Smith.

The discovery of accounts for the refurbishment of the chapel starting in 1729 sheds new light. Most of the craftsmen were local, Shrewsbury, men. However, Edward Poynton was paid for carving an altarpiece and this connects the refurbishment firmly with Francis Smith. The wrought-iron communion rails were supplied by the gatesmith Robert Bakewell of Derby who must now become the preferred gatesmith for the wrought-iron screen and gates formerly in the garden. The architectural framework of the altarpiece, the gallery and pews were made by William White a Shrewsbury joiner. The masons for the tower, paid for in December 1737, were Thomas Gates and a Mr. Webb. The area within the communion rails was paved with "Worcestershire" marble; a type of stone as yet unidentified. The altarpiece was superseded during the "restoration" of 1892. *(A longer note will appear in TSAHS).*

(Sources: GlamRO/CL/Deeds2/6439; Cranage, *Churches*, (1912), 847-8; Newman, *Buildings of Shropshire*, (2006), 847-8; Gomme, *Smith of Warwick*, (2000), pp., 19, 185-6, 288-9 )

James Lawson

## News from Old Oswestry Landscape and Archaeology Project (OOLAP)

### Old Oswestry Hillfort

Now is an excellent time to visit Old Oswestry, one of the most impressive Iron Age hillforts in Britain yet very easy to access from Llwyn Road or from the Gatacre playing fields. With views to the Cheshire ridge, the Wrekin and down the Welsh border, with massive ramparts and a unique and enigmatic array of steep sided pits it offers a challenge to the interpretive skills of the archaeologist. It's also a wonderful place for children to run around freely and explore the past.

The site is a haven for wildlife including some rare plants, all three native species of newts, and linnets, skylarks, and yellow hammers. The latter species has declined nationally by more than 50% over the last 25 years and is now on the Red List of birds of high conservation concern.



Yellowhammer at Old Oswestry hillfort (Rodney Farmer)



*Old Oswestry hillfort: ramparts near western entrance. The broom bushes (dark green) provide habitat for Greater Broomrape*

The hillfort retains a timeless feel despite the ever encroaching presence of the town. Views to the west and north have perhaps not changed substantially from those of three thousand years ago, but to the south east the bypass and the buildings of the expanding town have a major impact. Now Shropshire Council's latest Site Allocations and Management Development (SAMdev) plans imply even more development in this area. Details can be viewed at [www.shropshire.gov.uk/samdev\\_](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/samdev_)

If you are interested in the future of the hillfort, and you would like to join in activities including liaising with English Heritage and monitoring the management of the site please contact OOLAP, email [heather.hidden@btinternet.com](mailto:heather.hidden@btinternet.com).

*Heather Hidden (OOLAP)*

### **OOLAP seminar 2013**

For the past six years OOLAP has organised an annual seminar tracing the development of the Northern Marches from Prehistory onwards. Seminar number seven - **1066 and all that...** will take place on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> October 2013 from 10.00am to 4.00pm at the Marches School, Morda Road, Oswestry. Further details and a booking form (tickets are £10.00 each to include a sandwich lunch and morning and afternoon refreshments) can be obtained from:

Heather Hidden, Wern Weston Cottage, Weston Rhyn, Oswestry, SY10 7LJ E: [heather.hidden@btinternet.com](mailto:heather.hidden@btinternet.com)

### **Corbet(t) family research: linking Shropshire and Ireland?**

I have always loved coincidences and the way so many things in life seem to have links between them. I have spent the last year exploring as many lines of enquiry about the Corbett family as possible to give me a golden thread by which to explore the history and geography of these islands.

My father's family line comes from Tipperary in Ireland and I have discovered that, in one small part of that county, there are dozens of Corbett families. In fact the name seems to be concentrated in Tipperary, Limerick and Clare. Then, much to my surprise, I discovered that the Corbets were also a significant family here in Norfolk.

I had always known that Shropshire was the post-Norman Corbet land and that it was likely that most strands of the family name originated from Shropshire families. I finally tracked down The Family of Corbet: its life and times (A E B Corbet, 1915) which

traces the Caus, Wattlesborough and Moreton Corbet lines of the family and its spread from Shropshire. I noted that the second volume of the book was dedicated to Sir Roland Corbet (Coldstream Guards and killed at Givenchy in 1915). Then, as I explored the life of my grandfather and his three years in France during the Great War, I discovered that he had left Ireland and spent the whole war period in the Irish and then Machine Gun Guards. He was wounded in France and ended up in hospital at Ellesmere in Shropshire not many miles from Moreton Corbet! So I have spent some time in beautiful Shropshire to explore the land of my ancestors and I want to see if I can find any formal link between the Shropshire Corbetts and why the Corbett name emerged in South West Ireland. As Augusta Corbet put it in her history:

*'A good deal has still to be discovered also among the generations of younger sons in the Houses of Leigh and Longnor before their loss of the male line. The same may also be pointed out with regard to the descendants of younger sons in the Norfolk branch, with the clearing up of the vexed question of their descent...Again, a fertile field for research may be found in Ireland where many a Corbet family settled in the troubled days of Cromwell and following years. The name is constantly found both in the North and South of Ireland'*

It is this that has given me a focus for my research. I am interested in making contact with anyone with an insight into the Corbet family line. My main hypothesis at present is that the Shropshire Corbets provided military officers and men during the Tudor and, especially, Elizabethan campaigns in Ireland and it is probably from those soldiers that the Irish line emerged with the name apparently taking a local form (Corbain). During the 18th and 19th centuries Corbain is the closest equivalent Irish surname to Corbett and it seems that all later Corbains eventually anglicised their names to Corbett.

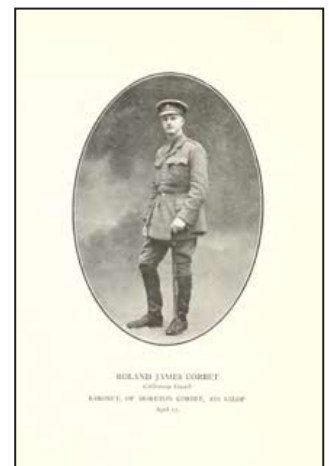
I would love to meet and / or hear from anyone with research interests that cover Tudor / Elizabethan Shropshire, the men and families that migrated from Shropshire to Ireland and also any research that has been done into the Corbet family.

Fred Corbett, 64 Naseby Way, Thorpe St Andrew, Norwich, Norfolk, NR7 0TP

Tel: 01603 432976. E: [frederick.corbett@virginmedia.com](mailto:frederick.corbett@virginmedia.com)



*Sgt. Edmond (Edward) Corbett DCM: my grandfather*



*Sir Roland James Corbet*

## Update: watchmen's huts on the Lilleshall Company Railways

In our last issue we published an appeal, by Shane Kelleher of the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust, for information about possible surviving examples of these huts or for photographs of destroyed examples. Shane has been able to provide us with a photograph of a now demolished watchman's hut which stood on Wellington Road, Donnington. Does anyone remember the location of any other such huts or know what they were used for?

Information to Shane Kelleher at E: [ironbridge.archaeology@gmail.com](mailto:ironbridge.archaeology@gmail.com) or on Tel: 01952 435900.



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## Book News

It has been suggested that we should follow the example of the *Woolhope Naturalists Field Club* and include a section in the Newsletter giving brief details of recent publications of local interest. Obviously, many of the titles included will later be reviewed in the *Transactions* but short bibliographical details in the Newsletter will bring material of interest to the attention of members much more quickly.

The following three volumes are all recent publications relating to Shropshire:

Bryant, Richard (2012): *Corpus of Anglo-Saxon Stone Sculpture, Volume X: the Western Midlands*. (Oxford: OUP/The British Academy)

(Covers Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire: price £95.00)

Gelling, Margaret (2012): *The Place-names of Shropshire: Part 6 – the hundreds of Brimstree and Bradford South*. (Nottingham: English Place-Name Society)

(When Margaret Gelling died in 2009 only five of a proposed eight volumes covering Shropshire place-names had been published. However, part 6 was largely complete and has now been published by the EPNS with just a few minor additions and amendments. It is available to Society members for the special price of £35.00 (post-free). Further details from the Newsletter editor. It is hoped that parts 7 and 8 can be completed by members of Margaret's team and published eventually.

White, R H, Gaffney, C & Gaffney V L with Baker, A (2013): *Wroxeter, the Cornovii and the Urban Process: Final Report on the Wroxeter Hinterland project 1994-1997. Volume 2: Characterising the City*. (Oxford: Archaeopress)

(The final volume covering the completion of this monumental enterprise. A snip at £15.50)

If you come across any publication that you consider ought to be included in the next edition of this bibliography please contact the Newsletter editor.

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## Newsletter Development

The editor welcomes contributions from individual members and organisations.

In future issues we hope to include brief biographies of distinguished antiquarians and archaeologists with a link to Shropshire. We also plan to highlight various finds from the county, recorded in the past, and now 'lost' (but we hope not gone forever). We will be launching this series in the next issue with a review of the story of the Bagley shield.

Suggestions for subjects / topics in either category – and ideas for any other material members would like to see covered should be sent to the editor (contact details below).

Copy deadline for the Spring 2014 Newsletter is Friday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2014. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 77, Spring 2014

**Website:** <http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk>

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the Society will be held at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 9.30am. The AGM will be followed, at 10.20am, by the **Roman Shropshire Day School**. With a wide-ranging programme this meeting will provide a review of the latest research into Shropshire during the Roman period. Places are available at the very reasonable cost of £15.00 which includes lunch and afternoon tea. Further information and a booking slip can be found at the bottom of the enclosed **Meetings Programme** leaflet.

**Subscriptions and Mailings:** We are constantly exploring ways which will enable us to maintain, or improve on, our current level of activities while ensuring the financial stability of the Society. At the AGM, held on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2013, it was agreed that the annual subscription would have to be increased, from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2015, to reflect our rising costs.

The new rates will be:

individual subscriptions:	£19.00
family subscriptions:	£20.00

A letter from the Treasurer is enclosed with this Newsletter. One way in which members who are UK taxpayers can assist the Society financially, at no extra cost to themselves, is by filling in a Gift Aid Declaration Form to cover their membership subscriptions. A new Gift Aid Declaration Form is enclosed with this Newsletter and the Treasurer has contributed the following note:

### *Please note:*

Because of the important additional information enclosed with this Newsletter it is being posted as hard copy to *all* members. If you normally receive your Newsletter by email you will still receive your electronic copy (in colour) as usual.

### *Gift Aid and member-benefits*

The government Gift Aid scheme allows us to reclaim tax on members' subscriptions. Recently, however, H.M.R.C. has made more stringent rules for Gift Aid claims, particularly in relation to member-benefits. A result of this is that the Society cannot claim Gift Aid on a subscription if that member has enjoyed a member-benefit that year – such as privileged-price entry to events organized by the Society. Besides reducing the Society's income member-benefits also make the Gift Aid scheme very complicated to administer. The Council has therefore reluctantly decided that it is no longer possible to offer privileged member-benefits at its events. This will not mean that members will be charged more, simply that we are no longer able to charge non-members at a discriminatory rate.

*Dr. Fran Bumpus (Treasurer, SAHS)*

**Meetings Group:** The Society's **Meetings Group** is still looking for any members who would like to assist with the development of the Society's events programme. The Group meets informally to discuss possible events and lecture topics – the task is not onerous and provides an opportunity for the wider membership to contribute to the Society's activities. If you would like to help please contact the Newsletter editor.

Alternatively, if you have an idea for an event or lecture topic but do not feel able to give up the time to attend meetings feel free to send your suggestion, by post or email, to the editor who will pass it on (contact details at head of page).

**\*STOP PRESS\***

**The new Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery is opening on Tuesday 1st April.  
It will be open 7 days a week from 10.00am - 5.00pm**

## Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery: Latest update

At the time of going to press (4th March 2014) the opening date has still not been announced but Shropshire Museum staff and volunteers are currently undertaking the final stages to complete Shrewsbury's new Museum and Art Gallery which is due to open in the next few weeks. Cases are being dressed, paintings being hung and captions written for the thousand or more items which will be on display to the public.



*Bones from the 'Conover mammoth' on display in Shrewsbury for the first time*

This month saw a visit from British Museum staff to install the Berth Cauldron: a remarkable Late Iron Age find from Shropshire which will be on display in the county for the first time in over 100 years. "I am thrilled that we have been able to arrange this loan with the trustees of the British Museum." says Emma-Kate Lanyon, Team Leader (Collections and Curatorial Services). "This is one of the key items I had hoped to secure for display as it tells an important story about society just before and after the Roman invasion. It was breath-taking to see it for real for the first time as it was carefully lifted out of its packing crate."



*A view of one of the new galleries in preparation*

By allowing key items to come home other nationals, such as the Victoria and Albert Museum who will continue to loan the late sixteenth century Corbet Bed for display, are also supporting the project and adding to the quality of the exhibitions. "This has been possible for the first time as the new museum provides the strict environmental conditions and security required by these museums to lend such important objects." says Emma-Kate.

Local people and those with a connection to the county have also rallied round the project. "We have some very notable loans from private individuals" says Emma-Kate. "These include the supposed scaffold cloth from the execution of Charles I and one of Shrewsbury astronomer Henry Blunt's ground-breaking nineteenth century models of the surface of the moon." Local people have also been generous in making some significant donations including raising funds to purchase a fine watercolour of Fish Street by the leading nineteenth century water-colourist John Varley and the largest known Roman coin hoard to have been found in Shropshire. Individual gifts have ranged from a collection of medieval artefacts from Tong Castle, a unique Caughley porcelain double handled sauceboat and a fine portrait by James Canterbury Pardon. Members may also be interested to hear that the museum is starting to fundraise to purchase a fine early medieval gold ring from South Shropshire which has been valued at over £3,500.00. The museum would love to keep it in Shropshire and in the public domain but, in order to do so, will need to raise a substantial part of the purchase price.



*Roman tombstones from Wroxeter*

"We cannot thank people enough for their support" says Emma-Kate. "The quality of the displays at the new museum is due to the generosity of local people who for over 180 years have helped us to build up a remarkable collection. Without their help we could not tell the story of our county's rich natural heritage and history."

*Emma-Kate Lanyon, Shropshire Museum Service*

## Notes from the finds desk of the PAS

Time flies when you are having fun!

2014 marks my tenth year as the Counties Finds Liaison Officer working for the British Museum's Portable Antiquities Scheme. Over the years I have been amazed at some of the finds reported to me and it has been a real privilege to handle and record them. Some of the most important have been acquired by the Museum Service – and I looking forward to seeing many of them displayed within the new Museum and Art Gallery – which will open very soon – at the old Music Hall in Shrewsbury town centre.

However, the majority of finds I work with remain with the finders or landowners who reported them in the first place. So I thought in this newsletter I would highlight three recently recorded discoveries which have been returned to the people who found them. Many other important artefacts from the county can be seen on the PAS database – [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk) – so if you have a spare half hour (after reading the rest of this issue) please do take a look

### A fob, hanger or dangler of later Iron Age Date from the Baschurch Area (PAS record HESH-D89587)

Archaeologists are unsure of the function of this type of artefact – most ascribe them to be a form of harness decoration that hangs or dangles although an example has been recovered associated with a grave from Kingsholm in Gloucestershire. The fob is formed from a cast copper alloy and dates to the late Iron Age (pre-Roman) date (100BC - AD 80). The fob is incomplete being broken across the projecting shank extending from the centre of the reverse; this break is old and patinated and the surface is unworn. Due to the break the shank and perforated loop is lost. The dangler is well cast with a circular disc / head which is augmented with an incised and pierced decoration. The overall form is that of an openwork threefold triskelle or whirligig. The whirligig is formed around a central cast raised circular boss with a cup-shaped central depression. The exterior edge of this boss is further delineated / enclosed by a deeply incised groove. The three defined arms are well modelled; each arm is cast slightly thickened. This additional thickness is enhanced by the arm being slightly twisted, bent away, giving the whirligig a three dimensional form - and the leading edge of each arm motion and definition. The entire disc is bordered by a very finely incised circumferential groove which defines the internal design and forms a neat external edge. Interestingly the reverse is also marked with areas of fine traced lines. These incised lines are very shallow and probably mark the mapping out of the design by the original bronze smith / craftsmen. The marks are very similar to those seen in



the openwork on the front - being crescent / comma shaped - although they are of varying sizes and so do not correspond directly with the design. It is likely that they have been applied with a compass and possibly functioned either as an initial failed motif / test design, or they helped the craftsman proportion the design on the front. The fob is a deep greenish brown colour with a well formed and preserved polished surface patina.

The full PAS record can be found here: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/599015>

### A Roman plate brooch from the Hinstock Area (PAS record HESH-93EAD7)

An incomplete cast copper alloy disc or wheel brooch dating to the Roman period, (circa AD 250-370). Approximately 95% of the brooch survives, although it has lost its pin and catchplate. In form it is sub-circular in plan with



a distinctive central domed projection from which six radiating ribs extend; the design resembles the hub and spokes of a wheel. The central dome is unusually riveted through the plate. Small areas of gilding survive on the decorative band and the central decoration. There are very few examples of these brooches (less than 20) are known from Britain and for Shropshire this form of brooch is very late – with the majority of brooches recorded by the PAS being from the period AD 75 – 200

The full PAS record can be found here: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/582630>

### Sceatta / Early Medieval Coin from the Albrighton Area PAS record: HESH-0FD355

This is only the fourth early Saxon Sceatta to be recorded by the PAS from Shropshire – and there are less than 10 known from the county. Therefore this



example is a very important addition to our knowledge of the period. It is probably a contemporary copy and dates to the period AD c.680-710 – most probably being made between AD 695 – 700. The front face shows a diadem-crowned king's head facing right with the partial nonsensical inscription [...]VIINOOAV[...]. The reverse face shows a bird sitting right on a cross with an annulet at the end of each horizontal arm. The broad distribution of these coins, like all metalwork finds for this period, favours the north and east of the county.

The full PAS record can be found here: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/583339>

Peter Reavill : [peter.reavill@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.reavill@shropshire.gov.uk)  
Portable Antiquities Scheme : Ludlow Museum Resource Centre  
March 2014

## Shropshire Archives News Feb 2014

### Service review

Shropshire Archives is currently undergoing a service review in order to meet the planned budget reductions set by Shropshire Council for the next three years. Due to the very difficult financial position Shropshire Council finds itself in, there will inevitably be an impact on the level of services we can continue to provide. Once consultation with staff and other stakeholders is complete, a public consultation will also take place during mid February to March. Please look out for details on our website and at Shropshire Archives and local libraries.

### On line publishing

Shropshire Archives has entered into partnership with Brightsolid who run the Find My Past website. Shropshire parish and non conformist registers dating up to 1900 will be on line in the spring and available on a subscription basis. Free access will be available at Shropshire Archives and at all Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin libraries. We will let you know when we have a more definite date for the release of the records.

### Records, archive and museum store

Many of you will be aware that space for the storage of materials at Shropshire Archives has been very tight for a number of years. I am therefore very pleased to tell you that capital funding from Shropshire Council has been secured to convert an existing Council-owned warehouse unit to provide a combined record, archive and museum store. This will provide a suitable environment for archives storage and will meet the necessary national standards. The store will also provide space for Shropshire Council records needing to be kept for a limited period as part of the Records Management Service, and also for some museum collections that cannot be accommodated in the new Museum and Art Gallery at the Music Hall in Shrewsbury. Work on the new store has now started and should be complete by April.

### Shropshire World War One Commemorations

Shropshire Archives is working with a wide range of county wide arts and heritage organisations to develop projects and activities to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the First World War. Funding has been granted by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England to support this activity from 2014 to 2016. We will keep you informed of progress.

*Mary McKenzie, Shropshire Archives*

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## News from Shropshire's Historic Environment Record team (the HER)

### First edition Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 Historic (County Series) Maps Available online.

The late 19th century First edition Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 historic maps for Shropshire are now available online via the British History Online website ([www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)). The facility provides you with an overview of the county from which you can select an individual map sheet, and allows you to zoom in and out, and move around the map sheet. Associated information includes the map sheet number and publication date.

From the homepage, use the Map tab to select Ordnance Survey 1:10,560 - Epoch 1 from the drop down list, and then select Shropshire. From the index map, click on the map sheet you want to view.

The map sheet will open. Clicking on a part of the sheet takes you in at maximum zoom (MAX). To zoom out, click on HIGH, LOW or MIN (Full sheet).

*Charlotte Orchard, Shropshire HER.*

### Map Search and 20th Century Mapping on the Discovering Shropshire's History website

The Discovering Shropshire's History website, [www.shropshirehistory.org.uk](http://www.shropshirehistory.org.uk) has now been enhanced with a range of mapping layers and the opportunity to browse and search via the map.

Click on Advanced Search.(Just below the Search box along the top.)

Click on Maps.

A Map will open with the "Our Collections" tab active and centred on the centre of the county. The map will fill up with markers for records, most of them HER records because all HER records contain spatial data. You can pan to the area you want and zoom in with the slider control, or with the Shift button held down, you can draw a box to zoom in with.

Click on any one of the markers to see the record's title. Click on the title to open up the full record.

There is a text search box on the left hand side just under "Our Collections" which you can use to move to a particular location by typing in a postcode.

When you are zoomed in to about a 1:10000 scale, photos will appear scattered over the map. Click on one of these to see the photograph and the record it relates to.

The default Base Map is “Open Street Map”, but click on the “Base Layers” tab for a wide range of options.

For access to a range of 20th Century Maps to overlay the base mapping, click on the “NLS Historic Maps” tab. These comprise three sets of 1 inch to 1 mile maps: 1920s, 1945-1947, and 1955 -1961, plus 1:25,000 (2 ½ inches to a mile) maps, dating from 1937-1961. These are all provided by the National Library of Scotland (NLS). You have the option to make the 20th century map semi-transparent so that you can see the Base Map underneath.

*Penny Ward, Shropshire HER*

### **HER Reloaded on the Discovering Shropshire’s History website.**

The original mechanism for loading and reloading the Historic Environment Record (HER, aka the Sites and Monuments Record or SMR) records onto DSH was convoluted and fragile, and as a result many of the records have not been refreshed for years, and the records created in the last few years have not been available at all.

Early this year, a new system for loading the HER records onto DSH came into use, and this has enabled us to reload the site not only with up to date copies of our Monument Records, but also with our “Event” records. The presentation of the records has also been improved. As the new system is much simpler and direct, and can now be carried out entirely by the HER staff, we aim to refresh our data as often as we can, so that the online version of the HER is much closer to the master database.

*Penny Ward, Shropshire HER*

### **Adding Images to the Shropshire HER records on Discovering Shropshire’s History**

We now have the facility to add images to HER records on DSH. This involves adding the photo’s date and Ref No and copyright to the image, saving it at a suitable size for the web (max 600 pixels and about 100kb), and then adding a link to the file from the relevant HER record.

The HER records are then reloaded to DSH with that link embedded and the DSH photos are then uploaded to the DSH image server. The images then appear on the map and embedded in the HER record.

Here is an example of a CPAT (Chris Musson) air photo :-

[http://search.shropshirehistory.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCS\\_MSA13217/](http://search.shropshirehistory.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCS_MSA13217/)

This is an example of a Milestone image, one of many which have been added by a volunteer from the Milestone Society.

[http://search.shropshirehistory.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCS\\_MSA23737/](http://search.shropshirehistory.org.uk/collections/getrecord/CCS_MSA23737/)

The HER has hundreds of digital images and many thousands of film negatives and colour slides of sites and buildings recorded on the HER. We therefore have the potential to greatly enrich the online HER records with images.

If anyone would like to volunteer to help with this we would very much like to hear from you. It might be possible for you to do the preparation of digital images part of the work from the comfort of your own home PC.

*Penny Ward, Shropshire HER*

*E: [Penny.a.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Penny.a.ward@shropshire.gov.uk)*

*Tel: 01743 252558*

## Notes from the Chair of the Council for British Archaeology West Midlands Group

As this is the first newsletter communication since our AGM in July, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself and to talk a little bit about the West Midlands' group plans for the coming months. Many of you will have been in touch with me over the last few years, providing articles for our flagship publication West Midlands Archaeology. This year I will hand over copy of my last journal as Editor and while I've enjoyed producing this, most recently with a team of trusty sub-editors, I will be pleased to hand over the reins to Deborah Fox, in order to concentrate more fully on my role as Chair. Thank you to everyone who has provided material for this over the years.



*CBAWM Dayschool held at The Guildhall, Worcester*

By day, I work for Worcester City Council as Historic Environment Record Officer, looking after the archaeological and historic buildings data for the City.

This involves a lot of work around data management, responding to enquiries, but most interestingly for me, engaging with local people and making the historic environment more accessible to the communities that live within it. This might be through recording projects involving volunteers or even through new technologies and communication channels, such as social media, of which I confess to being a huge fan! Most rewarding for me, is the work that I'm involved with as co-leader of the Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club, who this year are celebrating their 10th anniversary.

My focus for the coming months will be on producing a strategy for the group, which I hope our membership will be involved with shaping. Key for me, in my role as Chair, is to ensure that we facilitate communication between members, local groups and societies, and archaeological services across the region. By enabling a forum for discussion, I hope we will be able to open up opportunities for participation, education and collaborative working, and will therefore be writing to you to ask for your comments and ideas in the very near future. I look forward to working with you all!

*Sheena Payne-Lunn*

*Sheena.paynelunn@worcester.gov.uk*

*Twitter: @sheenapaynelunn*

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## A Year of Community Archaeology in the Ironbridge Gorge

At the beginning of April 2013 I began a year's training placement in community archaeology at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust. My placement, which is funded by the Council of British Archaeology, is one of a number of appointments across the country with fellow trainees placed with organisations such as the National Trust and CADW, local authorities such as Somerset County Council, and museums including the National Museum Wales and National Museums Liverpool. The aim of the placement is to provide holders with the skills and experience required to pursue a career in community archaeology following the end of their term.



*Samantha leading a guided walk in June 2013*

During my time at Ironbridge I have been involved with a variety of projects which have engaged volunteers and participants with the industrial archaeology of the Ironbridge Gorge. Having a background predominantly in medieval and military archaeology, finding myself immersed in the industrial world of the 18th and 19th centuries was quite a learning curve from the start. One of the first 'community archaeology' events that I was involved with was a day of fieldwork with the Ironbridge Archaeology Volunteer Group, using LiDAR data for the area surrounding the important Bedlam Furnaces to identify and record features in the landscape. Completely unprepared for what we might find, I found myself going from managed grassland above the furnace complex, into undergrowth on the river bank and finally into a strangers garden to look at some brickwork which may or may not have been of interest. At that moment I thought if this is what community archaeology is about I'm going to enjoy the next 12 months tremendously. And so I have!

Since then we have launched the Ironbridge Archaeology Seminar Series, which is a bi-monthly archaeology-themed lecture series open to anyone and everyone. So far topics have included warfare in medieval Wales, community excavations at Ditherington Flax Mill, excavations at a Deserted Medieval Village in Herefordshire, the archaeology of the country house and an Ironbridge Archaeology Volunteer Group project on Thomas Newcomen and the Newcomen steam engine. Upcoming talks include Mesolithic spring sites in Western Britain, and Roger White's investigations at Wroxeter Roman City in April. We've also launched and run a

series of beginner's archaeology workshops, which have been funded by the Council of British Archaeology and English Heritage, and have focused on topics such as illustration and drawing, historic building recording, conservation and archiving, OpenSource GIS and pottery identification.

In addition to these public events, I've also been able to work with and coordinate the Ironbridge Archaeology Volunteer Group on a number of projects including recording a collection of tile moulds discovered during renovations to the Jackfield Tile Museum, an excavation in Madeley looking for evidence associated with the early 19th century china decorator and manufacturer, Thomas Martin Randall, and we've just started a project using the historic maps we have in the archaeology archive at IGMT to create some thematic maps of the local area. I've also managed to fit in time to run a series of events for the Festival of Archaeology in July, put together a world war themed guided walk to coincide with the museum's 1940s event at Blists Hill in June, worked with a couple of the local primary schools and youth groups for archaeology related outreach sessions, and helped launch the Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club.

It's been a thoroughly exciting, busy and educational year, from which I've learnt a lot. Thinking back to that day at Bedlam furnaces, I think I've come a long way in understanding what community archaeology is really about. For those of us that are lucky enough to work in the heritage sector, discovering something new about our past is part of everyday life, however not everyone is lucky enough to do so, yet that does not mean that doors should be closed to them. Working with volunteers at the museum and providing access to training and learning to interested parties through both the lectures and workshops that we've run this year has been thoroughly rewarding, opening my eyes afresh to the excitement and enjoyment associated with working in archaeology, and encouraging me to continue working with community groups, volunteers and children in the years ahead.

*Samantha Colclough, Community Archaeology Training Placement  
Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trustt*

## The Place-Names of Shropshire

In 1961, spurred on by local enthusiasm, Dr Margaret Gelling began to organise the collection of materials for a survey of Shropshire place-names, and for the next 27 years, a group of researchers from the area helped her to gather the earliest records of thousands of major and minor place-names. From 1990, the results began to appear in print under the auspices of the English Place-Name Society (EPNS). Between then and 2012, the first six volumes of The Place-Names of Shropshire were produced, the last of which was almost complete at the time of Margaret's death in 2009, and was published posthumously. These six volumes treated all the county's major names (the names of towns, villages, parishes and townships), as well as the minor names of most of northern and eastern Shropshire (see Map 1), but left the south and west without published coverage (Map 2).

In 2012, funding was obtained from the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for a new project to complete the EPNS survey of Shropshire, using the data assembled by Margaret (which survive as extensive catalogues of slips filed in her old shoeboxes!), supplemented with new material where necessary. This four-year project, launched in January 2013, will bring to completion the long-term study of Shropshire place-names. In four further volumes, we aim to cover the remainder of the county and to provide a full introduction to the completed survey.

The project is a collaboration between the Institute for Name-Studies (INS), University of Nottingham, and the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies (CAWCS) at the University of Wales in Aberystwyth. John Baker, Sarah Beach, Jayne Carroll, and Paul Cavill at the INS are concentrating on the hundreds of Stottesdon, Overs, Purslow, Chirbury and part of Munslow. Meanwhile David Parsons and Helen Watt at CAWCS are focusing on the more 'Welsh' hundreds of Oswestry and Clun. Emily Pennifold, currently working on her PhD at CAWCS, is also attached to the project and is looking at field-names of the Anglo-Welsh border.

Further details can be found on the project website: <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/ins/projects/shropshire/index.aspx>

For all enquiries, please send emails to [shropshire@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:shropshire@nottingham.ac.uk)



Map 1



Map 2

## The Bagley shield: lost but (we hope) not gone forever

In March 1865 Joseph Dicken was draining a meadow on Baggy Moor west of Bagley in Hordley parish (in the valley of the River Perry) when, at a depth of 3 – 4 feet, he discovered a fine copper-alloy shield of Late Bronze Age Yetholm type. The shield was 23 inches in diameter and had been placed in an upright or sloping position in the ground. It was given to the owner of the land a Mr J Stanton by whom it was exhibited to the Society of Antiquaries on 14th December 1865. He passed it to his nephew Mr T J Provis of The Grange, Ellesmere who loaned it to the Society of Antiquaries 1873 Exhibition of Bronze Implements. It is said to have been ‘carefully preserved during his lifetime’ and, apparently, ‘put away’ during the sale of his furniture after his death (ca. 1898) but has not been seen since despite extensive, and assiduous, searching by, among others, the late Miss Lily Chitty. Fortunately a photograph of the shield was taken and a copy of this survives in the National Museum of Wales as does a 19th century drawing held at the British Museum (personal information, Dr.



19th century photograph of the Bagley shield (courtesy of NMW)

Marion Uckelmann). Despite many rumours of rediscovery over the years none has been substantiated. It is possible, of course, that the shield was destroyed or thrown away but some hope remains – recently a shield of similar date which had not been seen since the mid-19th century was rediscovered hanging on a wall in Yorkshire! Perhaps someone, somewhere in Shropshire, has seen an unusual dustbin lid or manhole cover...

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## The Oswestry Seminar Series: future assured

The Oswestry Seminar Series which, for seven years, has attracted capacity audiences of archaeologists and historians to the Marches School came to an end last October. Now Old Oswestry Landscape and Archaeology Project are delighted to announce that the Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust has stepped in and there will be a 2014 seminar. The date for your diaries is 25th October 2014 and we trust that this will be welcome news to the many well-wishers and supporters who hoped we would find a way to continue with this very enjoyable and successful event.

*Heather Hidden*

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## Book News

Barrett, Christopher. ‘Roland and Crusade Imagery in an English Royal Chapel: Early thirteenth century wall paintings in Claverley Church, Shropshire’  
*Antiquaries Journal* **92** (2012) 129-168

Haslam, Jeremy. *Town Plan analysis and the limits of inference: the cases of Bridgnorth and Ludlow, Shropshire*  
on  
<http://www.jeremyhaslam.wordpress.com>

*Copy deadline for the Autumn 2014  
Newsletter is Friday 25th July 2014.*

*Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter  
Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace,  
Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF*

*or emailed to shelagh228@msn.com*



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 78, Autumn 2014

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the Society will be held at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2014 at 9.30am. The AGM will be followed, at 10.20am, by the **Roman Shropshire Day School** (see separate flyer for full details).

With a wide-ranging programme this meeting will provide a review of the very latest research into Shropshire during the Roman period.

Places are still available at the very reasonable cost of £15.00 which includes lunch and afternoon tea.

**Subscriptions and Mailings:** A reminder that annual subscriptions will be increasing from 1st January 2015.

The new rates will be:

individual subscriptions:	£19
family subscriptions:	£20

If you are a UK taxpayer please do remember to fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form to cover your subscription. To obtain a current Gift Aid Declaration Form please contact the Newsletter Editor.

Many thanks to those who have provided us with email addresses – but we would still appreciate it if more of you signed up to receive mailings electronically. This really does save us a great deal of money!

**Meetings Group:** The society's **Meetings Group** is still looking for assistance with the development of the Society's events programme – whether in the form of new members of the group or just suggestions and ideas.

Please contact the Newsletter Editor if you think you can help.

## Christmas Social Event

Our 2014 Christmas Social Event will take place at 2.30pm on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> December at Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery, The Music Hall, The Square, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LH.



An opportunity to see the fantastic new museum which highlights both the town of Shrewsbury and the wonderful heritage of our county. Cost £5 to include admission and refreshments (payable on the day). Advance booking essential. Full details of how to book can be found in the **2014 – 2015 Winter Meetings Programme** (enclosed with this newsletter).

## Heritage Open Days 11th – 14th September 2014

The 2014 Heritage Open Days event will run this year from Thursday (11<sup>th</sup> September) until Sunday (14<sup>th</sup> September). During that period there will be open days / events / activities at nearly twenty locations throughout the county. Details of events at the Ditherington Flaxmill Maltings can be found on page 3 of this Newsletter. For a full list of county venues, further information and details of booking requirements visit [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

## The Wrekin Local Studies Forum

Back in 1997, as part of the planning process in creating services to be delivered by the new Telford & Wrekin Unitary Authority, a team from the local library service identified all the local societies, organisations and agencies with an interest in local studies/community history and invited them to a meeting with a view to forming a loose confederation, which could advise the new library service on how the local studies collections should be developed. At the first meeting, mutual suspicions were aired, enough areas of shared interest identified and an agreement to meet again resolved. At the second meeting a name for the group was decided upon – the Wrekin Local Studies Forum.

Since that date the Wrekin Local Studies Forum has brought together, at a quarterly meeting, representatives of a dozen and more local history groups based in a broad Wrekin area, plus Telford & Wrekin Libraries, Shropshire Archives, Friends of Ironbridge Gorge Museum and other interested parties such as the local Museum Development Officer. After many years at Telford Library the venue for our meetings is now the new Wellington Library, the home of T&W Libraries' Community History Centre.



*Gillian Linscott of the Crime Writers' Association at the Edith Pargeter Day*

These lively gatherings are a chance for an exchange of news, experience and expertise, and, importantly, an opportunity for agencies to make presentations to a number of societies grouped together in one place, either at our invitation or often at their request. In the past these have included for example the Heritage Lottery Fund, Midlands Sound Archive and Shropshire Historic Environment Team. Between meetings, news of events or of queries raised by respondents to our website is circulated by e-mail. The website, run by one of our members, is a valuable publicity tool as is the twice-yearly calendar, listing events to be held by member groups, which is circulated to all local libraries, Shropshire Archives and tourism venues. The Autumn edition also contains a 'block advert' for each group to give publicity for its aims and activities. For this we ask for a subscription to cover the printing costs, but for a smaller fee we are happy to include simple details of meetings from any relevant group which would like to contact us.

Most years WLSF plans a particular event to promote some aspect of local history research. In the early years this often took the form of an exhibition or display, on a number of occasions a day for member societies to have stands in Telford Town Centre. More recently we have looked for a local initiative to support, for example a few years ago a 'history day' in Wellington. In 2013 we held a particularly successful Edith Pargeter Day of talks and walks in Dawley to mark the 100th anniversary of her birth. As is always the case we had some excellent local speakers, but we were also very pleased to welcome Gillian Linscott of the Crime Writers Association.

The Forum's Transactions are produced more or less annually. In some years this publication aims to focus on new work by local researchers and in others to act as a record of a particular event by inviting the speakers to contribute articles. The latter include collections based on day schools to celebrate the lives and achievements of William Reynolds (2003) and John Randall (2010) and another in 2013 held in memory of Ken Jones, the most knowledgeable of local historians, a supporter of many groups, and a founder member of the WLSF itself.

The WLSF aims both to encourage local history research and also access to its results. There is great interest in the heritage of such a historically significant area and we are always happy to welcome representatives from other groups, to offer practical support where possible and in particular an opportunity to meet like-minded and experienced local historians.

[www.wlsf.org.uk](http://www.wlsf.org.uk)

## Researching the Flax Mill and its people

The Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings has an active Documentary Research Group which, over the last 18 months or so, has been carrying out a large scale research exercise focused on the people of Castlefields and Ditherington in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

### Collecting Names

The first step has been to build a Database of all individuals who lived in the area in the Nineteenth Century. This has been done by entering Lists of individuals into Excel spreadsheets which are then imported into an Access Database.

The Census has been the principal Source for this first stage of work.

We have attempted to capture ALL the Census Entries for the Castlefields and Ditherington area between 1841 and 1881, using the online Ancestry records.

We have now captured all but the last four Enumeration Districts for 1881.

The various items of information in the Census are manipulated in the Access Database to automatically generate a Summary of everything the Record tells us about that Person, for example:-

John Farmer

*Age: 15. Born c 1836 Shrewsbury, Shropshire.*

*Occupation: Flax Sorter. Living in 26 Spring Gardens.*

*Relationship to Head of Household: Son. Total no in*

*Household: 11. Head of Household is William Farmer whose Occupation is Agricultural Labourer*

### Other Sources of Names captured so far

1851 Tithe Apportionment Schedule: The Owners and Occupiers of all the Plots of Land recorded in "Castle Ward Without", including the Marshall Company Allotments, just North of the Flax Mill.

The Parish Apprentices assigned to the Flax Mill by Shrewsbury House of Industry and the Atcham Union of Parishes c 1800 and 1826.

Monumental Inscriptions in St Michael's Churchyard from the Record made by the Family History Society.

Parish Registers We have also carried out selective Data Capture from the Shrewsbury St Mary's and then St Michael's Parish Registers between 1796 and 1886, where the Occupation recorded flags a link to the Flax Mill.

The Church Rate Books 1800 to 1825 have given us the names of the householders of the "Houses near the Manufactory" and "Ditherington Houses" and the rents they paid.

The 1821 Census (in the vicinity of the Flax Mill) - a simple List of the Heads of Households

### What Next?

We now have a considerable number of Records of Individuals, and often also the means to develop records of their families over several generations. Now that the Shropshire Parish Registers are available online we can start using them to fill out the information we hold, for example finding out the married names of the younger female individuals, and the maiden names of the older ones, thereby enabling us to recognise the same individual before and after marriage.

### What is it all for?

The Database will enable us to analyse the whole community that grew up around the Flax Mill, and in particular those people who worked there. We will be able to do statistical analysis to see change during the mid and late 19<sup>th</sup> century in



*Ditherington Flaxmill Maltings from the air in 1995  
(©CPAT 95/C/1530 21/03/1995)*

people's occupations, where they were born, where in the study area they lived, and the age and gender distribution of the Flax Mill workforce.

However, it will also enable us to focus in on families and individuals and their stories, as records accumulate of particular individuals in which they are baptised, enter and sometimes change employment, get married, baptise and sometimes bury children, are widowed and perhaps remarry, and finally get buried or just disappear.

Already it is possible to output records of all those with the same surname and rearrange parts of them into a mini biography of a particular family. This process will in turn give rise to new questions, as we seek to fill gaps and add context.

It is hoped that all this will lead to articles in the Transactions, exhibitions in the Flax Mill and eventually online resources that will engage the public with the story of the Mill.

Penny Ward, Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings.

Do contact me if you would like to get involved.

[Penny.a.ward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:Penny.a.ward@shropshire.gov.uk)

### Forthcoming events at the Flaxmill Maltings:

#### Guided tours

There will be guided evening tours of the Flaxmill Maltings on Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> August and Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September. The tours are free but numbers will be limited. For further details see [www.flaxmill-maltings.co.uk](http://www.flaxmill-maltings.co.uk)

#### Heritage Open Days Weekend at the Flaxmill Maltings.

Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> September 10am – 4pm

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> September 10am – 4pm

Guided tours will be available at regular intervals throughout the weekend. There will be talks and presentations on the history, structure and uses of the buildings. A varied programme of other events will also be taking place over the weekend. Explore the history of the Flax Mill by taking part in hands-on art, textile and science-based drop-in activities. There will be an art exhibition and live music on site. Refreshments available.

#### Access

The site is derelict and currently on the *English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register*. Visitors must wear hard hats and appropriate footwear. Stairs, uneven surfaces and poor lighting make some areas of the site inaccessible for visitors with disabilities.

## Notes from the finds desk of the PAS

Well this section is called finds from the desk of the PAS – but actually I have been laid low with back problems recently – so maybe it should be called ‘notes from the finds bed of the PAS’. However, that aside, the months since my last update have been very busy so find below some of the most interesting artefacts that have been recorded by the PAS from the county. So as always – if you have a spare half hour (after reading the rest of this issue) please do take a look at the PAS database – [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk) – for many other interesting things.

The last few months have been particularly good for me because, as many of you know, I am especially interested in the prehistoric periods and recently we have recorded a significant number of Bronze Age finds including two flat axes, a socketed axe and a string looped spearhead all from the North of the county. The two flat axes are particularly important:

The first is of Early Bronze Age date (2350 - 2050 BC) discovered in the Hinstock Area, North East Shropshire 1. The flat axe is broadly sub rectangular in shape with a splayed crescent shaped blade. In profile it is broadly lentoid, with slight tapering edges.



The butt is relatively thin having a narrow rounded profile, whilst the sides of the axe gently expand in width from the butt to the blade with a crescentic cutting / blade edge. The axe is thickest at the mid-point with traces of a proto stop ridge present. Casting ‘flaws’ or gas bubbles are present over most of the surface of the flat axehead. The axe is a mid to dark green colour, with an uneven surface patina. Abrasion, caused by movement whilst within the ploughsoil, has resulted in a loss of some of the original surface detail. The axehead is best described as coming from the later phases of the Early Bronze Age and is comparable to the Migdale type; which are typified by axes with narrower butts which flare at the cutting edge.

The second flat axe is also of early Bronze Age date but dates from slightly later within the period (2000-1700BC); it was discovered in the Telford Area 2. The axe is small (diminutive) but is complete with very little wear. In plan the axe is broadly rectangular with an expanded and splayed crescentic cutting edge and thin rounded (D shaped) butt. In profile the axe has a distinct lentoid shape. At the mid-point of the axe is a slight median swelling / bevel / proto stop-ridge. The long edges of the axe expand gently from the butt until they splay to form the crescent shaped blade. The tips of which have been worn / abraded as has the blade edge itself. However it is likely that the axe had been worn and used prior to deposition, with the blade shape being slightly distorted by use. The axe is a mid green colour with a highly polished but abraded patina, which has been damaged in areas. It is best described as coming from the later phases of the Early Bronze Age specifically within the early developed flat axe tradition 2000 - 1700 BC. This

- 1 PAS record: WMID-E42FB1  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/613593>  
recorded by Teresa Gilmore, FLO Staffs and West Midlands
- 2 PAS record: HESH-A147C8  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/615081>

axe is very similar to those identified as either Type Migdale Variant Biggar although on this type the blade doesn’t expand to create such distinct blade tips. The other parallel is with the Developed Axe series, Type Aylesford. It should be noted though that all these parallels are all larger than this example.

The spearhead is formed of cast bronze (copper alloy) and is of Middle Bronze Age date (1500 - 1150 BC); it was discovered in the Ercall Area <sup>3</sup>. The spearhead fits best within the Developed side-looped series of spearheads with ogival blades. The spearhead is irregular in plan and broadly triangular in profile. The blade is incomplete, the cutting edges having been removed through abrasion and corrosion. The blade has a lozenge shaped mid-rib that extends to the tip adding strength and rigidity to the weapon. The socket is cylindrical and tapers into the midrib; below the blade it expands slightly toward the base. The mouth of the socket is circular and the two loops (string side loops) are present in line with the blade being positioned at the midpoint between the blade and base of the socket. The loops extend slightly from the socket and have flattened augments lozenge shaped plates. The casting seams on either edge of the spear have trimmed and hammered flat. On one side in line but below the loop is a small rectangular hole or slot cut into the socket; the purpose of this hole is unknown - it has rounded corners and the inside edge are worn. The slot is also patinated suggesting that it was deliberately formed and contemporary with use. There is no decoration present. The spearhead is a mid-brown green colour with a well preserved but laminating polished surface patina. The spearhead is also stained with large amounts of orange corrosion; most probably iron pan from wet soil conditions. The spear also has a bend at the mid-point with a deep lateral crack. It is difficult to tell when this damage occurred – it is possibly an artefact of movement in the soil but it is also possible that it was deliberately damaged when deposited. Similar looped spearheads are dated to the Middle Bronze Age specifically the second phase of Acton Park (2), Taunton (Cemmaes) or Pennard (1450-1125 BC) metalworking traditions. This type of spearhead have a distribution away from Wales and the Midlands being more focused on the South and East.

The final bronze age object is a complete bronze ribbed socketed axe discovered in the Ellesmere area <sup>4</sup>. This axe has a very square shaped mouth and relatively straight sides which expand near the base of the socket. The sides flare to form a slightly expanded blade edge. The mouth of the axe is sub-rectangular in cross-section; it has been unevenly shaped with the edges of the mouth being heavily trimmed to remove the four casting jets. The collar around the mouth is indistinct with very straight sides that are interrupted by a thick transverse moulded rib which extends across both faces and sides. The side loop is relatively small and wide having a lentoid cross section and is set in a low position beneath the collar in line with this horizontal rib. On each face of the axe, three parallel ribs descend from the lower edge of the horizontal rib. Two further less well defined vertical ribs descend along the external edge of each face. The casting flashes on the sides of the axe have been trimmed and hammered flat and suggest some preparation for use. The

- 3 PAS record: HESH-B9E688  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/615472>
- 4 PAS record: HESH-ECF938  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/599021>

axe is damaged / marked in several areas - all of this damage cuts through or removes the surface patina suggesting it is relatively recent and is therefore post deposition. Overall the axe is a mid-green brown colour with a thick well developed but scratched surface patina. The axehead fits well with those known from the later Ewart Park phase of the late Bronze Age 950 - 750 BC and due to the straight sides the date range may also fit with Bronze - Iron Age transition period known as Llyn Fawr which extends the date range to c. 650 BC.



Iron Age coins are very rare finds for Shropshire with very few being found in recent years; the largest concentration of these has



been recovered from the excavations at Wroxeter. This new example is from the Craven Arms area <sup>5</sup> and was found in the same area as a particularly fine late La Tene style brooch. The coin is a gold-plated contemporary copy of a late Iron Age gold stater of the Western Region / Dobunnic tribe - attributed to the tribal leader CATTI - dated c. AD 1 - 20. The coin is formed on a copper alloy core with a gold plated surface. The obverse has a leaf design formed from a central vertical line from which diagonal linear branches extend - all of which have pellet terminals. The reverse depicts a horse advancing right - with tail in three sections - above which is inscribed CATTI - there is no record of who Catti was.

A further coin is a relatively rare one for this part of the world being a silver Roman denarius of the emperor Carausius (AD 286-293) found near Market Drayton <sup>6</sup> and struck at the mint of



Londinium (London). The reverse of the coin shows the emperor advancing left on horseback raising his right hand in greeting and holding a sceptre in left; a small depiction of a captive slave is shown to his left. The inscription on the reverse reads ADVENTVS AVG (a contraction of ADVENTVS AVGVSTI). Inscriptions of this kind commemorate the imperial sovereign's arrival at Rome, either at the commencement of his reign, or on his return from a distance. At their accession to the throne, emperors went on horseback, and sometimes even on foot; and thus they made their first public entry into the capital of the Roman world. reverse type depicting Emperor on horseback left.

An important and relatively rare lead strap end dating from the 10th or earlier 11th century has been recorded from the Bishop Castle area <sup>7</sup>. Unusually there is a large perforation in the centre of the plate which suggests that this may be

associated with a book rather than dress fitting. The reverse of the strap end is flat whilst the upper face of the strap end has a small step defining the split end from the plate. The pointed terminal also has some much abraded moulded decoration at the tip. The strap end has an uneven green / brown patina.



The strap end is comparable to other examples which have the same shape and terminals with animal heads often with holes. This form is thought to originate from Ireland and it is interesting to see one in lead as dress accessories cast in lead alloy are most associated with Anglo-Scandinavian/late Saxon traditions. This form of strap ends were long-lasting with examples being found in contexts dated from the later ninth to the eleventh centuries AD. **(Image 5 to go with this para)**

This ingot (or billet) was discovered on the slopes of Clew Hill <sup>8</sup>, which is well known for its industrial heritage and mining, however the discovery of this artefact suggests that this activity may well extend back into the Medieval period suggesting that the area has a high potential for producing other similar artefacts in the future. This is also a rare find as it is the raw end product of smithing - something which has value and would have been used rather than stored or preserved. The iron ingot or billet is formed from a hammer shaped bloom of probable Early Medieval - early Post Medieval date (AD 550-1550). The ingot is broadly rectangular in plan and triangular in cross section. It has an uneven surface patina and the surviving surface has a series of oval scars, most likely from the spalling of surface corrosion. One end has a flattened and polished removal where the surface had been tested by the finder with an angle grinder. This test suggested that it was formed from wrought iron. The ingot is a mid-grey brown colour with distinct areas of dull red colour. A direct local parallel has not been found, but it is most likely to date from the later medieval period (AD 1200-1450). Blair <sup>9</sup> notes that: the spongy iron bloom produced in direct process furnaces needed to be consolidated into a useful billet or bar iron before a smith could fashion an implement. Bloom consolidation is a time-consuming and wasteful process. A full day's work by a smith was needed to consolidate 2kg of bloom into billet. Up to half the weight of the bloom was lost in the consolidation process.

The last artefact is a complete late Medieval slightly abraded decorated and glazed floor tile (AD 1200-1400) discovered in a garden in Newport, Shropshire <sup>10</sup>. The design is complete and features a central 'Holy' cross / crucifix with a crown of thorns depicted across its centre. It is surrounded by the 'Instruments of the Passion' including the spear and sponge which are crossed diagonally through the lower field of the tile. Clockwise, from the bottom left are the: the pincers, three nails, flail, the pillar / column where Jesus was whipped entwined with a rope arranged in a figure of

5 PAS record: HESH-C2D524  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/568495>

6 PAS record WMID-2C5A44  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/625495>  
recorded by Teresa Gilmore, FLO Staffs and West Midlands

7 PAS record: HESH-E814B2  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/581334>

8 PAS record: HESH-C26546  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/609605>

9 Blair C. 2001: 'Ironworking' in Crabtree P.J. (Ed.) *Medieval Archaeology; an encyclopaedia* New York pp 181-184

10 PAS record: HESH-0E5F45  
<http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/583276>

eight, a flagon, a cup (holy grail), a cockerel / Rooster, dice, temple / altar, ladder, another flail and a hammer. The sides and reverse of the tile are covered in a white



mortar residue which creates difficulty in observing the tile's fabric. The chip on the reverse of tile indicates that the tile fabric has an oxidized orange surface with large, rounded sandy inclusions. The depiction of the 'Instruments of the Passion' are a relatively common medieval ecclesiastical scene. Comparable tiles have been identified in Shrewsbury Abbey (Roger White *pers comm*) and a partial tile with the same image was excavated from Lilleshall Abbey and is now housed in the British Museum (1947.0505.2810-12). It is likely that these examples were produced at the same kiln site. Another partial example has been recorded on the PAS database from Whitgreave, Staffordshire (HESH-6F1F46).

As these tiles seem to be a locally produced it would be interesting to know if other examples are preserved within churches and archaeological archives – if members of the society do know of any others then please get in touch at the addresses below.

Peter Reavill, July 2014

peter.reavill@shropshire.gov.uk

Portable Antiquities Scheme, Ludlow Museum Resource Centre, 7-9 Parkway, Ludlow SY8 2PG

## The Pontesbury Manor Datestone and its Heraldry

### The Datestone

Some time after 1551 the Manor of Pontesbury was sold by William



Leighton to Roger Owen of Conover. The coat of arms [*Argent, a lion rampant sable, armed and langued gules, a canton of the second*] indicates that the individual of the initials "W O" was descended from the ancient Welsh family of Owen of Llundlo, Co: Montgomery. The first to assume the surname Owen was Richard Owen, son of Owen ap John, High Sheriff of Montgomery around 1611. A descendant of his was William Owen of Bettws, Co: Montgomery.

Pontesbury Parish was important and large enough to have three livings, over each a rector. A William Owen was listed as rector of the first and second portions in 1640 and he built the parsonage of the second portion in 1661 as shown on the datestone above.

This overmantle was originally in the older part of the Manor House, Pontesbury and on the demolition of this building in the late seventies the immense sandstone was put safely into store. It was acquired by a gentleman then living at Sibberscott where it lay upside down and shrouded in plastic against the elements for several years. The above photograph was taken in May 1980 shortly after its removal there.

From here the overmantle passed through a series of speculative changes of ownership before being noticed online by Mr David Carey of Shifnal Historical Group. It was acquired and several years were spent trying to find an appropriate home for it. Due to their foresight it can finally be seen, nicely displayed and very permanently

mounted into a wall in the recently refurbished "Nag's Head" public house Pontesbury. Its varied movements have resulted in an unfortunate deterioration of the artwork, nevertheless it remains an important link with local history.

### Heraldry on the Pontesbury Manor Datestone

#### Owen Arms

[*Argent, a lion rampant sable, armed and langued gules, a canton of the second*]

The impaled escutcheon "W O" was most probably that of William Owen of Bettws, Montgomery. It shows on the male [dexter] side, that is the left of the image, a black rampant lion with a red tongue and claws on a silver ground, a black square [canton] appears at the upper left corner in the usual position. Note that right and left of the shield are described from the bearer's point of view not the opponent's. This was the coat of arms of the ancient Welsh family Owen of Llundlo, Montgomery. Their line can be traced back to Howel Dda, King of South Wales. The first to assume the surname Owen was Richard Owen son of Owen ap John, High Sheriff of Montgomery ca. 1611. William Owen of Bettws was a descendant.



Owen Arms: unretouched (above) and retouched (below)

The heraldry of the sinister side of the impalement resembles that of some Corbet lines. In that case the birds are ravens. Otherwise, Cornish choughs do occur in Owen heraldry, here possibly painted in error without the red beak and legs.

#### Herbert Arms

After the Norman Conquest, Pontesbury was held by the Fitz-Corbets under Roger de Montgomery. It was later held under the Corbets by the Fitz-Herberts, in particular, Peter Fitz-Herbert, generally considered to be the ancestor of the Earls of Pembroke. Reginald Fitz-Herbert, grandson of the first Fitz-Herbert lord of the manor died in 1286. The Herbert association with the manor seems sufficient to explain their heraldry being exhibited later on the datestone.



The shield poses an interesting question. It is surmounted by an earl's coronet and the wyvern crest used by the Herbert families: Earls of Powys, Pembroke, Montgomery, Huntingdon and Caernarfon. However, these all divide the background to the shield blue and red [*azure and gules in pale*]. The shield featured is wholly red [*gules*] as found in some earlier and less prominent Fitz-Herbert families.

David J Smith January 2014

References: Pontesbury Parish Registers; Papworth's Ordinary of British Armorial; Burke's General Armory; Fairburn's Book of Crests; Battle Abbey Roll, Duchess of Cleveland 1889; Victoria County History of Shropshire

## Medieval floor tiles from Cleobury Mortimer Church

A recent article in the Shropshire Newsletter gave an account of a collection of medieval floor tiles that had recently been exposed at Billingsley church, after being hidden beneath a carpet for the last 30 years. At Cleobury at least 30 medieval tiles survive in a pavement next to the font; there may be more because the pavement extends beneath a wooden platform. At least thirteen of the tiles were originally covered in a black glaze and a further five had plain yellow surfaces. Simple black, yellow and red tiles were used to create geometric patterns.

A number of the tiles are decorated with images. Two tiles carry a shield with crossed keys and a sword in the middle. There is a truncated fleur-de-lys on top of shield and three lobed plants on either side. The crossed keys with a sword are the symbols of Saint Peter and Saint Paul; more significantly, they are the arms of Gloucester Cathedral which is dedicated to these saints. A variant of this design can be found at Ewenny Priory in South Wales; this has a slightly different decoration around the shield and the sword is pointing in the opposite direction, but the overall similarity is strong, suggesting similar origins for the two tiles.

The remaining decorated tiles are either very worn or fragmentary, but in most cases enough survives to allow the design to be identified. The clearest shows the head of a lion. This would originally have been one of a set of sixteen tiles, set in a square. When assembled, the outer set of twelve tiles had a design of two circular bands, between which were four crouching lions, each with foliage emerging from its mouth. Inside this a number of designs were formed from a square made of four tiles. One of these was a double petalled rose (ie a "Tudor" rose); what is probably a very worn version of this is also in the Cleobury pavement. Two more of the tiles are also from the outer and central layers of a sixteen-tile design. The outer design consists of a series of small crosses, each set in a circle, with the whole surrounded by two bands. Inside this are four crouching winged creatures.

At Cleobury it is possible to see the crosses and the back end of one of the creatures. The central design shows a circle surrounded by rays and crescents, with an outer band decorated by



stars. One tile at Cleobury shows a quarter of this design. A very worn design shows what is probably an inscription set above a circle. It is harder to find a precedent for this tile than the others, but what survives is consistent with a tile commemorating Abbot Thomas Sebright of Gloucester Abbey

The identifiable tiles all date from the late 15<sup>th</sup> or early 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries, similar to those of Billingsley. They were probably made in workshops based on Malvern Chase and either Worcester or Droitwich. There is no clue as to who paid for the tiles. However, by 1500 Cleobury had become the personal property of the monarch; the revenues from the town were often given as pensions to royal favourites. Whilst the town itself was little more than a large village, Ludlow was a centre of regional government and Bewdley was also important; powerful people would pass through Cleobury. Thus there were potential wealthy patrons who could easily afford to pay for a new floor for the church.

An extended version of this article can be found in the Cleobury Chronicles, volume 10, available from the Cleobury Mortimer Historical Society; contact David Poyner for details

E: David@D-Poyner.freemove.co.uk, Tel: 01562 68638).

## A cropmark enclosure at Newton, nr Ellesmere

In early June 2014, a team of 14 volunteers recruited by the Meres and Mosses Landscape Partnership Scheme (<http://www.themerandmosses.co.uk/>) and led by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire Council investigated the site of a prehistoric enclosure near Ellesmere. The enclosure (HER 02447) was known from aerial photographs and thought to be a farmstead of possible Iron Age date. The enclosure lies at the end of a promontory overlooking a small mere and the Shropshire Union Canal.

The excavations aimed to confirm the presence of the enclosure ditch suggested by the cropmarks on aerial photographs, and to try to get some dating evidence for the site in the form of finds from the fill of the enclosure ditch.

Two trenches were excavated in an attempt to locate the buried ditch of the cropmark enclosure. The main trench was cut running down the hillside from west to east. The enclosure ditch was found in the eastern end of this trench. The ditch was seen to be broad and fairly shallow – about 3m wide but only just over 0.5m deep. It was filled with a sandy loam soil, but unfortunately the fill did not produce any finds to help with dating the enclosure. Soil samples were taken from the ditch fill by the Manchester Metropolitan University researchers for possible pollen analysis, and a small piece of charcoal recovered from the fill might provide a radio-carbon date.

A number of pieces of flint were found by the volunteers from the topsoil, including one waste flake which showed signs of having been worked. A very small fragment of possible prehistoric pottery and a number of pieces of post-medieval pottery were also recovered from the topsoil.

Hugh Hannaford



*One of the sections cut across the enclosure ditch*



*Charlotte Orchard (Shropshire Council), Paul and Rosie (volunteers)*



*The main excavation trench, looking west. A number of sections have been cut at right angles across the enclosure ditch.*

## Shropshire Archives News August 2014

### Service review and changes to opening hours:

Following the changes to opening hours and staffing structure the new service is running pretty well though we are finding that inevitably we are busier when we are open particularly with researchers using original archive material.

**On line publishing – Find My Past:** Shropshire parish and non-conformist registers dating up to 1900 are now on line with Find My Past and have been generally very well received. Free access to the Shropshire material (and some other counties) on Find My Past is available at **Shropshire Archives, and at all Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin libraries.**

**Virtual and in person volunteering:** Both volunteering projects continue to be successful – over 130 people from across the world have signed up at <http://www.heritageheroes.org.uk/>, for the Virtual Volunteering project. However, we are still looking for more volunteers so do have a look and see if you can help.

**We have appointed Michael Turner,** formerly manager at Acton Scott Historic Working Farm to replace John Benson as Project Manager on the Heritage Lottery funded Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage project. Two events to celebrate the completion of the project are planned; one in Much Wenlock on Sat 18 Oct, and a conference at Theatre Severn in Shrewsbury on Sat 28 Feb 2015. See below for further details.

**Records, archive and museum store:** The store at Hortonwood is now in use providing capacity for the storage of records, archives and museum collections. All the pre 1974 District Authority records are now housed there and are accessible on a weekly basis as before.

**Shropshire World War One Commemorations:** We have appointed Alison Mussell as part time co-ordinator for this project. She can be contacted on [alison.mussell@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:alison.mussell@shropshire.gov.uk). A key aim of the project is to establish a website to link with data on the Imperial War Museum website Lives of the First World War. We will be working on this very soon.

**Friends of Shropshire Archives:** We have a new Chair Jill Ming and are working to revamp the website using WordPress so that it includes booking and payment options.

**Telford Our New Town Project:** We're enjoying working with Telford libraries on this HLF funded project. Sal Mager is supervising the work and we are recruiting a part time Cataloguing Assistant to support the work. The project will, for the first time, create an outline catalogue for the very large Telford Development Corporation collection of records we hold and we are digitising selected items from the collection. All this information will form part of the online catalogue.

### Shropshire Archive events

**Saturday 18 October 2014:** Much Wenlock History Day, Priory Hall, Much Wenlock. An afternoon of talks to celebrate the work done on the Much Wenlock Borough records.

**Saturday 28 February 2015:** Volunteering Conference, Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury. A day to bring together stories, research and discoveries made during the volunteering project

**Saturday 18 April 2015:** Sylvia Watts Day, Shifnal Village Hall, Shifnal. A day to celebrate the life and achievements of Sylvia Watts. A joint event with the Shifnal Local History Group.

### CPAT October Day School

The Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT) is holding a new annual day school ***Exploring the Borderland – Current Archaeology in the Marches*** on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2014. It will take place at The Marches School and Technology College, Morda road, Oswestry from 10am to 5pm.

The 2014 day school will have poster and photographic displays. Speakers at this year's day school will present the work of CPAT as well as work conducted by other professionals in Wales and the West Midlands.

TICKETS COST £10 to include sandwich lunch and refreshments.

For further information and booking please call Viviana Culshaw or Jenny Britnell 01938 553670.

### Book News

Fraser, Mike. *Wheels of Providence: over the Ironbridge in the Victorian Journal of John Cox Bayliss*, (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014)

Moor, Jonathan. 'Aristocratic pretensions and heraldic skulduggery in fourteenth century Shropshire: Sir Nicholas Burnell at Acton Burnell' *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society* **XVIII** part 2 (2010)

Riall, Nicholas. 'Awaiting a Daniel for interpretation: the Tudor church screen at Llanfair Waterdine, Shropshire' *Archaeologia Cambrensis* **161** (2012) 389-409

West, Jeffrey and Palmer, Nicholas. *Haughmond Abbey: excavation of a 12<sup>th</sup>-century Cloister in its Historical and Landscape Context* (English Heritage, 2014)

### Book News update

*Deeds of the Palmers' Guild of Ludlow* (Faraday, M A, 2012) referred to on page 8 of our Spring, 2013 Newsletter is now obtainable, in the UK, from the editor for £34.00 (hardback) or £24.00 (paperback) including UK postage.

E: [f2594255@gmail.com](mailto:f2594255@gmail.com) . Payment by cheque to M.A. Faraday, 47 York Gardens, Walton on Thames, Surrey, KT12 3EW

*Copy deadline for the Spring 2015 Newsletter is Friday 27th February 2015.*

*Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)*



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 79, Spring 2015

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the Society will be held at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury on Saturday 19th September 2015 at 2.00pm. The AGM will be followed by a talk on *The Place-Names of Shropshire* by Dr John Baker. For full details see the **Meetings Programme** which accompanies this Newsletter.

**Subscriptions:** Many thanks to those members who have set up a Standing Order or who have updated their existing order. This meant that over 60% of the subscriptions were paid on time at the beginning of January. However, about a third of the Standing Orders had not been updated to the new subscription rates. Please check that your SAHS Standing Order is for the correct amount (£19.00 Individual rate, £20.00 Family rate). If you find that it is wrong please correct it for next year and get the £5 to the Membership Secretary by post or by hand (contact details above).

Many thanks also to all who have returned a Gift Aid form. The Hon Treasurer is pleased to report that, in December, we were able to reclaim over £500 from HMRC an amount which included a back claim for all the new declarations recently received. If there are still members who would like to participate in the scheme but have not yet done so, Gift Aid forms are available to download from our website or, by post, from the Hon. Treasurer (Dr. Fran Bumpus, 9 Alexandra Avenue, Shrewsbury, SY3 9HT); the Membership Secretary or the Newsletter Editor (contact details above).

**Note from the Secretary:** Please note my new email address: [georgecbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:georgecbaugh@gmail.com)

**'The Stew' Public Inquiry:** Many members will be familiar with 'The Stew' – one of two rather dilapidated buildings situated between Theatre Severn and the Guildhall in Frankwell. 'The Stew' includes a late 17th – early 18th century structure and is, perhaps, the only surviving building that was associated with Shrewsbury's important river trade. Its name probably derives from the location of medieval fishponds on the site. Although in a conservation area it is not individually listed and is under threat of demolition and replacement by a hotel. The proposal has been formally opposed by English Heritage and the Shrewsbury Civic Society and a similar application was rejected in 2007. The current application is now the subject of a Public Inquiry which will sit from 28th April – 1st May 2015 and again from 6th – 7th May 2015. The opening day will take place in the Wilfred Owen Room (Shirehall) after which it will continue in the combined Shrewsbury and Oswestry rooms at Shirehall for the duration. Start time to be confirmed but probably ca. 10.00am.

**Pontesford Hill Appeal:** The Shropshire Wildlife Trust is trying to raise £265,000 to purchase Pontesford Hill. Donations can be made online or by post to: Pontesford Hill Appeal, Shropshire Wildlife Trust, FREEPOST ANG 60017, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ZD. For further details see [www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk](http://www.shropshirewildlifetrust.org.uk)

**Festival of Archaeology 2015:** The 25th Festival of Archaeology, co-ordinated by the Council for British Archaeology, will take place from 11th – 15th July 2015. There will be over 1000 events nationwide aimed at all ages and levels of interest. For further information see [www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk](http://www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk)

## Fighting for survival?

### Shropshire's museums, archives and heritage services

Few members of the Society can have failed to notice the reaction recently to the proposed cuts to the Museum Resource Centre in Ludlow. Opened with such fanfare just over a decade ago, the proposals were to have seen the staff within the building reduced to one half-post. The subsequent furor, centred on reaction within Ludlow itself, led to a partial reprieve in that one post will be kept full time for six months and will be reviewed after the May election. Ludlow has not been singled out: cuts have been taking place throughout the county heritage services, and are likely to continue as the Corporate Spending Review bites ever-deeper. Councils are being forced to focus on their statutory services, and these will inevitably take precedence over historic environment services which are non-statutory. Those heritage services that do survive are focused on those, such as planning-related activities, which have a means to earn at least some of their keep through fees levied for information and advice provided. Even these areas have been severely cut, however.

These are difficult times throughout the sector, and across the country. If we wish to maintain at least a bare minimum of services in the future we will have to accept change, but we must also fight to maintain at least that minimum level. Doing so will not be easy, but there are a number of things that we, as a Society, ought to be thinking about.

First is the obvious one that, in the run up to the election, when we are door-stepped by prospective candidates, ask about heritage and cultural services. What are the policies of the parties, and what are they proposing to do about the historic environment services in the next parliament? Will they be seeking to make such services statutory? I am not suggesting that their answer will, or should, sway your vote one way or the other, but it will at least make candidates aware that it is an issue that people are interested and engaged with. Second, with places like the museums and the archive services the phrase 'Use them, or Lose them' comes to mind. If politicians see that the public are apathetic about museums and archives, they will reason that no-one will miss them when they are gone. The axe will fall all the quicker. Please make use of the archives, including the archaeological archives held in store by the county, and visit the museums. An increase in numbers will show, in the most obvious possible way, that people really do care about these services. Lastly, I would argue that the Society needs to reach out across the county to the other historical and archaeological societies, along with the natural environment sector which is equally affected, and join together with them to express our rejection of the current approach to cutting the historic environment services. It is evident, from the reactions in Ludlow and Oswestry to their particular local heritage battles, that people really do care. If we all stood together and shouted about the heritage cuts, perhaps they might be more inclined to listen.

*Roger White*

## The future of Shropshire Museums Resource Centre based in Ludlow.

The SMRC cares for the county collections that are not on display in the Music Hall, Castle Museum & Pump Room in Shrewsbury, or at Much Wenlock, Ludlow, Acton Scott and Whitchurch Museums. As many members know it is an excellent facility, part funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and opened by the Queen in 2003. In the past 12 months the LMRC has had 13,400 visitors, 922 adults attended courses based on the collections & in excess of 1400 children attended education sessions. In addition a team of over forty volunteers have contributed 3176 hours (equivalent to over 430 days) of their time digitizing, cataloguing, cleaning and conserving the museum collections.

Before Christmas the three members of staff based in Ludlow (curator, curatorial assistant and administrator), were told that they would receive their redundancies, effective May. These three posts (2.8 full time equivalents) are to be replaced with a single curator's post to work two and a half days a week. This is a staffing reduction of 80%. A new as yet undisclosed working model for access and staffing is to be put in place.

The friends of Ludlow Museum encouraged our local MP Philip Dunne, to visit and Professor Michael Rosenbaum and I took him round. After his visit Philip wrote: "I was impressed by the well maintained collection and the usage of the facility, and by the hard work of both the professional staff and the volunteers ... I made clear my own view that the facility should be able to be maintained for normal weekly opening hours if at all possible". This intervention has persuaded the council to extend the Curator post for six months to give us time to see if we can find other external funding.

It is important to remember that the Ludlow Town Museum which was at the Assembly Rooms has been moved out, is in boxes and waiting to go back to its former home in The Buttercross at the top of Broad Street. This has been delayed partly because of finance issues with Shirehall. Part of the extension of time of the curator's post is to allow this work to be completed. Ludlow Town Council will take over the running of the town museum.

Michael Rosenbaum has motivated the world of Geology and Palaeontology whose practitioners at all levels have contacted the Council to express their deep concern. The LMRC is a County, National and International Resource and has a superb collection of fossils from the region. It is important that this collection is maintained and is accessible to scientists wishing to work with it.

Likewise the LMRC holds a large archaeological collection which is regularly used by the public and researchers. However, more recent site archives from developer funded work have now been moved to an industrial park in Telford. This site has no public access and, if people wish to consult it, the material needs to be transported to Ludlow

where there is space for it to be studied.

A public meeting in Ludlow in January was attended by over 200 people and enabled the community to express their opposition to the cuts. Emeritus Professor Hugh Torrens, Giles Miller and Sir Neil Cossons spoke from the floor.

Following this a petition was started and has achieved in excess of 1,000 signatures, which enabled me to address a meeting of the full council.

Further a group of us now meet regularly to discuss the future of Shropshire's Museums. The LMRC was the tip of the iceberg. It is the future of all of the County's Museums is at stake. The Council has taken the decision to run them with a skeleton staff and not transfer them into a separate trust and this is not satisfactory, nor good for the collections.

If you would like to know more then please email the team at [saveLMRC@gmail.com](mailto:saveLMRC@gmail.com). If you feel passionately about this then I urge you to write to [tina.woodward@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tina.woodward@shropshire.gov.uk) - and to your own Shropshire Councillor.

*Lottie James (Friends of Ludlow Museum)*



*Ludlow Museum and Resource Centre  
(Peter Reavill)*

## Shropshire Archives News February 2015

### Shropshire Volunteering Projects

Our two volunteering projects funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and Arts Council England; Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage and Heritage Heroes, are now moving towards a close. Over the last three years we have learnt a huge amount about managing volunteers working on archive and museum collections, and the satisfactions and challenges that brings.

The task now is to establish what volunteering in the future will look like within the existing services – we know that volunteering will continue but we need to work out the details. In the meantime, I'd like to thank all the volunteers who have given so generously of their time to both of the projects. You have made a huge difference to the accessibility and understanding of our fascinating collections.

### Shropshire Archives search room opening hours

Since we changed the opening hours in April 2014 we have had a range of feedback. One particular concern has been the limit on search room opening times from just 10am-2pm. We are currently looking at whether we can extend this at all, and hope to have a proposal very soon. We have also found that the search room has been very busy on some days, and are reviewing whether a booking system and some sort of restriction on numbers of items requested is necessary to ensure a fair and manageable service.

### Oswestry Cemetery project

This Heritage Lottery funded project is also coming to a close in March 2015. Conservation work is now complete and the cataloguing work nearly finished thanks to a number of volunteers. The website is now up and running including a blog of fascinating stories about those buried in the cemetery see [www.oswestrycemeteryproject.org.uk](http://www.oswestrycemeteryproject.org.uk). This research will continue. We are also asking for volunteers as part of the Heritage Heroes project to help out with the transcription of photographs of the gravestones, see [www.heritageheroes.org.uk](http://www.heritageheroes.org.uk).

### Telford Our New Town project

We are currently working with colleagues from Telford & Wrekin libraries on this Heritage Lottery funded project. The project has created an outline catalogue for the very large Telford Development Corporation collection, with more details for the whole photograph collection, as well as digitising selected items which are accessible online and on table sized screens at the new Southwater Library in Telford Town Centre. Making information about one of our largest and most significant collections more accessible is a great step forward.

### Sylvia Watts History Day (Saturday 18 April 2015)

A day to honour the life and work of Dr. Sylvia Watts, organised by Shifnal Local History Group. For further details contact Alan Cartwright, tel 01952 200646, email [cartwright.alan@gmail.com](mailto:cartwright.alan@gmail.com)

### Friends of Shropshire Archives Summer events

**Monday 1 June 2015**, 2.30pm: Visit to Brynkinalt Hall, Chirk, Wrexham LL14 5NS

**Tuesday 9 June 2015**, 7pm: AGM and talk about the Corbetts of Wellington and Shrewsbury at the Perseverance Ironworks in Shrewsbury, now Morris Lubricants, 38-41 Castle Foregate, Shrewsbury SY1 2EL

**Tuesday, 23 June 2015**, 2.30pm: Visit to Hatton Grange, Shifnal TF11 9HS

**Wednesday, 8 July 2015**, 2.30pm: Guided walk around the River Severn in Shrewsbury with Dorothy Nicholle, meet at Frankwell Car Park, Shrewsbury SY3 8HQ

For further details see the new and improved Friends website at [www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk)

*Mary McKenzie*

## Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project – An introduction

The Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project began in 2012. Run within the Shropshire Council Archives and Museums services with a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund, matched with additional financial support from the Archaeological and Historical Society, Friends of Shropshire Archives, the Friends of Ludlow Museum, the Walker Trust, the Shropshire Family History Society and Shropshire Council itself, the Project has enjoyed contributions from over 400 volunteers in its three years of operation.

The Project set out to engage more volunteers with the County-run Archives and Museums services to the achievement of two broad benefits. First, like museums and archives across the country, Shropshire's facilities hold many thousands of items for which public access is restricted due to their not being catalogued. Once this has been undertaken (usually alongside conservation and digitisation), items are far easier to retrieve from stores, thus offering greater access. Additionally, in this internet age, the conserving, digitising and, finally, cataloguing process opens up collections to be interrogated through a variety of routes on-line. The second Project benefit was to provide opportunities for a broad range of volunteers to develop new skills, knowledge and confidence by enabling them "to celebrate their culture through the exploration of Shropshire's history and heritage".

To this end, individuals have variously volunteered to undertake work including conserving court papers and costume, digitising photographs and flints and cataloguing pamphlets and archaeological collections.

### Tong Castle Excavation Archive

Before the M54 was built, a community led rescue excavation of the site at Tong Castle retrieved a large trove of artefacts dating from the post Conquest period (AD 1100) to Modern times. The range of objects found was wide, from medieval pottery cooking pots to iron spurs, from glazed medieval tiles to bones and building materials. Some have detailed context notes whilst others are less well documented. Many of the finds reflect the series of changes in domestic and military use from defensive Marcher castle to grand house. The finds also help to give a picture of the domestic life and contribute to our understanding of historical patterns of



*Selection of medieval floor tiles from Tong including a unique example showing a horseshoe and nail (courtesy of Shropshire Museums Service)*

trade and employment. Within the finds are some real gems, including rare local medieval tiles, a large range of cooking pots, interesting metalwork, preserved leather shoes, and even a clay pipe from Port Royal, Jamaica.

For many years a small collection of artefacts were loaned to the museum service for display, however, with the passing of many of the original excavation committee more and more of the finds have made their way into the museum collections. These have been at Ludlow Museum Resource Centre. Now, after 18 months of work, the majority of this collection has been sorted, cleaned, photographed and an interim catalogue produced – in short it is now in a state where it can be made available to both the public and professionals. The current items on display at Shrewsbury Museum, although interesting, are but a tiny proportion of what Tong has to offer – hopefully given the changes afoot within the museum service they will be available for all to access in the future.

*Dick Hughes (Volunteer)*

### Lily Chitty Flint Collection Research Project.

When Lily Francis Chitty (LFC) died in 1979 she bequeathed her papers to the Local Studies Library. This collection comprised several thousand articles, letters, drawings and maps about the archaeology of Shropshire. These were organised into 831 files by Tony Carr, resulting in the catalogue published by Shropshire Records, in 1992. Soon after LFC's death Mary Chitty (LFC's sister in law herself an archaeologist) donated LFC's Collection of geological and archaeological artefacts to the Rowley House Museum.

A substantial part of LFC's Collection of artefacts was devoted to flints. These have been organised into 200 collections containing more than 1500 flints found between the 1920's and 1970's. The majority of these flints come from three areas of Shropshire, as do another 1000 which have not yet been organised into collections.

Since their deposition many people have used the flints to try and understand prehistory in Shropshire. However, all have struggled because of the difficulty of linking the



*Child's leather shoe AD 1350-1450 (courtesy of Shropshire Museums Service)*



*Miss Chitty at White Abbey excavations (Alberbury) in February 1925 (courtesy of Shropshire Archives)*

documentation, which provides the context with the material evidence. Consequently, the core importance of LFC's collection, to the prehistory of Shropshire, has not been realised.

The recent developments at Shrewsbury Museum have

meant that the Chitty collection of flints has now been transferred to the Museum Resource Centre in Ludlow. This means that for the first time in more than thirty years there is enough space, equipment and volunteers to study it properly. The current project, whilst drawing together the documentation and the artefacts, is also updating the descriptions of the flints to the current standards of archaeological classification and supplementing these with high resolution photographs. This information will eventually be available in the form of a searchable database that will make the complete collection publically accessible for the first time.



*Barbed and tanged arrowhead from The Llan, Clunbury (Ludlow Resource Centre: Chitty Collection)*

Two of us are working together to bring this project to fruition. Dr Alan Cartwright (retired academic) and Jack Rowe (recent archaeological graduate) – we are being assisted by Peter Reavill (Portable Antiquities Scheme).

*Alan Cartwright and Jack Rowe (Volunteers)*

As an aside – if any society members are aware of a flint specialist with the initials NS who worked for a substantial time on the Chitty archive in Shrewsbury during the 1980's or early 90's could they please let the museum know. There are over 200 pages of detailed notes on the flints by NS and it would be good to acknowledge their work within the project.

### **Significant achievements made through volunteering**

The Volunteering for Shropshire's Heritage Project draws to a close in April 2015. In the three years of its operation the following key statistics will have been achieved across the County's Archives and Museums services:

Over 15,000 records and objects will have been conserved

Over 60,000 records and objects will have been digitised

Over 120,000 records and objects will have been catalogued

These significant achievements have been made through the dedication and skills of our body of volunteers who will have given over 8000 days of their time. Hats off to them!

*Michael Turner*

*Project Manager for Volunteering for Shropshire Heritage  
Shropshire Archives February 2015*

## **Notes from the finds desks of the Portable Antiquities Scheme**

Hello, my name is Victoria, and I am the Headley Trust Intern for the PAS in the West Midlands. I have been working with Peter Reavill at the Ludlow Museum and Resource Centre since October 2014. Together with Peter, I will be bringing you this edition of notes from the finds desk. During my time with the PAS I have had the opportunity to handle numerous objects, photograph them and research their history, with the final stage of adding a new record to the database. Another great experience has been assisting Peter in teaching a lesson on prehistory in which local primary school children were able to handle Neolithic flints and Bronze Age hand tools and pottery. The school visits and the opportunity to write articles such as this have been fun and made the internship experience varied. My time with the scheme both as a volunteer and intern has given me the confidence to apply for museum positions and also validated my wish to pursue a career working with artefacts either in the archaeological field or based in a museum.



My favourite newly recorded object is an Early Medieval stirrup strap mount. I have chosen this particular object as it is the first of its sub-type to be recorded on the database from Shropshire. I personally like the Scandinavian inspired imagery of the human face with its large eyes, and imagine when new it would have looked very striking on the side of a horse.

Early Medieval stirrup strap mount discovered in the Newport Area, Shropshire (PAS record: HESH-2205D1)



This stirrup strap mount dates to the Early Medieval period circa (AD 1000 - 1100). The front face of the mount depicts a human mask in low relief. The face comprises pointed oval eyes and a protruding nose, mouth and chin. This sub-type shows elements of influence from Late Viking Ringerike and Urnes decoration styles. The broad distribution for this style of strap mount shows a significant leaning towards Southern England and East Anglia and this example is an extreme outlier to that pattern being the most northerly mount known.

The full PAS record can be found here: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/662074>

The following artefacts have been identified as special finds of note: they have all been discovered in the Shropshire area:

Early Bronze Age flat axe discovered from Sheriffhales Area, Shropshire (PAS record: HESH-3AFE67)

This is a developed flat axe with hammer raised flanges of later Early Bronze Age date (c. 2000 - 1700 BC). The axehead is broadly sub rectangular in plan with a splayed crescent shaped blade. The cutting edge of the axe is lost and the crescentic blade shape is irregular with one side being rounder than the other. This irregularity seems to be more through use rather than through surface corrosion or abrasion. There is no evidence of decoration on any surface of the axe. The axehead is best described as coming from the Arreton type of long-flanged developed flat axes.



The full PAS record can be found here: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/640651>

Late Iron Age brooch discovered in the Caynham Area, Shropshire

(PAS record: HESH-B7DED5)

A near complete cast copper alloy late Iron Age La Tène II style brooch, dating to the period c. 300 - 200 BC. The overall shape of the brooch is formed from three interlocking / conjoining circular hoops, within each hoop is a saltire cross formed of spokes emanating from a central projecting boss or knop. The overall form is shaped like a wheel of which similar examples can be seen on wheel like votive models and miniature objects similar to examples recorded from Shrewsbury, Shropshire.



The full PAS record can be found here: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/649891>

Late Medieval to Post Medieval copper mortar discovered in the parish of Eyton upon the Weald Moors, Shropshire (PAS record: HESH-4FO0A1)

A large fragment from the side wall of a relatively thick copper alloy cast vessel, most probably a mortar of later medieval date or post medieval (AD 1400 - 1700). The exterior surface of the mortar is decorated with a repeating pattern comprising a series of interlocking arcs that form an arcade with diamond shaped patterns, fleur-de-lis and five petalled flowers. Two mortars with similar arcade like designs are recorded from the Whitechapel Foundry, London. The first is by the founder William Carter (1610-1616) and is dated 1615. This mortar has a band of similar decoration. The second mortar with similar design was from the founder James Bartlet (1675-1700) and on

a mortar dated 1689. It is therefore suggested that this mortar fragment dates from the 17th Century. The finder has very kindly donated this find to Ludlow Museum / Shropshire Museum Service who hold one of the largest collections of late medieval metal mortars in the country.

The full PAS record can be found here: <http://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/643458>

Early Medieval gold ring from the South Shropshire area (PAS record HESH-B61048)

Ludlow Museum has recently acquired with the help of the Art fund, the friends of Ludlow Museum and the Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society (i.e. you) a post Roman gold ring.

The ring was discovered in 2012 by a metal detectorist in South Shropshire. It has not been possible to identify any parallels in Roman period gold, therefore the probable date is Early Medieval (circa AD 410 – 750). The ring has undergone surface metal analysis at the British Museum, this indicated an approximate gold content for the ring of 93%, a silver content of approximately 6% and a copper content of approximately 1%. Roger White has suggested that this is “the only prestige piece of Brittonic Dark Age metalwork to have been found in the county”. The ring is now on display at Ludlow Museum and Resource Centre, moving to its new home at the New Ludlow Museum at the Buttercross in Ludlow town centre soon.



The full PAS record can be found here: <https://finds.org.uk/database/artefacts/record/id/516447>

Victoria Allnatt: *Portable Antiquities Scheme Ludlow Museum Resource Centre, February 2014*

### **A silver spoon from Pentrehyling fort.**

The next volume of Shropshire Archaeology and History is largely to be devoted to the excavations that were carried out between 1977 and 1998 at the Roman fort at Pentrehyling, on the Shropshire / Montgomeryshire border, and on the nearby campaign forts at Brompton Farm. These excavations were carried out as a summer digs by the Central Marches Archaeological Research Group (CAMARG) under John Allen between these dates until John's unexpected death immediately before the 1998 excavation. My involvement with the project came about via the participation of the Birmingham University Field Archaeology Unit (BUFAU). In 1989-91, the unit was commissioned by Shropshire County Council to carry out excavations in advance of road widening on the A489 which traverses the fort on its long axis. Both excavations took place in the era before the time when writing up was automatically included in the cost of excavation so English Heritage funded the post-excavation side of the project,

which for the past 15 years I have been trying to bring to fruition.

The reason why English Heritage were keen to fund the report is that it produced high quality evidence for pottery and other finds from a closely dated context, but also important and rare evidence for the industrial processing of lead ore for the extraction of silver through the process of cupellation. Only three or four sites from the whole of Britain have produced evidence of this kind, and it is confirmation that the ores in Shropshire were rich enough to extract silver.

The purpose of this note, however, is to highlight another find of exceptional interest from the site. During the road widening phase of the excavation the BUFAU team recovered a late Roman silver spoon from a stratified ditch fill of the fort.



*The silver spoon from Pentrehyling fort*

It was found in association with one or two sherds of pottery and a coin of the later members of the House of Constantine. This dates the deposition of the spoon to around the mid fourth century. Silver spoons of the late Empire are not uncommon finds in Britain, but they are rare as a site find like this as opposed to being found in a hoard, such as those at Thetford or Hoxne, in Norfolk and Suffolk respectively. Roman spoons at this late period came in two forms: the so-called rat-tailed spoon like this example, with its long tapering straight handle and pointed end, and the duck-headed type which has a larger, oval bowl and a looped handle terminated with a ducks head. The bowls of both spoons are often decorated with pictures but also with lettering, as this one is. Here the legend, partly worn away by use, reads UTERE FELIX VIVAS – Use [this] happily and live [long !] This is a common inscription found on many objects, precious or otherwise, at this time. From the Hoxne hoard, for instance, the phrase UTERE FELIX DOMINA JULIANA (Use this happily, Lady Juliana) is cut into a fretwork (opus interrasile) bracelet of gold, while a unique openwork bronze dice tower (from Vettweiss-Froitzeim villa in Germany) has UTERE FELIX VIVAS at the top of three sides, while, on the front, is a delightful message designed to reassure its users: PICTOS VICTOS; HOSTES DELITA; LUDITE SECURI – ‘The Picts are vanquished; the enemies are destroyed; we play in safety’.

While there is nothing overtly Christian about the Pentrehyling spoon’s inscription, the phrase is used in Christian contexts and is often taken to be an allusion to the hope of eternal life in Christ expressed by Christians. If such a connotation can be put on this spoon, not implausibly, since it post-dates the Edict of Milan, then it would be the first ever evidence for Christians in Roman Shropshire. The spoon will be handed over, with much of the archive, to the county museum service shortly and will hopefully find its rightful place in the new museum display. The remainder of the archive, that element excavated by John Allen’s group, will be handed over to the owners of the fort and will partly be put on display there.

Roger White

## A Shropshire Avalanche\*

In the church at Wentnor, to the west of the Long Mynd, the ‘hurricane stone’ records the death, at 9am on 2nd February 1772, of three members of the Perkins family and four others in a ‘hurricane of wind and snow’ which had ‘blown away’ house and occupants and buried them



*Wentnor ‘hurricane’ stone*

in snow so deep that they could not be found that day. Seven more had been buried but survived. The disaster occurred at Asterton (NGR: SO398913) a village located right below the abrupt western slope of the Long Mynd at a point where a short stream emerges from a steep-sided hollow in the hill.

In 1772 the word ‘avalanche’ did not exist in English so could not be used to describe the event but study of the site and research, mainly at the Shropshire Archives and in contemporary newspapers, has shown that this ‘hurricane’ was, in fact, an avalanche.

The coroner’s inquest verdict on these deaths makes it clear that this was an avalanche - ‘in a few moments four Houses...were laid waste by an Inundation of Snow which came rolling violently out of the Dingle in which four women and three men...were Suffocated, Smothered and Killed...’ (Shropshire Archives QR 83/28). Some died in their beds, others in the open, as the day started in this farming community.

On the day before the avalanche (1st February 1772) there was a great snow storm and high winds across the Midlands – roads were blocked, some travellers froze to death on the roads (including a man near Much Wenlock) and houses were buried in snow. A great accumulation of snow must have built up in the hollow above Asterton where the angles of the slopes – some over 35° - are sufficient for an avalanche to start and for the snow to be channelled down the narrow valley to the village. There the damage caused was typical of an avalanche: four houses in its track were destroyed but nearby houses were undamaged.



*Asterton hollow from the top*

After the 1836 Lewis (Sussex) avalanche where eight died, it appears that this Shropshire avalanche is the most deadly recorded in the British Isles. The Manchester Mercury reported on 27th February 1772 that ‘Upwards of 200 men have been digging in the snow for several Days past to find the dead Bodies’.

Mike Nurse

References: In particular Shropshire Archives documents including QR83/28, QR83/19, P296/U/1/38 and February 1772 editions of the Oxford Journal, Aris’s Birmingham Gazette and the Manchester Mercury.

\*A much fuller version of this fascinating story will appear in the *South West Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society Journal*, Volume 26 (Summer 2015)

## Update from James Lawson re: article on Berwick House and Chapel

(Newsletter No. 76, Autumn 2013)

On the subject of 'Worcestershire marble': the jury is still out, but it is likely to be 'Ledbury Marble' to be found on the Eastnor Castle estate and which was used for some fireplaces at Eastnor Castle ca. 1800. However I can see no connection between Smith of Warwick and Ledbury.

During the 19th century it was said to be grey but modern descriptions are more exotic: 'mottled red, purple, white and blue' a coral-crinoid-rich Silurian limestone. My source says to be found in local country houses and churches and used for flooring. No examples given.

Murchison's *Silurian System* (p.413) says: 'prevailing colour bluish and dark grey veined with white' but some strata pink or even red.

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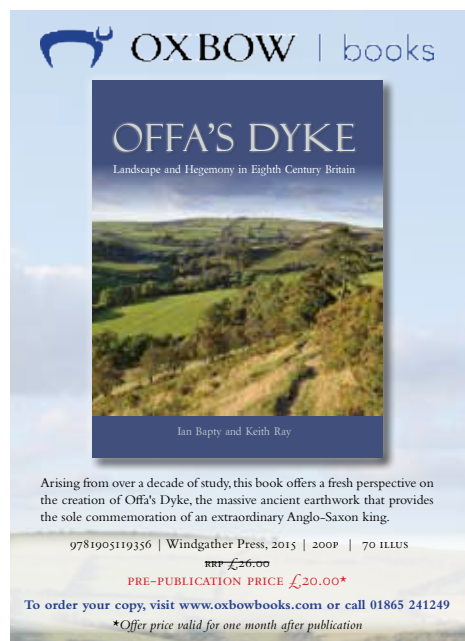
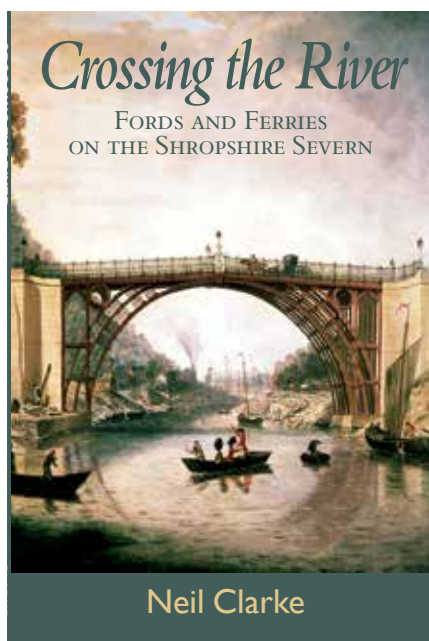
**Haughmond Abbey excavations report:** English Heritage has just published the long awaited *Haughmond Abbey: Excavation of a 12th-century cloister in its historical and landscape context* by J. J. West and Nicholas Palmer. The published price is £100.00, but E.H. is considering offering the work at a discount price (not yet specified) to members of our Society. When the discount, and the timetable within which it will be offered, are decided, I will notify e-mailable members immediately.

Any member whom I can't e-mail (not having e-mail or not having notified me of an e-address) should write to me (my postal address is in the *Transactions* prelims) expressing an interest in receiving news of the discount offer, and notification will be posted

George Baugh

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## Two new books covering different aspects of Shropshire's history will be available shortly:



Copy deadline for the autumn 2015 Newsletter is Friday 31st July 2015. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 80, Autumn 2015

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society will be held at The Shirehall, Shrewsbury on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015 at 2.00pm. The AGM will be followed by a talk on ***The Place-Names of Shropshire*** by Dr John Baker, Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for Name-Studies at Nottingham University. Since 2013 John has been part of a team, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, which has been working to complete the English Place-Name Society's survey Shropshire begun by the late Margaret Gelling in the 1960s. The project is due for completion by 2017.

**Chairmanship:** Our Chairman, James Lawson, will be stepping down from office at the 2015 AGM after giving stalwart service for many years. Should any member wish to stand for election as Chair or nominate a fellow-member for the position (only with the permission of the person being nominated) please send details by post or email to the Secretary: G C Baugh, Glebe House, Vicarage Road, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9EZ or E: [georgecbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:georgecbaugh@gmail.com). Please ensure that any nominations arrive in time to be considered at the AGM on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

**Transactions Editorship:** Canon William Price has also decided to step down, at the end of 2015 / early part of 2016, as Editor of the Society's *Transactions*, having served for over twelve years. During that time he has managed to clear a considerable backlog (no easy task) ensuring a smooth start for his successor. We are pleased to announce that Mrs Jenny Britnell formerly of the **Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust** has agreed to take on the task.

**Meetings Group:** Dr David Poyner will be resigning from Council at the 2015 AGM having chaired the Meetings Group for a number of years during which the group has contributed greatly to the benefits of membership with the production of interesting and varied programmes of talks and events. Please contact the *Newsletter* editor if you would like to join the group or offer suggestions for talk topics, speakers or events.

**Subscriptions and Mailings:** Subscription rates are now £19.00 for Ordinary Members and £20.00 for Family Membership (two or more people living at the same address). Institutional Membership is £20.00 and Overseas Membership £23.00. Please remember to update any out-of-date standing orders and to fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form if you are a UK taxpayer.

**Pagett Fund Grant:** A grant of £100 from the Pagett Fund has been made to the Whitchurch Museum towards the purchase of the second of a pair of ninth-century silver, highly decorated, hooked tags found at Prees near Whitchurch. The museum already has the first tag in its possession and it is hoped that the pair will be reunited by September for the first time in over 1000 years.

**Christmas Social:** Members are reminded that the Christmas Social, this year, will take place at the Flax Mill on Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 at 2.30pm. Full details in the **Meetings Programme** which accompanies this *Newsletter*.

## Shropshire Archives News July 2015

### 20 years at Castle Gates

In July we celebrated 20 years at the Castle Gates building. The new Shropshire Records and Research Centre, as it was then called, was formally opened on 24 July 1995. Those of us who were part of the team then find it difficult to believe it has been 20 years, though in many ways the service has been transformed especially with the use of new technology. Computers were just being introduced to the workplace in 1995 and the centre was one of the first new Shropshire County Council buildings to have an integrated IT network. Our customers only had access to one dumb terminal with the library catalogue on it, some of you will remember the screens with a black background and green typefaces.

Things are very different now with over 350,000 records online as well as images of Shropshire parish registers available through *Findmypast*. Throughout the 20 years, we have relied on the support of members of the Friends many of whom volunteer for the service. We couldn't have achieved what we have without you. Although we currently face unprecedented financial pressures, we look forward to the opportunities of the next 20 years.

### Shropshire Archives search room opening hours

Changes to the search room opening hours on Wednesdays to 4pm are going well and seem to be appreciated by customers. We are also encouraging customers as much as possible to order documents in advance – this makes the running of the public service more efficient. Thanks very much for your co-operation with this.

### World War One projects

Planning is now underway for further World War One commemoration activity from 2017 culminating in commemorations to mark the centenary of the death of Wilfred Owen in October 2018. We are working closely with Alexa Pugh Arts Development Officer to seek funding for a wide range of arts and heritage projects to support activity across the county.

### Shropshire Victoria County History

I am delighted to be part of plans to revive the Victoria County History in Shropshire and am looking forward to the launch in October. For more details contact Victoria County History Director Professor Richard Hoyle, [Richard.Hoyle@sas.ac.uk](mailto:Richard.Hoyle@sas.ac.uk)

### Events

**Thursday 10 September 2015, 11am and 2pm, Shropshire Archives**

**Behind the scenes tours of Shropshire Archives**, free but booking essential, tel: 0345 678 9096, email [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk)

**Monday 5 October 2015, 2.30pm, Shropshire Archives.**  
**Friends of Shropshire Archives Annual lecture, *Military Conflicts through Artefacts, Letters, Postcards and Family History*** by Graham Bradbury. An insight into the Napoleonic, Crimean, South African and North West

Frontier conflicts as well as the Great War. The talk includes a range of historic items and documents, and discusses research methods. £5

email [patkl@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:patkl@blueyonder.co.uk) for tickets

**Monday 23 November, 10.30am, Shropshire Archives**

Talk on the 1939 register by Myko Clelland of *Findmypast*, free but booking essential, tel: 0345 678 9096, email [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk)

### Courses

A range of courses and talks at Shropshire Archives is planned for Autumn 2015-Spring 2016.

*English Palaeography* 2-4 pm Tuesday 15 September for 6 weeks. Cost £37

*Latin for Local and Family Historians* 2-4 pm Tuesday 1 March for 6 weeks. Cost £37

*Researching Family History* 2-4 pm Tuesday 3 November for 5 weeks. Cost £32

*Canal History* 2-4 pm Monday 22 February for 5 weeks. Cost £32

Gordon Dickins talks:

*Falling in love with Tess Durbeyfield* 2-3.30pm, Monday 8 Feb, £3.50 and

*Inspired by Shropshire* 2-3.30pm, Monday 11 April, £3.50

For further details and to book a place email [museumeducation@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:museumeducation@shropshire.gov.uk), tel: 01743 258881

**Mary Mckenzie**

## Heritage, Crafts and a Cup of Tea



In 2012 members of the Newport History Society fulfilled a long held ambition, to open a Heritage Centre in Newport. The Town Council allowed the Society to use the unoccupied front room of 3a (part of the Newport Guildhall) rent free, to display archaeological artefacts discovered by the Societies Field-group, along with photographs and documents relating to the history of the town and surrounding villages. On Saturday the 21st June 2012 the Newport Heritage Centre opened its doors for the first time. The plan was to open on Saturdays from 10am until 2pm. The Centre would be staffed by volunteers from the History Society, who would talk to the general public about the displays and where possible

identify historical artefacts found by members of the public. In the first year 3a, as it became known received 1406 visitors. This was deemed a success by all involved and the council agreed to let the History Society to continue using 3a rent free, until the council elections in 2015, after which the project would be reviewed. In 2014 the number of visitors to 3a increased, with 1475 people visiting the Heritage Centre. However, the Council were now facing large cuts in funding and the town councillors informed the History Society that it would need to start paying rent for its continued use of 3a. Unable to raise funds to pay the rent, it looked as though the Heritage Centre would have to close its doors. It was at this point, that Tim Pryce became involved. Tim had set up a 'Pop Up Shop' at No2 Wellington Road. The shop had proved popular and soon became a recognised part of the towns High Street. Unfortunately, the landlord found a new tenant and as a result Tim needed to find alternative premises. It was suggested by members of the town council that the History Society and Tim share 3a. In January 2015, Tim Pryce offered to take on the lease for 3a, resolving the financial issues.



Today visitors to 'Newport Central' can see and purchase locally produced crafts and produce, or relax and have a cup of tea and a slice of home-made cake surrounded by display cabinets, filled with locally discovered archaeological treasures. The current displays feature artefacts from the early Mesolithic Period right through to the present day, over 6000 years. Displays are updated and regularly changed throughout the year, with a digital monitor providing information relating to the artefacts exhibited. The jewel in the crown, as far as the historical displays are concerned, is the 'Sheriffhales Roman Coin Hoard'. Found on the 2nd of August 2009 by Mr Terry Hayward. A total of 86 bronze coins were recovered, dating from the reign of the Vespasian (69-79AD) to the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-169AD).

Newport's 'Heart of England in Bloom' group are also now based in 'Newport Central'. The group will have information available on how to get involved with activities, such as planting up and maintaining flowerbeds situated around the town, along with a display of trophies and awards won by the group in previous years. Members of 'Heart of England in Bloom' will be available to talk to

the general public in 'Newport Central' every 3rd Saturday of the month, from 10am until 2pm, see press for details or pop in and say hello and find out for yourself what 'Newport Central' is all about.

**Julian Meeson**

### Speaking up for archaeology

It is impossible to imagine archaeology in the UK today without the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). Since its foundation in 1944, the CBA has



led the way with ground-breaking projects and innovative resources, sharing research, knowledge and opening up archaeology to new generations and new audiences. Above all, the CBA and its partners have worked tirelessly to represent the interests of everyone who cares about the UK's rich archaeology heritage and the future of our discipline.

They actively work with a range of partners to shape government policy around issues threatening the future of our historic environment.

#### The CBA's advocacy work over the years has included:

- Championing archaeology in the planning system (the new National Planning Policy Framework in England includes a specific section on the historic environment)
- Better systems for safeguarding portable antiquities (the 1996 Treasure Act followed active CBA lobbying, and the Portable Antiquities Scheme has a key role to play)
- Enhanced protection for wreck sites from looters and commercial salvage (new UK Government policy forbids all commercial exploitation of wrecks)
- Pushing for archaeology to be included in the formal education curriculum (prehistory was recently added to the National Curriculum in England)

They continue to push for enhanced safeguarding of landscapes, sites, building and antiquities and to promote opportunities for public engagement.

#### Supporting local action:

The involvement of local people in debates over ongoing cuts to local archaeological services, and how their local historic environment is protected, is more important now than ever. The CBA's Local Heritage Engagement Network (LHEN) project, funded by the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, supports local groups across the UK who look after and protect the historic environment on their doorsteps.

They are working with a number of key partners to raise awareness and respond to consultations about funding cuts, including the Federation of Archaeological Managers and Employers (FAME), the Association of Local Government Archaeological officers UK (ALGAO), the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) and Civic Voice.

#### Making the case for listed buildings:

As one of the few national amenity societies consulted on

proposals for alteration wherever demolition is involved, the CBA receive up to 4,000 listed building applications from England and Wales each year. They defend the archaeological significance of buildings and sites, giving a unique and vital voice to building types that may not otherwise be considered. They work with volunteer agents from local societies and historic buildings groups.

### Your support is vital



What you may not know about the CBA, is that their core funding source has been withdrawn. Next year will be their first without the funding that has been in place since they were founded in the 1940s. The result is that they have a third less money to sustain our vital advocacy work and participation programmes.

The CBA's campaigning role is more vital now than ever with increasing threats to our archaeological heritage from development pressures and the effects of funding cutbacks on archaeology practice here in the UK. Many archaeologists argue that we are at risk of losing all that we have gained over the past 70 years.

As such the CBA is launching a major appeal to everyone who cares about the future for archaeology in the UK. Support from CBA members and supporters will provide a stable foundation so the Council for British Archaeology can continue to resource our campaigning and advocacy work, projects and programmes.

**To find out what you can do to help support the CBA and the future of archaeology go to**

**[www.archaeologymatters.org.uk](http://www.archaeologymatters.org.uk) or call them on 01904 671417 for an appeal pack**

### **Old Oswestry Hillfort**



*Old Oswestry from the air (courtesy of Alistair Reid)*

It is not very often that archaeology in Shropshire makes National headlines, but the case of housing development proposals close to the major monument at Old Oswestry has made it to the national press and radio. A local pressure group 'Hands off Our Old Oswestry Hillfort' has carried out an effective campaign against the proposed development that, they argue, will so adversely affect it.

No-one involved – including Shropshire Council and Historic England – doubts the importance of the site so surely any development in the area should be automatically turned down, and yet it hasn't been. Why is this so?

Two factors need to be highlighted in answering this question. The first is that this is the first serious test of the government's new planning policy brought in as the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF; 2012). This sought to perpetuate the heritage benefits brought in by earlier planning guidance documents from 1990 onwards, but also to simplify and facilitate swifter planning decisions. Thus, what happens at Old Oswestry is not just of significance to Shropshire: it sets a precedent for what might happen to similar planning permissions elsewhere in England. That is why the government appears determined not to back down over this case.

The second factor is the extremely awkward position in which local authorities, in this case Shropshire Council, are being put. In short, all councils have been set housing targets by government. These houses have to be built somewhere and, in a county like Shropshire, it is more than likely that a relatively high proportion of those places will be on greenfield rather than brownfield (i.e. previously developed) land.

This is ultimately why the Planning Inspector has decided to retain the allocation of this site in the plan. In line with NPPF, the benefits to the local community of providing more housing are deemed to outweigh the vociferous objections of many of those very locals, and their supporters from all over the country. This is a conclusion that should concern anyone interested in preserving the county's heritage, as this society is committed to do. In this light, the caveats imposed by the Inspector are interesting. The housing scheme "should demonstrate appropriate regard to the significance and setting of the Old Oswestry Hill Fort" which includes working with archaeologists to ensure that the long-distance views to and from Old Oswestry are not compromised. This is an important concession which will minimise the impact should permission be granted, and it is worth noting in this context that the scale of the development has been considerably scaled back to 117 houses in total (contrast this with the 1,417 houses to be built elsewhere in Oswestry or the 27,500 new houses that Shropshire Council are expected to approve by 2016). While the protesters seem to have lost the argument, in fact they have undoubtedly affected the outcome, albeit not as much as they had wished. The moral is surely that the battle is still worth the fight.

**Roger White**

## Survey at Caus Castle

A magnetometer survey has recently been undertaken within the outer bailey of Caus Castle, focused on the medieval borough associated with the castle (centred on SJ 337 078). This was a pilot programme of work, to assess the survival of subsurface archaeological remains, potentially associated with the borough, which might respond to magnetic survey. As a pilot project, it was intended that the survey formed an initial assessment of the potential of the site for further non-intrusive survey and highlight areas where further fieldwork would be best targeted.

The documentary evidence for the borough of Caus is well known and has been briefly summarised by the Central Marches Historic Towns Survey (Buteux, 1996). The castle itself is thought to have been built by Roger fitz Corbet in the late 11th or early 12th century taking the name from his ancestral home in Normandy, but the first documentary reference dates to 1140 (Buteux, 1996: 2). The focus of the present survey was the borough of Caus, a town which developed within a rampart to the north and west of the castle site. King John granted a market charter on 10 April 1200, to Robert Corbet, with the charter for a fair granted in 1248 (Letters, nd). The town expanded through the 13th and 14th centuries, with 28 burgages recorded in 1274, 34 in 1300 and 58 in 1349 (Buteux, 1996: 2). Caus began to decline in the second half of the 14th and 15th centuries. The last recorded house is mentioned in 1614. The borough was surrendered to Parliament in 1645 (Shropshire HER PRN 00249).

Documentary evidence makes reference to a number of buildings known with the borough. These include the chapel of St. Nicholas, founded in the 12th or 13th century, still furnished in 1612 and probably used as a domestic chapel until the destruction of the castle (PRN 05106). This has traditionally been located as opposite the inner gate of the castle. In addition, the chapel of St. Margaret has been recorded from documentary sources as founded in 1272 and last recorded in 1447, although its location is unclear (PRN 05107). The main interior street, running between East Gate and Wallop Gate was recorded as still in use as part of a field road in 1816 (VCH 1968, 310). It survives, in part on site, as a discontinuous earthwork.

The results of the survey were promising, although no clear in situ building remains/structural deposits have been identified. The main set of anomalies detected in the survey relate to a series of trackways, lengths of which are evident as extant holloways, running roughly NE-SW across the site. In addition, a number of weaker magnetic anomalies have been recorded, which may well represent further disturbed building material across the site, some of it potentially in situ. Further survey work is anticipated, to include topographic survey of the complex earthworks in the outer bailey. A survey report has been lodged with Shropshire Historic Environment Record.

Giles Carey

The author is grateful to Historic England (formerly English Heritage) for loan of equipment, and to approving the Section 42 license to carry out the survey, to Penny Ward for her help on site and Mervyn Roberts for permission to carry out the survey on his land.

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Buteux, V (1996): *Archaeological assessment of Caus, Shropshire* (Central Marches Historic Towns Survey report)

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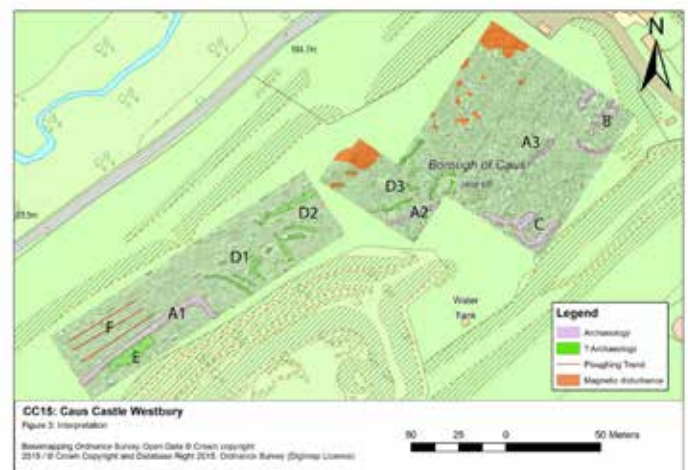
<http://www.history.ac.uk/cmh/gaz/gazweb2.html>

(accessed 28.04.2015)

VCH (1968): *The Victoria County History of Shropshire* 8 295-332



*Digital Elevation Model of Google Earth satellite photograph, showing the survey results in topographic context [Geophysical Survey data overlain on Google Earth image, floated on ASCII LiDAR DSM (from Geomatics Group). Viewed from NNW, 1.4x vertical exaggeration].*



*Interpretation plot overlaid on greyscale image. [Basemapping: Ordnance Survey Open Data © Crown Copyright and Database Right 2015]*

## Researching North Shropshire's 'marsh-forts'

The term 'marsh-fort' has only come into usage relatively recently and describes unusual, very low-lying, monumental Iron Age fortifications in a wetland setting; they are a scarce monument type and most are still classified under the generic shorthand of 'hillforts'. They are under-researched and, so far, the term has been used mainly with reference to the Iron Age double enclosure of Sutton Common near Doncaster.

Around the North Shropshire meres and mosses are several marsh-fort candidates, and these are the focus of my research for a PhD in landscape and palaeoenvironmental archaeology at the University of Birmingham. Wall Camp (HER 1108; Scheduled Monument 1020282) on the Weald Moors is one such – a 12ha multivallate fortification surrounded by peat-based farmland (Malim and Malim: TSAHS LXXXV (2010) 81-114.

Equally intriguing is The Berth near Baschurch (HER 129; Scheduled Monument 1004770) which comprises two upstanding Iron Age enclosures, within a very low-lying peat basin, linked to each other and to higher ground by interconnecting causeways. Excavations in the 1960s

revealed floors, post holes, ceramics and salt containers and finds include an Iron Age glass bead and a copper-alloy cauldron. The structure of the site has similarities with Sutton Common which has been characterised as more likely to be of ritual than domestic usage.



*Berth cauldron currently on display at Shrewsbury Museum (@British Museum)*

The surrounding peat deposits make The Berth especially attractive for palaeoenvironmental investigation as the basin (which is almost permanently waterlogged) provides ideal conditions for the preservation of organic deposits. A coring and sampling programme, undertaken during 2014/2015, revealed peat to a depth of 6.8m overlying glacial clay and early environmental analysis indicates that the area was likely to have been fen-carr and reed swamp from the early Holocene; the Iron Age has been located at 1.5m – 1.8m (by radiocarbon dating). Future landscape reconstruction will include mapping the basin to determine whether the peat depth is uniform. This will allow me to estimate whether the enclosures would have been permanently surrounded by water.



*Environmental sampling at The Berth (November 2014)*

I look forward to providing the SAHS with updates as my research progresses.

My ongoing thanks go to the landowners for giving me access to their sites. If anyone was a volunteer at the excavations led by Peter Gelling in the 1960s, I would be very keen to hear from you!

**Shelagh Norton**

E: [smn203@bham.ac.uk](mailto:smn203@bham.ac.uk)

## Church Stretton Area Local History Group

The group was founded in response to a successful bid from the Heritage Lottery funded project for excavations and research into Rectory Wood, a historic park in the centre of Church Stretton. The parkland was once part of the grandest houses in the town and was the subject of research because of the evidence of old buildings. The area had clearly been landscaped and local legend had it that Capability Brown also may have influenced the design as he was a friend of the Rector.

We are a small group, current membership about 30, whose main subject is the local area but we also exist to support each other and anyone else in any aspects of history research. At the moment the group has three main themes, public talks, research projects and in the summer months visits to local sites of historical interest.

The first public talks were given by members on the topics of their personal interest, Hand Cut Nail Trade, Brown Clee Hill, the Workhouse, the Long Mynd etc. Recently we have expanded our horizons to include other speakers and topics though we try to keep a local or at least regional aspect.

Our first research project was prompted by the 150 year anniversary of opening of the school in 2011, the building is now the library. The general theme of 'Early Education in the Strettons' gave us a wide target for research and gave some of us our first introduction to Shropshire Archives.

At the end of the project we showed our result in an exhibition in the school building. The day was a success with about 200 people coming to see it.

The second research project was in 2014 and part of the celebrations marking the 800 year anniversary of Church Stretton receiving its market charter. As there are very few original documents from that time which are specific to The Strettons the project had to be a general work on life in medieval Shropshire. Some of the topics we covered were language and literature, childhood, Brockhurst Castle, rabbits, place names, St Lawrence, women and work, music, illness and landscape history.



*Berth cauldron currently on display at Shrewsbury Museum (@British Museum)*

Like many local history groups our present project is on World War One. We are just at the beginning of a four year project but our first thoughts are to keep the project very local and try to build a picture of how the war changed daily life here in the Strettons. We would also like to use the names on the Roll of Honour and the War Memorials to build profiles of those who went to war.

Finally, we probably would not have achieved as much or kept the group alive without all the help we have received from Shropshire Archives and Shropshire Library service.

Barbara Parnell

[CSALHG@outlook.com](mailto:CSALHG@outlook.com)

## The Stallsman

Recently a tin box of old papers that was found in an outhouse in Chelmarsh was given to Shropshire Archives. They are wages slips belonging to J.E. Link (John Ernest Link) who worked at Highley Colliery. They cover the period from 1935-1940 and they shed light on the work of the miners at that period.

At Highley the coal would be undercut by a machine along a stretch of 25 or more yards; this was the coal face. The miners were organised in teams, each responsible for a portion of the face called a stall; perhaps 6 or so yards long. They had to break the coal down and load it into small railway wagons called tubs to be sent out of the pit. Not all men did the same job. Some were loaders; they had to shovel the broken coal into the tubs. The more skilled task was to get the coal off the face (with explosives if needed) and then break it into lumps that could be shovelled into the tubs. This was the job of the pikesmen. In the 1930s the pikesman would earn a basic of 8/10<sup>4</sup> per shift against a loader's basic of 7/6<sup>2</sup>. However, neither loader nor pikesman was usually paid directly by the Highley Mining Company; they actually worked for one or more subcontractor who was responsible for the working of the stall. These men were called stallsmen; they were paid by the Highley Mining Company for the coal they got from the stall at an agreed rate. From this they would pay the pikesmen and loaders their basic, plus whatever bonus they decided and would keep the rest themselves. Mr Link was a stallsman; he shared No 5 stall at Highley with Hubert Waldron. At the start of the week they would have to judge how much coal they could get from their stall; this would depend on the exact geology they would encounter during the course of the week. Having decided that, they would agree with the deputy (the foreman) how many men they needed.

To take one random example of a wages slip, that for the 28th February 1939 shows that they were working in a very good place, for they raised 145 tons of coal and nearly 9 tons of slack, for which they got 1/10 per ton. To keep their stall safe and easy to work, they needed to build 7 roof supports (chocks), for which they were paid 1/3 each. During the week they drove 10 yards of new road, as the face advanced. This gave the basic payment which was

then multiplied by various percentages which reflected past pay rises agreed since 1912; the most recent was a 1/- a day rise won in 1936. Against this, the stallsmen was charged for all explosives and detonators used in blasting the coal down, the cost of sharpening tools, a payment towards the cost of the Welfare ground, a sum for medical insurance and also unemployment insurance. There was also a deduction of ½d for every ton of coal to pay the checkweighman; this was a person nominated by the miners to work alongside the company clerk, to ensure that all the coal was weighed fairly.

The pay slip shows that Messrs Link and Waldron were paid £29-4-7½. This was shared between themselves and 9 other men who worked in their stall. This was an exceptional week; normally they employed only 4 others. It looks like not every man worked all the theoretical maximum of 5¾ shifts in the week as only 50½ shifts were worked in total. On average each member of the team would earn just over £3; although if the stallsmen had done their calculations correctly they would hope to see nearer £4 as their profit. To get this money, each man had moved 3¾ tons of coal a shift. They would have done this on their knees, working in a height of 3'9"; the money would have been well earned.

David Poyner



Council for  
British Archaeology  
West Midlands

## CBAWM – Grant Fund

CBA West Midlands is pleased to announce that we have now launched our Annual Grant Fund. This aims to support projects within the West Midlands region that work towards the same aims as CBAWM and can contribute to the archaeology of the region.

Full guidelines on the Grant Fund, including qualifying criteria and the application process, can be found online at <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbawm/grants.php>

As the scheme will run alongside the subscription year of CBAWM (the financial year), for this launch year there will be a short introductory period where applications can be made for an award in September 2015.

Please note that the closing date for applications for this is 31st August 2015.

## Victoria County History in Shropshire

The interest created by the publication last summer of VCH Shropshire VI, Shrewsbury part one, suggested that the moment was ripe to canvass support for the re-establishment of VCH in the county after a decade or more largely in abeyance. A meeting held at Shropshire Archives on 2 May 2015 attracted a large group in attendance who were adamant that a new county committee should be established. An excellent committee has come together with Professor Richard Hoyle acting as interim chairman, Dr James Bowen of the University of Liverpool as secretary and Nigel Hinton, as treasurer. The county committee has now met twice and gone a long way to devising a strategy for the revival of the county.



The first outcome of all the planning that is currently going on will be a public launch event at the Guildhall in Shrewsbury on Saturday 31 October when Dr Keith Lilley of Queen's University Belfast and Dr Barrie Trinder will speak on aspects of the history of the market towns of Shropshire. Thereafter we hope to have a whole range of funding raising occasions, but moreover, our publication programme includes the second volume on Shrewsbury in late 2016 or 2017, a VCH 'Short' on Wem, in late 2016 and the revival of work on Bradford Hundred in the north-east of the county to resume where the county-funded VCH staff left off a decade ago.

In parallel with this Richard Hoyle and James Bowen have had discussions with the Ludlow Historical Research Group and we very much hope that they will join with VCH to produce a red book volume on Ludlow. We hope to have a launch meeting there early in 2016.

Of course, it goes without saying that we have space and roles for many more supporters – as volunteer researchers and fundraisers for instance – and we have room on the county committee for anyone who feels committed to the revival of VCH Shropshire and wants to lend their support. Offers of help or requests to be kept updated on developments should be sent to [J.P.Bowen@liverpool.ac.uk](mailto:J.P.Bowen@liverpool.ac.uk)

We will circulate details of the public launch on Saturday 31 October far and wide when they are confirmed, but keep the day free in your diaries!

### Community-led Research Survey

#### Assessing the Value of Community-led Research

Historic England has commissioned Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service to find out how much archaeology, historic building and local history research is carried out by voluntary groups in England. The project will also assess the value or potential value this research has for enhancing Historic Environment Records (HERs) and Research Frameworks.

Local history and archaeology societies, diving groups and historic building enthusiasts are encouraged to contribute by completing an online survey. Whether your interest is in medieval manors or inter-war industry, your response will enable us to better understand the contribution of your efforts to heritage research, and to make sure that local history, historic building and archaeological research is better valued.

Survey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/community-heritage-research>

You can also complete the survey by post – please contact Rob Hedge on 01905 765654.

**The survey closes on 21<sup>st</sup> August 2015.**

### Heritage Open Days 2015

This year's Heritage Open Days will be taking place from 10<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> September 2015. For full details of local events and activities see: [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

Copy deadline for the Spring 2016 Newsletter is Friday 26th February 2016. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)

NB The Council is not responsible for any statement made, or opinion expressed in the *Newsletter* of the Society.



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 81, Spring 2016

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**Subscriptions:** Subscription rates remain at £19.00 for Ordinary Members and £20.00 for a family (two or more people at the same address). Institutional Membership is £20.00 and Overseas Membership £23.00. Please remember to update existing standing orders and fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form if you are a UK taxpayer.

**Council of the Society:** Three long-serving members resigned at the 2015 AGM and the Society would like to thank Bob Cromarty, David Poyner and Canon William Price for their outstanding contributions over many years of service. James Lawson stepped down as Chair at the same time (although remaining a member of Council) and our new Chair is Dr Martin Speight. Jenny Britnell has joined the Council and taken over as *Transactions* Editor from Canon Price.

**Pagett Fund Grants:** The Society is pleased to have made two further grants from the Pagett Fund. The first was a contribution towards the publication costs of *The Story of Bishop's Castle*, which will be published later this year by Logaston Press. The volume is being written by a team of local authors, each covering a particular aspect of the town's history. The second grant was a contribution towards the research costs for the planned VCH short volume on the history of Wem. The relaunch of the Shropshire VCH is a very exciting development which the Society is delighted to be able to support. The Pagett Fund was set up by the Society, using the bequest made by John Pagett, and the Society's Trustees are able to draw on the income from the fund to provide one-off grants for archaeological or historical investigation relating to Shropshire or for the preservation of antiquities in the county. For further information please contact the Treasurer Dr Fran Bumpus, 9 Alexandra Avenue, Shrewsbury, SY3 9HT E: [f.b.bumpus@gmail.com](mailto:f.b.bumpus@gmail.com)

## Shropshire Council cuts:

*a letter to members from Dr Roger White supported by the Council of the Society*

I, probably like all members of the Society, was alarmed and dismayed by Shropshire Council's announcement that they would be cutting their budget for museums to zero from April 2017. Faced with the settlement imposed by the Government, the Council had no choice but to eliminate as many discretionary services as possible and their announcement has made plain to all the real depth of the crisis. The reaction has been an, entirely understandable, howl of protest resulting in a number of on-line petitions to 'save the museums'. The only way to get the government to rethink the situation will be to judge the degree, and sustained volume, of such protests against the cuts and, for that reason alone, people should sign up.

Yet what is the long-term future for our museums, archives and other valued services, and their skilled staff? I find it improbable that either Government or Council will be able to back-track into saving these services, so options are very limited.

There are no easy answers here but I would like to think that the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society can make a contribution to the debate and help shape the emerging future services. The Society will welcome approaches from individuals or organisations who share our concerns. Perhaps what we need is a 'Heritage Alliance for Shropshire'?

***Any member wishing to comment / offer suggestions should contact the Newsletter Editor***

## Shropshire Archives News July 2015

### Opening Hours

We are currently consulting the public on reductions to opening hours following a budget and staffing review. The consultation provides three different options, all for versions of opening a total of 15 hours a week, a reduction from the current 20 hours; plus a fourth option, which is the opportunity for suggestions for a different pattern of opening from the public. The consultation runs until 4 April 2016.

This reduction in opening hours will ensure that the service can continue with other essential behind the scenes cataloguing and conservation work which supports public access to archives. An enquiry service will continue to be maintained from Tuesdays to Fridays. Local History Centres, housed in a number of libraries and other venues across the county, will also continue to provide access to their local and family history resources. Volunteering, events and courses as well as education sessions for schools and colleges will also continue to be provided on days when the service is not open to the general public.

The outcome of the consultation is expected to be confirmed in April, with the new pattern of opening hours introduced from May 2016.

Please follow the link to the online consultation <http://new.shropshire.gov.uk/get-involved/archives-reduced-opening-hours-2016/> or pick up a paper copy at Shropshire Archives or your local Shropshire library.

### Shropshire Victoria County History

Work on the revival of Shropshire VHC continues with a fully booked and successful volunteer day on Wem which took place at Shropshire Archives on 27 Feb. A history day in Wem on 26 June is being organised jointly with the Friends of Shropshire Archives.

### Events

Sat 19 March 10am-1pm Discovering Shrewsbury's History  
Shropshire Archives

Wed 25 May 2.30pm Visit to Acton Round Hall

Sunday 26 June 10am-4pm Wem History Day and Friends  
AGM, Wem Town Hall

Tues 5 July 2pm Visit to Old Oswestry Hill Fort and  
Oswestry Museum and Archives

Wed 10 Aug 2.30pm Visit to Weston Park

Saturday 17 Sept Place Names Day, Shropshire Archives  
details tbc

Saturday 15 October Discover Shropshire Day, Shirehall

For further information please contact Shropshire  
Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury SY1 2AQ, email  
[archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk) web [www.shropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk)  
and [www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk)

Mary Mckenzie

Members might be interested to note that in the January issue of Vidimus (the free online magazine of stained glass), there is an article on a forthcoming exhibition at Shrewsbury Museum devoted to Margaret Agnes Rope, a Shrewsbury-based Arts and Crafts stained glass artist. The exhibition will run from September 2016 until January 2017 and the article can be accessed at [vidimus.org](http://vidimus.org).

In the last issue of the Newsletter we published a pre-publication offer for *Offa's Dyke* by Ian Bapty and Keith Ray (Oxbow Books). We have been informed by Oxbow that the volume will be published during March and that the pre-publication offer will remain available for one month after the publication date.

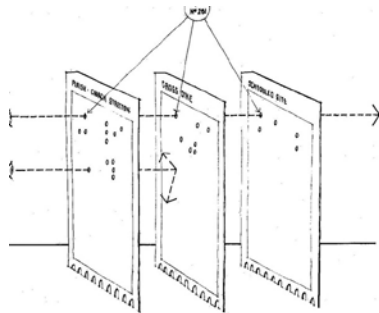
Local author Kate Innes has recently published her first novel, *The Errant Hours*, a historical novel set in the 13th century and located partly in Shropshire and partly in North Wales. It is published in paperback by Mindforest Press and is also available as an e-book.



## Forty Years On – The Historic Environment Record is 40 this year!

This year the Shropshire Historic Environment Record is celebrating the forty years of work since compilation of the Shropshire Sites and Monuments Record (SMR) began in **May 1976**.

In those early years, the records were created on A5 record cards with their location marked on a set of record maps, and linked to collections of supporting material such as air photos.



*Searches of the card index were carried out by means of "Optical Coincidence sheets". These had cells for every number between 1 and 9999. Holes were punched in sheets that represented a range of different attributes. In this example a hole is punched*

*in the cell for 251 in the Church Stretton Parish sheet, the Cross Dyke Type Sheet and the Scheduled Monument Status Sheet.*

By **1979**, about 3000 records had been created, mostly relating to archaeological sites and find spots. Then, in 1979, MSC (Manpower Services Commission) labour became



available, and using this resource, by **1983** records of over 6000 historic buildings had been added, derived not only from the Statutory Lists of Listed Buildings, but also from the results of MSC surveys as well as thematic gazetteers.

It now became difficult to interrogate a card index of such a size, but the advent of personal computers meant that **computerisation** was now an option. From **1984 to 1985** the core fields of the archaeological records only were entered into a basic system (on the Shirehall's first PC!) that allowed indexes and gazetteers to be printed out. In **1990** the data was moved to the "STAIRS" mainframe system, and over the next couple of years the computerised records were fleshed out with their Description and Sources details. By **1995**, the records for the Listed buildings had been computerised as well, by scanning the statutory lists, although the remainder of the buildings records remained on record cards.

Meanwhile, in 1990 the issuing of the **PPG16 planning guidance** had led to the production of a rising number of reports on developer-funded excavations, evaluations and watching briefs, which needed to be fed into the SMR, as well as an increasing demand for information from the SMR. The **1990s** also saw a wide range of projects aimed at, or with the potential for, enhancing the range and coverage of the SMR. These included:

1993 to 1995: **The Industrial Survey**, which added 820 Industrial sites to the SMR;

1993: Paul Stamper's **Historic Parks and Gardens** desktop

survey which added 290 records;

1993 to 1996: **The Central Marches Historic Towns Survey** which added 1446 records

1995 to 1997: **The Shrewsbury Urban Archaeological Database** added c1100 records

1994 to 1996 **North West Wetlands Survey**: 8 areas studied.

The **Marches Uplands Survey** included the recording of c 2200 features along 12 fieldwork transects.

The associated **Marches Upland Mapping Project** involved the transcription and analysis of AP evidence for the MUS survey area and generated c 1400 records.

The Millennium saw new challenges and opportunities for the SMR. **GIS** (Geographic Information System) software was now available, allowing the records to be viewed and interrogated via computer mapping. STAIRS was closed down, but the SMR was migrated to a specialist **relational database system** called SMR (now HBSMR). This in turn allowed all the Interventions (excavations, Evaluations, Watching Briefs) and Surveys to be recorded in their own right as "**Event**" records.

Subsequently the database developed modules for storing the **Historic Landscape Character Assessment** records created by the 2001 to 2004 HLC project, and another for **Designations**, so that Scheduled Monument, Listed Building and other designations could be recorded and managed in their own right and then linked to the monuments to which they relate.

The SMR database afforded much more sophisticated means of interrogating and outputting the records than before, including output in a format that could be uploaded to the Web. In the mid-2000s the SMR joined with Shropshire Archives and the County Museums Service to merge our three databases into one online database, which went online as the **Discovering Shropshire's History** database in 2006. The SMR Monument records were then made available to the **Heritage Gateway** web portal in early 2009.

In the last decade, the SMR has morphed into the Historic Environment Record (**HER**). It now underpins the work not only of our Archaeological Advisors, but also, since the creation of Shropshire Council in 2009, that of the **Conservation Officers**. Considerable progress has been made, largely with the help of a number of **volunteers**, not only in computerising the records for unlisted buildings but also bringing their level of detail up to that of the other records. Recently the HER has used an add-on to HBSMR called "**Library Link**" to link and manage our large and growing collections of digital images and report pdfs.

Although the means by which the HER is compiled, maintained and disseminated has changed beyond measure in the last 40 years, our core objective is still to make available in one place as much information as we can on all aspects of the historic environment to all those who need it or want it.

**Penny Ward.**

## Iron Age field, Woodcote (Pave Lane Farm) Fieldwalking report

### Introduction

The Iron Age Field (as it is referred to for the purposes of this report) is located to the South West of Newport. The field as the name suggests, is the site of an Iron Age settlement. Discovered during aerial archaeological survey work and subsequently excavated in 1990. The site is recorded as a 'triple ditch farmstead,' which is unusual for the area. Only three others are known in the West Midlands, although, this form of ditch layout is common in South Wales.

The excavation produced little in the way of archaeological artefacts, although organic material recovered from the bottom of the ditches during the excavations (once analysed) indicated the surrounding area was grassland during the Iron Age period. The site has subsequently been scheduled.

In 2015, Tony Baker (a local detectorist) approached the Newport History Society requesting assistance with his investigation of the site. He had searched the part of the field outside of the scheduled area for a number of years, recovering artefacts from a number of time periods.

He had noted during his visits, pottery fragments in the field, however was unsure of their date. With the permission of the landowner, it was decided that a member of the Newport History Society would carry out a fieldwalking survey, to recover and record any pottery whilst Mr Baker continued to metal detect the site.

### Fieldwalking

The field had been planted with maize, which proved useful for the purposes of performing a lineal fieldwalking survey (using the rows as a guide). Sticks were used to plot the border of the scheduled section of the field, to ensure nothing was removed from the protected area. It was soon apparent that the centre of the field contained little in the way of pottery, with only small amounts of Staffordshire Slip Wares being recorded, the notable exception being a small, Roman, Severn Valley Ware pot fragment. The fragment appears to be of the locally made form, which has been found on a number of sites in and around the Newport area and is believed to date from around 75-200AD. The fragment may have been drawn out of the scheduled area during the ploughing of the field. No further examples of Roman pottery were found during the fieldwalking survey.

The majority of the pottery recorded on the site was found in the area immediately adjacent the road, (Pave Lane) in a band approximately 30 metres in depth and stretching the width of the field.



*Examples of Medieval pottery and a sharpening stone  
(bottom right)*

Almost all of the Medieval pottery recovered was from this area, the majority of which appears to be from glazed tableware. One fragment still retains its green glaze and this may have been from a jug or drinking vessel (top left of photograph). The Medieval pottery appears to date from around 1250-1400AD. Other types of pottery recovered included fragments of stone and purple ware vessels dating from the 16th/17<sup>th</sup> century. Various forms of the locally produced Staffordshire Slip Ware were found with fragments spread evenly throughout the site. The majority of these being from either black- or brown-glazed milk pans or *pancheons* (storage jars) dating from the late 17th/18th century. Fragments of the highly decorated Staffordshire Slip Ware dishes and bowls from the period were also recorded.

Clay pipe stems and pipe bowl fragments were also noted, with one complete pipe bowl being recovered (see photo). The pipe bowl makers mark indicated that it was made in Broseley and dated 1680-1700AD.



*Clay pipe bowl*

The only other non-ceramic finds of note, were fragments of worked flint (see photograph right). A flint blade (Mesolithic in date) and a core (possibly late Mesolithic) were recovered.

A small amount of demolition debris was also found spread throughout the area adjacent the road. The brick and tile fragments, appear to be 18th/19th century in date, possibly from farm labourers' cottages or buildings from the disused Lilleshall and Donnington Canal wharf. The wharf (the only surviving part of the canal) is situated behind the Norwood House Restaurant, approximately 300m away from the site.



*Worked flint*

### **Conclusion**

To date, no Iron Age pottery has been found on the site, although metalwork from the period has been recovered from neighbouring fields.

The adjoining road, Pave Lane, is known to have been a Roman road (a section of which still survives close to the 'Fox Inn') and although only one Roman pot fragment was recovered, further Roman pottery may yet surface. However, one piece of Severn Valley Ware is not conclusive proof of occupation of the site during the Roman period.

In total 15 fragments of Medieval pottery were recovered. This points to people living in the area close to the current road's location in the late 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> century. The discovery of the Medieval pottery so close to the road also suggests that the road has remained roughly in the same position for at least, the last 1000 years.

The discovery of worked flint, indicates possible human occupation of the site stretching back some 8500 years. Although, as with the Roman pottery, further examples of flint tools and, more importantly, *debitage* will need to be recovered from the site to help confirm this conclusion.

**Julian Meeson**

### **Relaunch of The Victoria County History of Shropshire**

More than 200 people attended the relaunch of The Victoria County History (VCH) of Shropshire on Saturday 31 October at University Centre Shrewsbury. The VCH is written by local historians working in counties across the country. Famous for publishing its red books, the VCH also now produces popular paperbacks and content is increasingly being digitised and made available on British History Online digital ([www.british-history.ac.uk](http://www.british-history.ac.uk)). Since 2002 the VCH has not been active in Shropshire. The first volume of a two-volume history of Shrewsbury was published in red book form in 2014 and was organised by VCH Central Office, being achieved largely through the voluntary work of experienced local historians with the assistance of the Marc Fitch Fund. The interest created by this publication suggested that there was support for the re-establishment of VCH Shropshire.

In the week leading up to the launch the VCH Shropshire banner toured the county visiting notable historic sites. The relaunch event featured a talk by Professor Richard

Hoyle, Director and General Editor of the VCH, outlining 'VCH Shropshire: Past, Present and Future' and two further lectures were presented. The first by Professor Keith Lilley from Queen's University Belfast, entitled 'The Forms and Formation of Medieval Towns of the Marches', explored the urban forms and landscapes of the frontier town of the Welsh Marches, drawing on published work as well as his own findings, with special attention being paid to Bridgnorth and Ludlow in Shropshire. The second was by well-known local historian and patron of VCH Shropshire, Dr Barrie Trinder, entitled 'Shropshire Market Towns since 1660'. He gave a useful overview of the potential for thematic studies of the market towns of Shropshire and his lecture was illustrated with photographs of historic buildings from throughout the county.

The aim is for VCH Shropshire to be a collaborative community project that will research and write the histories of all parts of Shropshire, within the framework and standards of the VCH series. It will foster public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the history and heritage of the county. A new committee has been formed and is seeking funding from charitable trusts and sponsors to enable work to recommence and continue into the future. VCH Shropshire will play a leading role in the public dissemination of the county's history and heritage through the provision of substantial works of reference which will leave a legacy for future generations.

Plans are well advanced for the publication of a VCH short (a single place study) on the north Shropshire market town of Wem work on which will be starting shortly, with the intention that it will be published in the spring of 2017. The next red book will be on Newport and the Weald Moors, work on which had begun prior to the last full time County Editor's retirement, and it is hoped to be able to produce a red book on Ludlow and its surrounding rural parishes. A Wem study day is being organised with the Friends of Shropshire Archives for Sunday 26 June.

Working in partnership with Shropshire Archives, VCH Shropshire will encourage a variety of volunteering initiatives, assisting and supporting research into the parishes of Shropshire. The project has roles for many more supporters as volunteers, researchers and fundraisers.

For more information about the project please contact: VCH Shropshire c/o Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 2AQ.

Email: [info@victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk](mailto:info@victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk)

Follow the project on Twitter: @VCH\_Shropshire

Website: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/shropshire>



*Dr Barrie Trinder, Patron of VCH Shropshire, delivering his lecture*

## Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings Visitor Centre

In November 2015 the Friends opened the doors to their new state-of-the-art Visitor Centre for the first time. Built using grants from Historic England and the ERDF the facility brings together for the first time interpretations of the mill's role in the industrial revolution and the pioneers who made it happen, including:

- details on how flax was processed, from the field to the end product, which include a myriad of items from ship sails to playing cards.
- the impact of the building's revolutionary iron frame on the world of architecture
- details of the mill's machinery and technology
- working conditions at the mill, including child labour
- the change of use from Flaxmill to Maltings and the malting process

There is also a short animated film that visitors can watch which charts the history of the building and its people, as well as oral history recollections of people who worked at the Maltings and who were barracked there during the last war.

Entry is free and opening times for the centre are:

9th January 2016 – 26th March 2016  
Saturdays only, 10 am to 4 pm

1st April 2016 – 29th October 2016  
Friday, Saturday, Sunday 10 am to 4 pm

The Friends are also recruiting volunteers to help with the manning of the Visitor Centre. They are asking for people who are able to commit to at least a half day each month. If you're interested in helping please contact them on [info@flaxmill-maltings.co.uk](mailto:info@flaxmill-maltings.co.uk).

### **Newsletter editor's note:**

An article about the Flaxmill can be found in the April 2016 issue of Current Archaeology.



Flaxmill Visitor Centre

## A Wider Understanding of Old Oswestry and its Setting

The second seminar hosted by the Hands Off Old Oswestry Hillfort (HOOOH) campaign group was held at the Memorial Hall, Oswestry on 13th February as part of Hug the Hillfort weekend of events. The campaign group opposes proposals for extending urban development north of Whittington Road and into Oldport Farm, which would effectively destroy the existing rural setting to the south-east of the hillfort, and the series of talks given at the seminar aimed to further our understanding of what comprises Old Oswestry's heritage significance and setting.

Speakers and topics included Tim Malim (*Power Politics and the Setting of Old Oswestry*), Dr Rachel Pope (*Hillfort Hinterlands: Understanding the "setting" of Heritage*), Peter Reavill (*Iron Age artefacts reported to the PAS from N Shropshire*), Caroline Malim (*Legends in the Landscape: Old Oswestry, Whittington & the Holy Grail*), Dave Matthews (*An interpretation of Views from the Hillforts of the Northern Marches*), and Dr George Nash (*Park Hall & the WWI legacy within the Hillfort Hinterland*). The talks generated widespread interest and debate, clearly identifying Old Oswestry as a focal point in the landscape over thousands of years, at the centre of an ancient network of communications and a probable northern cult centre for the Cornovii, the importance of which continued into historic times with the construction of a political boundary (Wat's Dyke), the foundation of Oswestry, a meeting place and market at Oldport, and an area dedicated to training for the Western Front during the Great War.

### **Tim Malim**



Members of the public spell out HOOOH at the western entrance to Old Oswestry on 14th February (Photo: Alastair Reid)

**Regionally important Anglo-Saxon silver hooks with entwined beasts go on display at Whitchurch Museum.**



**Whitchurch Museum has acquired a pair of silver engraved hooks dating from the late 9th or 10th century AD.** This acquisition has been supported by the Art Fund and many local contributors including Whitchurch Town Council, Prees Parish Council, Shropshire Archaeological Society, Whitchurch Historical and Archaeological Group. The hooks were **discovered in the Prees area, North Shropshire**, by two individual metal detectorists some two years apart. The two finds were reported to the Coroner as potential **treasure** under the 1996 Treasure Act. **Now they are on display for the first time since their loss some 1100 years ago**

The hooks are very similar to one another and form a matching pair. Each hook is of a similar shape with two sewing holes positioned on one edge. They are both decorated with similar entwined beasts which oppose one another. The exact beast is unknown - some think they could be hound / hunting dogs, whilst others prefer that they are deer. The bodies of each animal is enclosed within interlace in the 'Trehwiddle' form - this style of decoration helps date the design. The craftsmen who made the tags would have hand carved / chased the intricate design from the flat panel and then filled the grooves with niello. Niello is made of silver, lead and copper and when applied would have been a blue black colour. A thousand years in the Shropshire soil has removed most of this surface, but originally the design would have been one of contrasts between bright silver hound and a dull black coloured background.

The function of the hooks is also unclear; similar examples have been found with burials often being positioned around the knees / legs. This has led some specialists to believe that they were used on clothing - possibly as garter hooks to stop socks / trousers slipping. However, other evidence from coin hoards suggests that these hooks were used on satchels, purses, or leather bags to close them; this would explain why they are found in graves near the legs. The coin hoards also help to date their use - with the best example being found in a hoard of English coins discovered in the Forum in Rome which was dated to AD 945. Very few pairs of tags are known and of those recovered to date these are the most decoratively elaborate and well preserved.

Although we can marvel at the opulence and decorative skill of the people who made these very fine objects - we are at

a loss to say something about their original owner. We do know that they were of high status and that to find the two hooks within the same area suggests that they were lost together. Material from the early medieval period is very rare in Western Britain and Shropshire has very few finds of this date. We know that Whitchurch was an important Roman town (Mediolanum), being positioned between the major cities of Uriconium (Wroxeter) and Castrum (Chester). Although we have very few finds of Saxon date there is nothing to suggest that its regional importance at the heart of the Roman road network, doesn't continue into the Saxon and Medieval periods.

Our current lack of understanding of the period makes the discovery and reporting of these finds especially precious; the two detectorists who found the hooks have shed light on a very poorly understood part of our history. Hopefully as time goes by more material from this period will come to light and tell us about our ancestors.

**Peter Reavill**  
**Portable Antiquities Scheme – Shropshire and Herefordshire**

### **Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club**



*Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club visit to Daniels Mill, Bridgnorth*

The Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club, which is based at the Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust, is currently recruiting new members and volunteers. Over the past few years the club has been involved in some really interesting and rewarding activities including trips to Benthall Hall and Wroxeter Roman City and a visit from the conservator for the Staffordshire Hoard.

The club has recently started a recruitment drive for new member so, if you know of any potential members (aged 8 – 16) who are interested in learning about archaeology and history, and would like to have lots of fun in the process, please get in touch.

We are also looking for volunteer Branch Assistants, preferably with archaeology or education experience, to assist with planning and running the sessions. If you are interested, or if you know someone who might be, please get in touch for a chat.

Further information and contact details can be found at <http://www.yac-uk.org/clubs/ironbridge>

**Shane Kelleher.**

## The Stew, Frankwell, Shrewsbury

Last December the Planning Inspectorate issued its decision on the planning appeal for The Stew in Frankwell, rejecting a proposal to demolish the existing building and replace it with a new build, 42 bed, four star boutique spa hotel. The preceding planning inquiry sat for a total of fifteen days, in three separate sessions in April – May, July and September.

Located adjacent to the new Guidhall building (which has just re-opened as the new University Centre Shrewsbury), The Stew was used as an office and auction house by Holland and Broadbridge in the latter decades of the 20th century. An archaeological assessment of the Frankwell Quay area by Nigel Baker in 2000 established that behind a number of mid-20th century extensions, this building comprised an historic core consisting of the remains of an early 18th century house with attached industrial extensions that map evidence indicated were present by 1838.

The subsequent demolition of the mid-20th century extensions in the early 2000s, revealed the building as it stands today. Following further assessments by Richard K Morriss and others, this can now be clearly recognised to include a house range of five bays and two stories with full attic. This was built in mellow red handmade brick laid in Flemish Bond, with blocked window openings with heads of gauged red brick, stone quoins and string course below the first floor windows, beneath a plain tile roof with coped gables and roof lights indicating the position of former dormers. The architectural style of this range, which is comparable to a significant number of other buildings within the town centre, indicates that it is likely to date to the early 18th century.

The house was subsequently extended to three stories to its rear in the late 18th or early 19th century, possibly replacing an earlier stair range, and again to the south in the early 19th century, in both instances in mellow red handmade brick beneath slate roofs. Window openings in these extensions are regularly spaced in vertical and horizontal alignment, with two sets of taking doors to all three floors with lucams, providing the building with a strong industrial/ warehouse character.

The exact functions of the warehouse extensions was hotly disputed during the inquiry, but the Planning Inspector accepted Shropshire Council's evidence, together with that of Peter Napier on behalf of local residents and the Shrewsbury Civic Society, that, on the balance of probabilities, the impetus for their construction was provided by Shrewsbury's river trade, which peaked during the 1820s and early 1830s. As one of only two surviving buildings (the other being the adjacent Glen Maltings) that can be perceptibly linked to this trade, the Inspector agreed that The Stew is therefore of regional importance in its own right. As an exemplar of the development of Frankwell into an industrial, working class suburb in the later 18th and 19th centuries, the Inspector also found that the building makes a positive contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

The appeal decision set an important planning precedent, removing the threat of demolition for the foreseeable future. The challenge now, however, is to find a viable use that conserves this important historic building for the future.

**Andy Wigley**



*Northern and western elevations of 'The Stew' showing the early 18th century house range and the warehouse extensions*

Copy deadline for the Autumn 2016 Newsletter is Friday 22nd July 2016. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)

NB The Council is not responsible for any statement made, or opinion expressed in the *Newsletter* of the Society.



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 82, Autumn 2016

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**Tel:** 01743 246547 (evenings and weekends). **E:** [penelopeward205@btinternet.com](mailto:penelopeward205@btinternet.com)

## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM: The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the Society will be held on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2016 at 2.00pm. The AGM will be followed, at 2.30pm, by a talk on **Round barrow relationships: considering the role of round barrows in English landscapes from 1500BC-AD1086** by Anwen Cooper former prehistoric researcher on the English Landscapes and Identities project (EngLaID).

**Subscriptions and mailings:** Subscription rates remain at £19.00 for Ordinary Members and £20.00 for a family (two or more people at the same address). Institutional Membership is £20.00 and Overseas Membership £23.00. Please remember to update existing standing orders and fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form if you are a UK taxpayer. Meanwhile, postal charges continue to rise. If you do not already receive Society papers by email please consider doing so. The *Membership Secretary's* contact details are at the head of this *Newsletter*.

**Pagett and Betton Fund Grants:** The Society is pleased to have made a further grant from the Pagett Fund to assist the Shropshire Museums Service with its purchase of the Claverley Iron Age coin hoard. A grant has also been made from the Betton Fund towards the conservation of two early Minute Books of the old Borough of Wenlock. For further information regarding either of these funds please contact the Treasurer Dr Fran Bumpus, 9 Alexandra Avenue, Shrewsbury, SY3 9HT **E:** [f.b.bumpus@gmail.com](mailto:f.b.bumpus@gmail.com)

**Membership of Council:** We have been actively recruiting new members for the Council of the Society and hope to have several nominations in time for the 2016 AGM. In addition, the Secretary of the Society (George Baugh) would like to stand down from his post in 2017. The role is not onerous and, if any Society member would like to take on the task, please feel free to contact any Council member to discuss it.

**Christmas Social 10<sup>th</sup> December 2016:** This year's Christmas Social is being held at the headquarters of **The Shropshire Wildlife Trust** at 193 Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6AH. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to provide full details in this *Newsletter* or in the accompanying *Meetings Programme* but the event will start at 2.30pm on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December. There is plenty of public parking next to the SWT building. We will post full details on our website and will send out updated details to all members for whom we have email addresses as soon as possible and we will also ensure that the updated details are available at the AGM in September and at the October **Local History Day** and at our November talk. Anyone who has not been notified or cannot access the updated details by the beginning of December should contact either the *Newsletter Editor* or the *Membership Secretary* (contact details at the head of this *Newsletter*)

**Heritage Open Days 2016:** Heritage Open Days have been celebrated annually since 1994 and will run from Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> September – Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September in 2016. This year there are more events / activities / open days than ever taking place in Shropshire and further details of them all can be found at [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

## Shropshire Archives News July 2016

**New opening hours:** The changes to the opening hours from June are now well established, and readers are appreciating the additional access to the search room in the afternoons. We have only had a couple of Saturday openings since the changes, so it is difficult to see how well used the time is. We will review the Saturdays after a six month period towards the end of 2016. If you wish to see Saturday opening continue, please do make use of this facility.

**Madeley History Project:** Work on the Madeley section of the Telford Development Corporation photographs has now started. It is planned to catalogue and digitise over 1,000 images of Madeley and the surrounding area, as part of this Heritage Lottery funded project, which is led by Madeley Town Council. All the images will be available on the online catalogue once the work is completed.

**Shropshire Victoria County History:** Work on the Shropshire Victoria County History (VCH) has now restarted with the appointment of Judith Everard as a part time editor to work on the history of Wem. The very successful history day in Wem held on the 24 June attracted over 80 participants, and a great deal of support for VCH activity. A group of over 20 volunteers are also now engaged on various VCH related research projects

**Much Wenlock Borough Minute Books:** Much Wenlock Town Council has secured Heritage Lottery funding for us to work on the conservation, digitisation and transcription of the 2 earliest minute books for Much Wenlock, which date from 1495-1810. We are grateful for the financial support of the society with this project. Work on the conservation of the volumes has just started. Mary Beard, Professor of Classics at Cambridge University, who is originally from Much Wenlock, is supporting the project as its patron. We are currently recruiting a team of volunteers to support the cataloguing and transcription work from autumn 2016. If you are interested in taking part, please contact us at [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk).

### 2016-17 Events and Courses

Date	Description
8 September	2pm Behind the scenes tour @Shropshire Archives, Free booking required
9 September	2pm Behind the scenes tour @Shropshire Archives, Free booking required
13 September	Course – Palaeography How to read old writing with Helen Haynes– Tuesdays 2-4pm for 6 weeks cost £45
17 September	2pm -6pm Launch of Shropshire Place Names exhibition @Shropshire Archives £5, booking required
15 October	10.30am-4pm Shropshire History Day Shirehall. Shrewsbury talks, stalls, displays, dancing, Free
29 October	2pm Victoria County History Annual Lecture, Gareth Williams, Capability Brown The Guildhall Shrewsbury £5 booking required
1 November	Course – Tracing the history of your house with Liz Young– Tuesdays 2-4pm for 6 weeks cost £45
19 November	10.30am Friends Annual Lecture Andrew Pattison 'William Hazledine, Ironmaster Extraordinary', £5 booking advised
28 February	Course – Latin for local and family historians with Helen Haynes– Tuesdays 2-4pm for 6 weeks cost £45

Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury SY1 2AQ

Contact tel 0345 678 9096

Email [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk) [www.shropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.shropshirearchives.org.uk)

**Mary McKenzie**

## A busy summer enjoyed by the Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club

The Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club (YAC) members have been getting their hands dirty at two of the region's finest house and gardens this summer. As part of the Festival of Archaeology the group collaborated with the Marches YAC branch to undertake an excavation at Dudmaston Hall near Bridgnorth. The young diggers worked on revealing an old pathway which led up to the Brewhouse Courtyard. In addition the group also dug at Weston Park as part of the Capability Brown 300 anniversary celebrations where they helped to excavate the floor surface of Pendrill's Cave, a grotto which, according to legend provided a home for a hermit called Pendrill.

If you know anyone who may be interested in joining the club or would like to help out please get in touch. Further information and contact details can be found at:

[www.yac-uk.org/clubs/ironbridge](http://www.yac-uk.org/clubs/ironbridge).

**Shane Kelleher**

*(Museum Archaeologist, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust)*



*A member of the Ironbridge YAC recording a gravestone at Holy Trinity Church, Coalbrookdale*

## A letter from Wroxeter

It isn't often that Wroxeter makes it into the Editorial pages of a major national newspaper, but last month a mention of the city in the *Guardian's* editorial alerted me to a fleeting reference to Wroxeter in the cache of letters recently published from London.<sup>1</sup>

Contemporary written references to Wroxeter are exceedingly rare – this is only the second. The first, also on a tablet, was found at Vindolanda, at the opposite end of the province of *Britannia*.

That reference appears to be to a detachment from the garrison at Vindolanda on secondment to Wroxeter sometime between ca. AD 85-95<sup>2</sup>. The new reference offers a name for a resident at Wroxeter: Intervinaris.

The text is written on the back of a conventional but incomplete stylus tablet, a flat piece of silver fir with a recessed panel on one side that originally held wax. The writing is on the other, i.e. outer, side, giving us the addressee and addresser, all written in capitals. The surviving text reads:

1        nori Gessi-  
          ni f[il]io Interui-  
          [n]aris  
          scripsit  
5        ?Vir[oc]oni

... to [...]nor, son of Gessinus; Intervinaris wrote (this) at *?Viroconium*

(transcription and translation by Roger Tomlin)<sup>3</sup>.

In his commentary on the text, Roger Tomlin notes that the name Intervinaris is otherwise unattested, as is the patronymic *Gessinus*. The incomplete name of the recipient has a Greek ending –nor. The placename itself is not as clearly legible as it might be and may be misspelled, a function perhaps of the fact that when writing the address, Intervinaris had to space his words either side of the binding strip keeping the tablets closed. The tablet was found in levels dated to sometime between AD65-80.

Little can be added to this analysis, but it is worth briefly discussing the nature of Roman writing tablets since the two references represent two very different types of text. The Vindolanda tablet was written on a letter made of inner bark, the equivalent of Roman notepaper, and represents a typical piece of ephemera written by the Roman army – a list of where members of the garrison were located at any given time.

These notes were then perhaps written up in a more formal manner to be kept as a record, the simple note then being discarded. The London example is the more familiar wax-filled tablet that we normally think of when discussing Roman writing tablets.

The function of these was more formal in that they were used for record keeping, for instance when buying or

selling something, or for a legal document. The tablet was of at least two leaves so that the text was enclosed within, bound and sealed using a signet ring or some such device to avoid any tampering with the text. In the case of this tablet, we have no idea what the text referred to as sadly it did not survive. Despite this, it does represent probably our earliest reference to the existence of Wroxeter, at a time when it was still a legionary base.

**Roger White**  
(*University of Birmingham*)

<sup>1</sup> 'Postcards from the edge of the Roman Empire decoded' *Guardian* 4/6/16; Tomlin, R.S.O. (2016) *Roman London's First Voices. Writing tablets from the Bloomberg excavations, 2010-14.* Museum of London Archaeology Monograph 72.

<sup>2</sup> *Tab. Vindol.* 858; Bowman, A.K. Thomas, J.D. Tomlin, R.S.O. (2010)

'The Vindolanda Writing tablets (*Tabulae Vindolandenses*) IV, Part 1' *Britannia* **41**, 187-224.

<sup>3</sup> <WT23> Tomlin 2016, 104-5.

## Audit of the 1972-3 excavation archive, Redhill, Shropshire

An audit (supported by funding from English Heritage) was undertaken of the archaeological archive resulting from rescue excavations undertaken by David Browne at the fort at Redhill in 1972-3, for which an interim report had been published in 2004 (Browne and Boon 2002).

This was particularly prompted by more recent, development-led, commercial excavation in 2011-13 in the same general area as the earlier fieldwork and was particularly carried out to enhance the context for reporting on the later excavation.

The audit surveys the scope, quantity and quality of the 1972-3 site archive, and the extent of progress towards its final publication.

This work will also ensure that the archive is in a good state for transfer to Shropshire Museums.

The significance of this archive with respect to early Roman military activity in Shropshire was conclusively confirmed.

The full report is to be made available online through OASIS.

### References:

Browne, D M and Boon, G C (2002) 'Excavations at Redhill, Lilleshall, Shropshire: an interim report *TSAHS* **77** 1-9  
Hurst, D, Evans, J and Mann, A (2015) *Audit of the 1972-3 excavation archive Redhill, Shropshire. (Worcestershire Archaeology: unpublished report 2202).*

**Derek Hurst, Jane Evans, Andrew Mann and Robert Hedge**  
(*Worcestershire Archaeology and Archive Service*)

## Forty Years Hence – the future of Shropshire's Historic Environment Record (HER)

This short note follows on from a piece in last newsletter by Penny Ward which celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Historic Environment Record. Penny explored the development of the record from 1976 onwards, through the substantial contribution large and small projects made to our collections, the digitisation of the record and ongoing work on ensuring all records were up to a good standard. I wanted to take the opportunity here to highlight some projects that the HER has been working on recently, often behind the scenes, as well as emphasising the role of volunteers in the compilation of our records. The key message is that the record continues to develop apace, and continues to welcome contributions from as wide a range of interested parties as possible.

Our focus on a day to day basis is the results of fieldwork carried out as part of the planning process. This includes ensuring that we have to date information on all investigations relating to the archaeology and historic buildings of the county. Much of this work is unpublished, but our library, available by consultation at Shirehall, includes a wide array of fieldwork reports (from watching briefs, archaeological evaluations, excavations etc.), surveys, photographic records and desk-based appraisals.

National and local projects undertaken over the course of the last few years have also significantly enhanced our records, and our focus remains on making the results of these accessible to all researchers. The Historic Farmstead Characterisation Project, for instance, mapped and described the locations and characteristics of all historic farmsteads across Shropshire based on Ordnance Survey 2nd edition maps of c.1900, published after the final significant period of development of traditional farmsteads and the general use of vernacular materials. Modern maps were then used to identify the rates of survival to the present day. The results of this project – which mapped over 6000 farmsteads - forms an integral part of the HER collections.

A particular project that may interest readers is the Shropshire Council Aerial Survey Project. Undertaken in several stages from 2008, with funding from English Heritage/Historic England, the project has sought to reinvigorate aerial survey in the county. It has photographed many previously identified sites, as well as recording additional detail of previously known sites. The project has included survey of a wide range of 'targets', representing good geographic coverage of the county - including photography of cropmarks, earthworks, buildings and structures. The full results have been integrated with the Historic Environment Record, and the full size digital images are available for consultation at Shirehall. A large number of these images have also been made available on the Discovering Shropshire's History website. I have reproduced a number of sample images on the following page – they clearly show the benefits of survey at different times of the year and in different conditions!

From 1976, the HER has relied heavily on voluntary help and this tradition continues to this day. Our volunteers have recently been involved in a wide range of both field and office-based projects. Particular successes include work on the war memorials of the county (which are currently the subject of a programme of designated by Historic England), identifying non-conformist chapels from the desk and in the field, and a number of projects enhancing the way we have recorded street furniture, toll houses, workhouses, and enhancing our building records with dating information.

The Historic Environment Record will never be complete! Whilst we work hard to ensure that our records of the varied historic environment of the county are as complete as they can be, we rely on new contributions representing a wide range of research topics. If you feel you have something to contribute, please contact us to find out more. We are also always looking for new volunteers so again, please do not hesitate to contact us if you feel you may be able to help.

Finally, I would like to note a huge vote of thanks to Penny Ward, who was responsible for the HER for over 30 years. Penny retired in June 2016 and all from the Historic Environment Team at Shropshire Council wish her a happy retirement! Anyone who has had the pleasure to work with Penny will know her dedication – I know how much a debt the HER owes to her, and how much she has given to the archaeology and historic environment of the county. Penny and I will be doing a joint presentation on the HER on Discover Shropshire Day on Saturday 15th October to celebrate our 40 year anniversary. We hope to see as many of our contributors and volunteers as possible as well as those who would like to contribute to our collections – please come and speak to us on the day.

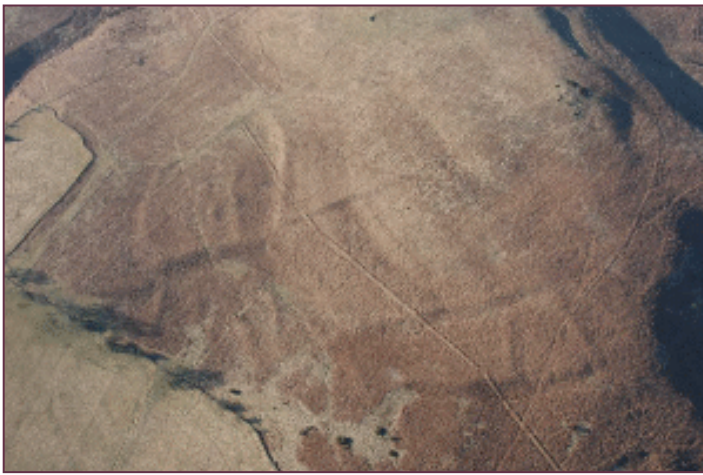
Giles Carey, Historic Environment Records Officer. 01743 254619 her@shropshire.gov.uk

**A very small sample of aerial photographs from the Shropshire Council Aerial Photographic Project 2008-2015 – please contact us to see the originals.**

**All images © Shropshire Council**



*Three possible previously unrecorded Bronze Age barrows on Edenhope Hill in the Clun Forest, photographed in snow on 6 January 2009 (Flight 09\_SA\_01).*



Particularly favourable light conditions on 8 March 2010 enabled the multi-period field systems on Hope Bowdler Hill near Church Stretton to be recorded in unprecedented detail (Flight 10\_SA\_05).



Characteristic corner and entrance of the rarely photographed Roman marching camp at Cound Hall, on the southern bank of the River Severn south-east of Shrewsbury, photographed on 5 July 2010 (Flight 10\_SA\_08).



A previously unrecorded double ditched rectangular enclosure at Easthope on Wenlock Edge, photographed on 14 July 2011 (Flight 11\_SA\_03).

## Notes from the desk of the PAS

*Tempus Fugit* and the summer's here. I'm not quite sure where all the time goes between these newsletters, as always I'm running late with lots of exciting finds coming into the office. I am writing this on the train after a prompt from the Newsletter editor! The train is meandering through the Shropshire countryside; looking out of the window and seeing our rich countryside beneath the drowsy summer fields of hay and corn I realise how lucky we all are. There have been some changes since my last update – my excellent intern Victoria has moved on and now is the part-time FLO for Staffordshire. As usual there have been a handful of important new finds but I suppose what I am most impressed with is the number of everyday 'ordinary' objects being reported. It is these 'boring' finds that are *just another* medieval buckle, broken piece of pot, or small flint scraper which are adding to our knowledge of the county, filling in the gaps between known sites and telling us about the everyday folk of Shropshire's past.

Anyway, here are some of the 'best' most exciting finds that have been reported recently, in compiling these I notice a distinct prehistoric and Roman bias which I will attempt to rectify in the next newsletter (if I remember :-))

As always you can see more of our work and finds on our online national database [www.finds.org.uk/database](http://www.finds.org.uk/database)

Later Iron Age Fob or Dangler from Loppington, North Shropshire (LVPL-78F55A)



This is the second fob that I have brought to your attention and it is equally impressive. It is pyramidal in form with a triangular frame, openwork decoration and a suspension loop. Within the centre of the frame is an integral triskele motif which at its centre is a raised circular boss. At each corner of the frame is a further smaller decorative boss although two are incomplete due to damage from within the plough soil. The pierced suspension loop is integrally cast and projects from the rear. The fob has a glossy dark green patina. Triangular fob/danglers are unusual and this is the only recorded example on the PAS database within a triangular border. No exact parallel is yet known; however, it fits into the general openwork-triskele type which is normally set in a circular or triple-armed arrangement. Fobs or danglers remain a poorly understood artefact type, and may have been hung from items of equipment, personal apparel or harness decoration

A fragment of late Iron Age scabbard chape from Shifnal, East Shropshire (WMID-F8516E)



Evidence for Iron Age swords in Shropshire are rare and this example is an important addition to the archaeology of the county - originally this chape was U shaped but it is now incomplete due to old and patinated breaks. The external edge is decorated with a series of shallow incised 'celtic' scrolls and circles, a small oval depression probably held an enamel or glass inset and the design would have echoed that on the lost element. These types of chapes come from narrow bladed swords in the La Tene style and dating from the 2nd century BC to the early part of the 1st century AD.

A late Iron Age / early Roman Bull's head bucket mount from the Corvedale, South Shropshire (HESH-B5A00D)



The style of this example is more likely to be early Roman in date and be attributed to a long lived 'celtic' or 'native' Iron Age trend. The mount is an irregular triangular shape in plan, the sides are faceted and the rear face is concave with an irregular cell shaped depression. The front face of the mount (bull) is decorated with integrally cast horns situated at the widest point of the head. Beyond the horns, are two projecting ears whilst below the ears the sides of the mount taper to form a long rather slender nose. The base of the snout is lost through an old and patinated break. The form of the head is distinctly geometric in shape, comprising two faceted tapering side panels which could represent stylised eyes; at the centre of the forehead is a triangular shaped panel which is pierced and the remains of an iron rivet is present. This pin helped fix the mount to the sidewall of a vessel /

tankard / cauldron / bucket. A direct parallel for this mount has not been found. However, Angie Bolton (FLO for Worcestershire and Warwickshire) has compiled a national corpus of this object type and suggests that it is best paralleled against an example from Nantwich, Cheshire which was discovered on a Roman salt production site in a deposit dating to the 2nd or early 3rd century AD.

An early Roman 'military' harness pendant from Much Wenlock (LVPL-6E70B4)



This relatively unassuming crescent shaped artefact is indicative of the militarisation of Shropshire in the years following the Roman conquest (AD 80 - 250). The pendant is lunate or crescentic in shape with an incomplete suspension loop set perpendicular to the frame. These pendants are associated with the Roman military and may have adorned a horse harness or a soldier's apron. Similar examples have been found within the barrack block at Caerleon. These parallels have been dated from around the mid second to the first half of the third century. Although often identified as harness pendants academics in recent years have also suggested that they were used as decorative amulets on military aprons

A late Roman 'Crossbow' Brooch from Woore, East Shropshire: WMID-DDA2BD.



This stunningly well preserved brooch is exceptionally rare in Shropshire being the first of its type recorded by the PAS from the county. The brooch is broadly 'P'-shaped in profile and 'T' shaped in plan, with large robust knobs of the head of the bow and on either ends of the crossbar. The knob at the head of the bow is onion shaped with a protruding rounded projection at the top. It is possibly that the onion shaped knobs at either end of the crossbow also had these projections which were subsequently damaged and are now missing. The lower bow splays towards the foot and is triangular in plan. At the rear of the lower bow there is a slot which would have once held the pin in place. The brooch is decorated with incised ring and

dots as well as moulded cast collars. A similar developed crossbow brooch with chevron chip carving on the lower sides of the bow was discovered in legionary fortress of Richborough, Kent. This form of brooch is dated to the mid - late 4th century and is often associated with deposits within military sites or graves. Very few of these have been recovered within the West Midlands and evidence for 4th century activity in Shropshire apart from within the Wroxeter hinterland and along the Roman road network is exceptionally scarce.

A silver penny of Offa of Mercia from Worfield, East Shropshire (DENO-2150DA)

Early medieval / Saxon coins are extremely rare in Shropshire and so this iconic silver penny of Offa of Mercia is an important addition to our counties



history. The coin comes from Offa's light coinage, lozenge obverse, from an uncertain mint, and struck by the moneyer Alhmund c. AD 765-792. The obverse depicts embellished flueretty style cross with a lozenge at the centre with the king's name

O F A R in the angles between the arms. The reverse has the moneyer's name in two lines ALHMUND with a cross above.

**Peter Reavill**  
*(Finds Liaison Officer for Shropshire and Herefordshire)*

## Wem History Day

With funding now in place and two new researchers appointed (Dr. Judith Everard and Wendy Horton), The Victoria County History (VCH) of Shropshire held its first public event since its re-launch in Shrewsbury in October last year. The Wem History Day, organised in conjunction with the Friends of Shropshire Archives was held at Wem Town Hall on Sunday 26th June and included a series of talks, and displays and guided tours of the town organised by Wem Civic Society.

Richard W. Hoyle, Professor of Regional and Local History at the University of London spoke on 'The Victoria County History in Shropshire - Why Wem?' He outlined the current work being undertaken by the VCH nationally and its activities as a predominantly volunteer movement. More specifically he discussed aspects of Wem's history that lay behind its selection as the first publication of the new VCH Shropshire project, for instance the survival of a 1561 survey and 1631 map, the discovery of the papers of Samuel Garbet, as well local debate surrounding the granting of the town's market charter. This was followed by Dr. James Bowen, Postdoctoral Research Associate at the University of Liverpool who having undertaken a preliminary analysis of a series of historic maps of the town using Geographical Information Systems (GIS)

compared the landscape and townscape of Wem in 1631 and the 18-19th centuries. He tentatively suggested the different stages in the town's development, discussed themes which will feature in the forthcoming 'Short' and identified parallels with many of north Shropshire's other small market towns, for example the occurrence of urban fires and their traditional marketing function.

After lunch a series of walking tours arranged by Wem Civic Society explored the history of Wem's pubs and breweries, the High Street and the Church. Finally, Dr. Jonathan Worton who completed a PhD at the University of Chester gave the final lecture titled 'The Women of Wem and a few Musketeers: The Civil War battle for Wem of October 1643', describing the course of events during this turbulent period. He also spoke about his latest book, To Settle The Crown - Waging Civil War in Shropshire, 1642-1648 published by Helion & Company in their Century of the Soldier series.

Commenting on the study day, Professor Richard W. Hoyle said: 'The event was a fascinating day for us all. Wem is steeped in history and the programme offered a unique opportunity to learn more about the past life of the town, its people and its buildings. We have chosen Wem for our first VCH publication because its history is reasonably well documented from the later sixteenth century onwards. It has good records including the recently rediscovered papers of the eighteenth-century vicar, schoolmaster and topographer Samuel Garbet (1685-1756), whose History of Wem was published in 1818. Even though our work is only just beginning, we already have some important discoveries to announce which deepens our knowledge of this fascinating town.'

The event had wide public appeal with 90 people in attendance including family and local historians, volunteers with the new project as well as residents of the town. Work has now begun on researching content for a VCH Short on Wem. It is scheduled for publication in the spring of 2017 when a further event will be held in the town. This will be the first parish history in Shropshire to be published by the new VCH Shropshire project. It is intended that this single parish volume will establish a model for the histories of other market towns in north Shropshire and future publications are planned. Interviews given to BBC Radio Shropshire by Professor Richard W. Hoyle and Shelagh Richardson, Chair of Wem Civic Society (broadcast 28<sup>th</sup> June 2016) are available as a podcast on the VCH Shropshire website.

The project has roles for many more supporters as volunteers, researchers and fundraisers. For more information about the project please contact: VCH Shropshire c/o Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 2AQ.

Email: [info@victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk](mailto:info@victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk)

Follow the project on Twitter: @VCH\_Shropshire

Website:

<http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/shropshire>

## The Story of Bishop's Castle

The South-West Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society (SWSHAS), in partnership with Bishop's Castle Heritage Forum and Heritage Resource Centre is preparing to publish a new book – The Story of Bishop's Castle.

This aims to be a wide-ranging but accessible history. Fourteen authors with local historical interests have contributed fourteen chapters which present a chronological narrative of the town and its surrounding area. The chapters include the geological, prehistoric and Anglo-Saxon background, the building of the castle, the planted town and its medieval history, Elizabeth I's Charter of Incorporation, the Civil War, Bishop's Castle as an infamous rotten/pocket borough, Church and Chapel, caring for the people – Health and Education, Road Communications and the life and death of the Bishop's Castle Railway, the town as a market centre and its growth into the present lively community including recorded memories of local people.

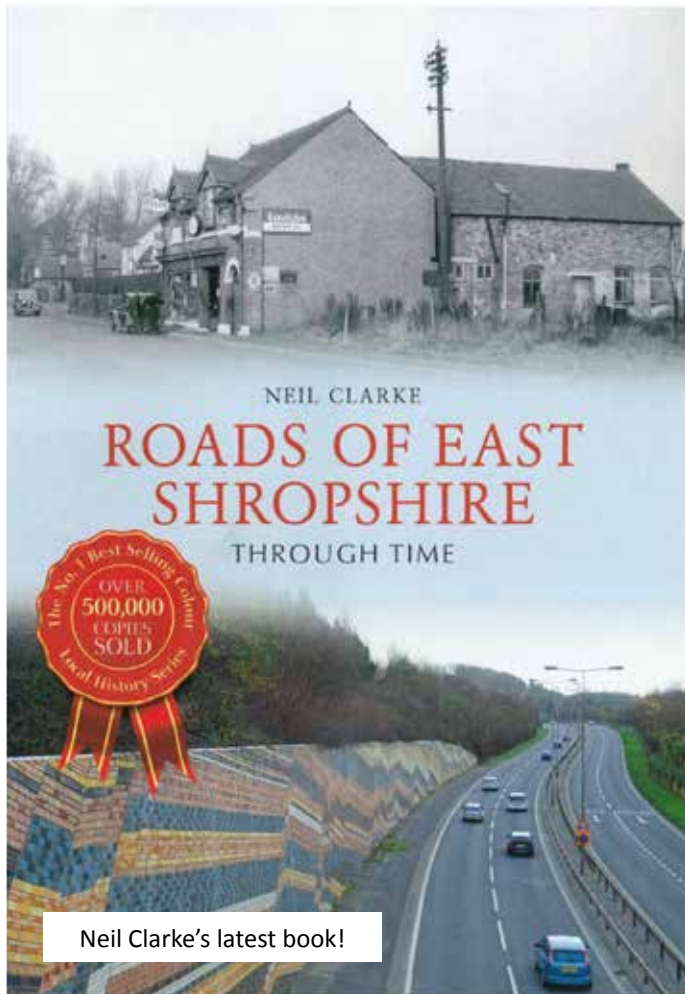
The book, which will be the first full-length history of Bishop's Castle, will be published by Logaston Press and should be launched in October/November. It will be generously illustrated and will, we hope, offer a clear and readable account of the origins, development and life of a remarkable little town.



Church Street, Bishop's Castle in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (M. Strawston)



Bishop's Castle from the south-west



**2pm-5pm**  
**29 October 2016**

**University Centre**  
**Shrewsbury**  
**The Guildhall**

**VCH Shropshire: Annual Lecture**

*Lancelot Capability Brown - A Tercentenary Consideration of Britain's Greatest Landscape Gardener and His Shropshire Connections*

2016 marks the tercentenary of the birth of Britain's greatest landscape gardener, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown. While Shropshire has no Chatsworth or Burghley, Brown enjoyed links with several influential Shropshire residents and assisted with bringing to the fore the 'capabilities' of a good few acres within the county boundary. His legacy and his influence will be considered in this illustrated lecture where Gareth Williams (Gareth J. L. Williams MA, Curator & Head of Learning to the Weston Park Foundation) assesses his impact on Shropshire and national history.

Please register via: <http://www.eventbrite.com/e/vch-shropshire-annual-lecture-tickets-25928863930>. A donation of £5 for this event would be gratefully received.

- The venue will be open from 1.30pm, with Meeting to begin at 2.00pm. Tea will then be served.
- Lecture to commence at 3.00pm and expected to finish by 5.00pm.
- Parking will be available in The Guildhall Car Park.
- For more information see: [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/shropshire](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/shropshire) or follow us on Twitter @VCH\_Shropshire.

INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH  
University of London  
School of Advanced Study

Copy deadline for the Spring 2017 Newsletter is Friday 24th February 2017. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)

NB The Council is not responsible for any statement made, or opinion expressed in the *Newsletter* of the Society.



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 83, Spring 2017

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**Subscriptions:** Subscription rates remain at £19.00 for Ordinary Members and £20.00 for a family (two or more people at the same address). Institutional Membership is £20.00 and Overseas Membership £23.00. Please remember to update existing standing orders and fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form if you are a UK taxpayer.

**Council of the Society:** We are pleased to record that our request for new Council members has been successful and we have now been joined by Sheila Black and Rosemary Thornes while Gavin Watson has agreed to be co-opted at our next meeting. We are still looking for a new Secretary to replace George Baugh who, after long and dedicated service, hopes to retire at the 2017 AGM.

## Shropshire Archives

### Purchase of Lacon Childe of Kinlet deeds and documents

As a result of financial support from the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society and Shropshire Family History Society, Shropshire Archives has purchased an important collection of Shropshire deeds and documents relating to the Lacon Childe family of Kinlet.

This collection of over 100 deeds, legal documents and correspondence dates from the 16th to the 19th century. It includes material on the parishes of Kinlet, Cleobury Mortimer and surrounding areas.

The Lacon family held Kinlet from the 16th century and remained Catholics following the reformation, though they were prepared to compromise in order to hold a variety of public offices. One of the deeds records the sale of the town and manor of Cleobury Mortimer by Bonham Norton (1565-1635), of Church Stretton, printer to King James, to Sir Francis Lacon of Kinlet in 1626. Sir Francis was MP for Bridgnorth in 1610 and Sheriff of Shropshire in 1611-12.

Anyone who would be interested in taking on the post should contact our Chairman Dr Martin Speight at [mandmsp8@btinternet.com](mailto:mandmsp8@btinternet.com) (or get in touch with the *Newsletter* editor).

**Pagett and Betton Funds:** The Society is pleased to have made a grant to Shropshire Archives to assist with the purchase of an important collection of documents relating to the Lacon Childe family of Kinlet (see below). For further information about the Pagett and Betton funds please contact the Treasurer Dr Fran Bumpus, 9 Alexandra Avenue, Shrewsbury, SY3 9HT **E:** [f.b.bumpus@gmail.com](mailto:f.b.bumpus@gmail.com)

The marriage of Ann Lacon, Sir Francis' granddaughter, to Sir William Childe, a master in Chancery, in 1640, brought the Childe family to Shropshire. Their grandson William Lacon Childe was also MP for the county of Salop in the 1720s and 30s. A selection of his correspondence, mainly about legal matters, survives in the collection. The Childe family remained at Kinlet Hall until the 20th century.

Also amongst the deeds is one dated 1565 signed by Sir William Cecil (1520-1598) in his role of Master of the Court of Wards and Liveries. The court managed the estates of orphaned heirs until they reached full age. In this case the estate is held on behalf of George Pygott of Kinlet.

The collection complements the existing holdings relating to the Lacon and Childe families held by Shropshire Archives in a number of different collections.

**Mary McKenzie**  
**Team Leader, Shropshire Archives**  
**January 2017**

## Shropshire Archives News February 2017

### Archives accreditation

The big news for Shropshire Archives is that we have been awarded Archive Accreditation by the National Archives. Archive Accreditation is the new UK quality standard for archives. By achieving accredited status we have demonstrated that Shropshire Archives has met clearly defined national standards relating to management and resourcing; the care of its collections and what we offer all our customers and users. It also means that we can continue to act as a place approved for the deposit of public records, and can continue to house government records such as records of magistrate's courts, hospitals and other state bodies.

The Accreditation Panel which made the award said they:

*"also extended congratulations to the Archives' team on continuing to deliver such a positive service in challenging circumstances and in balancing a range of ways of accessing the collections, beyond the traditional searchroom."*

A celebration event was held on Monday 6 February attended by over 50 people.

### Saturday Opening

Following the changes to the opening hours introduced in June 2016, Shropshire Archives has been open on the first Saturday of the month from 10am – 4pm. Having reviewed the usage of the service, which has been steady, we have decided to extend the Saturday opening until March 2017. We will then review the hours for the year 2017-2018. Please do continue to use us on Saturdays, if you wish to see this service continue.

### Much Wenlock Borough Minute books

Volunteers are now working on the transcription and cataloguing of the Much Wenlock Borough minute books, dating from 1495-1810. This information will ultimately be available as part of the online catalogue. Work on the conservation of the text of the volumes is complete, and the volumes will now be rebound in an appropriate binding. This project is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and led by Much Wenlock Town Council.

### New Shropshire Archives website

We are working with our IT partners, Shrewsbury based Orangeleaf systems, to redevelop our website including a much improved online catalogue, with many more document images, easier online payments, and advance ordering. We hope this will make your visits to Shropshire Archives much more efficient, but also ask for your patience while we become accustomed to the new system. The website has been soft launched and can be found at <http://beta.shropshirearchives.org.uk/>. Please give us your comments and feedback on the site.

### 2017 Events

Date	Description
25 March	10am-1pm 'Beggars can't be choosers', investigating the story of the poor and destitute in Shropshire, Shropshire Archives £5
14 June	AGM and visit to Lilleshall Hall, Friends of Shropshire Archives
30 September	Bishops Castle History Day, Friends of Shropshire Archives

Mary McKenzie

## Westward on the High-hilled Plains ... to a Clash of Cultures

Travelling anywhere around Shrewsbury today one is only too conscious of the scale of new house building in the town, while the raging debate over whether to build in the shadow of Old Oswestry hillfort reminds us that such developments can be contentious. Further afield, the HS2 project is about to get the go-ahead and will cut a broad swathe across the region. All such developments are subject to the rigours of the planning system, enforced by hard-pressed local authorities across the country. To make their decisions about whether works should go ahead, planning officials need up-to-date information and assessment of what needs to be investigated and why. In order to make such decisions, up-to-date assessment is required of research priorities, yet Shropshire, and the West Midlands in particular, are ill-served in the general texts books about archaeology in Britain. It is often seen as a peripheral area and is poorly characterised compared to other areas that, apparently, have richer potential archaeologically.

To cope with such issues, English Heritage (as it then was, now Historic England) launched an initiative early in this millennium to create a series of volumes for each region of England that would characterise the archaeology of each region by period, to summarise the existing evidence base and highlight the latest thinking about what research priorities there need to be. So far, two volumes have appeared – a synthesis of the whole region and all periods (*The Archaeology of the West Midlands*, edited by Sarah Watt, 2011) and *The Undiscovered Country. The Earlier Prehistory of the West Midlands*, edited by Paul Garwood, 2007. Now two more volumes can be added to the list to bring us up to the start of the middle ages. *Westward on the High-hilled Plains* edited by Derek Hurst covers the West Midlands in Later Prehistory and is out now while *Clash of Cultures? The Romano-British Period in the West Midlands* edited by Roger White and Mike Hodder will be out at the end of this year or the beginning of next. All volumes are attractively produced by Oxbow Books in full colour and are reasonably priced. They offer an authoritative summary of known evidence, but are aimed at a general as well as academic readership. To anyone who has an interest in the early history of the region, they are essential reading.

Roger White  
University of Birmingham

### The Place-Names of Shropshire: Part VII

The Hundred of Stottesdon and the Borough of Bridgnorth, should be published in spring 2017. Publication of Part VIII, the Hundred of Overs, the Lower Division of the Hundred of Munslow and the Borough of Ludlow, is planned for the latter part of 2017.

## Old Oswestry Hillfort volunteers help improve the monument

Volunteers organised by the HOOOH (Hands Off Old Oswestry Hillfort) community group recently took to the ramparts of the hillfort in a new initiative to support scrub maintenance as a collaborative effort with English Heritage. The scheduled monument is a guardianship site and English Heritage has undertaken various surveys to help formulate management plans over the past decade. These include an Earthworks Survey (Smith 2010), a Conservation Management Plan (Reid & Marriott 2010) and an Ecological Management Plan (Turnstone 2016).



'Hillfort Hug'

Despite these detailed studies and the implementation of a policy for grazing the ramparts, the previously clear outline of the banks and ditched defences have become covered in bracken and scrub growth over large areas, including the enigmatic depressions or pond features on either side of the western entrance, and so in 2016 HOOOH approached English Heritage to request a meeting so that a more local and immediate response to management problems could be initiated. The resultant agreement has led to seven volunteers helping with pro-active management tasks under the guidance of English Heritage and consultant Turnstone Ecology. The team worked alongside landscape contractor, SJL Landscaping, to clear overgrown vegetation in January and February, taking advantage of the very cold weather ahead of the migration and breeding season for newts after their winter hibernation. The programme has included removal of the tall scrub and other vegetation from the pits so that they are now visible again, and clearing the willow from around the ponds to improve the likelihood of water remaining all year round. A lot of the branches were chipped onsite and the larger logs were used to make hibernacula, warm, safe places for a large variety of small animals and invertebrates to inhabit. The volunteers also placed bracken in two of the smaller pits to try to discourage mountain bikers.

Further work is planned including removal of much of the invasive bracken, whilst retaining habitats for linnets and yellow-hammers, and without damaging the displays of bluebells and other species that thrive on the hillfort. Much of this work is needed not only for improving visibility and access, but also to protect below ground archaeological deposits from damaging root action.



Old Oswestry 'hillfort clean-up'. Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> January 2017

HOOOH also held the third seminar since 2013 and Hillfort Hug event over the Valentine's Day weekend to highlight the local community's interest in protecting the monument and its setting from urban expansion and inappropriate development. In addition the group is now leading a promotion for a northern Heritage Gateway to Oswestry which would incorporate the important historic landscapes of Brogyntyn Park, Old Oswestry, Oldport Farm, Cambrian Railways, Park Hall, and Whittington Iron Age Fort and medieval castle.

Anyone who would like to get involved in future volunteering on the hillfort should contact Mr Phillips on 07751 160576

Smith, N., 2010 Old Oswestry, Selattyn and Gobowen, Shropshire: Analysis of Earthworks Archaeological Survey Report *English Heritage Research Department Report Series No. 82-2010*

Reid, M. & Marriott, J., 2010. *Old Oswestry Hillfort Conservation Plan* (produced for English Heritage).

Turnstone Ecology Nov 2016 *Old Oswestry Hill Fort Ecological Management Plan TT1975* (produced for English Heritage)

**Tim Malim and Neil Phillips**

## Impressions of the Past

*Here they used no coin, but cattle, metal  
& a life in the sky god's upturned hand*

Impressions of the Past is a community arts project which during winter and spring of 2016-17 has been offering local people, schools and community groups a unique opportunity to discover, explore and celebrate Shropshire's Iron Age heritage.

Led by ceramicist Ruth Gibson and poet Jean Atkin, the project offers free workshops in clay and poetry about the Iron Age landscape, and focuses on local landmarks such as the impressive hillforts of Lower Camp at Pontesford Hill, Earl's Hill and Callow Hill.

Jean and Ruth are leading active, practical workshops which will take place both outdoors and under cover, inspiring everyone to respond to these remarkable places and their long human histories. Workshops will continue until early March 2017 and following these there will be a celebration event in April.

So far Impressions of the Past has worked with Year 5 and 6 from Minsterley Primary School on a very wintry day on the hills. The children made marks in clay with pine cones, tree bark and stones while they were up on the hill. Archaeologists Mike and Teri Green came dressed as Iron Age farmers, and showed the children artefacts and Iron Age designs. With Ruth, the children created their own designs for clay roundels, looking at Celtic patterns and Iron Age coins for inspiration, drawing into the clay to create roundels for glazing and firing.



*Clay roundels inspired by Celtic patterns*

They also wrote about the experience

*My leaf was rough and hard to tear off  
but a perfect, delicate pattern transferred.  
Out of nowhere Iron Age people  
popped from behind a tree,  
blue patterns on their faces.  
I punched my clay into the eye of an oak.*

There has also been a community walk up to the summit of Earl's Hill, which attracted over 20 people, who listened to Hugh Hannaford, Senior Archaeological Advisor at Shropshire Council, describing what can be seen, and Jean gathered lines from those attending to create a poem (an excerpt from which is under the title).



*Group visit to Earl's Hill Pontesbury, November 2016*

The project is also working with home educated families, further community groups and numerous other children through the Woodcraft Folk and the Guides.

Ruth is an award-winning ceramic artist and sculptor and has successfully completed a variety of public art commissions throughout Shropshire using carved brick, ceramics, stone and glass, often involving the community in many aspects of the design and construction process. She is experienced in delivering ceramic workshops to all ages and abilities, and in a variety of settings, and is a visiting lecturer at University of Wolverhampton. [www.ruthgibsonceramics.co.uk](http://www.ruthgibsonceramics.co.uk)

Jean is an experienced educator and project leader, working regularly with schools, day centres, nursing homes and community projects. She helps people of all ages to find their own words and enjoy the experience, and she frequently works out-of-doors. Jean is a published and prize-winning poet, and has also written a novel for children, 'The Crow House'. [www.jeanatkin.com](http://www.jeanatkin.com)

Both the clay and the poetry created during the project will eventually be displayed in installations on the hills.

Impressions of the Past is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund via the Stiperstones & Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme. The project is also supported by the Friends of Pontesford Hill, Shropshire Wildlife Trust and the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership

Contact: **Jean Atkin** [jean@wordsparks.co.uk](mailto:jean@wordsparks.co.uk)

Tel: 07504 649150

## The Isle Woollen Mill, Bicton

As reported several times in the local press, the former flax mill at Ditherington is undergoing restoration, mainly because of its significance in the history of such buildings. Already, a volunteer-run visitor centre has opened, explaining all this and the local history of textile manufacture, and is well worth a visit.

During the late 18<sup>th</sup> century considerable progress was being made in the mechanisation of textile production, leading to the development of the 'factory system' as a replacement for 'domestic' production. The necessary power was initially supplied by water, hence the term 'mill', which was even applied to factories driven by steam engines, which could be sited almost anywhere with good transport links supplying coal.

Shrewsbury already had a long tradition of textile trading, particularly woollen 'flannel' from Wales, so that local merchants were eager to seize the new opportunities which the factory system provided. The flax spinning mill was thereby built in partnership with a Leeds company on the new canal, just north of the town.

While all this was going on, in 1797, Arthur Aitkin, reporting on his tour of North Wales, remarked that "the greatest undertaking he considered to be the mill erected by Cook and Mason at the Isle...where a tunnel conveyed water to a wheel which provided power for spinning and fulling" (Trinder, *Industrial Archaeology of Shropshire* (1996) 138).

Clearly there is a local 'Bicton' story here which has tended to be overlooked, perhaps because so little is surviving at the site today.

The mill was obviously exploiting the difference in water levels across this narrow neck of land left by the two mile loop of the river around the Isle (as discussed in *Bicton Village News* in January 2008). Historically the estates of Up Rossall (The Isle), Down Rossall and Rossall Heath all met here (as discussed in *Bicton Village News* in October 2008 and June 2011).

The actual plot upon which the mill was to be erected first appears ca. 1777 as a single detached field of the Bicton Grove Estate, then owned by Thomas Wright and called 'the Grove at Rossall Lane End', a term later continued by the Ordnance survey (SA D3651/B/17/2/38).

At some stage, perhaps soon after this date, Richard Jenkins (Sen.) of Bicton Hall acquired this six-acre field, which he called the 'Isle Yard' along with the neighbouring farm in Rossall. In 1792, he leased it to Shrewsbury draper Samuel Cook, who, at the same time, reached agreement with the other landowners sharing the adjacent heath allowing a tunnel under that land to serve a mill to be built here (SA 2495/box 24). It surely cannot be a coincidence that one of them, Folliot Sandford, then employed miners to dig another tunnel in order to drain his pool at the Isle (SA 465/399-400). It was to remain dry for many years until his successor allowed it to partly fill up again (*Bicton Village News*, February 2011).

From, now on the progress of the enterprise was recorded by various agreements involving new partners providing either technical or financial support, hence the appearance of Mason in Aitkin's report. Thomas Holt, a Liverpool merchant, also acquired an interest which, at his death in 1802, passed

to his brother John, a glass manufacturer from Wordsley near Kingswinford, and to his sons, Edward and Thomas. Then in 1821, when both John Holt and Edward had died, the administration of the



business passed to Thomas, who decided to close it down. Perhaps the economic climate after those boom years of the Napoleonic Wars was now less favourable.

Jonathan Perry, auctioneer of Shrewsbury, was thus engaged to dispose of it, first by selling its machinery and then seeking a buyer for the remainder of the lease of the premises including the remaining corn mill. The auction was duly carried out in 1824 with details listed in *Eddow's Salopian Journal*.

However, Jonathan failed to find anyone to take on the corn mill lease so he was obliged to take it on himself, while continuing the search. Fortunately for him, Richard Jenkins returned from India in 1827 and now involved himself with the management of his estates, including taking back his father's lease and compensating Jonathan for any extra expenses. At the same time agreements were drawn up between the local landowners for the inclosure of Rossall Heath, in which Richard Jenkins was granted access to that part of the tunnel running under land allotted to the Sandford estate. Then, after the inclosure in 1830, further agreements rationalised the once irregular eastern side of the heath, giving the pattern of straight hedges and access road we see today (SA 465/392-415).

In 1841, the census recorded John Davies 'malster' and family here. Then the Rossall Tithe Map of 1843 clearly shows the mill as part of the farm owned by Richard Jenkins and let to Richard Kilton, but there is no mention of an additional tenant actually working the mill.

Around 1850, a whole sequence of changes in land ownership took place leading to the disappearance of the mill altogether: *Bagshaw's Directory* of 1851 provides the last reference to a mill and miller, Robert Williams, by which time Humphrey Sandford of the Isle had already taken over his part of the tunnel. At some stage, Richard Jenkins, now in London, sold his Rossall estate to Henry Wentworth Fielding, who already owned the rest of Rossall, and who could then sell the whole lot to John Harley of Shrewsbury (SA 3651. Temp bnd1 5). A map, prepared at this sale, actually shows the line of the tunnel and the mill, but by 1884 the Ordnance Survey shows only the dwelling house remaining.

Meanwhile a row of six cottages down Isle Lane, which had been originally built for the factory workers, had been redeveloped into the Isle Cottages.

**David Pannett**

## More news from the Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club

The Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club was established in 2013 and it is one of the 70 Young Archaeologists' Club Branches distributed throughout the UK.

Our branch is led by professional archaeologists, from the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and the National Trust. In addition to this, we are lucky to have the valid support of volunteer assistants and we have recently appointed our very first two junior assistants who have just turned 17 years old. Our leaders and assistants generously give up their free time to help young people (aged between 8 and 16) get inspired by archaeology and find out more about their local heritage.



*Discovering Shrewsbury*

Our leaders say about the branch:

'We are very proud of our Branch here at Ironbridge. Archaeology has played such an important role in the museum's work over the years. It is well known that Ironbridge is the Birthplace of the Industrial Revolution; however it is also the birthplace of Industrial Archaeology as a discipline. We hope to inspire a new generation of archaeologists who will learn to appreciate and value the importance of our interesting and diverse heritage, whilst having lots of fun in the process'

We run a mammoth range of different activities designed and planned to help our young archaeologists learn and appreciate the value of our past and the local/national historic environment. Through archaeology children enhance their understanding and appreciation of key values such as communication, respect, discipline and the importance of working as a team. This is all happening while having fun practicing different archaeological techniques such as excavation, surveying, recording and processing archaeological finds. Last summer we contributed to two small archaeological evaluations, one at Weston Park at the site of Penderel's Cave, and the other at Dudmaston Estate, which investigated the location of a former garden footpath.

Luke, 17, is one of our senior young archaeologists and he will shortly become a branch assistant. Luke aspires to become an archaeologist when he is older and we asked him to share with us his thoughts about the Ironbridge Young Archaeologists Club: "Since I have joined YAC, I have learnt a lot of new things; whether it's archaeological

techniques or building up my self-confidence around others. This includes meeting a diverse range of people at these sessions who I have become friends with and have helped me, as well as me helping them to learn, whilst having a lot of fun!

The inspiration for me to become a junior assistant is that I have only been with YAC coming up a year now, and despite

me having learnt a lot at these sessions, I know that I can continue to learn if I stay on here. I can gain a lot of experience and am able to get a sense of professional working atmosphere. It is also great experience for learning how to lead/assist a group of young people which will build my confidence and be a great addition to my CV. I would recommend YAC to anyone thinking about it."

When the weather is kind, we love to venture outdoors to discover new archaeological and heritage sites (see image). For example, last summer, we had a fascinating walk around Shrewsbury learning about Medieval architecture and surviving features. Whilst last October, we commemorated the end of the Battle of the Somme by visiting the reconstructed training trenches at Park Hall, Oswestry.

By working in partnership with other groups and organisations, and with the constant support from the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, we do our best to provide our members with new and creative learning experiences.

The Ironbridge YAC is based at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Coalbrookdale and usually meets once a month on a Sunday from 1pm to 3pm. We apply a yearly membership of £10 (or £15 for a family up to 5 children) and each session is £4. If you have a child or grandchild who you think would be interested in joining please get in touch, likewise if you are interested in helping us run the club by becoming a branch assistant.

Members of the public can support our branch by volunteering, sharing their skills and knowledge, making a donation or helping us find sources of funding to continue making a significant and positive impact on the lives of our young members and young people in general. Every little bit of help counts!

**Viviana Culshaw**

**(Archaeological Officer, Ironbridge Gorge Museums Trust)**

For more information, including information on how to join, please contact us at [ironbridge.yac@gmail.com](mailto:ironbridge.yac@gmail.com)



*YAC 'Geophys' at Coalbrookdale*

## VCH Shropshire makes good progress

On the 29th October 2016 approximately 120 people attended the inaugural AGM and annual lecture of VCH Shropshire. The latter was given by Gareth Williams, Curator and Head of Learning at Weston Park, who spoke on 'Capability' Brown – Britain's Greatest Landscape Gardener and his Shropshire Connections. Whilst Shropshire has no immense estate like Chatsworth or Burghley, he demonstrated how Brown had strong links with several influential Shropshire families. His lecture was illustrated by a number of properties within the county where either works or proposals for works were made, including Oakly Park, Rectory Wood at Church Stretton, Tong Castle and Weston Park. He outlined how at each location, Brown's dealings with his clients offered a key insight into how he operated. His activities in Shropshire can be seen to be influential with regards his landscaping work elsewhere in England.

The grant funding from the Jean Jackson Trust and the Walker Trust together with smaller awards from the County History Trust, the Pagett Fund of the Shropshire Archaeological Society and Wem Town Council have allowed us to proceed to the appointment of two research staff in May 2016. Our efforts have been concentrated on Wem which will be the subject of a VCH 'short' (paperback history). Whilst we advertised nationally, we considered ourselves fortunate to make two excellent appointments of experienced historians living in or near Shrewsbury. Dr. Judith Everard, a medievalist who held a college fellowship in Cambridge was appointed as the Contributing Editor and Ms Wendy Horton, a buildings archaeologist has researched and written the architectural history of the town. Work is progressing well on the Wem short publication and we hope that it will be published late 2017 or early 2018. Dr Everard has come up with a definitive answer to the vexed question of the Wem market charter although it may not be what Wem people want to believe! Volunteers have been working either singly or in groups and have taken responsibility for either gathering material – we have a strong group in Wem that have worked on the trade directories for the town – for future use or who have undertaken to contribute sections of the Wem short. Wendy Horton also convened a group interested in Wem buildings and has led parties measuring frontages in the town. The data collected has been analysed by James Bowen using a Geographical Information System (GIS) to reconstruct the urban morphology of the town.

Meanwhile Richard Hoyle has been exploring Wem materials in the National Archives. There he has found what is in effect the estate archive of the Earls of Bradford for that part of their estate which was in the hands of John Newport, the fourth earl's illegitimate son and heir. And the National Archives have finally located the National Farm Survey (1941-2) for Wem Rural, marked in their catalogue as missing, although as the photograph shows, there is something rather daunting about it. Much of the text of the Wem short is now prepared and we are on course for a 2017 publication and launch.

We are also been actively planning work on two red books namely the part-complete Shrewsbury, part two and Newport and the Weald Moors, for which extensive VCH research notes exist. In February 2017 boxes of notes for Shrewsbury part 2 were transferred by VCH Central Office, to Shropshire Archives. All draft text and notes are now at the disposal of the county committee, so work on this volume can resume. We would encourage anyone interested in working in a voluntary capacity on the history of Shrewsbury to contact the project.

VCH Shropshire's application for charitable status was submitted in the autumn of 2016 and the Charity Commissioners have agreed that Victoria County History (Shropshire) Limited can be registered as a charity. Plans for 2017 include the launch of a new website ([www.vchshropshire.org](http://www.vchshropshire.org)), a second Wem History Day and the 2017 annual lecture to be given by Dr. Richard Hayman on the history of the River Severn.

The project has roles for many more supporters as volunteers, researchers and fundraisers. For more information about the project please contact:

VCH Shropshire c/o Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY1 2AQ.

Email: [secretary@vchshropshire.org](mailto:secretary@vchshropshire.org)

Follow the project on Twitter: [@VCH\\_Shropshire](https://twitter.com/VCH_Shropshire)

Website: [www.vchshropshire.org](http://www.vchshropshire.org)

### Friends of the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings:

A great day out lies in store for local families as the Friends of the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings open the gates of the historic site for a Family Fun Day on Sunday, 21<sup>st</sup> May 2017 from 12 noon – 6.00 pm.

There will be a range of activities, including a skate park, exotic animals, circus skills, arts workshops and live music.

Everyone will have an opportunity to look round our visitor centre, walk around the site and talk to our expert volunteers.

Entry to the event is FREE and the Friends will also be able to offer free food and drink to all those attending who are under 16 years of age.

**Richard Benjamin**  
*Administrative and Support Officer*  
**Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings**  
[www.flaxmill-maltings.co.uk](http://www.flaxmill-maltings.co.uk)

### Notes and Queries :

'Tamburlaine in Ludlow again. Onomastic evidence reconsidered' (Misha Teramura)

This article refutes an earlier suggestion that the use of the Christian name Tamburlaine in Ludlow refers to a performance of Marlowe's play in Leominster in 1619 – 20.

### The Atlas of Hillforts of Britain and Ireland

Final conference: Edinburgh, 23rd June 2017.  
Registration is free but ticketed.

For further information just google Atlas of Hillforts Conference 2017.

## From the finds desk of the Portable Antiquities Scheme

As always, I am behind with everything that I intended to do – but for once this isn't entirely my fault! The reason instead is due to an extraordinary find reported to HM Coroner at the end of November 2016. As an archaeologist based in a museum I'm used to working with delicate and important finds – but most of them are at least 300 year old! However, when the phone rings and the conversation starts:

*Hello Peter, I've got this really odd case for you – and if anyone could help – I think it is you.*

You can't really say anything else but tell me more ...



*Image of the piano*

SO – the long and short of it is that someone found a substantial amount of gold objects within the body of a recently donated piano. The piano was given to a community group in South West Shropshire and when it was tuned, they discovered the hidden stash. We know that the finds are highly unusual in nature being substantially made of gold and appear to have been deliberately hidden within the last 110 years.

An inquest was opened in January this year to determine whether the hoard qualifies as Treasure under the terms defined by the Treasure Act (1996). For a hoard less than 300 years old to be Treasure, it must be:

- Substantially made of gold or silver
- Deliberately concealed by the owner with a view to later recovery
- The owner, or his or her present heirs or successors, must be unknown

So my time since then has been spent chasing up leads talking to the many people who have supplied information to us and finally cataloguing and

researching the material so that it will be ready when the inquest is resumed at the Shrewsbury Coroner's Court on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2016.

We know that the cache of items was deliberately hidden within an upright piano made by Broadwood & Sons of London and sold to a music establishment in Essex in 1906. The enterprise which purchased the piano has been traced to a shop or wholesaler of music / musical instruments which was owned by Messrs. Beavan & Mothersole of 27, West Road, Saffron Walden.

The recent history of the piano has been traced to around 1983 where it was purchased by a local family in Saffron Walden area.

We have asked that anyone with any information about the original owners of the piano and/or of the potential treasure, their heirs or successors, should provide this in writing to Mr. Ellery at the Coroner's Office for Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin at the Shirehall, Abbey Foregate Shrewsbury SY2 6ND.

The Coroner will require evidence about:

- the nature of the find (i.e. what it comprises);
  - how, when, where and why the find was concealed
- evidence upon which they can be sure of the ownership by any potential claimant.

There is no penalty for mistaken claims made in good faith but any false claims may be reported to the police.

Hopefully in the next newsletter I will be able to tell you more – but – until then – my lips are sealed.

In that newsletter – I will update you on all the amazing finds recently reported from the county as well as let you know about the celebrations for the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of PAS – including a new county treasure trail!

Luckily, whilst my attention has been diverted elsewhere – Emily Freeman, my most recent intern has been hard at work recording finds and working with the museum. We have been incredibly lucky over the years to have amazing interns funded by the charitable organisation – The Headley Trust. Before Emily we have had Teresa, Richard and Victoria – all of whom have gone on to work with the PAS.

Until next time ...

**Peter Reavill**  
**Ludlow Museum Resource Centre**  
**February 2017**

Copy deadline for the Autumn 2017 Newsletter is Friday 28th July 2017. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)

NB The Council is not responsible for any statement made, or opinion expressed in the *Newsletter* of the Society.



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical  
Society  
No. 84, Autumn 2017

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## SOCIETY NEWS

**AGM:** The **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING** of the Society will be held on Saturday 23rd September 2017 at 2.00pm. The AGM will be followed, at 2.30pm, by a talk entitled ***I was naked and you clothed me*** by Dr Sarah Thursfield (for further details see Meetings Programme).

**Subscriptions and mailings:** Subscription rates remain at £19.00 for Ordinary Members and £20.00 for a family (two or more people at the same address). Institutional Membership is £20.00 and Overseas Membership £23.00. Please remember to update existing standing orders and fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form if you are a UK taxpayer.

Meanwhile, postal charges continue to rise. If you do not already receive Society papers by email please consider doing so. The *Membership Secretary's* contact details are at the head of this *Newsletter*.

**Pagett and Betton Fund Grants:** The Society will be pleased to receive applications for grants from either of these funds through which we have already been able to offer support to a number of county-based archaeological and historical projects

For further information please see our website <http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk> or contact the Treasurer Dr Fran Bumpus, 9 Alexandra Avenue, Shrewsbury, SY3 9HT E: [f.b.bumpus@gmail.com](mailto:f.b.bumpus@gmail.com)

**Membership of Council:** We are delighted to have recruited several new members to the Council of the Society during the past year. In addition, Dr Rosemary Thornes has begun to undertake some of the duties of Secretary in preparation for the retirement of our current Secretary, George Baugh, who hopes to hand over the baton at the 2017 AGM.

**Publications:** Copies of most of the past volumes of the Society's *Transactions*, as well as various other Society publications can be obtained, and will continue to be obtainable, from George Baugh.

For further information please contact George at Glebe House, Vicarage Road, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9EZ or E: [georgecbaugh@gmail.com](mailto:georgecbaugh@gmail.com)

**Winter Social Event 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2017:** This year's Winter Social is being held at The Isle House in Bicton by kind permission of Edward and Ros Tate. Full details can be found in the accompanying *Meetings Programme* and, as usual, advance booking for this event is essential.

**Heritage Open Days 2017:** Heritage Open Days have been celebrated annually since 1994 and will run from Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> September – Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> September in 2017. There will be at least sixteen events / activities / open days taking place in Shropshire over that weekend and further details of them all can be found at [www.heritageopendays.org.uk](http://www.heritageopendays.org.uk)

**The past is not yet dead...:** If any members of this Society needed reassurance that the past is still alive and kicking they need only look at the listings for forthcoming events at the Theatre Severn's Walker Theatre. Professor Alice Roberts is giving a talk there on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2017 and it had already been sold out a couple of months ago – far quicker than tickets for events which might be viewed as 'more popular'!

## Shropshire Archives update August 2017

### New website:

Thanks very much to all of you who have registered on the new site. We now have almost 300 registered users. The online advance ordering is going well. We are still developing the online payments element of the site but this should be available soon. We are also working with Orangeleaf Systems who created the site to develop the ordering and production systems. This includes creating a locations database for all our collection linked to barcodes which, in future, will dramatically improve our ability to make items available. This is a longer term goal which has been achieved at other archive services, most notably at The Keep, in East Sussex. We will keep you informed as this work develops.

### Much Wenlock Minute Books project:

Work on the conservation and digitisation of the earliest two Much Wenlock Borough minute books, dating from 1495-1810 is now complete. The books were rebound at Staffordshire Record Office by Senior Conservator Richard Nichols and we are delighted with the result. Good progress has also been made on the translation and transcription of the pages themselves. This work has been done by a dedicated group of volunteers who have done a great job despite the challenging handwriting in both Latin and English.

All the completed cataloguing and transcription is now available on the online catalogue, together with the digitised images. A celebration event is planned for 9 September in Much Wenlock where the conserved minute books will be on display. This project was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and led by Much Wenlock Town Council.

### Farewell to Katherine and welcome to Andie:

In August Librarian Katherine Allcock left Shropshire Archives as her family are relocating to near Plymouth. Katherine has worked at Shropshire Archives for 10 years and during that time she has proved to be a very valuable member of the team both in managing the public service team with Sarah Davis, and dealing with the processing and cataloguing of the library and printed books. We have appointed Andie Lloyd in Katherine's place. Andie has worked at the British Library both dealing with researchers and cataloguing collections. Andie grew up in Shrewsbury and has now moved back with her family. We look forward to welcoming her to the team.

### Shropshire Archives events:

Heritage Open days - Shropshire Archives behind the scenes tours  
2pm Thursday 7 September and Friday 8 September,  
Shropshire Archives

**Free but booking essential**, email [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk)  
or tel 0345 678 9096

30 Sept Friends Bishop's Castle History Day, Community College, Bishop's Castle, 10-4, £10 (£15 with lunch)

**For further details see [www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk)**

28 Oct Shropshire Victoria County History Annual lecture, Dr Richard Hayman, River Histories: exploring the past on the Severn and Wye, Shrewsbury Baptist Church, Claremont Street, Shrewsbury 2pm £5. see [www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/shropshire](http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/counties/shropshire)

18 Nov Friends Annual lecture, Dr Roger Bruton, The Shropshire Enlightenment, Shropshire Archives, 10.30am, £5

**For further details see**

**[www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk)**

Mary McKenzie

## The view from above: recent survey work at Caus Castle and Castle Pulverbatch

Over the past couple of years, a series of non-intrusive surveys have been undertaken on two castle sites in Shropshire, funded generously by the Castle Studies Trust. Small grants have enabled a programme of extensive and intensive survey to be undertaken at both Caus Castle, Westbury and Castle Pulverbatch.

The surveys at both sites have employed a nested methodology – large scale topographic survey (using a Unmanned Aerial Vehicle [UAV], or drone), focused conventional analytical earthwork survey and detailed geophysical survey. The underlying principle has been that, by comparing and contrasting the results of different survey techniques, maximum information can be gained about these sites.

Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, commonly referred to as drones, have become, in recent years, an increasingly important part of the survey arsenal of the landscape archaeologist. In the present fieldwork, systematic survey by drone has not only allowed low-level aerial visualization but, by using "structure from motion" technology has allowed us to create a full 3d topographic models from overlapping images taken from the drone's camera. This has allowed detailed analysis of earthworks, and is of particular use when used alongside other, more conventional techniques of remote sensing.



*The tree-covered motte and inner bailey, at Caus, surrounded by the castle's outer enclosure  
(© Shropshire Council 2010)*

Work at Caus Castle, a site of private land, was largely concentrated on the inter-relationship between the motte and bailey castle, probably built by Roger fitz Corbet in the late 11th or early 12th century, and the associated borough, with burgesses recorded from a range of documentary sources in the 12th and 13th centuries. Earthwork evidence of the borough itself was quite slight, although some possible house platforms did survive. Earthwork survey, both from the drone and on the ground, allowed the analysis of the hitherto under-examined inner bailey of the castle – mapping the inner courtyard in detail, as well as pointing to some possible garden earthworks, possibly associated with works carried out by the Thynne family in the early 17th century. In addition, earthwork survey evidence has provided a re-analysis of the relationship between the inner bailey and outer enclosure of the castle.

In 2017, based upon the model developed at Caus, a programme of geophysical survey and UAV survey took advantage of recent management work to clear parts of the survey, spearheaded by the Friends of Castle Pulverbatch. Castle Pulverbatch is

recognised as being one of the finest examples of a motte and bailey castle in the county. The castle comprises a roughly circular motte with a base diameter of 35m standing up to 8m high constructed on the edge of a ridge to make best use of the natural topography. When in use, a timber tower is likely to have stood on the top of the motte. There are local traditions of stonework surviving on the summit of the motte, though there is no trace of this now. Detailed resistivity and magnetometry survey was undertaken of all available areas in both the inner bailey on the northeast side of the motte, and the large outer bailey that lies to the northwest. Analysis of the results suggests in situ building material, particularly within the inner bailey, coinciding with earthwork features seen on the drone survey.

Initial reports have been prepared for these programme surveys, and have been lodged with the HER; articles for regional and national journals are now in preparation. Photogrammetric models produced by the drone survey described above can be seen and explored online – follow the links from SAHS website. Giles Carey (Historic Environment Records Officer, Shropshire Council). [her@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@shropshire.gov.uk) 0173 254619  
 Dr. Michael Fradley, University of Oxford) earthwork survey and principal investigator, Caus Adam Stanford, (Aerial-Cam) UAV survey, Caus and Castle Pulverbatch



*UAV image of Castle Pulverbatch in context of the village which has been suggested as a planned settlement (Aerial-Cam 2017)*

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### Acknowledgements

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Castle Studies Trust

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Friends of Castle Pulverbatch

Stiperstones and Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme (SCLPS)

Historic England

## Construction work at Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings begins thanks to Heritage Lottery Fund investment

Funding of £20.7m from The National Lottery is enabling construction work to start on the iconic Main Mill and Kiln at the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings. This is Stage two in the regeneration of the site.

The work will restore the Grade I listed Main Mill – the first cast-iron framed building in the world and forerunner to the modern skyscraper, and the Grade II listed Kiln along with landscaping and a new car park. When complete there will be visitor interpretation, activity space and a café on the ground floor which will be managed by the Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings. The upper four floors of the Mill will provide commercial office space. A programme of activities will be available during construction with training opportunities and chances for the local community to get involved.

Work will start on 19th June 2017, and will be carried out by Croft Building and Conservation Ltd. They are responsible for the structural repairs to the Main Mill and reintroducing windows that were closed during the Maltings phase. This will flood the building with natural light. The works should be complete by the end of 2018 when work will start to repair the Kiln, fit out the buildings and complete all associated landscaping work and car park.

The Flax Mill was built in 1797 and was the largest employer in Shrewsbury. The flax business declined in the 1870s and the mill closed in 1886. The site was converted into a maltings in 1897-8, when the Kiln was added. After being used as a temporary barracks during World War Two, the site resumed as a maltings until its closure in 1987. These works will transform and open the site back up for local people, visitors and local businesses.

Anyone interested in regular updates can subscribe to the project Newsletter. There is a sign-up area on the homepage of the website. A YouTube presentation of a recent talk with images by Nick Hill of Historic England, covering the works at the Mill can be accessed at <https://youtu.be/5cfzu-Up5j8>

Historic England, who took over the site in 2005, and its partners Shropshire Council and the Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings are building on the success of the Stage 1 project, which created a visitor centre (opened late 2015) within the Office and Stables part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, and have secured funding to cover the Stage 2 project which is due to open to the public in 2021.



*Visitor Centre*

## News from the Portable Antiquities Scheme

Hello, I'm Emily and I am working with Peter Reavill at the Ludlow Museum and Resource Centre as the Headley Trust Intern for the PAS in the West Midlands. This internship coincided with the celebrations surrounding the 20th anniversary of the Treasure Act which includes a number of events held nationally and a large conference in York in October. For Shropshire's contribution, myself and the Graduate Curator for Shropshire Museums, Abigail Cox, have designed a Treasure Trail signposting all of the locations in Shropshire that have Treasure on display. We have been distributing "20 years of Treasure" stickers to all of the institutions featured in the leaflet to highlight the Treasure on display.

Shropshire has produced some stunning artefacts since the Treasure Act was implemented in 1997, including the rare Iron Age Nesscliffe Spoons (PAS record HESH-9A4B83) in Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery and the small but detailed Anglo-Saxon hooked tags (PAS record LVPL-A65F43; HESH-24A9D4) in Whitchurch Heritage Centre. Many of the artefacts have been acquired with help from the archaeology society. However, 20 years of Treasure also gives us an opportunity to reflect on the more common finds that the general public bring to us every day. Although our Treasure Trail highlights Treasure in the county, we have also put together some temporary display in The Buttercross Museum in Ludlow and here at the Museum Resource Centre to demonstrate the vast array of artefacts hidden beneath our feet.

We began this project by visiting all of the locations in Shropshire that have artefacts on display that have been acquired as a direct result of the Treasure Act. It was important that we confirmed the where in the museums the artefacts were displayed and we needed to ensure there was space for our Treasure 20 stickers. As a social media campaign was going to accompany our leaflet, lots of photographs of the museums and the towns were also needed. What struck us most was the dedication of the local people to their museum collections, happy to help

and excited to show us their treasures. There is so much passion for Shropshire archaeology across the county and it made this project even more enjoyable. We wanted our leaflet to highlight these locations and give a little tease as to what can be found there because we didn't want to give away everything! Therefore there are some illustrations of some of the artefacts on display and where they can be found. The leaflet also outlines the work that PAS do and how we can be contacted should you want to report any finds.

For us the most important part of the Treasure 20 celebrations is displaying amazing artefacts found by the public every day. It is not only about the Treasure, it is also about the small finds like the hundreds of Roman coins that come across our desk or the beautiful little Medieval buckles; perhaps less exciting but just as important. The temporary cases in the Ludlow library foyer and The Buttercross museum have been taken over by PAS for the summer. Each location has a collection from a local field walker or metal detectorist on display. In the library foyer we have a special showcase celebrating the project of one of our volunteers working on the Lily Chitty collection. Though the Lily Chitty collection predates the PAS database, her approach to recording was very much a precursor to how Finds Liaison Officers record finds today.

Our leaflet can be found in our Ludlow locations and online on our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/ShropTreasureTrail/>). So, when you are out and about, please pop into your local museum and look out for the 20 years of Treasure logo!

Emily Freeman



**The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) and #Treasure20**

This year marks the 20th anniversary of PAS and the Treasure Act (1996). This trail celebrates the many pieces of treasure acquired by Museums across Shropshire, highlighting the finds, both big and small, on permanent display.

To begin your own treasure hunt use our trail (overleaf) and find the “20 years of Treasure logo” to guide your way.



Look out for our temporary displays in Ludlow Museum and the Museum Resource Centre, which focus on the stories behind everyday archaeological finds discovered by local people.



PAS is a voluntary scheme whose aim is to record archaeological finds discovered by the public in England and Wales. For more information follow the links on the back of this leaflet.



Visit the Portable Antiquities Scheme database for details about the Treasure Act (1996): [finds.org.uk](http://finds.org.uk)



To report your finds, contact Shropshire and Herefordshire Finds Liaison Officer, Peter Reavill: [peter.reavill@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:peter.reavill@shropshire.gov.uk) 01743 254748

7/9 Ludlow Museum Resource Centre, Parkway Ludlow, SY8 2PG



For the story of this leaflet's production and the latest news, follow us on social media: Facebook page **Shropshire Treasure Trail** Twitter and Instagram pages **@ShropTreasure**.

#ShropTT #Treasure20

Created by Abigail Cox and Emily Freeman



**Shropshire  
Treasure  
Trail**



**Top Treasures:**



Anglo-Saxon Hooked Tag



17th Century Silver Thimble



Anglo-Saxon Pendant



Post-Medieval Mourning Ring

**Shropshire Treasure Locations**

**Whitchurch Heritage Centre**  
12 St Marys Street, Whitchurch, SY13 1QY  
Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 11 am – 4 pm.  
Entry: Free  
Treasures To Find: 2  
Top Treasure: 1

**The House on Crutches Museum**  
High St, Bishop's Castle, SY9 5DE  
Weekends and Bank Holidays 2 pm – 5 pm  
Entry: Free  
Treasures To Find: 1  
Top Treasure: 2

**Ludlow Museum**  
The Buttercross, 1 High St, Ludlow, SY8 1BS  
Friday, Saturday & Sunday: 10 am - 4 pm  
Entry: Charged  
Treasures To Find: 2  
Top Treasure: 8

**Newport Town Council**  
The Guildhall, High Street, Newport, Shropshire, TF10 7AR  
Monday - Friday 10 am - 3 pm  
Entry: Free  
Treasures To Find: 1  
Top Treasure: 5

**Shrewsbury Museum and Art Gallery**  
The Music Hall, Market St, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LG  
Tuesday to Saturday 10 am – 4.30 pm.  
Sunday 11 am – 4 pm  
Entry: Free ground floor  
Treasures To Find: 16  
Top Treasure: 3, 6, 7

**Bridgnorth Northgate Museum**  
Bridgnorth, WV16 4ER  
Wednesday & Weekends 1 pm – 4 pm.  
Entry: Free  
Treasures To Find: 3  
Top Treasure: 4

**Top Treasures:**



Roman Coin Hoard



Medieval Matrix Seal



Iron Age Spoons



Anglo-Saxon Filigree Ring



## Oswestry and Border History and Archaeology Group (OBHAG)

The Border Counties Archaeology Group, which soon became OBHAG, was founded by a team of enthusiastic local volunteers working with Professor Barri Jones on the excavation of the substantial Roman site at Rhyn Park near Oswestry.



Forty happy years later the group has about one hundred members and a full programme of talks, visits and activities linked to the history and archaeology of the border area.

Recent projects include: the Morda Valley Research Project; the Old Oswestry Landscape and Archaeology Project (OOLAP); active participation in the Oswestry Heritage Forum and affiliation with the ongoing Oswestry Castle Research Project which promises to change completely our understanding of the castle's structure and significance.



*Group members with former Time Team member, Matt Williams following his talk to the Society.*

Meetings with talks are held at 7.30pm on the second Friday of the month in the Methodist Church Hall, Castle Street, Oswestry. In the early summer there are two evening visits to local places of interest and, in July, a day-long trip with an expert guide: recent destinations have included Lichfield, Wigmore Castle & Leominster Priory and the Richard III Centre at Leicester.

OBHAG reaches its 40th anniversary in November and will be celebrating with a dinner (with guest speaker) for members past and present and friends at the Wynnstay Hotel, Oswestry on January 25th 2018. Full details and booking forms will be available, online and at meetings, from September 2017.

Contact:  
obhag@histarch.uk Website: <http://oswestry.histarch.uk>

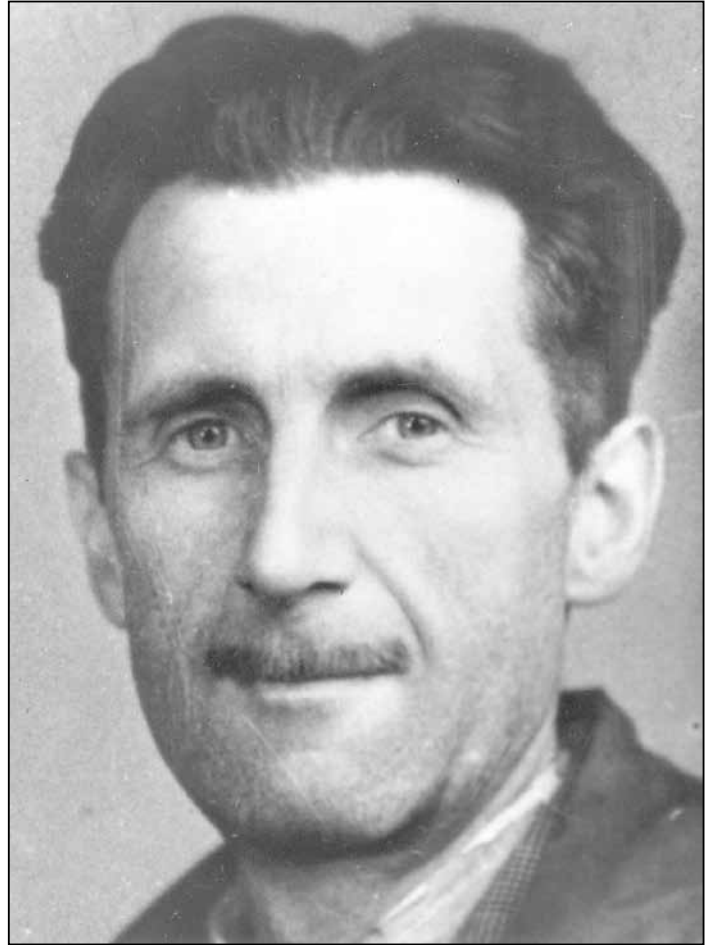


*Oswestry castle excavations*

## George Orwell: the Shropshire connection

Eric Blair, better known as George Orwell, had a little-known connection to Shropshire where he spent many childhood summers as an Edwardian schoolboy.

The Buddicom family lived near Orwell's family home in Shiplake, near Henley-on-Thames. The two sets of parents were friends and George and his sister Avril became very close to the three Buddicom children. The Buddicom children's paternal grandparents lived at Ticklerton Court in Eaton-under-Heywood and, when Orwell was a schoolboy at Eton, he spent many summers at Ticklerton engaging in country pursuits such as shooting and fishing, as well as admiring the elderly Buddicom's magnificent library.



It is believed that the young Orwell and Jacintha Buddicom (the eldest of the Buddicom children) had a romantic attachment which was broken when Orwell left to become an officer in the Indian Police in 1922.

They rekindled their friendship in writing shortly before Orwell's death in 1950 after Jacintha Buddicom realised that the famous author, George Orwell, was none other than her childhood friend Eric Blair. Unknown to the other guests she attended his funeral, sitting unobtrusively at the rear of the church.

Roger Lewis

## Medieval Attingham Park and the Severn floodplain

Some time ago the writer was directed by a colleague to LiDAR data for English river valleys, coasts and fenland, accessibly presented and freely available, on a house-price website ([houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map](https://houseprices.io/lab/lidar/map)), using data from the Environment Agency). The briefest scrutiny of the Atcham-Attingham-Brompton area showed that, laser-scanned from the air with the finest details of relief massively enhanced, the area is still covered by the remains of medieval agriculture: ridge-and-furrow, fields and headlands. Attingham Park (pictured – the main entrance bottom left, hall in centre, old A5 along lower edge) in particular stands revealed as containing an intact medieval agricultural landscape, preserved on an island of permanent pasture in an almost county-wide sea of arable.

In the parkland south and west of Attingham Hall, about 10-12 medieval fields are visible, each containing many individual strips/ridges, many of them crossed diagonally by the present drive. Further ridging, fields, headlands and enclosures cover the Deer Park, east of the River Tern. Also visible are the approach roads converging from both sides of the river on the site of the Old Tern Bridge (surveyed for the National Trust in 2015), c.130 metres north of the old A5. Holloways south of Berwick Maviston and the moated Home Farm (pictured top left) show up well and the LiDAR makes an interesting comparison with the RCHM survey published in the 1987 Transactions. Exploration on foot shows that features that appear strongly on the LiDAR can be traced easily, if not always made sense of, while the faintest LiDAR traces are all but invisible on the ground. The busy arable landscape of the early Middle Ages thus revealed is a dramatic contrast to the depopulated parkland of the late 18th century.

The Severn floodplain nearby also has much of interest where old grassland remains unploughed, as it does south of Attingham around Lower Brompton, and also west of Shrewsbury, north of The Mount. LiDAR shows that paleochannels are numerous, many segments of arcs representing infilled channels and their scroll-bars showing up, even in arable areas. The better-preserved grassland shows that medieval ridging was adapted to this natural framework, with field-strips bent to conform to the scroll-bars and the undulations formed by infilled channels. Not much of high medieval Shropshire, it seems, was allowed to remain unploughed.

### Nigel Baker

Baker, N. (2015). *An archaeological survey of the Old Tern Bridge, Attingham Park, Shropshire*

Everson, P and Stamper, P A. (1987). 'Berwick Maviston and Attingham Park', *TSAS* 65, 64-69



*Attingham LIDAR composite*

## News from VCH Shropshire

So much to tell, so little space ....

The first piece of news is that our account of Wem is 'finished' and has gone to VCH Central Office to be refereed. I say 'finished' in that even after the third quarter of the eleventh hour bits of Wem material kept turning up. In fact even after the 'final' deadline we finally located the title deeds to Wem manor as part of a much larger body of unknown Shropshire material at Raby Castle. The title deeds contain no great surprises, but allow us to be precise where before we had to be speculate. This new material has to be incorporated into our text. We hope that with a good wind behind us, the Wem Short will be out for Christmas.

We returned to Wem on 18 June to outline some of our findings to a large and enthusiastic audience. Judith Everard explained why there never had been a Wem market charter and how the belief that there was one arose out of an antiquarian misreading of a manuscript. Wendy Horton described the goings on which surrounded the rebuilding of Wem church (and the regrets that followed the rebuilding) and James Bowen discussed the townscape and topography. I followed up the rear with some comments on the agriculture of Wem and its parish. The *Whitchurch Herald* gave us a good write up a couple of weeks later.

Over the next few months Judith Everard will work on the VCH history of the parish of Wem (Wem Rural) and this will appear as a publication on our website. Then she will move onto Newport and the surrounding villages where we plan a big initiative to finish the VCH volume on Newport and the Weald Moors which was begun by David Cox before his retirement. Announcements about our plans for Newport will follow, but we are pleased to be working with the Newport History Society to bring this project to fruition. We invite volunteers who would like to contribute to get in touch, and we certainly invite donations to support a research effort which will last two or three years.

Speaking of the website ([www.VCHShropshire.org](http://www.VCHShropshire.org)), we encourage you to have a look and, in particular, to add your name to our mailing list. We have added the first sections of the completed text of VCH Shrewsbury part two to the website as a public resource. Unfortunately this volume is not going to appear quickly. We very much regret the recent death, after a period of illness, of Bill Champion, a major loss to this volume and to the history of Shrewsbury as a whole. The volume relied a great deal on his deep knowledge of the town. We send our deepest sympathies to his widow and family.

Finally, we welcome Richard Hayman as the speaker at our annual meeting on Saturday 28 October in Shrewsbury, when he will be talking about 'River histories: exploring the past on the Severn and the Wye'. Full details are on the website together with instructions as to how to sign up.

Richard Hoyle

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### Update from the Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club

The Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club has been very busy so far this year. Our sessions have included an introduction to archaeological stratigraphy (which was brought to life through the medium of cake); an exploration of the ancient techniques of weaving and basketry; a film matinee showing a documentary by Professor Barry Cunliffe and social anthropologist Lionel Sims investigating the history and development of Stonehenge; a joint session with the Marches YAC at Wroxeter Roman City and a visit to an excavation, at what is believed to be an Anglo-Saxon hall at Attingham, which was led by the University of Birmingham and the National Trust.

We are currently looking for volunteers to help us run the Ironbridge Young Archaeologists' Club. Ideally they would have archaeological or teaching experience, however this isn't essential. We are also looking to recruit new members so if you have a child or grandchild, aged between 8 and 16, who may be interested in joining please get in touch. If you are interested in finding out more about either please email us at [ironbridge.yac@gmail.com](mailto:ironbridge.yac@gmail.com)

Shane KelleherMCifA

Industrial Heritage Support Officer



*Stratigraphy cake*

We are sad to report that, during the past few months, the deaths have been announced of four people who have made important contributions to our understanding of the archaeology and history of Shropshire. Ernie Jenks was a life-long supporter, and vice-president, of this Society; Bill Champion was a former co-editor of the Shropshire VCH and had an unrivalled knowledge of the early modern history of Shrewsbury; Dr Ivor Brown was a retired mining engineer who published extensively on the history of mining in the county and David 'Dai' Morgan Evans was the archaeological consultant to, and presenter of, the Channel 4-funded, and televised, project to build a 'replica' Roman villa at Wroxeter.

Copy deadline for the Spring 2018 Newsletter is Friday 23rd February 2018. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor at 7 Elstree Close, Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, SY3 9QF or emailed to [shelagh228@msn.com](mailto:shelagh228@msn.com)

NB The Council is not responsible for any statement made, or opinion expressed in the *Newsletter* of the Society.



# SHROPSHIRE Archaeological and Historical Society

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical Society

Newsletter No.85  
Spring 2018

Website: [www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk](http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk)

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## 📰 SOCIETY NEWS

**Subscriptions:** The Society's Subscription year runs from the beginning of January. The current rates are £19 for Individual membership, and £20 for family/joint membership. Some 136 members have already paid their subscription by Standing Order. Another 27 subscriptions have been paid by cash or cheque up to the middle of February, either by post or in person at the last two meetings.

The Membership Secretary looks forward to receiving the remaining outstanding subscriptions in the next couple of months; her contact details are given at the top of this newsletter.

Please remember to update existing standing orders and fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form if you are a UK taxpayer – it is an easy way to provide additional support to the society, at no extra cost to yourself.

**Newsletter:** Giles Carey has taken over as Shelagh Hampton as editor of the newsletter. Shelagh has been newsletter editor since 2013. Shelagh deserves our grateful thanks for undertaking this tireless job. The newsletter is a vital regular communication tool with members of the society; if any readers have comments or ideas for articles, please do not hesitate to contact the newsletter editor, at the address above. Full details of the next newsletter deadline are given at the end of this newsletter. The incoming editor would like to thank all contributors to this issue who have responded to a tight deadline.

Members are reminded that if they would like to receive this newsletter by email, please share their address with the membership secretary.

### Sale of exchange publications

Members who were present at the Annual General Meeting last September may remember that I spoke about the question of exchange publications. For many

years (well over a century in some cases) this society has exchanged publications with a large and varied number of similar archaeological and historical societies. For the last forty years or so these have been stored at Shropshire Archives by kind permission of successive archivists. Last year, however, we were given notice that they are running out of space, and they asked us to move some of our exchange publications out of their storage.

I mentioned that I hoped that the Portable Antiquities Scheme would be able to take some or all of these, and Peter Reavill did manage to find homes for several series with some of his colleagues. This still left us with a very large number of volumes to be removed from the Archives by the end of November, and the prospect of nowhere to put them. In the end we had no option but to place them in the hands of Halls, who entered them into two successive sales. We also managed to sell one set of transactions privately for £150. In total the sale produced £460 for the Society.

The exercise had its bizarre elements, most notably the collection of banana boxes, which Halls recommended for packing the volumes. A small group of Council members spent an energetic couple of weeks in mid-November scouring local supermarkets for these, and puzzled readers at the Archives were greeted at times by these boxes being rushed through the main door. The whole exercise could not have been completed without the dedicated teamwork of members who collected boxes, and most importantly, packed the books into them. Many thanks to George, Penny and Sheila for their invaluable help on packing day, to all who collected boxes, and to Mary McKenzie and her long-suffering staff who saw Store No.3 disappearing under a mountain of banana boxes.

I should stress that not all exchange publications have been sold, only those of more distant societies from places as far apart as Ulster and Kent. All publications from societies in neighbouring counties in the Marches

and mid-Wales have been retained and may be consulted on application to staff at the archives. We will also probably continue to exchange with these societies, though the whole question of exchanges will be discussed at our postponed Council meeting in April. I must add that the selling of these often superb runs of Transactions was carried out with a heavy heart – but this was far better than the alternative of pulping. At least they will have gone to good homes.

*Martin Speight*

## NEWS: SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES

### Wilfred Owen 100

Shropshire Archives and Museums has been successful in securing £41,600 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the death of Shropshire war poet Wilfred Owen in 2018. A countywide programme of events, exhibitions, performances and talks will be launched on 4 August to commemorate 100 days until the anniversary of Wilfred Owen's death on 4 November. Two part time posts to support this work are currently being advertised.

### New website

We are continuing to work with our colleagues in finance to get online payments for image downloads established. The testing process has been much more complicated than we expected but we are making progress. We plan to have everything in place for April 2018. Customers are registering and ordering online in increasing numbers and we are very pleased with the improved functionality of the online catalogue.

### Shropshire Council Children's records

Our funded project to catalogue the Shropshire County Council Children's records will be complete by the end of March. We will then review whether any further additional cataloguing/indexing is required to abstract further details of clients and staff.

### Shropshire Registration Service records project

Work has started on a partnership project with Shropshire Registration Service to index their registers of births, marriages and deaths dating from 1837. We have recruited a team of four people, to work on this project for 12 months. The indexes, together with digitised images of the registers will, in due course, create an online resource for all of the Shropshire records. This will improve ordering of, and access to, copy birth, marriage and death certificates.

### Staff Changes

Alex Moxon our apprentice finished his contract in September. We decided to reconfigure the post into a part time 12 month Archives Intern post to make it possible for graduates to apply. We have appointed Meriel Lees to the new post and she started work with

us in November. We are very pleased with how the new post and Meriel are fitting into the structure. In addition, Shropshire Family History Society has now agreed to fund an additional 15 hours a week for Meriel's post to allow her to widen her experience, and to deliver some specific family history orientated projects. We are very grateful to the Family History Society for their ongoing support.

### Upcoming Events

- **Tuesday 22 May, 2.15pm:** Visit to Hardwick Hall near Ellesmere

Hardwick Hall is a grand Grade II\* listed Georgian Hall of three floors and a cellar. It was built by John Kynaston who had inherited the land in 1693 and finished the house before his death in 1733. Price: £19 (members), £20 (non-members) including refreshments

- **Tuesday, 12 June, 6.30pm:** Friends AGM at the Flax Mill Maltings, Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings, Spring Gardens, Shrewsbury, SY1 2SX

The Friends' AGM and a talk by Penny Ward on the Flax Mill and its renovation followed by a guided tour of the site including the canal and former industrial buildings. Price: £5 including refreshments

- **Thursday, 19 July, 2pm:** Visit to Harper Adams University, Harper Adams University, Newport TF10 8NB

A guided tour of the main campus and a visit to the library and archives.

Price: £5

For further details see

<https://friendsofshropshirearchives.org/>

- **Saturday 20 October**

World War One Showcase Day 10am-4pm  
Shirehall, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND

*Mary McKenzie, Shropshire Archives*

## NEWS: SHROPSHIRE COUNCIL HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

Shropshire's Historic Environment Record (HER) is the primary source of information about the historic environment of the historic county – archaeological sites, finds and features, historic buildings, structures and landscapes.

It is a publicly accessible archive – it can assist members of the society with queries of all types, and is supported by an extensive range of material collected over the last 40 years. There's a wide range of resources forming the record - ground and air photographs, survey reports and plans, and a library of unpublished, 'grey literature' reports, mainly generated by the

planning process. New information is being added all the time.

A quick user guide is now available on the website - <https://shropshire.gov.uk/environment/historic-environment/historic-environment-record/>



Clun Castle from the air. © Shropshire Council

Of particular note is the recent completion of a decade of digital aerial photographic survey. Over 8000 photographs have been taken, catalogued and integrated with the HER – covering a wide range of cropmark sites, historic buildings and landscapes. This fantastic resource is available to view by appointment, with a selection of images being made available online via the *Discovering Shropshire's History website*.

For further details email [her@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@shropshire.gov.uk) or 'phone 01743 254619.

*Giles Carey, HER Officer, Shropshire Council*

## NEWS: FRIENDS OF FLAXMILL MALTINGS

The HLF funded project to repair and regenerate the Main Mill and Kiln is proceeding apace, and at the Society's AGM in September, Nick Hill, Historic England's project manager will outline the intricate work being done on the Main Mill and recent archaeological discoveries.

A major part of the work involves opening up the windows that were bricked up when the Flax Mill was converted to a Maltings. This involves removing the brickwork, replacing the rotted timber lintels and then rebuilding the reveals on both sides of the opening.

Meanwhile, the roof has been stripped down and repaired and will soon be re-slatted, allowing the protective canopy that has shrouded it for years to be removed.

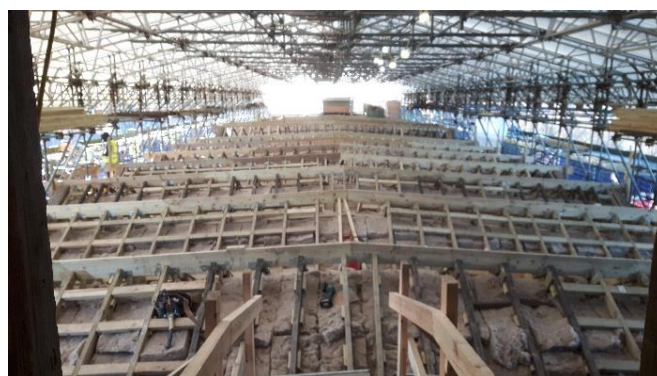
*From April the Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings Visitor Centre will be open every Friday, Saturday and Sunday, 10am to 4pm.*

*The Friends of the Flaxmill Maltings are currently looking for more volunteers to help man the Visitor Centre. This would require a minimum commitment of 4*

*hours per month, but more if you can offer it. This would be a chance to part of the Friends' team, and to become involved with this hugely exciting project.*

*If you're interested please email:*

[info@flaxmill-maltings.co.uk](mailto:info@flaxmill-maltings.co.uk)



## FUNDRAISING EVENT FOR VCH (SHROPSHIRE)

A Victorian Tea Party, organised by Newport History Society to raise money for VCH (Shropshire):

Newport History Society humbly solicit a continuation of your Patronage

*for a tasteful fund-raising event*

WHICH IS TO BE  
A VICTORIAN  
AFTERNOON TEA PARTY  
Hurrah!

This will be for the benefit of the Victoria County History (Shropshire)

and will take place on

**SUNDAY 24th JUNE from 2-6pm**

at 'The Ferns', 32 Station Road, Newport, TF10 7EN

The Party will start with the arrival of Queen Victoria

*The afternoon will be interspersed with songs (refined and music hall instrumentalists, monologues & hilarious entertainments!*

**Ticket Price £12.50**

**which includes sparkling wine, afternoon tea and entertainments**



Tickets from [www.theferns.co.uk](http://www.theferns.co.uk), The Ferns, 32 Station Road, Newport TF10 7EN or personally via

Linda Fletcher .... Cheques to be made payable to Newport History Society

ADMISSION STRICTLY BY TICKET ONLY



associated with leather working were recovered including possible blades, a bone leather needle and several palm guards, suggesting that a range of industries relating to hide tanning may have been taking place on the site.

Hide tanning during this period appears to have taken place within a domestic rather than a purely industrial setting, with a large assemblage of pottery retrieved from many features. The recovery of a considerable number of glazed and decorated floor tiles and glazed ridges tiles indicate the presence of a high status building in the area, possibly with ecclesiastical associations. The area appears to have undergone a decline in status and fortunes during the 17th and 18th centuries, although small-scale industrial activity continued until the construction of the Victorian tannery at the site.

The demolition of the former Victorian tannery revealed parts of the original brick floor. Subdivisions for tanning tanks were also visible across most of the area, suggesting that the entirety of the ground floor had at one stage housed tanning tanks. The construction of the 19th-century tannery building and subsequent piling associated with the sixth form college had completely removed any earlier archaeological features that may have been present, in the north-western part of the development.

An assessment of palaeoenvironmental evidence from the medieval pits has shown that they contain domestic waste, with dietary evidence indicating the use of a range of food sources including domestic animals, fish, legumes, imported dried fruits, wild-gathered fruits/nuts and cereal crops.

A programme of post-excavation analysis and report will be undertaken during 2018, leading to full publication of the results in the Transactions of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society.

*Will Logan, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT)*



## FROGMORE HALL EXCAVATION, ATCHAM, JUNE 2017

I am sure many of you will have seen press coverage recently about the excavation last summer on the Anglo-Saxon buildings located on the Attingham Estate. Those of you with long memories will remember that this site was discovered by J. K. St Joseph in the hot summer of 1975 and was published in that same year. At that time, sites like this were vanishingly rare (they are still not that common) so the entire field was immediately scheduled and taken out of cultivation in 1990.

While putting the site under pasture protected it from long-term damage, it encouraged other problems, namely rabbits and 'nighthawks' – the term used to describe clandestine metal detectorists who were suspected of raiding the field. It was for these reasons that Janine Young (current National Trust Archaeologist for the Midlands) and I were able to persuade Historic England that the site should be investigated to assess whether the site had, in fact, been damaged.

The excavation was financed and run as a University of Birmingham training excavation but could not have taken place without the active support in kind and in personnel supplied by the National Trust. Given that we only had 15 days for the entire excavation, the project design was modest in scope and in its aims. We sought to characterise the preservation of the site, to assess the damage to the site (potential and actual), to date the site if at all possible, preferably by retrieving material capable of supplying scientific dates (in practice, radiocarbon samples), and lastly to carry out a controlled and organised systematic metal detector survey using the Newport History Society (recommended by the local Finds Liaison Officer, Peter Reavill). All of these outcomes were achieved.

Two trenches were opened. The larger contained evidence for a large timber building, up to 23m long and 16m wide including annexes 4m x 5m at both ends. The walls were trench built, the trenches surviving to a depth of 0.4m. Where evidence survived, the walls were seen to be of posts packed closely together and plastered with clay supported internally by withies. The building had burnt down, as evidenced by the fired daub and charcoal fragments

(offering the possibility of radiocarbon dating). No significant internal features were identified other than some small pits containing burnt stone. One side of the building had been cut away by a large post-medieval pit, while much of the archaeology lay beneath a medieval ploughsoil (dated by some decorated glazed and rouletted pottery). Some Roman pottery was found in the wall trenches. More Roman pottery was found in the short section of the wall trench excavated in the other, narrower trench, and also in the V-sectioned ditch that converged on the line of the wall. The ditch contained a significant amount of Roman pottery, including joining sherds. While we cannot rule out a Roman date for the building, its parallels are all Anglo-Saxon and a single site find – of an incomplete bun-shaped loomweight – is clearly of mid Anglo-Saxon date (roughly 600-900). The radiocarbon dates are awaited.

Rabbit damage was present, but relatively slight. They had, however, disturbed the archaeological features. The metal detectorists recovered around 200 finds including three Roman brooches, a scatter of Roman coins from the 1st to 4th centuries and two or three Anglo-Saxon finds, including part of a Late Saxon / Viking stirrup mount. There are no plans to do further excavation.

*Roger White, Senior Lecturer, Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Birmingham*

## THE REDISCOVERY OF MEOLE BRACE CASTLE

Perhaps the most obscure of Shropshire's medieval castles, Meole Brace Castle is referred to only twice by that name, in the 16th century; earlier documents refer only to a capital message (1217) or to a tower (1273). The 'old castle house' was said by J B Blakeway to have burnt down in 1669. Its site was identified with a spot called Castle Bank in the grounds of Meole Brace Hall, a short distance to the east of the medieval parish church, where Archdeacon Bather, owner of the hall in the early 19th century, was said to have found its remains and planted a mulberry tree to mark their discovery.

In 2017 an evaluation trench was excavated in the grounds of Meole Brace Hall, a short distance east of the traditional castle site marked by the Ordnance Survey but close to a very old and decayed mulberry tree. The excavation found, at its extreme western end, a large robber-trench partly filled with brick rubble of very early character. Removal of this exposed the corner of a cellar with walls of Keele Beds sandstone blocks. The brick rubble seemed to have derived from the superstructure of the building above the cellar; the closest parallel found so far for the bricks is at Whitehall in Shrewsbury (1578-82). There were no medieval artefacts other than decorated floor tiles. There was some evidence of fire-damaged fabric in the rubble, but no burnt or ashy deposits in situ, though the cellar fill was not fully excavated. The remains are probably those of a 16th-century brick cross-wing to the medieval hall, which was most likely built at the top of the gradient overlooking the Rea Brook just to the west of the excavation trench. Most probably a small fortified manor house, perhaps not dissimilar to Wattlesborough Hall, Meole Brace Castle was nevertheless the successor to an Anglo-Saxon royal manor, once the possession of Edith, Edward the Confessor's widow.

*Nigel Baker*

## FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY: THE STIPERSTONES AND CORNDON LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP SCHEME

Beginning in 2013, the Stiperstones and Corndon Hill Country Landscape Partnership Scheme (LPS) is a five-year Heritage Lottery Funded project to conserve, enhance and celebrate the landscape and heritage of the South-West Shropshire and Powys borderlands.

Within the portfolio, the LPS has delivered projects with a historical and archaeological focus. 'Scraping Beneath the Surface' is themed on 19th and early 20th Century mining and quarrying, whereas 'Open Hills, Old Ways and Commons' reflects elements of the borderland story, from the Neolithic through to the late medieval period.

In early 2014, the LPS commissioned an airborne **LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) survey** of the 200km<sup>2</sup> scheme area. The LiDAR resource was used to engage local volunteers in follow-up, on the ground, survey of the Open Access Land and unenclosed uplands of the scheme area. Training and leadership was provided by project partners CPAT and Shropshire Council, with volunteer teams conducting Level 1 fieldwork investigation feeding their results back to the Historic Environment Record (HER).

Over the course of the project, 43 fieldwork sessions took place and engaged 58 volunteers. The uplands of Heath Mynd, Stapeley Hill, Cefn Gunthly and Lan Fawr (Corndon) have yielded 83 records in Shropshire alone. Alongside the HER, results have been integrated on to a new, innovative web app, Layered Landscapes

(<http://records.stiperstonesandcorndon.co.uk>), which displays LiDAR and corresponding records from some of the key study areas.

*Joe Penfold, Community Officer, Stiperstones and Corndon Landscape Partnership Scheme*

Although the LPS ends soon volunteers led by consultant archaeologist Mike Greene have set up a new group, **The Shropshire Hills and Marches Community Archaeology**, which aim to provide further insights into the historic landscape. This group will be expanding the area of interest of archaeological investigation, in which members of the community conduct archaeological fieldwork in a cross-border project engaging in and acquiring and appreciation of their historic environment. The research will contribute to the Historic Environment Records in both Shropshire and Powys. SHaMCA will promote its work through publications and public displays to further public awareness of the significance of the historic environment.

*M. J. Greene M.A.(Res), M.A., P.C.I.f.A For and on Behalf of Shropshire Hills and Marches Community Archaeology*  
[shamcommunityarchaeology@outlook.com](mailto:shamcommunityarchaeology@outlook.com)

## ■ ALL'S WELL AT CONDUIT HEAD (SJ 472111)

We can at last bring good news about this site, which was once exploited as a source of clear water for Shrewsbury as early as the 16th century. (R. Cromarty, 'The water supply in Shrewsbury 1550–1885', T.S.A.S. LXXV (2000), 15–48.)

On the south side of the town a broad curving hollow in the solid rock stretches from Cophorne Hospital around to the Rea valley. Its line is marked by a zone of deformed ground on deep glacial drift: 'Irish Sea' boulder clay, Lake clays and outwash sands, all topped by 'Welsh' boulder clay. It is crossed by the narrow valley of the Rad Brook, and altogether the surface configuration has presented a challenge to the suburban development of the area.

While many of these 'kettle holes' are kept damp by local surface water, one appears to be in contact with the sandy aquifer within that glacial 'sandwich', so that it is constantly supplied by water from below, which then overflows towards the Rad Brook. Along this same route a pipe was laid to serve the town in a pioneering move to avoid total dependence on the polluted River Severn. A small shelter was also built to protect the intake, which still stands as a protected monument.

Eventually modern supply systems, first near Coton Hill, then Shelton, took over the town's supply, leaving this source only to supply the cast-iron 'conduits' in some streets, hence the name 'Conduit Head' rather than the original name 'Broadwell'. Although this system went out of use, the site was still owned by the borough council, which could later pass it on to Severn-Trent Water as the location for pumps and pipes distributing Shelton Water.

The historical significance of the site and its surviving features was fully appreciated by Shrewsbury Civic Society in the 1980s. They organized improvements to access and interpretation, but sadly their work was

blighted by vandalism, which caused the project to lapse.

After more years of neglect the Shropshire Beekeepers' Association has acquired the lease and has set about restoring the situation for the benefit of both wildlife conservation and historical interpretation. An old pump house c. 1908 has become their headquarters and depot for beekeeping activities, while providing modern facilities for meetings and lectures. Bit by bit the old well heads are being cleaned up and interpretative displays installed. Anti-vandal defences have also been improved!

The site is open on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, and already interested groups have been made welcome. These could include our own Society some time. For further details see the website [www.shropshirebees.co.uk](http://www.shropshirebees.co.uk).

*David Pannett*

## ■ COUNTRY HOUSE VISITS

Most members will know about Shropshire's National Trust country houses—Attingham Hall, Benthall Hall, Cronkhill, Dudmaston Hall, Morville Hall, and Wilderhope Manor—and will have enjoyed visiting them. (Sunnycroft, Wellington, is perhaps rather different from such historic halls and manor houses. 'Designed to emulate the upper classes, this rare middle-class Victorian survival is a mini estate', 'an oasis in the middle of suburbia'.) The dates and opening hours of these houses are readily available in the National Trust's yearly Handbook, which also indicates which—e.g. Cronkhill and Morville—are tenanted and thus private homes with particular arrangements.

There is, however, a special interest attached to seeing country houses that remain privately owned family homes. One such privileged visit was enjoyed by members who attended our very enjoyable pre-

Christmas social meeting at The Isle, Rossall, by kind invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tate.

There are, however, other ways to acquire opportunities to enjoy such visits to private country houses, and Invitation to View is an organization through which bookings may be made. In Shropshire this year houses that may be visited through Invitation to View are:

Aldenham Hall, near Bridgnorth (Mr. and Mrs. James Fenwick); Hardwick Hall, south-west of Ellesmere (the Kynaston family); Hatton Grange, Shifnal (Mr. and Mrs. Rupert Kenyon- Slaney); Millichope Park, Corvedale (Mr. and Mrs. Frank Bury); Pitchford Hall and its Tree House, south of Shrewsbury (Mr. and Mrs. James Nasan); and Willey Hall, near Much Wenlock (Lord and Lady Forester).

Particular interest attaches to Pitchford Hall now that it has been bought back into the estate by the late Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Colthurst's son-in-law and daughter, who are restoring it as a family home after years of neglect by an absentee owner.

Just beyond the county boundary, and also linked in to Invitation to View, are Brynkinalt Hall, east of Chirk in Clwyd (Mr. and Mrs. Iain Hill-Trevor); Combermere Abbey, north of Whitchurch in Cheshire (Mrs. Sarah Callander Beckett); and Iscoyd Park, west of Whitchurch in Clwyd (Mr. and Mrs. Philip Godsall).

Our Society cannot arrange group visits to these houses, but members can easily find out how to apply for a visit by consulting Invitation to View's 2018 brochure or by going on line to [www.invitationtoview.co.uk](http://www.invitationtoview.co.uk).

Wenlock Abbey, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Louis de Wet, is also becoming available for a limited number of visits annually, though not through Invitation to View. Groups (min. 20; max. 30) wishing to visit the Abbey can make an arrangement through Vivien Bellamy ([vivienbellamy@outlook.com](mailto:vivienbellamy@outlook.com)). The house has a special interest as the very little altered residence built for the Priors of Wenlock in the 15th century. Its Victorian owners, who restored it as a comfortable home, are the subject of two good recent books reviewed in our last Transactions (vol. 92, pp. 177–9). Since its purchase by the present owners in 1983, the house has evolved further; a series of remarkable interiors has been created by the unique vision of artist Louis de Wet. A visit to the Abbey could easily be combined with a next-door one to Wenlock Priory ruins, excellently cared for by English Heritage.

*George Baugh*

## ■ MIDDLETON SCRIVEN CHURCH

Modern accounts of Middleton Scriven church, such as Pevsner and Newman "The buildings of Shropshire"

consider that the church of Middleton Scriven was entirely rebuilt in 1845-6 by the rector, the Rev. Dr. Thomas Rowley. This is reflected in the Historic Environment Record for the church (HER 11875).

However, this does not fit easily with a written account of the restoration made by Rowley and kept within the church. In this he describes extending the nave to the west, raising the height of the roof and rebuilding the chancel, but all this assumes that he retained the north, east and south walls of the nave. During recent restoration work at the church, it was possible to inspect and photograph the building; the dust from the construction work served to highlight ridges in the rendered interior walls of the church. These showed clear evidence of the former nave walls, exactly as implied by Rowley's description. The photographs also showed evidence of blocked walls in the south wall of the nave and a relieving arch above the door in this wall. These features can be seen in a water colour of the church by John Homes Smith and dated to 1830. Comparison of this picture with a 1791 watercolour by Williams shows that the church had previously undergone substantial alteration, perhaps by Thomas Rowley's father, Richard. Indeed, the parish registers for 1801 refer to the first service in "the new church". It will be interesting to see if a faculty exists that might shed light on this earlier rebuilding. Whatever Richard did, it is clear that the majority of the nave at the church is older than current records suggest; it would not be surprising if it retains a substantial amount of medieval fabric.

*Andy Johnson and David Poyner*



The north-west corner of the chancel, showing extensions to the east and the raising of the roof

Copy deadline for the Autumn 2018 Newsletter is Friday **20<sup>th</sup> July 2018**. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter Editor c/o Shropshire HER, Shropshire Council, Shirehall, Shrewsbury SY2 6ND, or emailed to [shropshirenewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:shropshirenewsletter@gmail.com)

**NB The Council is not responsible for any statement made, or opinion expressed in the Newsletter of the Society.**



# SHROPSHIRE Archaeological and Historical Society

Shropshire  
Archaeological  
and  
Historical Society

Newsletter No.86  
Autumn 2018

Website: [www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk](http://www.shropshirearchaeology.org.uk)

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## 📖 SOCIETY NEWS

**Subscriptions:** The Society's Subscription year runs from the beginning of January. The current rates are £19 for Individual membership, and £20 for family/joint membership. The Membership Secretary looks forward to receiving any remaining outstanding subscriptions as soon as possible; her contact details are given at the top of this newsletter.

Please remember to update existing standing orders and fill in a Gift Aid Declaration Form if you are a UK taxpayer – it is an easy way to provide additional support to the society, at no extra cost to yourself.

Members are reminded of the society's AGM which will be held on **Saturday 22nd September 2018 at 2.00pm, The Shirehall, Shrewsbury**. This will be followed at 2.30pm by: "The Shrewsbury Flaxmill Maltings Project" by Nick Hill of Historic England.

### *Visit to Molverley*

The weather was fine for the first of this summer's field visits - to Molverley on 12 May. When all had managed to park along the lane leading to the church, we took our seats within to listen to a double presentation by Lynne Lloyd and Sue Gittins on the history of St Peter's and the major conservation project that was undertaken in the early 1990s following the sheet piling of the riverbank to the west. This included the massive fund-raising effort required - which led to an award to the village.

David Pannett then spoke about the environment of that part of west Shropshire starting with a photograph of 'the ice front to the west c.18000 years ago' and aided by hand-outs, including a LiDAR image and annotated map, of the area. Emphasising that since the end of the last ice age the land-forms in the area have been fairly stable due to the fact that the overburden left behind as the ice retreated is fine-grained and hummocky. Even though the Vyrnwy is a meandering

river, medieval ridge & furrow survives within the bends of the river and it flows in a deep channel just outside the churchyard. It also explains why the houses of the village are clear of flood water when the Severn and Vyrnwy overflow onto the surrounding land - they have always been built on the hummocks.

The talks were followed by tea and excellent cakes provided by the ladies of the church and an opportunity to explore the church and its surroundings. David then led a walkabout illustrating on the ground the points that he had made during his talk.



Alan Tyler

## 📖 NEWS: SHROPSHIRE ARCHIVES

### **Wilfred Owen 100**

Work is progressing on an exhibition on the life of Wilfred Owen which will be on display at Shrewsbury Museum and on digitising and indexing local First World War newspapers. The project will be formally launched at a civic occasion at Shrewsbury Abbey on 4 August.

### **Student placements**

We supported 3 students from University Centre Shrewsbury during June. Their enthusiasm and hard work was inspiring and we hope they found the experience positive. We will also be supporting a

number of undergraduate placements for Shropshire based students over the next few months.

### Access to images and more information now on the online catalogue

You can now access images of a range of documents and photographs on our website, some for free and others linked to online payments. We hope this improved access will benefit our customers across the world as well as providing additional income to the service. Highlights available include, our photograph and print collections, images of the Much Wenlock Borough minute books, 1495-1810, and documents from the parish poor law collections.

We also reached a milestone with over 19,000 records from the Shrewsbury Deeds collections (SA ref 6000) going online following over 5 years work by our volunteers. The records are a collection of charters, deeds, surveys, manorial records, and miscellaneous documents previously held in Shrewsbury Public Library which date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

### Shropshire Archives and others events

28 August 2018 6-7.30pm, Shropshire Archives Anchorites in Shropshire: Archaeological and Archival Evidence, talk and workshop. Free, for more details and to book a place contact Victoria Yuskaitis at: [vyuskaitis@gmail.com](mailto:vyuskaitis@gmail.com)

2pm Friday 7 September 2018, Shropshire Archives Heritage Open days - Shropshire Archives behind the scenes tours

Free but booking essential, email [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk) or tel 0345 678 9096

18 September – 23 October 2018 Palaeography course with Helen Haynes, Shropshire Archives 2-4pm, £45

18 September – 23 October 2018 Poems from the Archives course with Jean Atkin, Shropshire Archives 10-12pm, £67

20 October 2018 First World War Showcase day, Shirehall, Shrewsbury, Free event, 10am-4pm, contact [archives@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:archives@shropshire.gov.uk)

27 October 2018 Victoria County History Annual lecture, Professor Peter Edwards, 'Horses in Early Modern Shropshire: for Service, for Pleasure, for Power?' Central, Shrewsbury Baptist Church, 4 Claremont Street, Shrewsbury, 2.00pm, £5 donation requested

17 November 2018 Much Wenlock Charter Celebrations contact Much Wenlock Town Council [www.muchwenlock-tc.gov.uk](http://www.muchwenlock-tc.gov.uk)

24 November 2018 Friends of Shropshire Archives

Annual lecture, Dr Kate Croft, 'Health and Expedient: childcare and charity at the Shrewsbury Foundling Hospital, 1759-1771', Shropshire Archives, 10.30am, £5, For further details see [www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk](http://www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk)

Mary McKenzie, Shropshire Archives

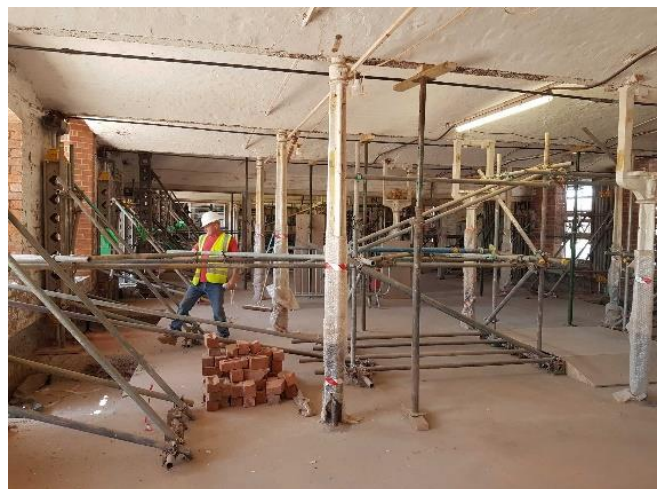
### NEWS: FRIENDS OF FLAXMILL MALTINGS

Phase One of the HLF funded project to repair and regenerate the Main Mill and Kiln began in June last year. It is on schedule and on budget and progress is now increasingly visible.



The roof has been stripped down, the original iron valley gutters conserved and reinstated and the roof has now been felted and the slating has commenced. This means that most of the canopy and scaffolding that has protected it for many years has been taken down, and the saw tooth profile of the roof will soon be on view once more.

Meanwhile, the process of strengthening the masonry walls and rebuilding the window openings has begun to show how much natural light would have flooded the buildings when it operated as a flax mill.



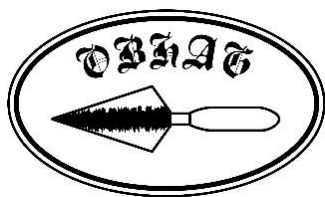
Once the work on the walls and windows has been completed, the scaffolding that has cloaked the building for so long can be removed and the Main Mill building will once again stand tall and imposing over its Spring Gardens site.

Phase Two of the works will begin in early 2019. The Kiln and Jubilee Tower will be restored and the Main Mill will be fitted out for the start of its new working life in Spring 2021.

Don't forget that at the Society's AGM in September, Nick Hill, Historic England's project manager will outline both the work that has been done so far, and what remains to be done in this internationally important project.

*Penny Ward*

#### NEWS: OSWESTRY & BORDER HISTORY & ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP



Oswestry & Border History & Archaeology Group has an exceptionally interesting programme of talks this

autumn. Bill Britnell and Tom Lerwill will focus on the Welsh side of the border and we are very privileged to

welcome Nick Millea, the Bodleian Library Maps Librarian whose talk will concentrate on Shropshire.

Friday 14<sup>th</sup> September: Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age sites in the Tanat Valley. *Bill Britnell, Research Associate at the Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust (CPAT)*

Friday 12<sup>th</sup> October: Graveyard Graffiti in North East Wales. *Tom Lerwill*

Friday 9<sup>th</sup> November: A history of Shropshire in Maps. *Nick Millea, Bodleian Library Maps Librarian.*

Friday 7<sup>th</sup> December: Treasure beneath your feet. *Wrexham Heritage Society*

*Meetings are held in the Methodist Church Hall, Castle Street Oswestry at 7.30 pm and non members are very welcome.*

*Entry Fee: Members £1 ; Non members £3*

#### THE BERTH, BASCHURCH – AN ONGOING PUZZLE

Many members of the society will be familiar with the site of The Berth. This unusual Iron Age fortification is located in the marshlands of the North Shropshire Plain, close to the village of Baschurch. It comprises two enclosures which are connected across boggy pasture by upstanding, 'T' shaped causeways; the larger enclosure surrounds the low-lying gravel mound of Berth Hill and overlooks Berth Pool. It was visited on numerous occasions by Lal Chitty and was subject to excavation during the 1960s, and until quite recently, it had its own Shropshire-based study group. Its most distinguished artefact is the Berth Cauldron, which was recovered from Berth Stream in 1906 and is currently on display in the Shrewsbury Museum. However, and despite the Berth's status as a Shropshire icon, little is known about the site.



Figure 1 The Berth - main enclosure seen across flooded pasture January 2016 (Norton 2016)

Although the Berth is classified as a hillfort, it shares striking similarities with the Iron Age 'marsh-fort' of Sutton Common, near Doncaster. Marsh-forts are scarce monuments and their function and chronology have not been researched in detail. The monumentality and architecture of these enigmatic monuments reflects that of their hillfort cousins, but their location in low-lying marshland could suggest a different purpose. Sutton Common was never the focus for domestic occupation but appears to have been used as a site for ritual or ceremonial practices, begging the question whether the Berth may have had a comparable function.

A programme of research began at the Berth several years ago, and so far, investigations have concentrated on the Berth's palaeoenvironmental past and the associated question of site access. Analysis of the plant and insect remains preserved in the extensive peat deposits which surround the monument confirmed that the peat basin is the result of a kettle hole formed during the last (Devensian) glaciation. As the kettle hole became progressively terrestrialised, the basin developed into a mosaic of alder-carr woodland with still pools and areas of wet and dry grassland. This was the environment which surrounded the Berth during its occupation. It is unlikely that the monument was completely encircled by open water, although Berth Pool may once have been more extensive.

A combination of boggy terrain and wet alder-carr woodland meant that accessing the Berth's enclosures would have been difficult, possibly deliberately so, and whilst the existing causeways may seem to provide the obvious answer, they have no parallels elsewhere in the British Iron Age. How the site was accessed formed the main research question for excavations undertaken in 2016 and 2017 by the University of Birmingham (Chapman, Smith and Norton, 2017). Two trenches were opened, one in each causeway, which revealed that, with slight variations, both were constructed of solid stone blocks and rested on peat foundations. The construction technique has parallels with that used in the infrastructure for some early railways, for example, at Caldon Low in Staffordshire (Blockley and Shaw, unpublished). Together with finds from one trench (a piece of medieval tile and a copper belt buckle), the evidence suggests that the existing, upstanding causeways are unlikely to be contemporary with the Iron Age monument and are quite probably post-medieval.



Figure 2 The Berth - Trench 2 - east-west causeway (Norton 2016)

These findings left unresolved the question of access to the Iron Age monument. However, a putative 'third' causeway was identified, which linked the main and small enclosures across the north-east section of the pasture, and led to an entrance in the ramparts of the main enclosure. This finding poses further questions however. For example, if this was the main entrance, what was the purpose of the very obvious, large in-turned entrance sited to the south-east of the main enclosure ramparts, close to Berth Pool, and how was that accessed? Was the main enclosure accessed by a formalised routeway, reminiscent of Sutton Common, and did the small enclosure act as a kind of annex to the main enclosure?

This enigmatic site will fuel archaeological debate for many years to come. A programme of geophysical investigation of the main monument is ongoing and excavation is likely to recommence in 2019. Our thanks go to Howard Edwards and his family for allowing access to the site.

Dr. Henry Chapman, Reader in Archaeology and Digital Humanities, Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Birmingham

Shelagh Norton, PhD Researcher, Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Birmingham

Dr. David Smith, Senior Lecturer, Classics, Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Birmingham

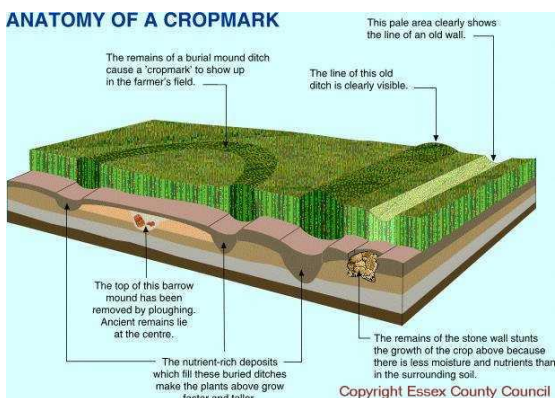
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Chapman, H., Smith, D.N. and Norton, S.M. (2017) *The Berth, Baschurch, Shropshire (SAM 1004770; HER 129): Report on the Excavation and Post Excavation Analysis from the Berth, Shropshire, June 2<sup>nd</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2016*. (Unpublished Report to Historic England).

## A BUSY SUMMER FOR AERIAL ARCHAEOLOGY IN SHROPSHIRE

The dry summer, as widely reported, has provided a boon for aerial archaeologists, with a large number of new discoveries across the country, as well as significant detail being added to previously recorded sites. Shropshire has been no exception, and with grant funding from Historic England, Shropshire Council's Historic Environment Team have been able to take advantage of the conditions to carry out aerial reconnaissance. The drought conditions of early summer have put many crops under stress, with the result that a wide range of different 'cropmarks' have emerged. In addition, 'parchmarks' have developed with stunted grass growth overlying buried stonework.



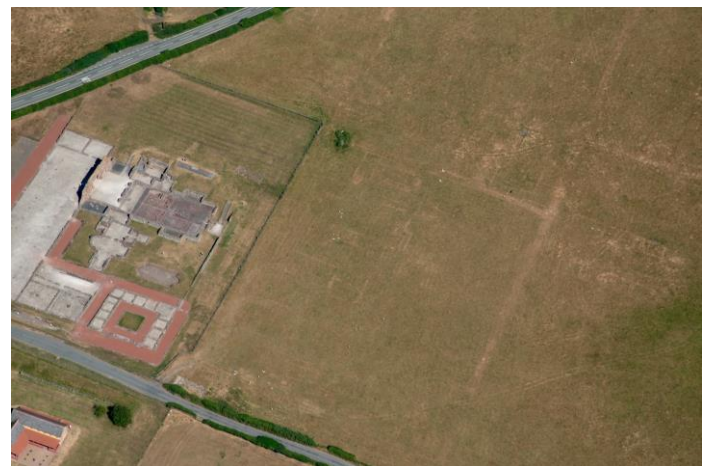
Some highlights of the project are indicated below. Most significant has been a series of sorties over Wroxeter, as parching has revealed significant detail, particularly of insulas II, IX, XII and XVI, including the plan of an aisled building to the south of Bell Brook, recorded in the 1970s. Aerial reconnaissance this summer has identified 23 sites that are entirely new to the record, particularly across the south-east of the county and in the north – these include a number of enclosures of probable Iron Age to Roman date, a selection of ring ditches surrounding Bronze Age barrows and several sections of pit alignment.

The aerial reconnaissance programme is ongoing – further flying is planned in Winter 2018, primarily to record earthwork sites, and

again in Summer 2019, to further take advantage of a locally based reconnaissance team within the cropmark window.

Analysis of the data is also ongoing, but all 500 new aerial photographs have been integrated into the Historic Environment Record, to accompany the over 8,000 acquired over the last decade, since the Historic England programme of aerial reconnaissance began. Many of the images have been uploaded to Discovering Shropshire's History, but the HER would welcome enquiries from members of the society who are interested in finding out more or accessing the originals: [her@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:her@shropshire.gov.uk) 01743 254619.

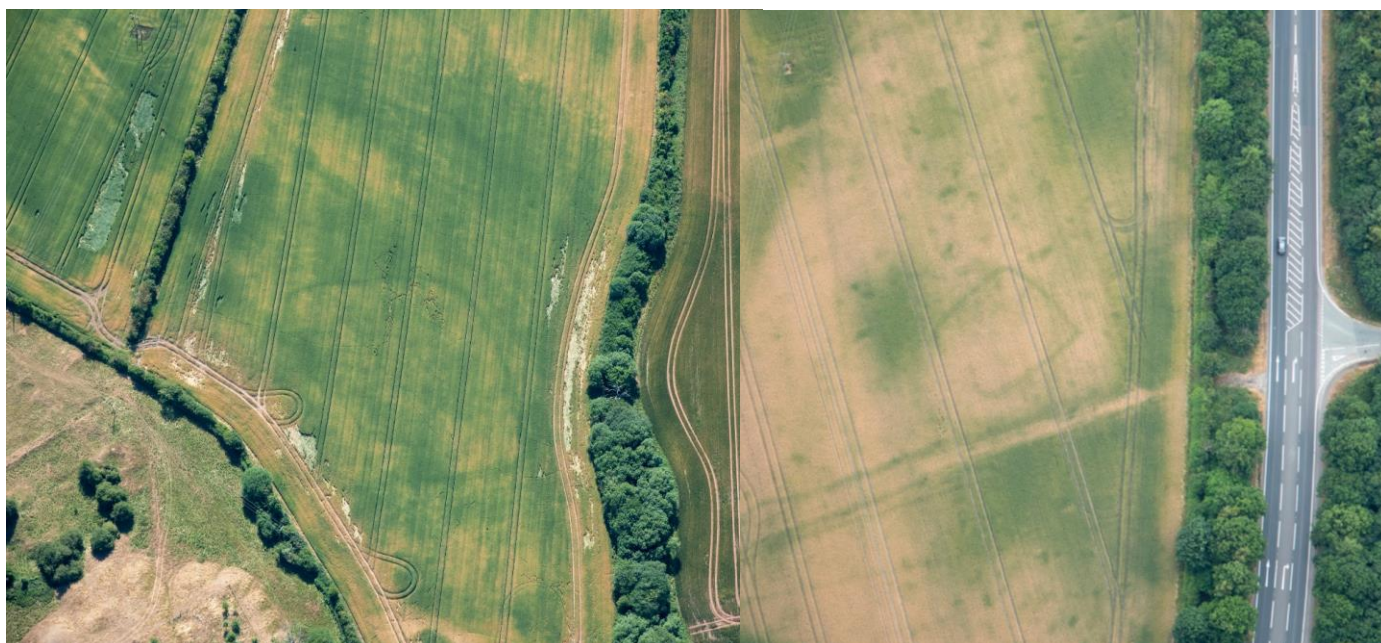
All images are © Shropshire Council, 2018.



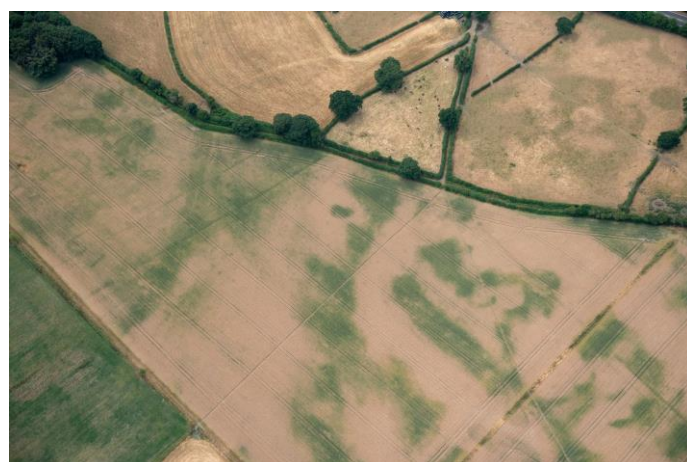
Wide view of parchmarks at Wroxeter, showing clear detail of defences (left), streets and detail of buildings, with particularly sharp details of insula IX (right)



*Clear detail of an aisled building is visible, first recorded in the drought of 1975, adjacent to the south of Bell Brook.*



*Newly recorded subrectangular enclosures of probable Iron Age to Roman date visible near Caughley (left) and Gobowen (right)*



*Two very different military sites: clear parchmarks of WWII Prisoner of War Camp No.8, Mile House, Oswestry (left) and the southern ditch of vexillation fort at Rhyn Park, St Martin's seen as a thin linear cropmark, with possible titulum outside the entranceway (right)*

*Giles Carey, HER Officer, Shropshire Council Historic Environment Team*

## IRONBRIDGE POWER STATION: ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORDING

Ironbridge Power Station is located 1.6km west of the town centre of Ironbridge and 18km south-east of the county town of Shrewsbury, in central, eastern Shropshire; the site is situated on the south bank of the River Severn, hemmed in by the escarpment of Benthall Edge to the south, and extends between the remains of the 12th -century Cistercian Abbey at Buildwas to the west and the narrowing valley of the Ironbridge Gorge to the east. The site extends to a total area of c.86 hectares, of which c.45 hectares are occupied by buildings and structures dedicated to power generation. Historically, the site has been occupied by two 20th -century coal-fired power stations; namely 'Ironbridge A', a 200MW station constructed by the West Midlands Joint Electricity Authority (WMJEA) between 1929 and 1939 (operational from 1932, initially at half-capacity), and 'Ironbridge B', a 1,000MW 'super-station' built between the years of 1962 and 1969 as part of a large-scale expansion of electricity generation at a national scale under the auspices of the nationalised Central Electricity Generating Board (CEGB). Functioning briefly in tandem, the majority of the buildings related to the A Station were demolished in the early 1980s. Ironbridge B ceased generation on 20th November 2015, since which time the station has been undergoing a process of decommissioning; demolitions at the site are due to commence in 2018.

The B Station site survives largely complete, comprising a standard grouping of power station structures based around the generating core of boiler house, turbine hall and control block. Its constituent buildings are, for the most part, strictly utilitarian in nature comprising large enclosed spaces of rectilinear, orthogonal form for the accommodation of generation and related plant. This use of simple, functional forms represents a fundamental move away from the design philosophy of previous eras that gave rise to the 'brick cathedrals' of the early-20th century. The ranges are of structural steel or reinforced-concrete frame construction throughout, finished with a standard and consistent range of external claddings, resulting in an unremarkable 'generic' aspect. As such, there is nothing intrinsically innovative in the buildings themselves, either in terms of their architectural form and detailing, nor indeed in the processes that took place within, the latter dictated entirely by the engineering requirements of the 500MW programme.

The Ironbridge station had to be adapted to occupy an elongated, fairly narrow site, hemmed in to the south by the rising escarpment of Benthall Edge at the narrowing of the Ironbridge Gorge and to the north by the existing railway lines, in such a way as to cause minimum disruption to the A Station, which was to continue in operation, at least temporarily, while also leaving land for

possible future expansion. Where the buildings of Ironbridge B are unusual, therefore, is in their relationship to their site and, by association, to each other.



The principal generation buildings were located to the centre of the site, with control block, turbine hall and boiler house within a large, conjoined block, stepping up successively from north to south, with a single, massive chimney stack sited axially to the rear thereof.

A massive 400kV switch-house and an extensive new coaling plant were laid out to the west, and a bank of four cooling towers erected in an unusual, gently sweeping arc to the east. The elongated nature of the site also resulted in one of the longest and most complex conveyor systems of any of the group of contemporary power stations, transporting fuel from the coal handling plant to the unit boilers. Auxiliary buildings including water treatment plants, circulating water plant, dust and ash plants were fitted in between the cooling tower field and the main generation buildings. While modifications to plant etc. were made to overcome initial operational difficulties and, subsequently, periodically throughout the lifetime of the station, both in line with technological advances and in response to tightening environmental controls, the original plant buildings retained, for the most part, the functions for which they were originally designed and constructed. Although the boiler house and turbine hall were subject to extensive repair following fires in the later years of the 20th century, and while adaption to bio-mass fuel source in 2012 necessitated significant modifications in terms of plant throughout, both the site layout and its original functionality remain readily legible in presentational terms.

A detailed programme of building recording was carried out, cross-referenced to a comprehensive photographic record and illustrated with copies of original design drawings/diagrams and early photographs as appropriate.

The full report is available online:  
<https://doi.org/10.5284/1043137>

*Ric Tyler, Buildings Archaeologist*

## ■ EARDINGTON FORGES

The Shropshire Caving and Mining Club have recently been able to explore the remains of the Upper and Lower Forges at Eardington.



*A club member climbs into the upper culvert level at Eardington Upper Forge*

Upper Forge was opened in 1778 by the brothers John and William Wheeler, both established ironmasters. A canal linking this to the Severn was working by 1782 and they established Lower Forge at the canal's mouth above the Severn by 1789. The sites operated together and passed through a series of owners; after the Wheelers it passed to the Stokes family, prominent Black Country ironmasters who also had a blast furnace at Billingsley. For a short period in the early 19th century it was leased by Samuel Twamley. In 1814 the works were leased by James Foster and John Bradley from the Black Country, although they may have been operating at Eardington from 1809, with the help of John Raistrick, an innovative engineer then working at Bridgnorth Foundry. For the remainder of its life, it was worked by Foster and company. At some point around 1810-20, Upper Forge was abandoned and all iron working was concentrated on Lower Forge. This closed in 1889.

A forge typically takes cast iron from a blast furnace, a very brittle material and removes excess carbon and other impurities to produce wrought iron, that can be worked by blacksmiths. Traditionally charcoal was used as the fuel in the forge but by the late 18th century, coal/coke was being introduced. The Wheelers initially used charcoal but they soon introduced coal with a technique called potting and stamping. By the early 19th century this process had been replaced at Eardington by puddling using a reverberatory furnace, where the coal fire was in a separate compartment from the iron, and the hot gasses from the fire were used to melt the metal. The puddling furnace was combined with a "balling furnace" where the refined iron was worked into bars. However, early in the 19th century this was also abandoned and the forge reverted to using charcoal to produce the wrought iron. This

gave a better-quality product than could be obtained from coal-produced iron and Eardington became one of the largest charcoal iron producers in the country. The canal linking the two forges was almost entirely driven in a tunnel. Back in 1967, when the club last visited the site, it was necessary to use a boat to explore it, but now the bed has silted up and so it was possible to walk through. At the lower forge site, an overflow from the canal passes through a second tunnel to emerge at a pit that once held a waterwheel that powered the forge. There is evidence for further cisterns in the rock behind the forge that also fed water to the site. There are the remains of what might be a Lancashire hearth, used in the charcoal process to refine the iron; a blocked flue leads to a chimney that still stands. A network of culverts were also explored. These consist of tunnels on two levels connected by a shaft that drain water from various parts of the site into the Severn. One tunnel is particularly interesting as it extends for several hundred feet to terminate it a filled shaft at the north end of the site. The 1816 Ordnance Survey 2":1 mile preliminary drawings show two pools in this area, so it is possible the shaft and tunnels were used to move water from these. By the time of the tithe map of c1841, the pools had been drained and replaced by walled compounds which still survive.

*David Poyner*

## ■ PRISON HISTORY WEBSITE

Members might be interested to learn of a new website recently launched by the Open University dedicated to Prison History research. Dr Rosalind Crone writes:

"Prison History ([www.prisonhistory.org](http://www.prisonhistory.org)) is a database which contains information on nearly 850 penal institutions which existed in 19th century England, including around 420 local prisons and 380 lock ups. For each institution, there is information about its operational dates, jurisdiction, location, population statistics, the primary and secondary sources which mention it, and a list of all the relevant and surviving archival documents which we have been able to find in repositories based in England. On accessing Prison History, users can either search for specific prisons or various types of prisons, or browse the lists of archival materials that we recovered."

Dr. Crone is keen that the resource develops so if you have any further information, she invites you to correspond with her further.

Contact [Rosalind.Crone@open.ac.uk](mailto:Rosalind.Crone@open.ac.uk) for further information.

➤ NB The Council is not responsible for any statement made, or opinion expressed in the *Newsletter* of the Society.