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### **A Warm Welcome to New Members**

Mrs H Cameron, Worcester  
Mr & Mrs J Cavell, Worcester  
Ms R Edwards, Worcester  
Dr & Mrs R Higgins, Littleworth  
Mr D J H Smith, Gloucester  
Mr S Thwaites, Malvern

Neither the Committee of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society nor the Editor is responsible for any statements or opinions expressed in the *Worcestershire Recorder*, the authors of the contributions alone being responsible for the same.

Cover illustration: Sheldon Tapestry Map: Feckenham Forest, © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford (see p21). Note Coughton marked on the map (see pp19-20).

## Chairman's Letter



It is with some trepidation that I set out to write my first letter as Chairman of the Society, in the knowledge that I follow predecessors with whose professional archaeological expertise I cannot hope to compete. Nevertheless, I am conscious of the very generous support which they continue to supply, along with that offered by all the committee members and officers who work so hard for the Society. My special thanks, and those of all of us, must go to James Dinn, who has guided the Society through the last three years, during which membership has increased, attendance at lectures has broken all records, and the Society's financial position has continued in a secure and stable state. His initiative in setting up a Research Fund for aspiring researchers in Worcestershire's archaeology and history will bear fruit this year. I am delighted and reassured that he will continue to be at the centre of the Society's affairs as Deputy Chairman and as Programme Secretary.

Among the current business which the committee has under consideration is the agreement with the University of Worcester governing the care and housing of the Society's Library, members' access to which has recently been less than satisfactory. We hope soon to be in a position to circulate revised arrangements which will make things easier for members who want to make use of this valuable resource.

### *Excursions*

Let me add that we should be equally thankful to those members who have given their unstinted time and efforts over several years to organising the summer excursion programme, namely Muriel Tinsley, Michael and Jenny Goode, and Stephen Price. The 2016 programme will however be their final production, and they will be taking a well deserved rest from their labours. The excursion programme is a popular part of the Society's activities, witnessed by the fact that all of this year's outings have been fully subscribed. It would be a great pity if this very satisfactory situation were to be threatened, and volunteers are urgently needed to replace the retiring team if the programme is to be continued next year. Please let me or any committee member (see p4) know if you can offer your support; plenty of help and guidance from those with experience is waiting for you. In the meantime, this year's programme (pp23-4) kicks off on 26 April with a visit to Oxford to see the Sheldon tapestry maps, following on from the Berkeley Lecture on the same subject.

### *Lecture Venue*

As mentioned above, the lecture programme has been very successful in recent years in attracting large attendances; something like a third of the entire membership regularly comes to St Georges Hall each month. The consequence is that we have to some extent become the victims of our own success. The hall has certain distinct inadequacies for the numbers now involved: the acoustics are not good, and the sound system is less than reliable; the portable screen is too small to make projected illustrations easily decipherable from the back of the hall, and the lack of raked seating makes this doubly difficult; and there is no fixed seating, with the consequence that seats have to be set out and put away each time we meet. These problems are well known to regular attendees and have been referred to before, not least by my predecessor in his letter last August to all members, in which he canvassed views about desirable changes. The committee has as a result been looking for an alternative venue, bearing in mind the need for somewhere reasonably central and accessible from all parts of the county, with some parking, as well as addressing the problems I have listed above. We have now decided to try the lecture theatre at the Royal

Grammar School in the Tything in Worcester for our lecture programme next season. This has raked permanent seating, installed projection facilities with a large screen wall, and an installed sound system. It thus meets most of the criteria which we have set ourselves for a new venue, although there is not as yet a hearing loop (one is promised in a refurbishment to take place in the next couple of years), and disabled access is less good than at St Georges, though possible. Parking is provided in a secure car park in Little London, controlled by a keypad, from which it is a short walk to the theatre.

I should emphasise that this change is in the nature of a trial, to see how the new venue measures up to members' needs, as well as those of the speakers who visit us, to whom we have an obligation to provide adequate facilities. We will actively seek your reactions next season, in the course of which we will continue to review the situation.

## **Bob Ruffle**

### **WAS Committee**

Chairman	Bob Ruffle
Deputy Chairman	James Dinn
Secretary	Janet Dunleavey
Treasurer	Garth Raymer
Editor (Transactions)	Robin Whittaker
Programme Secretary	James Dinn
Membership Secretary	Margaret Goodrich
Excursions Administrator	Vacant

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Paul Hudson                      Frazer McNeil-Watson                      Rachael Trimm

#### Other Officers of the Society (not on the Committee)

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Editor ( <i>Recorder</i> )	Caroline Hillaby
Curator	Debbie Fox
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Technical Officer	Peter Walker

#### Sub-Committees (Bob Ruffle and Janet Dunleavey on all, ex officio):

Editorial: Robin Whittaker, Joe Hillaby, Chris Guy, Garth Raymer

Library & Collections: Debbie Fox, Joe Hillaby, Robin Whittaker, Peter Walker, Garth Raymer, Roger Fairman

Membership & Communications: Margaret Goodrich, Brian Browne, Caroline Hillaby

Excursions: Under review

Email contact can be made via the website <http://worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk/>.

Congratulations to **Ernie Kay** who, in recognition of his major contributions to the Society over the years, both practically and financially, was made an honorary member at the AGM.

### **Ave et Vale. Welcome to:**

#### **Kerry Whitehouse**

I gained my undergraduate degree at University of Worcester in Archaeology and Heritage and have worked on contracts at Mike Napthan Archaeology. I worked towards a post graduate certificate in Heritage and Identity while working at the Medical Museums of Worcester (The George Marshall Medical Museum and The Infirmary). I now work for Museums Worcestershire as Registrar, looking after documentation systems for the collections and also work in Interpretation at The Commandery.

#### **Fraser McNeil-Watson**

I am pleased to have been elected to the committee of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society and look forward to serving on it. I graduated from Edinburgh University in Natural Philosophy and subsequently specialised in Nuclear Physics and instrumentation. I have been employed for many years at Malvern Instruments specialising in particle characterisation, and am now employed part time in a largely consultative role. My interest in History and Archaeology goes back at least as far as my interest in physics. I decided when it came to choose A level subjects that I would make my career in science and keep an interest in historical matters. My special interests lie in Military History from Roman times on, so archaeology is also very relevant.

**Farewell** to two former Chairmen who have both contributed to the Society's lecture programmes and *Transactions*: **Joe Hillaby**, Committee member since 1993 and Programme Secretary for fourteen years, 2001 to 2015, and **Stephen Price**, a Committee member since 2005 who has worked tirelessly for the Society in many areas. Also retired from the Committee are the Excursions team, **Muriel Tinsley** and **Michael & Jenny Goode**. The Society's thanks go to all these colleagues for their efforts on behalf of the Society.

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#### **Hal Dalwood, 1957-2015**

Hal Dalwood, one of the county's best-known archaeologists, died on 25 November 2015 after a short illness.

Hal was one of a number of archaeologists who arrived in Worcestershire in 1988 to work on the Deansway excavations, which took place before construction of the Crowngate shopping centre in Worcester. Hal, like many others, stayed on and made the county his home. The Deansway excavations were the most extensive ever in the city, with a large team on site for a full year. This, however, was not Hal's first visit to Worcestershire; in the 1970s he worked for a season at Beckford, on an excavation of the Iron Age village. Hal rapidly made the urban archaeology of the county his speciality. After Deansway he and Victoria Bryant surveyed the archaeology of the smaller towns in Worcestershire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire. The survey provided a firm basis for understanding the potential of over 60 existing or former towns and is still widely used 25 years later. This was an early example of an 'extensive urban survey' and provided a template for many similar surveys across England. He returned to the Deansway project to oversee the publication of the site, along with his wife, Rachel Edwards, and the report was finally published in 2004.

Hal was the linchpin of most of the major excavations in Worcester during the 1990s and 2000s, including Newport Street (recently published, see p15), the City Campus, Lowesmoor, and the Hive, as well as numerous smaller sites. Elsewhere in the county his work included excavations at Pershore Abbey, and he co-authored the resource assessment and research agenda for the

archaeology of river valleys in Worcestershire, *Archaeology and Aggregates in Worcestershire*. He engaged widely and seriously with theoretical archaeology, and also with the development of the profession – he was an early member of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (now the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists) in the 1980s and continued to support their work. His contributions to projects were always thoughtful and rigorous; he was never afraid to challenge accepted orthodoxies and interpretations. Hal was extremely well read, but his thinking was influenced as much by his engagement in current affairs and the arts, and by wider experiences such as the year he spent in southern Sudan teaching English in 1980-81.

He was a passionate communicator both beyond the profession and within it, using all available media. This included organising the annual Worcestershire Archaeology Dayschool for many years, advising on museum displays, giving lectures (including several to the Society, where his talks were always a popular draw) and contributing to academic and professional conferences. He was a regular contributor to the Transactions – between 1992 and 2006 he wrote, or co-wrote ten papers. In his work he was always generous with advice and ideas. Hal will be remembered and missed by very many people, as an inspirational colleague, friend and archaeologist.

## **James Dinn**

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### **News from the County: an update on some outreach projects**

#### Pershore Wetlands

The Pershore Wetlands project has been focusing on the Avon Community Meadows and has involved many people in events over the past couple of years. We have produced school resources to help young people understand the history and archaeology of the site and investigate the history of settlement at Pershore, including asking the question ‘Why did people choose to settle in this location?’.

#### The Start of Something Big – Redditch Oral History

As a follow up to the Engineering the Past project which investigated the industrial history of Redditch up to the 1950s, Jestamminute Theatre is coming forward in time. Once again we are helping to train people in carrying out oral history interviews to capture the memories of those who worked in the factories. We’ve also produced educational resources and are trialling them with classes, so not only is the history preserved but local children can learn about Redditch’s industrial heritage as part of local history topics.

#### Assessing the Value of Community-Generated Historic Environment Research

Historic England commissioned us to find out how much archaeology, historic building and local history research is carried out by voluntary groups in England. This included assessing the value or potential value this research has for enhancing Historic Environment Records (HERs) and Research Frameworks. As part of this, local societies in Worcestershire and across England completed surveys (thanks to any of you who took part), and in-depth pilot studies were carried out for three areas. We have been working on those replies and will shortly finish this interesting project and be able to share the findings.

#### World War One Hundred project

We’ve been supporting the Worcestershire World War One Hundred project, which is marking the centenary of the Great War through a partnership of heritage organisations. This has included hosting a couple of workshops as part of the CBA’s Home Front Legacy (see p10). The aim is to train volunteers to record WWI archaeology still with us in this country. These records will then

get added to the local HER to help ensure that this important recent part of our archaeological heritage is not forgotten. So great was the interest for the first session that we repeated the workshop.

#### Three Counties Traditional Orchards Project

This is an HLF project, restoring and caring for traditional orchards. One strand, which will contribute to management plans, will be researching the history of specific orchards and doing archaeological walks in them to see what features remain, and we have started helping volunteers begin the research.

#### Foresters Forest

Crossing the border we have working in the Forest of Dean as part of an HLF Landscape Partnership project. Lots of volunteers were trained in recording archaeological features identified through LIDAR. A number of enthusiastic people have been going out throughout the winter following these up, and we've been keeping in touch to provide advice and support. We've been very impressed at the determination of the local people and how many features they have been getting through.

#### Schools

We have been visiting more schools to help them understand the county's past. Prehistory is now part of the national curriculum for key stage 2, and we have helped a number of schools who had never taught this and weren't sure what to do. We have a rich prehistoric heritage in Worcestershire, so schools don't just have to look at Stonehenge and Skara Brae, but can use local sites and evidence and replicas based on local finds. Two schools have included a guided trip up British Camp – fortunately the weather has been fine so far!

#### Workshops

Last autumn we ran a six-week 'Introduction to Archaeology' series, looking at the different stages and skills in the process of archaeology from desk-based assessments to digging and post excavation study. This was quickly full up, with lots of people wanting to find out more about the different aspects of archaeology, so we are repeating it in Bewdley and Kidderminster in partnership with Worcestershire Libraries and Learning, and will run it again in The Hive in the autumn.

#### **Paul Hudson**

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#### **News from the City**

Archaeological work at Royal Worcester Porcelain (site C) has now been completed. A very complex series of interventions here included evaluations, watching briefs and some small-scale targeted excavation. As previously reported, remains found on the site included parts of the medieval St Peter's church. These included a red sandstone buttress bearing the graffiti 'IH 1823' (the church was demolished and rebuilt in the 1830s). There were many ledger slabs and burials associated with this church and its Victorian successor.

There were also substantial remains of the medieval city wall, confirming the line shown on the 19th century Ordnance Survey mapping. In most cases the medieval stone wall, which had been demolished to well below current ground level, was used as a foundation for brick buildings or boundary walls. No remains were found of the tower which was expected at the south-east corner of the church.

Further south on the Royal Worcester Porcelain site, a small excavation uncovered the 8.6m diameter circular pads, made of crushed firebrick and mortar, which formed the sub-base for two of the late 19th century kilns. All other remains had been removed.

Archaeological excavation of a site at White Ladies Close in late 2014 found a number of Roman features. Two parallel ditches ran at right angles to the projected line of the Roman road north from Worcester. These could have formed a boundary or enclosure, or demarcated a trackway. A number of pits and postholes were found, but very few finds, and their function was undetermined. As usual in Worcester, there was evidence relating to ironworking, but in this case the majority of the (very small) waste assemblage was made up of ore rather than slag. It is possible therefore that this area was used for ore storage or roasting.

A small watching brief at St Georges Lane North recorded Roman ditches, soil layers and other features, similar in character to those found at the former Worcester City FC ground, 150m to the north-east. The site, in the valley of the Barbourne Brook, is only 250m north of the Roman remains found at White Ladies Close, raising the possibility that the Roman occupation of this part of north Worcester was much more extensive than had previously been thought.

Building recording has included work at Mealcheapen Street (17th-18th century house), St Georges Lane North, Britannia Square and Bromyard Road (19th-century coach houses). A building assessment of the former St Johns Mill (ice works) has drawn attention to features deserving recording or preservation.

## **James Dinn**

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### **A votive from the Vale? A mutilated Roman coin from Badsey, Worcestershire**

Recent fieldwork by local historian Peter Stewart at Under Badsey (SP066431) has revealed limited evidence of Romano-British and later activity, including a small ceramic assemblage – dominated by Severn Valley ware – and an even smaller number of coin finds. Such a group is, in itself, unremarkable; the Vale of Evesham is home to a large number of small to medium-sized Romano-British rural farmsteads with associated field systems befitting a landscape of significant agricultural potential (Cox 1967; Price 1983, 147). The coin finds, however, contain one object of individual interest in the form of a denarius of Domitian (81-96 AD), worn and heavily mutilated by a series of cutmarks (Fig). The extent of defacement on the reverse inhibits detailed identification, which must remain as follows:

AR denarius of Domitian, 81-96 AD.

Obv. [IMP CAES] DOM[IT] AVG [GERM ...]. Laureate head of Domitian r., cutmarks

Rev. Illegible. Reverse indeterminate, cutmarks.

As RIC II:I(2) Domitian 11-821, Mint of Rome. 2.30g, Wear A3/A4.

Both faces have been mutilated by cutmarks, overwhelmingly concentrated on the reverse, where more than 60 discrete slashes can be identified (Fig). That these are probably deliberate cuts made in antiquity is indicated by three characteristics. Firstly, the majority of the slashes are deep, straight cuts following regular unbroken lines, distinct from the smaller and shallower scratches produced by unintentional use-wear or subsequent surface disfigurement (Kiernan 2001, 21); secondly, there is a concentration on the reverse; and, finally, the pattern of surface defacement is unique among Roman coins from Badsey sites, of which more than 500 have been individually identified by the author.

Accepting the case for intentional defacement, the Badsey find is marked out as an apparently unique Worcestershire example of a phenomenon recorded elsewhere in the western Empire. Kiernan (2001) identifies five principal forms of coin mutilation – surface cuts/slashes, edge cuts, halving/portioning, bending and side/edge hammering – evident on Romano-British coin finds, apparently most common in the first to mid-second centuries. The Badsey find fits neatly into this framework, albeit considerably more defaced than examples recorded by Kiernan, where fewer than five surface slashes are usually recorded. A close parallel is afforded by a sestertius of Trajan (98-117 AD) found at Great and Little Chishill (Cambs.; PAS-ID BH-981072), whose reverse is similarly obliterated by scratchmarks; more local is a nummus of the House of Constantine (360-364 AD) found a short distance from the Fosse Way at Offchurch (Warks.; PAS-ID WAW-16B913), where both faces have been similarly scratched.

Kiernan (2001, 19) notes the apparently exclusive distribution of excavated examples at religious or votive sites, including the Bath Sacred Spring, Coventina's Well, Hayling Island and Piercebridge (Kiernan 2001; Dobson 2014), although this may be linked to the comparatively large size of such assemblages (P. Walton pers. comm., 29 February 2016). To these can be added a number of single finds recorded on the Portable Antiquities Scheme (e.g. PAS BH-981072, BH-5703B8), although here site context is rarely known; the aforementioned find from Great and Little Chishill is a noteworthy exception, found a short distance from two second- to fourth-century votive miniature axeheads (PAS BH-E4E401, BH-C3BB12). The possible connection between coin mutilation and ritual activity is striking, perhaps read in parallel with



*Figure 1: Mutilated denarius of Domitian (81-96 AD) from Under Badsey*

the ‘ritual killing’ of other Iron Age and Romano-British artefacts – a sacrificial act removing objects from the realm of everyday circulation, rendering them fit for the otherworld (MacDonald 2007, 172; Dobson 2014, 4). In the case of the Badsey find this is reiterated by the findspot’s close proximity to the Badsey Brook, watercourses being well-recognised foci for ritual activity in later prehistoric and Romano-British contexts (Alcock 1965; Bradley 1990). If a ‘ritual’ interpretation is accepted, dating remains a key unresolved issue. The longevity of Domitianic denarii in circulation has been traced by Carradice (1983, 70-72), whose basic framework is illustrated by British denarius hoards; declining from a late first-century peak, issues of Domitian represent less than 20% of coins in the Trajanic hoards from Lavenham (Suffolk; Robertson 2000, 23, no. 120) and Verulamium Insula XIV (Herts.; Robertson 2000, 21, no. 110), dwindling to 8% of the mid-second-century hoard from Lawrence Weston, Bristol (Gloucs.; Robertson 2000, 44, no. 215) and 3% of the late second-century hoard from St Briavels (Gloucs.; Robertson 2000, 71-72, no. 338). The Badsey find, therefore, was probably deposited between c.81-120 AD, and most likely before the end of the first century.

On the basis of the available evidence, therefore, the coin from Under Badsey might best be interpreted as a late first-century votive deposit, perhaps connected to the veneration of water cults, a trace of transient ritual behaviour in a county where evidence for Romano-British non-funerary ritual is rather slim. Further fieldwork may establish a firmer site context, with potentially significant implications for an understanding of Romano-British ritual in the county.

### **Acknowledgments**

I am grateful to Peter Stewart (Evesham) for permission to publish this find, and to Adrian Popescu (Fitzwilliam Museum), Kris Lockyear (UCL), and Philippa Walton (Ashmolean Museum) for valuable comments and discussion.

### **Murray Andrews**

**Institute of Archaeology, University College London**

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### **The Home Front Legacy 1914 - 1918**

Longer-term members of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society will possibly remember articles about the former Defence of Britain Project (1995 to 2002) and the follow-up Defence of Worcestershire Project which, using volunteer researchers, was coordinated by the County Archaeological Service. As a result of those projects, some 2,500 sites of a modern defence nature have been added to the Historic Environment Record (HER) for the county. Members will also be aware of the events and activities being organized both nationally and locally associated with commemorating the various 100th anniversaries of key stages of World War One. The Council of British Archaeology is consequently asking volunteers to turn their attention to recording sites and buildings which reflect the impact of that war on the Home Front. As a result of the earlier projects, about a hundred such sites already appear on the Worcestershire's HER, but there is much more to investigate and record. To guide researchers, the CBA has published a handbook entitled, 'The Home Front in Britain 1914-1918 – An Archaeological Handbook', which is available for £12 from Oxbow Books in Oxford or The Hive in Worcester. The CBA is encouraging researchers to electronically record sites for a national database, and a website has been established at [www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk](http://www.homefrontlegacy.org.uk) for the purpose. Any sites recorded in this fashion will be transferred to individual county HERs.

The Home Front Legacy Project is intended to record sites and buildings which come under the following broad headings:

1. **Commemoration**, including the less well known war memorials, memorial halls, memorial parks and gardens, local cemeteries containing war dead, and sites of captured German guns (most were destroyed in the drive for scrap metal in 1940), together with the British tanks gifted to towns and cities which performed particularly well in the purchase of savings bonds;
2. **Headquarters and training facilities** for troops, including drill halls, training grounds, practice trenches, firing ranges and temporary billets or camps;
3. **Home Defence**, including sites and buildings used by the Volunteer Training Corps (the Home Guard of World War I which later became the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Volunteer Battalions of the Worcestershire Regiment), as well as those used for civil defence;
4. **Homes for Heroes**, including housing schemes, farms and small holdings created for demobilised soldiers, as well as rehabilitation facilities for the disabled;
5. **Agriculture and forestry**, including woodlands and areas of pastureland or other open spaces brought into more productive use, additional allotments, and sites or buildings used by the County Agricultural Committee, Women's Land Army and Women's Forestry Corps;
6. **Treating the casualties**, including the use of existing hospitals, location of auxiliary hospitals and Voluntary Aid Detachments, as well as Red Cross depots;
7. **Munitions production, storage and transport**, including the use of railways, canals and docks, as well as associated housing for munitions workers;
8. **Prisoner of War camps and billets.**

While it is the so-called 'shell scandal' which grabbed the newspaper headlines in May 1915, when Sir John French blamed the inadequate supply of artillery shells for having considerably hampered his ability to successfully fight the early battles on the Western Front and resulted in the high casualty rate of his troops, in fact the expanding British Army was short of just about everything. The political fall-out from the scandal was Parliament passing the Munitions of War Act on 9 June 1915 and the establishment of the Ministry of Munitions, under the control of David Lloyd George. This act defined munitions as 'anything required for war purposes, including arms, ammunition, warlike stores or material, and anything required for equipment or transport purposes or for production of munitions'. This definition should be used as a guide to what should be recorded under the seventh item in the list above.

If any members have a particular World War I site in Worcestershire that they think should be recorded, please let the CBA know, or failing that inform the HER Section of the Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service (WAS) at: [anash@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:anash@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### **Mick Wilks. Volunteer Researcher with WAS**

**NB.** Mick takes a particular interest in the now largely forgotten Voluntary Training Corps. He and Malcolm Atkin hope to publish a history of the Worcestershire force in due course to follow up *Chronicles of the Worcestershire Home Guard*, published in October 2014. Details of headquarter sites, training grounds or other sites used by the VTC, or any photographs of personnel would be very welcome, and contributions fully acknowledged in any publication.

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### **Worcester Cathedral Altar Rails**

The comments by Tim Bridges on the refugee Worcester cathedral choir fittings, now to be found within the church of Holy Trinity in Sutton Coldfield, are very welcome (*Recorder* 91) but need to be modified in the light of a recent watching brief undertaken by this writer

on 10-11 February 2016. As Bridges observes, the Worcester furnishings arrived through the agency of the Rev W.K. Riland Bedford, then the incumbent of Holy Trinity, and were installed in the church in 1874-5. An inscription cut into the rail on the north side of the north screen records this and is partially visible in Bridges' photograph of the north side of the chancel screen.

Standing in the choir of Holy Trinity were until recently a set of Marian stalls, somewhat modified to make them usable in a parish church, backed by open screens formed by a colonnade of ornate pillars capped with a frieze. These too are Marian. In the north or Vesey chapel the dado screen is very different. This was seen by Nikolaus Pevsner and it was this that doubtless convinced him, and others more recently, to view the entire collection of furniture in the choir as being Jacobean. In point of fact it is solely this section of work that is indisputably of a seventeenth century date. It can be clearly seen in Charles Wild's 1823 aquatint drawing of the choir stalls, the panelling forming a backdrop either side of the organ (*Recorder* 87). Amongst the imagery carved on this panelling is a Scottish thistle, which can be suggested as being a reference to James I. All of the rest of the woodwork in the choir with further pieces elsewhere in the church, is identifiable as being Marian, dating to 1556-7, and can reliably be attributed to the patronage of the queen herself.

Whilst the choir stalls pose a number of problems, in terms of additions and modifications, they are fundamentally Marian. The main feature of all the choir stalls is the repetitive use of carved openwork arabesques that fill the uppermost parts of each sections of these stalls. These can be described as 'planted' insomuch as they were carved separately and fitted into their own groove parallel to the groove that holds the backing panels. The Jacobean work is carved in a rather different manner, being set onto its backing panels more in the mode of a frame rather than planted directly onto their backing panels. The arabesques in the choir stalls are directly comparable to the more ornate and vivid carvings to be found in the priests' desk frontals on either side of the stalls and the quasi-reredos that is set around the east end of the chancel, behind the high altar. The contrast between the light touch of the carvers in all of these panels is striking when examined against the heavier and more florid Jacobean work to be seen in the north chapel panels.



The altar rail, there is only the one section, has long been stored in the north gallery. It is likely that around half of the altar rail that Charles Wild included in his sketch is to be found in Holy Trinity. But does it date to the seventeenth century? The design and

decorative carving to be found on both the individual balusters and the rail indicates inspiration was taken from mid to late sixteenth century architectural prints, such as those by Vredeman de Vries. It is possible that this altar rail is a rare surviving example of Elizabethan work, rather than being yet another Jacobean piece.



My work has centred on the introduction of the early Renaissance style into England during the first part of Henry VIII's reign. Much of this early material is to be found in Winchester Cathedral, and in churches and houses across Hampshire. Amongst later settings in Hampshire are a few examples of work that date to the Marian period, or the years soon after. Eamon Duffy referred to them as *disjecta membra* and has listed a good few of them in his study of Catholic England under Mary Tudor, but his study was incomplete. There are additionally three tombs in Hampshire, another in Wiltshire, as well as a painted frieze from Winchester College that was probably made as a backdrop for the wedding ceremony in Winchester that saw joined together Mary Tudor and Philip of Spain. The truly odd aspect of all of these pieces is that, whilst they are all indubitably 'Renaissance', no two pieces are quite alike, and there is no sense of a homogenous style.

Whatever objections there were and are to the re-ordering of churches, including that of Holy Trinity now underway, we need to beware of protesting overmuch. It is fully evident that Church of England congregations are shrinking, and that for the Anglican church to survive it must adapt and change. That the historic furnishings at Holy Trinity will survive, much of them remaining in situ, is to be welcomed. Moreover, it is the case that the very fact of the re-ordering programme being contemplated in the first place alerted us to the riches this church possesses, the highlight of which for me are the remnants of the Marian choir stalls from Worcester cathedral. These can now be firmly understood for what they are and placed in their larger cultural context of the European acceptance of stylistic change. It goes without saying that in the English adoption of the style they are unique; it is probably also the case that they are largely without parallel in Europe.

### **Nicholas Riall**

Consultant to Holy Trinity Church, Sutton Coldfield, for the Marian stalls.

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### **Croome Court: Chinese Bridge**

The report in the last *Recorder* (No 92, Autumn 2015, p.10) of the welcome and highly successful re-instatement of the Chinese Bridge at Croome Court reminded me that in 2009 I and the Society's current Treasurer took part as students of the University of Worcester in a training excavation, directed by Dr Jodie Lewis, the purpose of which was to examine the approaches to the bridge site and look for its abutments, as a preliminary to the restoration which has now borne tangible fruit. The excavation was successful in finding the path leading to the bridge, and its foundations in the bank of the 'river'.

### **Bob Ruffle**

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### **Recent Publications**

*The Church and Vale of Evesham, 700 – 1215: Lordship, Landscape and Prayer* (Studies in the History of Medieval Religion Volume XLIV). David Cox (The Boydell Press, 2015)

In his Preface to this excellent book Dr Cox explains that the history of Evesham Abbey has been complicated by the fact that the medieval monks, in order to construct the history that suited their purposes, 'felt justified in preparing a dossier of texts in which unfavourable facts were suppressed and favourable ones selected, and in which the meagre remnant was improved and augmented with myth and legend', and this has meant historians have been 'long unable to get at the truth'. However, in this volume it is his contention that the advances in the interpretation of documents and archaeological remains mean that this difficult material can be probed more confidently.

Dr Cox, with his unparalleled knowledge of Evesham, is the ideal person to attempt this clarification of this difficult history. His command of the written sources, his awareness of all the latest research in a wide variety of fields (reflected in the valuable bibliography), and not least his knowledge of the topography of the area through the ages inform this book throughout, which is written with Dr Cox's typically scrupulous and judicious weighing of all the evidence.

He has chosen to concentrate on the first half-millennium of the Abbey's history because, as he says, the last three centuries of its history are too richly documented and intricate for a single volume. But there is ample material indeed in this period to create a richly detailed narrative. His early chapters set the scene for the foundation of the abbey, showing how Bishop Ecgwine of Worcester was keen to found a monastery free from the domination of noble families and closely under his own control. Dr Cox sketches a very plausible topography for the chosen site, a *hamm*, 'land hemmed in by water', which was sufficiently undeveloped to offer the chance of a foundation isolated from normal life, but also one crucially set at a boundary between two zones, the older residually Christian north-west and the more pagan south-east, meaning the abbey was ideally placed for missionary work. The chapters setting the abbey site in the wider early Anglo-Saxon landscape and the story of its growing endowment are deeply interesting.

The relationships between bishop Ecgwine and the first abbots form an important part of the story. Bishop Ecgwine was to become a key figure in the mythology of the abbey, canonised as its founder and celebrated in a life by Byrhtferth in which it can be difficult to separate historical fact from hagiography. The nuanced story that Dr Cox tells shows the realities of ecclesiastical and national politics at that time, and the role that the bishop's own close circle of associates played in this early period. There follow chapters on the decay and revival of the abbey. Monastic reforms of the Benedictine revival, led by figures including bishop Oswald of Worcester and backed by King Edgar, were followed by difficult times as powerful local noblemen sought to attack the power of the church. However, the reign of Cnut and his support for Abbot Aelfweald saw a revival, with the abbot making the abbey a focus for relics (especially those of St Ecgwine) and a site of pilgrimage. Dr Cox weaves into this story fascinating details of the corresponding development of the surrounding town of Evesham, granted status as a borough by King Edward in 1055 and thus a growing market centre.

The Norman Conquest brought a change in character of the abbey from an Anglo-Saxon culture to a wider European dimension, represented by the new abbot Walter who introduced monastic constitutions, planned and began a great new church and increased the number of monks. He also fostered literary awareness and introduced habits of record making and record keeping. As an archivist I found the accounts of the development of written evidences and administrative records, inevitably linked to the forgery of deeds and papal privileges, particularly interesting.

The later chapters are taken up, amongst other issues, with the struggle between the abbey and the bishops of Worcester for ultimate control of its affairs and the story of the infamous Abbot Norreis.

This review can only hint at the wealth of detail and interpretation in this impressive volume, which will be essential reading for all interested in the history of Evesham and of religion in the diocese of Worcester. We are very much in debt to Dr Cox for distilling his lifetime of knowledge into this account.

**Robin Whittaker**

**Oxbow Books. Special Offer for WAS members – 20% off:**

*Excavations at Newport Street, Worcester, Offa's Dyke and Huntsman's Quarry*

To receive 20% off these titles please quote WAS16 when ordering by phone (01865 241249) or by entering the code at the checkout at [www.oxbowbooks.com](http://www.oxbowbooks.com). Discount is valid until 1 December 2016 and cannot be used with any other promotional offer or discount.

*Excavations at Newport Street, Worcester, 2005: Roman Roadside Activity and Medieval to Post-Medieval Urban Development on the Severn Floodplain* Peter Davenport (ed), with multiple contributors. Cotswold Archaeology and Worcestershire Archive & Archaeology Service (2015) 286pp, rrp £21.95, but see Special Offer above.

This substantial volume records the most important excavation within the city walls of Worcester since that at Deansway more than 25 years ago. Moreover, it adds greatly to our knowledge of the post-medieval development of this part of the city, whereas the report on Deansway (*Excavations at Deansway, Worcester, 1988-89: Romano-British small town to late medieval city* ed H. Dalwood & R. Edwards, CBA Research Report 139, 2004) had to cut short its analysis at about 1600 as a result of resource constraints.

The site, between the north side of Newport Street and All Saints Road/Dolday, with frontages on Newport Street, lies on the edge of the Severn floodplain. Newport Street was until the later 18th century the main thoroughfare out of the city to the west, leading to the medieval bridge, and the excavation confirmed that this route was followed by a Roman road on substantially the same alignment. This part of the city, however, had to wait until the 13th century before there was any real urban development. The volume narrates its subsequent history, with the piecemeal establishment of narrow building plots reaching from Newport Street right back to Dolday, and their subdivision into courts and eventual decline into overcrowded tenements cleared only in the 20th century.

The book has to meet the challenge faced by all major excavation reports, in telling a coherent story, backed by sufficiently detailed evidence, without getting lost in a maze of detail. It succeeds in this task very well. The detail is all there, but sandwiched between introductory chapters on the archaeological and historical background and the project objectives and methodology, and concluding chapters including thematic discussions (on, for example, the river and the transformation of the floodplain, the development of the street system, buildings and houses, and household material culture), and a final summing up.

Because the story is almost entirely medieval and post-medieval (going right up to the 20th century), one of the most interesting aspects of this work is that it has been possible to integrate the archaeological record of buildings and boundaries with documentary evidence of ownership and occupation from the 13th century onwards. This makes this more than just an excavation report; it contains a pretty comprehensive account of this corner of Worcester, at least since the 13th century. It ought to be added that the excavation strategy for the site was based on preserving *in situ* archaeology below the level required by the new building's foundations (apart from two deep sondages and a geotechnical borehole survey which demonstrated a significant depth of archaeological deposits), so that there remains potential for extending the account in future.

The Specialist Reports occupy more than a third of the volume, and will provide a rich source of detailed information for archaeologists and historians of Worcester for many years to come. They cover not only the usual categories of material and environmental remains, but also the

documentary evidence for individual properties (contributed by Pat Hughes), a *tour de force* of historical reconstruction. The post-medieval pottery report (Alan Jacobs) is particularly valuable, since little has previously been published on the later (late 17th-18th century) pottery of Worcester, and the section on clay tobacco pipes (Allan Peacey) is probably the most extensive account yet for Worcester, including currently known evidence for local manufacture. It is perhaps a pity that there is only limited illustration of the pottery, compared with very comprehensive illustration for the clay pipes. But the illustrations are overall extremely well done, and well reproduced. They complement the text, and include a number of old photographs which help to give a visual reality to the archaeological and historical account alongside.

This volume will stand together with the report on Deansway and Martin Carver's seminal work on medieval Worcester (*Medieval Worcester: an archaeological framework*. TWAS 3S 7, 1980) on the shelves of anyone with a serious interest in Worcester's history and archaeology. The final Chapter ('Conclusions') was contributed by the late Hal Dalwood (see p5), and the last words can fittingly be left to him: 'The Newport Street excavation represents an important step in the application of urban historical archaeology to the buildings and backyards of Worcester.'

### **Bob Ruffle**

*Offa's Dyke. Landscape & Hegemony in Eighth-Century Britain* Keith Ray & Ian Bapty (2016)  
464pp, 177 figs; rrp £29.95, pre-pub price £20 until 30 April & see Special Offer above

My comments on this publication: as with any book, the first question is, 'Who is it aimed at?' At first glance its size and glossiness give the appearance of a 'coffee-table' volume. It is well printed and illustrated – though some photos could be bigger and brighter – and has an excellent index and bibliography. A closer look reveals a serious examination, based on many years' experience by the writers, of the purpose and extent of the (8th-century?) monument.

In modern thought, however, Offa's Dyke is not just a monument. It is also a National Trail walked by 10,000 annually and the mythical – in part – boundary that the Welsh cross on the way to play at Twickenham! Should the relationship of these concepts be ignored in any study of the Dyke – in particular that between the walk and the monument? This new book has but minimal reference to the National Trail; no reference to any guide (that I could see) after 1975. There have been many (I was involved in two), and all have at least a cursory note on the earthwork. The cultural significance for the present day is not a topic covered.

Offa's Dyke is less obvious, in the landscape and in documentation, than say Hadrian's Wall and is thus more open to alternative interpretations. (My own view is to say 'good', as this gives a wonderful opening and opportunity to researchers.)

There have been four major sets of research into the earthwork in the last hundred years: Cyril Fox in the 1920s; Frank Noble in the '60s; David Hill and Margaret Worthington in the '70s and '80s; and the present authors more recently. All build on the work of their predecessors, though there is much disparity in their conclusions, in part reflecting the intellectual climate of the time when they were written. Fox, inspired by Sir Mortimer Wheeler, made an outstanding survey mile by mile and appears to have concluded that the system of dykes was now 'explored, examined and that nothing further need doing'.

His successor did not concur, and pointed to questions such as dating, absence of finds, and continuity of the monument with apparent major gaps. An awful lot seemed to hinge on the statement by the monk Asser, a century after the favoured date, that Offa built his Dyke from 'sea to sea'. Frank Noble's untimely death meant that his work was never completed, though Margaret Gelling ensured that his key questionings were published, initially through the Open University. Frank was very concerned by the question of which enemies the English (Mercian) earthwork faced, and the nature of the defences with which it opposed them. In 1969 he founded the Offa's Dyke Association whose vital role for the future of the Dyke the authors acknowledge in an endnote.

David Hill and Margaret Worthington, from a Manchester University base, conducted many small-scale excavations, but found minimal conclusive evidence. Their principal conclusion was to regard the work as facing the Welsh of Powys and not complete at the northern and southern ends where this threat did not exist. By this view the Wye Valley stretches and the Wat's Dyke fortification do not belong to the same system at all.

Ian Bapty and Keith Ray do not agree, and their meticulous and detailed analysis in this new book are much closer in conclusion to the views of Cyril Fox, to whose memory the book is dedicated. Whilst not everything is explained, a strong argument is made for the 'sea to sea' defensive view.

The book is densely written and is not always easy to read, but there is much worthwhile material to repay close scrutiny. We must await the next instalment of views about this elusive monument. In the meantime I would love to see a critique of Bapty/Ray from the 'opposite' school!

### **Ernie Kay**

Ernie was awarded an MBE in 2001 for his work in the Welsh marches, which included 30 years for the Offa's Dyke Association, of which he is still Vice President, and was instrumental in setting up the Offa's Dyke Visitor Centre at Knighton in 1999.

***Huntsman's Quarry, Kemerton*** Robin Jackson (2016) 192pp, rrp £30 (see Special Offer above)  
Robin Jackson needs no introduction to WAS members. To quote WAAS' Explore the Past website, 'at Kemerton our archaeologists discovered evidence of settlement 3,000 years ago, not just traces of occupation, but groups of huts, the earliest we know about in the county. It also provided an important collection of prehistoric pottery.' The book will be reviewed in the autumn edition of the *Recorder*.

### **Keith Ray *The archaeology of Herefordshire: an exploration*** (Logaston Press, 2015) £15

This is as much the record of an extraordinary period in archaeological research in Herefordshire as it is a narrative account of the archaeology of the county. The author was appointed as Herefordshire's first county archaeologist in 1998. However the achievements of that period were not just the work of one person. Keith Ray surrounded himself with a formidable team of dedicated and skilled archaeologists working in the sub-fields of planning archaeology, countryside management, historic environment record, and public archaeology, as well as fieldwork. Neither was the work described here just the achievement of the body which became known as Herefordshire Archaeology, though it stood at the centre – over 350 reports published by them bear witness to this. Herefordshire has always had a strong amateur tradition, especially through the Woolhope Club, and Herefordshire Archaeology fostered strong relationships with the people of the county. Academics started to make Herefordshire the subject of research and

excavation, and there were several visits from *Time Team*. And of course archaeological work in response to development has played an important part, this being the work of several archaeological units from Herefordshire and beyond. Aerial survey too has been important, and Chris Musson's discoveries of cropmark sites play a large part in our understanding of Herefordshire's past.

Sadly the financial crash and subsequent austerity exposed the fragility of this structure. The small unitary authority of Herefordshire was particularly hard hit and has made severe cuts to services. Keith Ray left the county council in 2014. As a result he may well have been the county's last county archaeologist, as he was not directly replaced when he left in 2014 (indeed the role of county archaeologist has all but vanished across England in the last few years). The team he brought together has largely dispersed, leaving just a skeleton staff. The museums service has also suffered.

At 436 pages, this is a substantial book, and probably one to be referred to rather than read cover to cover. It is also a serious work of scholarship, with a substantial bibliography, which signals this seriousness by omitting the best-known publication originating from Herefordshire's archaeology (Alfred Watkins' pioneering work on ley lines, *The Old Straight Track*, though ley lines do rate a mention), as well as what must be one of the biggest selling books with a Herefordshire archaeological theme (Phil Rickman's *To Dream of the Dead*, which includes the discovery of the 'Dinedor Serpent').

Highlights of the recent work covered in this book include the excavations of the Neolithic settlement at Dorstone Hill, the Rotherwas Ribbon (a mysterious and so far unique Beaker period 'surfaced linear way'), a Bronze Age cairn in the Olchon Valley, several hillforts, including some newly identified, as well as Roman, medieval and later sites. Herefordshire prehistory, in particular, will never be the same again.

Andy Johnson and his team have done an outstanding job in the production of the book, which is illustrated in full colour throughout, with a cover price of only £15 (available at substantially less through various online bookshops). Highly recommended.

## **James Dinn**

***Fighting the Nazi Invader. British Resistance 1939-1945*** by **Malcolm Atkin** (Pen & Sword, 2015) £19.99. ISBN 978-1-47383-377-7. 234 pp, nearly 50 maps, diagrams & photographs.

After a long layoff from the world of publishing, Malcolm Atkin, former County Archaeology Officer and foremost expert on the English Civil War, has made a welcome return with a barnstorming and detailed study of the secret world of British resistance during the Second World War. Malcolm's enthusiasm for his 'new' subject matter shows in this well-researched, and sometimes controversial, exposé of the shadowy men in the British secret intelligence services who organised the embryo resistance groups in anticipation of a German invasion during the dark days of 1940, the involvement of the military establishment and the creation of the GHQ Auxiliary Units, as well as the conflicts which arose between the various factions involved. In part taking the work carried out by this reviewer and Bernard Lowry on Auxiliary Units in the Midlands during the Defence of Britain Project, a project which Malcolm steered in his former capacity as Archaeology Officer, he has more fully explained their place in the military hierarchy, as well as delving more deeply than anyone else into the clandestine world of the spies and radio operators of Special Duties branch of the Auxiliary Units. Tom Winteringham's influence on

Home Guard training through his Osterley Park school for guerilla warfare is also fully covered, as are the weapons and radios developed for clandestine work. I sense that Winteringham, an experienced officer veteran of the Spanish Civil War, is a particular hero of Malcolm. Many of the illustrations are from Malcolm's own collection of military equipment and historic radio sets.

Fully referenced, the book includes photographs and biographical notes on the main players in this particular story. All round, it is a damned good read for anyone with even the slightest interest in the world of covert operations in World War Two and I heartily recommend it.

## **Mick Wilks**

*St Nicholas Owen, Priest-Hole Maker* Tony Reynolds (Gracewing, 2014) £9.99, 163pp

This fascinating book opens with a 'Prologue: The Reformation' which provides a clear historical background from Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy in 1534 to the reign of Elizabeth I. Later, reference is made to Pope Pius V's bull *Regnans in Excelsis* of 1570 [see [www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius05/p5regnans.htm](http://www.papalencyclicals.net/Pius05/p5regnans.htm)], which 'deprived [the queen] of here pretended Title' and absolved her subjects 'from any ... manner of duty of dominion, alleageance, and obedience' and Elizabeth's response, the Treasons Act. Also discussed is the Armada of 1588, which linked Catholicism with enmity towards England. A captured priest was asked 'the Bloody Question': 'Whose side would you be on, the Pope's or the Queen's?'

Nicholas Owen was born c1562 in Oxford where, allegedly, 'not three houses ... were not filled with Papists'. Many had left for Douai and elsewhere, and Douai College received papal approval in 1568. Students, including Nicholas's brothers John and Walter, were trained in religious controversy for two years, then sent back to England to promote the Catholic cause 'even at the peril of their lives'; by the end of the 16th century more than 300 priests were sent on the English mission. The Douai College Diaries record the entries, ordinations and deaths of some 140 priests who were martyred. Of the 471 seminary priests known to have been active in England in Elizabeth's reign, at least 294 were imprisoned at some point; 116 were executed, 17 died in gaol, and 91 were banished.

Nicholas, also known as 'Little John' or 'Little Michael', was very short and probably disqualified from the priesthood. The son of a carpenter, he was apprenticed to a joiner in 1577, the terms of his indenture including 16d each Easter, Pentecost, St Michael's and Christmas; and at the end of eight years two sets of suitable clothes, 10s and twelve implements.

For nearly 20 years Nicholas worked for Henry Garnet, who in 1589 became leader of the Jesuits in England. The other key player, John Gerard, was described as a man 'of gentle blood and gentle breeding—of commanding stature, great vigour of constitution, a master of three or four languages, with a rare gift of speech and an innate grace and courtliness of manner'. This helped him move around the country under cover as a falconer.

Priest holes pepper the book, with one chapter devoted to them; smaller holes hid the 'massing stuff'. Owen's first priest-hole was probably built in Garnet's London house; so that it appeared unoccupied, talking aloud, or lighting a fire by day were not allowed. Several are illustrated, including one at Baddesley Clinton, long enough to accommodate several men. The first priest-hole at Hindlip Hall, described as 'riddled with the most ingenious hides', was probably made in 1589 for Edward Oldcorne, who was executed in Worcester in 1606. When Hindlip

Hall was raided following the Gunpowder Plot, Garnet and Oldcorne received 'caudles, broths and warm drinks' via a narrow tube from an adjoining bedroom. It is estimated that Nicholas Owen built 150-200 hides. 'How many Priests', Gerard wondered, did he save 'in the space of seventeen years, having laboured in all shires and in the chiefest Catholic houses of England'?

A number of raids are recorded by Gerard and Garnet. Remarkable behaviour by 'virgo become virago' Anne Vaux (see *ODNB*) saved the lives of several men hiding at Baddesley Clinton from the 'four leopards [who] raged about the house' for four hours. Searches became more thorough and determined – and longer. In East Anglia Gerard emerged after four days' hiding, 'wasted and weakened, as well with hunger, as with want of sleep, and with having to sit so long in such a narrow place', the mistress of the house 'so changed that she seemed quite another woman'. In December 1598 two priests spent ten days in a cavity excavated in the stone wall of Scotney Castle with minimal clothing, a bottle of wine and one loaf of bread; their remarkable escape is well worth reading. After the Gunpowder Plot a hundred men searched Harrowden Hall for nine days during which Gerard could sit but not stand up.

Owen's first experience of torture was in the Poultry, 'a very evil prison', after he and Gerard were arrested in 1594. Owen was released, but Gerard was transferred to the Tower where he remained for three years. 'Escape from the Tower' gives a vivid account of the events leading to his being met by Owen with horses at the ready. Nicholas and Oldcorne's servant were arrested following the Gunpowder Plot when, with only one apple between them, they emerged after a few days from their hiding place at Hindlip Hall. Garnet and Oldcorne remained hidden, 'well wearied ... both in continuous paine of our legges [which were] much swollen', yet 'very merry and content within, and heard the searchers every day most curious over us ... when we came forth we appeared like ghosts'. They also were arrested.

A harrowing chapter, 'Torture and Death', questions both the legality of the torture and the official account of Owen's death. The final chapter, 'The Forty Martyrs', continues the horror but explains the processes by which he was raised to sainthood, his feast day on 22 March. Edmund Campion and Robert Southwell who feature in the book are also among the Forty Martyrs, whilst Edward Oldcorne and his servant Ralph Ashley were declared Blessed but not canonised.

Through quotations, sometimes lengthy, principally from Garnet's letters and Gerard's Autobiography and Narrative, the reader experiences the dangerous, unsettled life, hideous confinement, unswerving faith and loyalty and remarkable courage of Nicholas Owen and his colleagues. A most absorbing book.

NB. Coughton Court, where Garnet and Nicholas first heard of the failure of the Gunpowder Plot, can be seen on the Sheldon map, see cover illustration and p21.

Just out: Pamela Hurlle *Stanbrook Abbey* (2016) A history of the community up to the present day. £9.99. This book will be reviewed in the autumn edition.

Yet another volume from the Worcestershire Historical Society:  
*The Autobiography and Library of Thomas Hall B.D. (1610-1665)* ed Denise Thomas, Worcestershire Historical Society NS 26 (2015)

## **The Sheldon Tapestry Maps in the Bodleian Library**

### *Historical overview*

The Sheldon Tapestry Maps for Worcestershire, Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Warwickshire are woven in wool and silk, and are fine examples of cartography and decorative art dating from the 1590s. Commissioned by Ralph Sheldon for his home at Weston, Warwickshire (close to Long Compton, on the A3400 between Oxford and Stratford on Avon), the series illustrates these four midland counties of England, the tapestries' full geographical extent covering all of the country from the Bristol Channel to London, and from Birmingham to south of what is now 'the M4 corridor'. The total width of this panoramic view was approximately eighty feet – each tapestry in its completed state measured some nineteen to twenty feet wide and about fifteen feet high – 6.5m wide and 5m high. Weston House, which fell into ruin in the nineteenth century, would have appeared on all four of the tapestries, placing Sheldon at the centre of this Tudor landscape. A beguiling coincidence now sees the Worcestershire tapestry hanging on display in Oxford's Weston Library, a building recently renovated and now accommodating the Bodleian Library's special collections.

Two of the original set of tapestry maps, Worcestershire and Oxfordshire, are owned by the Bodleian, which received them in 1809, bequeathed as a gift from the antiquary Richard Gough. Furthermore, a sizeable proportion of the Gloucestershire tapestry was purchased by the Library at auction in 2007, complementing two smaller sections already held in the collection. More of the Gloucestershire map is held in private hands. The final tapestry in the set illustrates Warwickshire, and is held by Warwickshire Museum. The Warwickshire map is the only one of the four which survives completely intact. The remainder are only partially complete, with Worcestershire and Oxfordshire having lost significant portions of their content to moths and vermin, whilst Gloucestershire has been broken up into many parts, not all of which have survived. All four tapestry maps were in the Sheldon family's possession until 1781 when they were finally removed from Weston House.

The tapestries are of major significance for cartographic history, forming a unique representation of the landscape, at a period when modern cartography was still in its infancy. Their content was largely derived from the county maps of Christopher Saxton which were surveyed and published in the period from 1574 to 1579, but this set of four have no forebears in English mapmaking tradition. As a concept, these tapestry maps were unique in England. They were ground-breaking developments at the time of their creation, as indeed were Saxton's county maps.

The designer of the tapestries and the names of the weavers are unknown, as is the whereabouts of where the tapestries were woven. However, the tapestries are believed to have been created under the guidance of Richard Hyckes, a man whose name appears above the scale bar on the Worcestershire map.

One key design factor of note is the orientation of the four tapestries. Tapestries, by definition, need to be square or rectangular. English counties, on the contrary, are not shaped by such conventions. Thus, in order to maintain a consistency of shape within the confines of Weston House, it was necessary to orient both Gloucestershire and Warwickshire with east at the top; Worcestershire and Oxfordshire follow the now conventional layout with north at the top. Consequently, the tapestries cannot be joined together to provide an uninterrupted view of the countryside.

## Worcestershire



*Rolling the tapestry into place, © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford*

The Worcestershire map was placed on display in the Weston Library's spectacular Blackwell Hall in readiness for the public opening of the building on 21 March 2015. In order to achieve this, the tapestry required cleaning and restoration. The team of conservators from the National Trust's tapestry studio at Blickling Hall, Norfolk, was appointed to undertake work on all three of the Bodleian's tapestry maps. The Worcestershire tapestry was initially cleaned at the Royal Manufacturers De Wit in Mechelen (Belgium), before returning to Norfolk for conservation treatment.

Once back at Blickling the team undertook a number of conservation tasks, including:

- incorporating green fabric as both an infill and a lining;
- a stitched support for the tapestry;
- tapestry fragments were positioned and tacked onto the mounting fabric;
- stitching to secure the holed and damaged edges of the tapestry fragments, colour matched to tone in with the damaged area;
- embroidering damaged lettering to obtain a clear reading.

When complete the tapestry would have had borders along the top and down the right-hand side, complementing those which remain, thus significantly increasing the tapestry's current dimensions.

Worcester is located in the centre of the tapestry, and details of the surrounding counties of Shropshire, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire and Herefordshire surrounding Worcestershire are clearly visible, each county having its own background colour. Worcestershire is pale pink. All Worcestershire settlement names appear on a golden background label; settlements for the remaining counties are on cream labels. The effect of these colours is best seen by standing back from a distance of about five metres, as Worcestershire's seven detached exclaves are clearly viewed prominently, also in pink. All the Sheldon tapestry maps show prominent county boundaries, settlements with their associated unique vignettes, rivers (and bridges), hills (sometimes with beacons, as at Broadway and Frankley), forests, tracks (these do not appear on Saxton's maps, nor do they appear to represent the real situation on the ground), coats of arms (Worcestershire features parts of the Royal arms and the Sheldon family arms), and decorative borders.

With the Worcestershire tapestry project now complete, the Bodleian's attention will turn to the Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire maps.

**Nick Millea**

Map Librarian, Bodleian Library

### **The Malvern Bookshop**

One of our members, Rebecca Roseff, a still practising archaeologist (for Border Archaeology), is currently running the long-established second-hand book store in Great Malvern situated on Priory Steps, right up close to the Priory Church. This book store is well known in the West Midlands; it has been running for over 60 years and prides itself on good quality books, with a strong local and archaeological section. Books are bought and sold, so whether you are searching or downsizing, it is well worth a visit. See [www.themalvernbookshop.co.uk](http://www.themalvernbookshop.co.uk) or email Rebecca at [themalvernbookshop@gmail.com](mailto:themalvernbookshop@gmail.com).

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### **Worcestershire Archaeological Society Lecture Programme, 2016-17**

Among the planned subjects are retrospective views of the results of 25 years of development-led archaeological work, since PPG16, both in the county and the city of Worcester; Bethany Hamblen on the Court Rolls project; Roger White on the Roman occupation of Wales and Welsh identity; Tom Charlton on Richard Baxter. Details will be sent out during the summer.

### **NB: New Venue**

As noted in the Chairman's Letter, next season's lecture programme will take place, on a trial basis, at the lecture theatre at the Royal Grammar School in Upper Tything in Worcester.

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### **Worcestershire Archaeological Society Excursions, 2016**

**Tuesday 26 April**                      **Oxford. The Sheldon tapestry map of Worcestershire, medieval monastic houses and monastic colleges.** Led by James Dinn £5 £6 for guests

En route to the Bodleian we will visit the ruins of Rewley Abbey and the medieval St Bernard's College (now St John's). After a guided viewing of the tapestry map by Nick Millea (see p21), we visit the medieval Durham College (now Trinity), where the 17th-century chapel should have reopened after restoration. The lunch break will give an opportunity to visit the 'Bodleian Treasures' exhibition in the Weston Library, which includes the 14th-century Gough Map, one of the earliest to show Worcester (as well as Kidderminster, Droitwich and Evesham), and a medieval music manuscript (one of the 'Worcester Fragments').

After lunch we will visit the sites of the Blackfriars and Greyfriars, the latter recently the subject of an extensive excavation on the site of the Westgate Centre. We then walk from St Ebbe's via St Mary's College (Frewin Hall) to Gloucester College (now Worcester College).

**Saturday 14 May**                      **Perrycroft, Malvern.** By private cars, led by Janet Dunleavey  
Perrycroft is an Arts and Crafts house on the western side of the Malvern Hills built in 1895 by C.F.A. Voysey, one of his earliest commissions. It was designed as a holiday home for MP John William Wilson, a Birmingham industrialist. Subsequently it was used by the Birmingham Boys Brigade for many decades and by the 1980s its condition had deteriorated as a result of such long term institutional use, but the house and its ten acres of grounds have recently been completely restored by its current owners. £15 to include tea.

**Wednesday 15 June**                      **Hanbury Hall. House and gardens tour with evening meal**

By private cars, led by Rachael Trimm and Jenny Goode, starting at 5.30 p.m.

A 'child of the Wren age' (Pevsner, 2007), the house (National Trust) was built in 1701 by Worcestershire MP Thomas Vernon, architect unknown. Our tour will include newly-opened sections, the restored Hercules rooms and recreated Gothic corridor, recently re-decorated smoking room and stunning staircase wall-paintings by Sir James Thornhill which underwent major restoration work in 2010. Outside we will look at the archaeological research that went into the reconstruction of the gardens. Evening meal to follow. Restricted to 35 members.

**Thursday 14 July                      Richard III: Leicester and Bosworth Battlefield site**

Coach tour led by Michael & Jenny Goode

We will visit the Richard III Visitor Centre, on the site of the medieval friary of the Grey Friars where the king's remains were buried over 500 years ago. Nearby is his tomb in Leicester Cathedral, in the ambulatory between the Chapel of Christ the King and the sanctuary, designed by the architects van Heningen and Haward in a Swaledale fossil stone. We shall then travel to the Bosworth Field Study Centre where there will be an opportunity to have lunch in the cafe attached, and afterwards enjoy a conducted tour of the site and a visit to the Centre itself.

**Tuesday 16 August                      St Peter's Flyford Flavell and St James, Bishampton**

By private cars, led by Tim Bridges

St Peter's Flyford Flavell and St James, Bishampton were largely rebuilt in the Victorian period but retain important medieval features. Both churches have Norman doorways and Perpendicular towers. Inside St Peter's a medieval font and small collection of floor tiles were incorporated into the rebuilding of 1882 for philanthropist William Laslett. St James' is a significant work of 1870 by local architect Frederick Preedy, but retains a Norman font and 17th-century hourglass stand in a recently re-ordered interior.

**Tuesday 23 August                      Chedworth Roman Villa and Corinium Museum**

Coach trip led by Garth Raymer

National Trust Archaeology will be conducting a third season of excavations at Chedworth during the last two weeks of August 2016 and the visit will include a tour of this year's dig plus a view of the many changes that have taken place in the last few years. In the afternoon we will have a talk and conducted tour of the Corinium Museum in Cirencester, rounding off at the adjoining Jack's Café for tea and glorious cake.

**Tuesday 27 September                      Honington Hall**

Coach trip to **South Warwickshire**, all within the old diocese of Worcester, led by Peter Bolton. We begin with coffee at Pevsner's 'most important and impressive High Victorian house in the county', **Ettington Park**, built 1858-62 for Evelyn Philip Shirley by Pritchard and Seddon and retrieved from a perilous condition by its restoration for a hotel. The adjacent ruined former parish church and the roofed-in transept will be opened for us to see the Shirley tombs and the fine modern stained glass by the Irish artist Evie Hone. We shall also visit **Compton Wynyates** church, rebuilt after Civil War damage c1665, specially opened for us (the house itself is firmly closed). It retains its original furnishings and a wondrous collection of hatchments. After lunch, following up last year's visit to Honington church, we go to the neighbouring Hall, again opened specially for us: 'a gem of a late C17 house', again quoting Pevsner, with its busts of Roman emperors outside and glorious array of mid-18th century plasterwork inside.

**2016 Study Tour, 3 to 8 October: Menai Strait**

Our Autumn Study Tour this year, based at **Beaumaris**, will range on either side of the Menai Strait. This is castle territory, and we shall visit **Caernafon** and **Conwy**, as well as Beaumaris itself. Among other delights will be the great houses of **Plas Newydd** and **Penrhyn**, the Slate Museum at **Llanberis**, **Penmon Priory** and the spectacular Bronze Age Copper Mine at **Great Orme**. On our way we plan a lunchtime visit to **Chirk Castle** and on the homeward run, we'll take the opportunity to stop off at **Portmeirion**. All in all, it promises to be a great week.

Items for the next issue should be sent to the Editor,  
email recorder@worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk by 1 September 2016.

