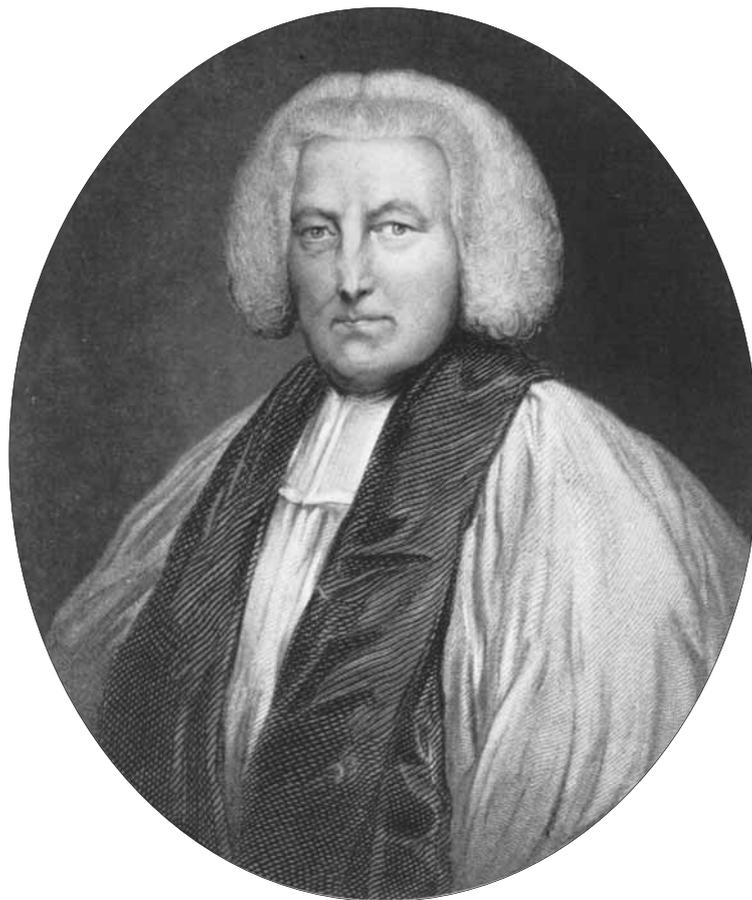


Worcestershire Recorder

Autumn 2008, Edition 78

ISSN 1474-2691

Newsletter of the
WORCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Charity No 517092



Free to Members
Membership Secretary Tel: 01684 565190

CONTENTS	Page
Chairman's Letter	3
News from WHEAS: The Butts Dig, Worcester	3
Wyre Forest LiDAR survey	5
Church Farm West – an archaeological investigation	6
News from Worcestershire Record Office: Deposits, March - September 2008	8
Croome Court: The Coventry Family Archive	8
News from the City	9
St John's, Worcester	10
News from the Friends of Hartlebury Castle and the Hurd Library	10
The Hurd Library	12
Fifty Years of the Victorian Society.	13
The de Freville Estates of Crowneast and Ruggehalle, Wichenford	14
The Wribbenhall Project	17
Understanding trade in Worcestershire before the industrial revolution	18
Book Reviews: <i>The Worcestershire Eyre of 1275</i>	19
<i>The Tribe of Witches. The Religion of the Dobunni and Hwicce</i>	20
<i>Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches</i>	21
<i>Artisan Art. Vernacular wall paintings in the Welsh Marches, 1550-1650</i>	21
<i>Roman Roads in Britain</i>	22
<i>Medieval Roads and Tracks</i>	22
<i>The Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester and Noake's Guide to Worcestershire</i>	23
<i>Oxford Dictionary of National Biography</i>	23
Shrub Hill Station Waiting Room	23
Worcestershire Archaeological Society Excursions Programme 2008	24
Worcestershire Archaeological Society Lecture Programme 2008-9	24

A Warm Welcome to New Members:

Chris Campbell, Knightwick
 Mary Croxson, Worcester
 Andrew Evans, Powick
 David Hardeman, Bromsgrove
 Claire Haslam, Rushwick
 Rosalyn Mason, Powick
 Ann Wagstaff, Fladbury

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: Bishop Hurd, engraving by J.B.Hunt in Rev F. Kilvert *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Right Rev. Richard Hurd, D.D., Lord Bishop of Worcester* (1860) (see p12)

Chairman's Letter

Two very significant excavations have been taking place in Worcester this year – at The Butts, the site of the new Library and History Centre, (see below) and at Castle Street in advance of the new City campus for the University of Worcester. Both excavations have added considerably to our knowledge of the city's past and in particular important new evidence is emerging on the form of some unusually substantial structures in the Roman period. Those members who went to see the excavations at The Butts in September were treated to a private view of the site led by the archaeologists. We owe our thanks to Hal Dalwood and his colleagues from the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service for making this possible and giving us an insight into these very significant finds.

As I write the economy teeters on the edge of being classified as being in recession. While economic decline may reduce the development threats to the archaeological heritage, it will be increasingly important to ensure that the infrastructure of professional archaeology in both the public and private sectors is not eroded. This Society will be vigilant in monitoring the situation and voicing its opinion when needed.

I had hoped to be able to report encouraging news about the future of Hartlebury Castle, but negotiations between the County Council and the Church Commissioners are protracted. Some of you will have read in the press that discussions on the Castle's future have become embroiled in politics. It would be a tragedy if the opportunity were not taken to purchase the Castle, to keep it in the public domain and extend access to the whole site. The work of the Friends of Hartlebury Castle and the Hurd Library, as reported in this edition of the Recorder, are to be applauded and we must hope that their efforts will soon begin to bear fruit.

The excursions programme goes from strength to strength. Despite the weather this summer the excursions have been well attended and have offered a wide range of field visits to see historic buildings, landscapes and archaeological sites. A particular hallmark of these trips is to go to places to which members would not normally have full access. Through local contacts we are usually met by expert guides who willingly share their enthusiasms with us, a feature which adds considerably to our understanding and enjoyment.

On a personal note, health problems mean that I am unable to complete a third year as your Chairman. I would like to thank the Committee for all their support over the past two years. I have enjoyed serving the Society as your Chairman and especially having the opportunity to meet so many members and enjoy your company at our events.

Stephen Price

Members will want to join the Committee in thanking Stephen for his positive and active chairmanship, and in wishing him a speedy and full recovery, and all the very best for the future. He has given strong leadership, and worked hard for the interests of the Society.

News from Worcestershire Historic Environment & Archaeology Service The Butts Dig, Worcester

Excavation started in August 2008 at the site of the Worcester Library and History Centre, due to open in 2011. The former Worcester City Council depot had been the home of bin lorries

for many years, but construction starts in 2009 of a new development that will include Worcester City Library (presently on Foregate Street), Worcestershire Record Office (currently located at County Hall and in Trinity Street), the County Council Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (WHEAS), and the Worcester Customer Service Centre. The library will also house the University of Worcester Library, and the site is next to the new University of Worcester campus on the former Worcester Royal Infirmary site. Excavation is ongoing. Further information on the plans for the project, and information on progress, can be found on the Worcester Library and History Centre project website: <http://www.wlhc.org.uk/index.html>.

WHEAS investigated the site a few years ago. Access was restricted by buildings and vehicles, but a number of small evaluation trenches were excavated. These showed that the site was covered in a thin spread of Roman deposits, with some areas where a deeper stratigraphic sequence had built up. These investigations led to the conclusion that a substantial part of the buried archaeological deposits would be affected by the construction work, and one area of the site was identified for full excavation.

The site has had a varied history, and information on the historical and archaeological background is available here: <http://worcestershire.whub.org.uk/home/wccindex/wcc-arch/wcc-arch-community-index/wcc-arch-community-the-butts.htm>.

Following the stripping of the site, it was clear that the eastern part of the excavation area contained the foundations of Victorian buildings, a wide 17th-century ditch, and a Roman ditch and trackway, consistent with excavation of the adjacent site. However the western part of the excavation area contained very extensive Roman deposits. A row of three urban buildings was revealed, dating to the mid 4th century: a large aisled building (10m x 20m) and two 'strip buildings'. These were the most recent buildings in a long and complex sequence of Roman



Community excavation underway in September 2008

occupation. The buildings appear to front onto an east-west street, perhaps running to a quay, or to a previously unexpected crossing point, roughly under where the railway viaduct crosses the river.

The concentration of structural evidence points to The Butts being an area of intensive commercial activity, with evidence for a range of craft production and small-scale industry, although detailed analysis will be needed before the economic basis of these households is known. The excavation has already produced an enormous assemblage of artefacts, and it is likely that this will continue as the team excavates down through earlier layers, beneath the aisled building. The nature of the archaeological deposits points to this area being an important zone within the Roman small town of Worcester. The excavation is rewriting the story of Roman Worcester.

The first ten weeks of the excavation were a community archaeology project, and over 200 local people took part. From mid-October the site has been excavated by a team of professional archaeologists from WHEAS. The excavation will continue into the winter of 2008, and remains open to the public, Monday to Friday (10am to 4pm).

Hal Dalwood

Wyre Forest LiDAR survey

During the winter of 2007 a Forestry Commission funded LiDAR survey was carried out over Wyre Forest. The survey data is being interpreted as part of an ongoing project to transcribe all features of historic environment potential.

What is LiDAR?

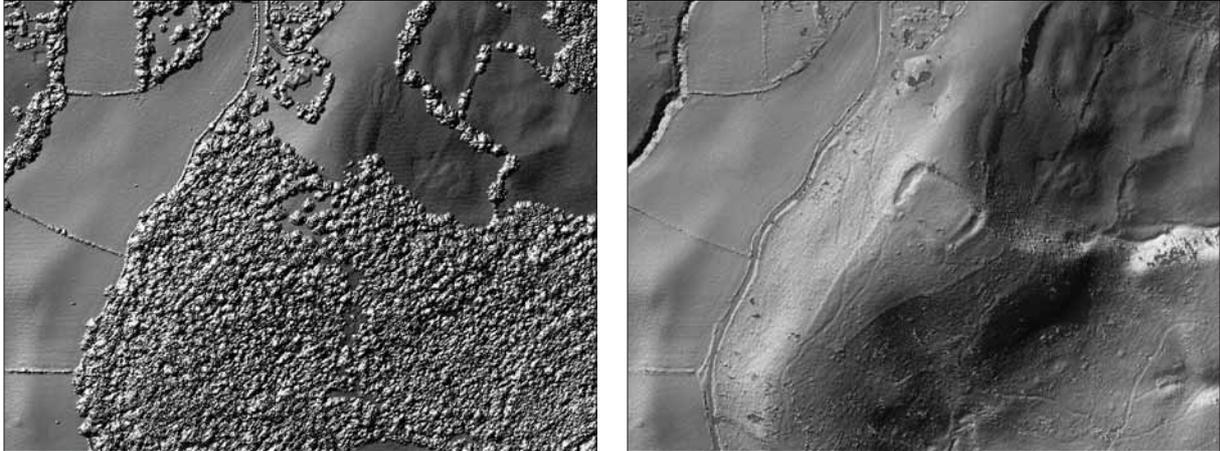
Light Detection And Ranging is an aerial method of topographic survey that can be applied to produce highly detailed three-dimensional surface models of the landscape. Developed originally as a military mapping technique, LiDAR has since been developed for civilian applications, notably for flood risk modelling and landscape survey. It was soon recognised that LiDAR could contribute towards the canon of survey methods employed in landscape archaeology. Perhaps, nowhere has this been applied more successfully than in revealing the historic landscapes hidden under extensive areas of forest. To date, LiDAR surveys have been carried out in the forests of Dean, Savernake and Wyre. The survey is carried out from an aircraft flying at 3,300 ft. Fitted with survey equipment that emits a dense pattern of lasers at the surface, the aircraft records the reflected lasers and uses the data to map the ground surface. Over woodland the lasers are reflected from the woodland canopy; however, a percentage penetrates the canopy to reach the woodland floor. A computer process then virtually removes the woodland canopy to reveal surface detail otherwise unobtainable.

Project background, potential and aims

Prior to the 2007 LiDAR survey, Wyre Forest was under-represented within the Historic Environment Records of Worcestershire and Shropshire. This is a typical problem of all landscapes under woodland cover. The Wyre Forest Landscape Partnership Scheme was formed in 2006 to develop the Grow With Wyre project, which has recently been successful in securing a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Interpretation, promotion and enhanced management of Wyre Forest's historic landscape are major aims of the project.

Initial assessment of results

Far from a barren landscape, initial studies have revealed an extensive and diverse assemblage of multi-period features across the 73 km² survey area. Features include rectilinear enclosures, boundaries, an intricate communication network and many features associated with historic forest industries. To date, three locations under the forest canopy have revealed the remains of relic field systems, and there are suggestions of other similar examples. These field systems are already contributing towards an understanding of dynamics and changes in land-use in Wyre's landscape.



Comparative LiDAR images at Wassell Wood with the tree canopy (left), and following further processing (right), the canopy removed to reveal a substantial earthwork enclosure, boundary banks and tracks. Images © Worcestershire County Council based on data supplied by the Unit for Landscape Modelling and Forest Research as part of the Grow with Wyre Project.

Future aims and objectives

It is planned to complete the transcription of features by early 2009. This will facilitate a first stage of interpretation and provide a dataset for integration into the Worcestershire and Shropshire Historic Environment Records. A second stage of the project planned for 2009-10 will aim to validate features in the field to both refine interpretation and assess current condition.

Adam Mindykowski

Church Farm West – an archaeological investigation

A team from the Field Section of WHEAS, assisted by a group of volunteers from the charity Motov8, undertook an excavation at Church Farm West, Ball Mill Quarry, Grimley, this summer. The site is situated on the western river terrace of the Severn, close to a bend in the Grimley brook and south-west of a small eminence upon which Top Barn Farm lies. It is designated a Scheduled Ancient Monument and as such has been recognised as a site of national importance.

During mapping in 1959-1966, an extensive series of cropmarks was identified in and around the site, including five large enclosures of Prehistoric and Romano-British date. In the 1970-90s, archaeological investigations to the north revealed evidence of Neolithic activities and Bronze Age funerary monuments. An archaeological evaluation of the site area undertaken by WHEAS between 2002-4 also provided evidence for Middle Bronze Age and Mid-Late Iron Age

settlement, and Romano-British activities from the 1st-4th centuries. The results of the evaluation did, however, indicate a high level of damage caused by historic and ongoing ploughing. English Heritage therefore felt that it was best to retrieve all the archaeological evidence from the site under Monument Consent, and allow mineral extraction to continue.



Excavations over the last couple of months encompassed c5 hectares of the investigated field, with 5.7 hectares to be excavated in 2009. After topsoil and subsoil stripping, a large 'D' shaped enclosure ditch was identified along with pits, postholes, an oven (possible corn drier), other ditches, and tree bowls.

Preliminary results indicate occupation evidence from the Bronze Age, with the recovery of hazelnut shells, grain, and flint flakes from pits. A Middle Iron Age pot sherd and several Late Iron Age sherds were also found in pits. The large enclosure ditch (Enclosure A – see photo) contained some interesting finds, like a 4th-century coin with the term 'GLORIA EXERCTVS' ('The glory of the army'), a Polden Hill brooch (c.90-175), and an iron latch lifter from a possible Roman house. Pottery found dated to 3rd-4th century, and several near-complete vessels were recovered; one, a waster, may indicate a production site nearby. Pot sherds were also recovered from other pits and ditches. So far, the assemblage is similar to finds in other sites in Worcester City, like The Butts.

Analysis is ongoing and full site characterisation will be made after the 2009 excavation. Preliminary interpretation of the large enclosure suggests it provided a major stock holding area rather than a focus for occupation, which at this point is believed to lie further south. Working out the settlement history of the site will allow us to investigate further the relationships between rural and urban settlements in Worcestershire in the Romano-British period.

Sarah Phear

News from Worcestershire Record Office Deposits, March – September 2008

BA:

- 14,753 Records and deeds relating to Bromsgrove Court Leet and Manor
- 14,765 Rental of Knightwick Manor Farm, 1842-1927
- 14,767 Index to Worcester City planning applications, 1902-1905
- 14,769 B.S.Smith's notes on the Dougharty family
- 14,771 Stray deed of 1680 concerning Ashton under Hill
- 14,778 Plans of Barnsley Hall Hospital, c. 1880s
- 14,788 Volume of watercolours, mainly of north Devon (Buckle collection)
- 14,796 NADFAS church reports on Droitwich St Peter, Hindlip and Worcester, Old St Martin.
- 14,808 Reports of the 'Historic Kidderminster' Project
- 14,826 Copy letter from Lord Nelson to George III (Sandys collection)
- 14,830 Microfilm of diaries of John Amphlett of Clent (late 19th century)

Robin Whittaker

Worcestershire Record Office

Croome Court: The Coventry Family Archive

Work is now well underway at Worcestershire Record Office on the project to catalogue the Croome collection, the family and estate archives of the Earls of Coventry. Work began in August 2007 to catalogue the collection, which came to the Record Office in 2006 as part of the Acceptance in Lieu of Inheritance Tax scheme, in order to make it fully accessible to the public for the first time. Once catalogued it will facilitate research in many areas, including local and family history, the history of horticulture and landscape gardening, the history of architecture and furnishings, and political history.

The first task to be undertaken was an initial listing of the collection, to provide a detailed overview of the records, enabling an understanding of how the different areas of the archive relate to one another. An electronic box list of the collection has been produced, along with a spreadsheet containing brief details of each of the hundreds of title deeds and leases contained within the collections. The deeds and leases have been arranged into their respective civil parishes, and within these have been organised according to the name of the piece of land involved. Some of the lands are unnamed and are organised as unidentified lands. Although not currently available to the public, this list allows staff at the Record Office to search for any available deeds relating to specific pieces of land, thus increasing access to this part of the collection for searchers.

With the initial stages of the project complete, work has now begun on the cataloguing of the Croome collection. The records are being entered into a CALM (Collections management for Archives Libraries Museums) database and will one day be searchable through WRO's online catalogue, which is scheduled to go live in coming months. The catalogue is being completed to file or item level, according to the standards laid out in ISAD(G) (General International Standard for Archival Description). Records relating to the management of the Croome estate are currently being focused upon, and to date the rent rolls and rent collecting books in the collection, spanning some 215 years, have been entered onto the database and are available for issue in the searchroom. The family papers, which include the records and bills relating

to Croome court and the landscape gardens, are not currently being worked upon as they are the subject of a funding bid, which aims to add a third year of cataloguing time onto the project.

September saw the first volunteer sign up to help with the early stages of cataloguing on the Croome project, working on the arrangement and listing of the clothing bills within the collection. We are keen to recruit more volunteers at this stage, as the help they can provide could be vital to the progression of the project. If you are interested in volunteering with the Record Office, please contact Robin Whitaker on: 01905 766353 or email at: RWhittaker@worcestershire.gov.uk. For more information on the Croome project please contact Charlene Taylor on: 01905 728704 or email at: ctaylor1@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Charlene Taylor

Croome Cataloguing Archivist, Worcestershire Record Office

News from the City

The largest archaeological project in Worcester since the Deansway excavations of the late 1980s is currently underway at The Butts (the new library and history centre development). This exciting project has had a significant community involvement, and the archaeological results are already exceeding expectations. A report on results so far is included elsewhere in *The Recorder* (pp3-5).

On the other side of the railway viaduct is the new university campus site, and large-scale excavation here has produced abundant Roman material, including large pottery assemblages from quarry pits, building foundations, and a mysterious circular ditch. Recording of the Infirmary buildings has continued, revealing 18th-century graffiti, details of the mid-19th-century chapel, and the entrance to a tunnel leading under Castle Street from the former prison. It's believed that the bodies of executed prisoners were taken through the tunnel for dissection at the Infirmary.

Evaluation at the Sainsbury's supermarket site in St John's has for the first time produced evidence of gravel-terrace archaeology in this area. This is by far the largest development project to have occurred in the centre of St John's for nearly 40 years, and in overall extent dwarfs the adjacent medieval suburb. The archaeological interest has focused on the extreme east of the site, very close to the edge of the terrace and overlooking the Severn floodplain, with views towards the city centre. Here a ditched enclosure of first century AD date has been found, the finds evidence pointing to occupation both before and after the Roman conquest. The finds assemblages are exceptional for Worcester, with large quantities of first century pottery and other material, as well as ironworking hearth bottoms. (and see below)

Work in Sansome Place (the former BT site) revealed evidence of post-medieval pit-digging, while further north in Sansome Walk, the remains of a massive circular water storage tank from World War II were found.

Excavation at the former Alma Inn in Mill Street has produced further evidence of Saxo-Norman occupation in this area south of the castle.

Among other building recording projects, work at 52 & 53 The Tything has proved particularly interesting. Both houses contain elements from the rebuilding of the suburb in the late 17th century, after destruction during the Civil War. 52 The Tything, previously mentioned for its 19th-century tea-chest partition wall, also contained a striking diagonally-braced roof truss, while much of the structure of the 17th-century house at 53 is intact, with an elaborate staircase dated to between 1655 and 1670.

As part of the ‘evidence-gathering’ for the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy and future planning documents for Worcester, the City Council is undertaking a characterisation project covering the whole city. Results of this will be reported in a future issue.

James Dinn

St John’s, Worcester

Although the post-excavation analysis and reporting have yet to commence, the following can be said of the site: The enclosure is rectangular in plan, and formed of a wide and deep ditch. Three sides have been exposed and recorded. No bank was discernible, nor was an entrance defined. The north-east corner had been identified previously during an evaluation c 6-7 years ago, although its significance had perhaps not been fully recognised.

It measures approximately 40m north-south by 30m east-west. Unfortunately the site had been truncated, causing the loss of all but the deepest internal features. A number of gully-ditches indicate that zoning of the enclosure took place, whilst four burials along and partially within the northern arm indicate one of the last phases of use, probably in the 3rd century AD.

As James has said, the finds assemblage was spectacular, both in terms of quantity and quality. Pottery ranged from a small amount of Samian ware, to imported mortaria, Malvernian and Severn Valley cooking vessels and storage jars, all of which appear to be of 1st-2nd century date, plus some immediately pre-Conquest large hand-made lime-stone tempered storage vessels. Evidence of on-site iron working was clear, and a number of copper-alloy and iron items were recovered, including brooches.

The occupation site is located directly on the edge of gravel terrace so would have been ideal for utilisation of the free-draining plateau to the west, and the resources of the floodplain and River Severn to the east, whilst its prominent position directly opposite the sandy ridge on which the Roman town was established further indicates that it lay at the heart of the local and regional trade routes.

Tom Vaughan
WHEAS

News from the Friends of Hartlebury Castle and the Hurd Library

The news on the future of the Castle, which is for sale, is still uncertain. The County Council has been looking at how the castle can be brought into the public domain but is having difficulties moving forward with this, for various reasons, both political and financial. The

Council is continuing to look at the options and asked the Friends to convene a meeting so we could all look at the possibility of forming a Building Preservation Trust (BPT) to acquire and run the castle. The County Council, Wychavon District Council, English Heritage, Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust, Worcestershire Archaeological Society and the FHCHL were all represented at the meeting, and other interested parties and potential trustees were present.

The meeting, which took place on 30 September, was very successful. There was a presentation by Ian Rice of the Architectural Heritage Fund and statements from the County Council and the FHCHL followed by an excellent discussion. All present, except the County Council staff, were really enthusiastic about setting up a steering committee to look into forming a BPT or other type of charitable trust to acquire the Castle and so preserve it for the use and enjoyment of the public in the future. The FHCHL understands the difficulties the County Council faces currently, but hopes that it too will see that a trust is the way forward. The steering committee is now underway and working very hard. It is holding meetings with various interested parties and is in touch with the Church Commissioners who own Hartlebury Castle.

We believe that a BPT or another form of charitable trust acquiring the castle could be something all parties could support and that the public would welcome. It would have great advantages in terms of grant funding and in the case of a BPT would be eligible for special grants from the Architectural Heritage Fund. If a charitable trust owned the Castle, it would mean a high level of public access can be assured.

We shall continue to work with the County Council and others, particularly Wychavon District Council, to find a solution which preserves a high level of public access to this wonderful building. We do not think ownership by a business is, in any way, an appropriate future for such an important historic building, let alone one which contains the Hurd Library and the Bishop's Chapel, which as well as being very important architecturally, is a consecrated building.

The Friends' main objective continues to be 'to ensure that Hartlebury Castle, including its garden and grounds, and its historic contents is brought into the public domain and retained for use and enjoyment by the people of Worcestershire and beyond'.

HELP NEEDED

If you have any knowledge or experience of building preservation trusts, saving historic buildings or related matters please do get in touch. We should also be grateful for help in setting up a web site. If you don't have specialist knowledge but want to express support we should be very glad to hear from you. We know that other members of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society have a great deal of relevant knowledge. Please share it with us. We need your help and expertise as well as your advice and enthusiasm at this critical time. Please do contact us. Thank you.

Virginia Wagstaff

Secretary FHCHL. v_wagstaff@yahoo.co.uk 01299 250883

The Hurd Library

We are delighted to announce that agreement has now been reached with the Bishop of Worcester, the Church Commissioners and the County Museum for the FHCHL to care for the books in the Hurd Library at Hartlebury Castle. The Library was built and furnished in 1782 by Bishop Richard Hurd, who was bishop of Worcester from 1781 to 1808. It is the most beautiful room in a lovely tranquil setting at the back of the castle, overlooking the moat. It has very fine plasterwork, bookcases and contemporary furniture. (See cover, *Recorder* 75, Spring 2007) Bishop Hurd was one of the literati of his day and his collection of books is extremely wide ranging. It includes medicine, science, travel and topography as well as history, languages, literature and theology.

King George III was a close friend of Bishop Hurd and gave him over 100 books for his library. The King and Queen, the Duke of York and three royal princesses visited the Bishop at Hartlebury Castle on August 2nd 1788. The King was staying at Cheltenham because he had been advised to take the waters. He was recovering from his first serious attack of what was thought at the time to be insanity, but may well have been porphyria.

There is a contemporary account of the royal visit to Hartlebury written by the Bishop's nephew, another Richard Hurd, who acted as his uncle's amanuensis and lived with him at Hartlebury. The account, which is still in the library, tells of the royal party being entertained in 'the Library where a Breakfast of Tea, Coffee, Chocolate, Fruits and Jellies etc had been prepared, which the Royal Visitors partook of, and were waited upon by the Bishop'.

The experts regard the Hurd Library as a very fine 18th-century gentleman's library and it is considered to be of national and international importance. Bishop Hurd died at Hartlebury Castle on May 28th 1808, aged 88, and is buried in Hartlebury churchyard. His will, which is still in the library, says:

'I give and bequeath to my Successors in the See of Worcester and all succeeding Bishops of that See for the time being for ever the use of all my books which I shall leave in the Library of the Episcopal House or Castle of Hartlebury at my death and also all the furniture of the same Library.'

We are very glad to say that the current owner of the Library, the bishop of Worcester, Dr John Inge, who is President of our Society, is 'wholeheartedly committed' to the library remaining at Hartlebury.

We had our first volunteers' induction session in the Library on 10 September, under the expert guidance of Christine Penney. Chris was formerly head of Special Collections at Birmingham University Library and University Archivist. She is a key member of the FHCHL committee and we are very fortunate to have her working with us. Through Chris we have close links with the Historic Libraries Forum.

The induction session was a wonderful experience for the first seven volunteers. We were first taught how to take the precious volumes off the shelves in the correct way. Over the next months we shall check every book to make sure it is in the right place, record any that are missing, and check condition. It is a huge privilege for those involved. Because of insurance, at the moment the Church Commissioners have only agreed to members of the FHCHL committee being allowed to work in the library, but in the future we hope that other

FHCHL members who wish to be involved may be able to take part in some aspect of the work.

We saw so many fine bindings, engravings and woodcuts, as well as the signature of the poet Alexander Pope on the fly leaf of one of his books. It has made all the hard work of the last two years seem worthwhile, and made us even more certain that this unique library must stay in its beautiful setting as an inspiration for the people of Worcestershire and elsewhere.

Mary Arden-Davis, Acting Chair FHCHL

Fifty Years of The Victorian Society.

2008 is the Golden Jubilee of the Victorian Society, the national charity which campaigns for the preservation of buildings from the Victorian and Edwardian periods. In the early days of the 1960s members fought major national battles to try to save a number of Britain's iconic buildings; some were successful, perhaps most famously St Pancras Station, but others were lost, including the notorious case of the Euston Arch. It is ironic that, almost 50 years since the wanton destruction of this important railway building, there is now discussion about its possible rebuilding. The Society has said throughout the last 50 years that good, well-constructed 19th- and early 20th-century buildings, which were made to last, should not be allowed to disappear, particularly if their replacements are not going to stand the test of time. Whilst some of these major cases have come and gone, the work of the Society today is no less vital in this field. Many good buildings are under threat from demolition or unsympathetic alteration, and recent campaigns have sought to secure the future of a range of Victorian and Edwardian factories, churches, public houses, swimming baths, schools and hospitals right across the country. The website www.victoriansociety.org.uk has further details of the work of the Society and anniversary events, such as the 1000 year swim!

The Society has recently nominated its top ten endangered buildings for 2008, and it is significant that two are located within Birmingham: the Red Lion Pub in Handsworth and Moseley Road Baths. Both are listed at grade II* by English Heritage and reflect the huge number and excellent quality of Victorian and Edwardian buildings throughout the urban West Midlands. Casework in this area is funded by a special trust and managed by the Birmingham Group of the Victorian Society, which celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2008. The group began by campaigning to save the buildings around Victoria and Chamberlain Squares in central Birmingham, which resulted in the preservation of the Post Office and Queen's College.

More recently casework has covered a wide variety of buildings, including many from within the earlier boundaries of the county of Worcestershire. We have been involved this year with local campaigns to save Woodside Library and St. John's Church in Dudley, as well as Lye and Wollescote Cemetery Chapels near Stourbridge, and the listing by English Heritage of 'The Grove', an Arts and Crafts house in Pedmore. We are also heading interesting campaigns to save buildings such as Parkside School and the cemetery cross in Bromsgrove. Cases in the remainder of Worcestershire are covered by caseworkers in the London office, but further information about West Midlands casework and the activities of the Birmingham Group can be seen on our website www.victorian-society-bham.org.uk

Tim Bridges

Architectural Adviser for Birmingham & the West Midlands

The de Freville Estates of Crowneast and Rugehalle, Wichenford

The Wichenford Local Heritage Group has been active for some years now. Spurred on by the fact that so little was known of the village's history, members have been combing not just the Worcester Record Office - treasure chest that it is of information and documents - but also, thanks to the internet and Access to Archives (A2A), many other Record Offices round the country.

Thus it was, without stirring from home, we came across the Zachary Lloyd Collection in Birmingham. Among the many documents one in particular opened up a new area of research for us. The document dated from 1477 and was a '*Rental of Wychenford Manor renewed by the oaths of the tenants and bailiff on 10th June in the 17th year of the reign of King Edward the 4th after the Conquest of the Angles as for the lands and tenements pertaining to John Leeke Lord of Crowneste*'.

There then follows a detailed description of the tenants including *John Giles of Wychenford for his land called Rugehale yard per annum 8/-*. (my underlining)

These two references were intriguing because the Victoria County History has 'Rugehall' as an alternative name to the Crowneast estate in St John's; but this document clearly placed Rugehall in Wichenford, as the other fields rented by John Giles can still be traced today!

Further National Archives and A2A searching produced a whole series of related documents: the earlier ones from the 13-14th centuries were linked to a family called de Freville, and the later ones from the 15th century to the Leekes mentioned in our 1477 document.

One large cache of documents was found in Nottingham University's Special Collections Department - 16 deeds for Crowneast alone! Others were linked to 'Kekenwykes', unplaced by their archivist but obvious to us as 'Kenswick'; and 'Langhern', clearly a misreading of 'Laugherne'; five deeds named 'Rugg's Place', a small farm on the boundary between Martley and Wichenford, but were, it was to turn out, concerned with either the Ruge or Rugehall; two deeds named Wichenford itself; and there was even one document that tantalisingly referred to Clopton - an area as yet unplaced, somewhere near Crowneast-Rushwick, but mentioned in pre-Conquest boundary charters!

The documents are part of the Middleton Papers and were clearly going to be of importance to our studies. So in December 2007 contact was made with the archivist at Nottingham University and arrangements were made to view the Papers. On the last day of February 2008 Peter Walker and myself, accompanied by the invaluable Kevin Down, drove over to Nottingham. We were fortunate that the Reading Room was empty so we disturbed no-one except a watchful archivist with our reactions and (my) squeals of delight as we worked our way through the pile of documents laid out for us.

Each in its own paper envelope, the documents were mostly pristine - as clean and unaged as the day they were written. Most were about A5 size, and in a small neat hand that betrayed not a single dip of quill or even a blot. The handwriting was so clear, in the main, that both Peter and I could follow Kevin as, with the casualness of a man reading aloud from his morning newspaper, he translated the medieval Latin into English.

I hastily took dictation, as the texts were translated one by one. The Clopton document, so

much anticipated, was a sad disappointment. It was as if the parchment had been held against a large hot candle, because the entire centre of the document had melted away, leaving just a few clear words round the edges. Suffice it to say it was an indenture between Matilda de Freville and Peter of Clopton and involved a mill. No more could be gleaned.

Others, though, made up for this loss. One in particular repaid further scrutiny and was found to reveal a mini-descent of the Crowneast estate.

Mi D 4597, between 1236 and 1253:

Know all men that I William Giffard by the will and assent of Margery, my wife have given, granted and affirmed to Arnald de Berkley, clerk, those 10/- worth of annual rent, which the heirs of Walter le Bufle used to be under obligation to render annually to me and my wife and our heirs for the land of Crowneast which rent Gilbert de Branesford sold to Hugh le Poher and which the same Hugh le Poher gave to me in free marriage of Margery, my wife; to have and to hold to the same Arnald and his heirs or to whomsoever he shall want to give, assign or bequeath it or their heirs or their successors other than a house of religion.

Unpeeling the information, we now know that Gilbert de Bransford sold the rent of Crowneast to Hugh le Poer, who gave it to William Giffard in marriage to Margery le Poer, his sister, who then rented it out to Walter Bufle and heirs for 10/- p.a.

So we can now correct the VCH for a second time: 'One carucate of this (Crowneast) land belonged in 1236 to Walter Bufle (fn. 85); his son and heir Robert sold it in 1255 to Baldwin de Freville'. Footnote 85 gave as its reference the Middleton Papers, which somewhat threw us. But rather than refer to a document, it gave a page number in the Historical Manuscripts Commission's Middleton Papers (1911). On referring to this page we found 'land on the eastern side of the Severn in the city of Worcester and without' being detailed – so not Crowneast at all!

New information has a habit of throwing up new questions: who was William Giffard? Was he William, brother to Bishop Godfrey? But that William is usually listed as being married to a Katherine, not a Margery. The likelihood is that they are indeed one and the same person and that Margery was a first, forgotten wife.

How do we come to this conclusion? Because the following Crowneast documents were issued by Matilda or Maud de Freville née Giffard, who is always listed as the Bishop's sister. Perhaps Matilda brought Crowneast with her as dowry on her marriage with Baldwin de Freville, as from 1250 onwards the estate is in de Freville hands. Or maybe William sold it to his brother-in-law.

Baldwin de Freville is to die in 1256 and Matilda marries quickly again to Sir William de Ebroycis (Devereux / Devros) and under that name writes the following:

Mi D 4598

Matilda de Ebroycis (Devereux / Devros) and Alexander de Freville her son have granted to William of Ablington all our manor of Crowneaste with appurtances, woods, meadows, fishponds to have and to hold from us and our heirs for the term of his life. And after the decease of the said William the manor is to revert to Matilda and her son Alexander.

For this grant William has given in exchange 1 messuage, 3 carucates of land, 12/- annual rent, 40 acres of wood and pasture, 4 acres of meadow at la Ruge in Wichenford. The said William has also given us 1 messuage 1 carucate of land 18/- of annual rent 12 acres of woodland 20 acres of meadow at Beckenore [Becknor Manor] and Shelve [Shell] in Hanbury next to Wyche with roads, meetes & bounds together with certain salt pits in Wyche.

And we Maud and Alexander promise the aforementioned goods to William Ablington so long as he lives and one competent bowl and a tabard every year at Christmas.

And we have handed over to William at the same manor 16 oxen 140 wethers and all utensils greater and lesser found there at this time, together with all stock, all the corn of whatsoever sort still growing, of which the said William should have usefrucht [usufruct] of the utensils for the length of his life and also of the corn without any obligation, restitution during life and after death.

We have promised also that we will undertake soon to marry Alice daughter of the said William or that, should she ever enter honestly into religion, we promise we shall give after the decease of the said William every year forever to the White Nuns at Whistone 2 quarters of wheat and 2 quarters of oats at two terms of the year: viz at Christmas 1 quarter and at Easter 1 quarter as perpetual alms for the soul of the said William and we bind ourselves to this accord whoever of us shall hold these tenements will do all this, strengthened with our seals and these being witness:-

The Abington/Habington family needs no introduction in Worcestershire and we knew of William already, but as William Abington not Ablington; other records seem undecided as to what to call him: mostly Abington, occasionally Abbington with a sprinkling of Ablingtons. Luckily there is enough common ownership of land to affirm that we are dealing with the same man, whatever his surname.

But Alice Abington as Alexander de Freville's wife was something new. We had not found a single record or family tree that mentions this alliance. And yet it must have taken place because only this can explain how the Wichenford estate of Rugehall became part of the de Freville holdings and would stay linked with Crowneast until the Leekes sell the estate in the early 16th century.

Then, just as any new word learnt is met immediately again, what did Peter find recently in the newly published Worcester Eyre of 1275 but a record of Alexander de Freville and Alice his wife! Admittedly in the Eyre she is said to be the daughter of William of Sohelle, but as one of Abington's properties was Shell or Shelve perhaps this is what is meant.

Other documents read during our visits (so far three have been undertaken) have provided even more food for thought, but they will have to form part of another report. The two documents above were worth the trips by themselves. Their ramifications are not yet fully explored and if anyone has information or references that can add to either, we would be very grateful to receive them.

Heather Rendall
Chair WLHG

The Wribbenhall Project

Wribbenhall is a forgotten area of the County. It was once part of Kidderminster, but since the 1930s has been part of Bewdley. The recent Heritage Lottery Fund Project has helped to put it on the map and raise people's awareness as to its history.

The Project was launched on 1st February 2007 with a well attended meeting at the local secondary school. The various strands of the Project were explained. A major part was the dating of some buildings using dendrochronology. Ian Tyers, who was commissioned to do this, looked at several buildings and decided on eight; he got seven exact dates and two range dates (one of the buildings was two-phase). He worked alongside Stephen Price, who did a meticulous study of all these buildings and many others too. The dates found were:

Whispering Cottage, Westbourne Street – winter 1576/7
3 Beales Corner – spring 1618
Bridgewater Cottage – winter 1619/20
Internal wall in Pleasant Harbour House – 1600-28
6 Kidderminster Road front range – winter 1632/3
6 Kidderminster Road rear range – 1647-62
Malthouse Row – summer 1633
1 Kidderminster Road – spring 1665
12 Kidderminster Road – spring 1666

Stephen's work highlighted two features of national importance. In 3 Beales Corner, there are some rare wall paintings in the first floor room, which can now be confidently dated to 1618-9. In 6 Kidderminster Road, there is the only known example of an original dog wheel in a private house; it is believed to be early 18th Century.

Another aspect of the Project concerned a survival from the 14th Century. Numbers 5, 7 and 9 Stourport Road had already been dated to 1302-24, but Pat Hughes was commissioned to work on their documentary history. No firm evidence was found for the original owner; it could have been the Burnells of Kidderminster or the Mortimers of Tickenhill. Pat did, however, manage to push back the known history to the early 18th Century.

The local schools were also involved. Pupils from Bewdley High School made a film of the Project, while children from Wribbenhall First School had the opportunity of seeing round 9 Stourport Road and making a model (in conjunction with Bewdley Museum) of how No.7 would have looked.

The Project was accompanied by such events as a seminar on reading old title deeds, an exhibition and guided tours of the Wribbenhall area.

A final presentation was made on 17 April 2008, and a book entitled *Early Wribbenhall* published two months later. The book is far more than simply a report on the experts' findings, as it includes much of the research that has been carried out in the last few years.

Heather Flack
Project Leader

Understanding trade in Worcestershire before the industrial revolution

Daniel Defoe wrote that ‘Trade is like Religion; ‘tis what all men talk about and few understand’. While the general history of trade and industry in Worcestershire before the Industrial Revolution is broadly known, understanding the *how* as well as the *where* and the *what* (not to mention the *why*) is considerably less advanced.

The clues and evidence are largely locked up in various classes of public records held by The National Archives (TNA). Most impenetrable of these are the records of Chancery. This researcher has spent some time familiarising himself with these records and searching them for Worcestershire references. They have proved to be particularly valuable for evidence about trade and industry before the end of the 18th century.

Some of these are completely new and, as far as one can ascertain, have not been used before. Others have been known, perhaps for some time, but the original case papers have not been investigated. When they are, it often reveals much new evidence which earlier historians with family or political priorities had not thought worth reporting.

One such case may illustrate the richness of such sources. It concerns the activities of William Glasbrooke, an iron merchant who, in the 1620s and 1630s, lived in Wribbenhall and had at least one warehouse in Bewdley. He is completely unknown to us except through two Chancery disputes, in 1629 and 1635. These reveal that Glasbrooke purchased iron from a number of iron forges, including Bringewood (Herefordshire), Longnor (Shropshire), Cleobury, Shelsley and Pontypool, the latter being owned by one John Hanbury of Gloucester. Glasbrooke stored the iron in his warehouse before selling it on to manufacturers of iron goods in Birmingham and the Black Country. His business was subject to cash flow problems because those whom he supplied often purchased on credit. He therefore tried to do the same from his suppliers. But the capital in his business was acquired by a series of loans upon bond from a number of individuals, notably in Worcester and London.

In 1635 Glasbrooke declared himself bankrupt, and the extent of his debts and those who owed him became clear. His principal creditor was Hanbury, who claimed that Glasbrooke had not paid him for iron which he had subsequently sold on. John Hanbury of Gloucester, dealer in Merchandise of Iron, had employed Glasbrooke for many years as his agent in the buying and selling of Iron, through which Glasbrooke obtained the credit from others in order to support his own business.

Hanbury used Glasbrooke to conceal some of his own financial frailty. It was vital for Hanbury’s business that his customers and creditors were confident that he was financially stable and that they could trade with him without worrying about the risks that trading on credit brings. To disguise some financial problems, Hanbury persuaded Glasbrooke to publicly pretend that he (Glasbrooke) owed Hanbury much more money than he really did, that was going to be paid very soon. Having persuaded Glasbrooke to confess a ‘judgment ‘ for a far greater sum of money than was due, Hanbury then secretly took out a Writ of Execution upon the Judgment for Glasbrooke’s body, goods and his lands.

Hanbury sent a friendly invitation to Glasbrooke to come and meet him in Gloucester, but instigated a plot to have him arrested within the City. Glasbrooke was privately forewarned, and fled. It was at this point that Glasbrooke declared himself bankrupt and the whole affair started to unravel. Hanbury was evidently not a happy man.

Hanbury and others came with the Undersheriff of the County of Worcester to Glasbrooke's house 'near Bewdley' (probably Wribbenhall) and broke in, by virtue of the Writ of Execution, when his wife and children were present. Hanbury, the Undersheriff and agents broke open 'the dores trunks Chestes and Boxes' of Glasbrooke and seized 'all his Bonds Bills specialties books of accompts and other writings goods and chattells whatsoever remayninge in or about the said howse or uppon his lands amountinge to a greate value'. They also broke into his shop or warehouse near Bewdley, taking other valuable goods of diverse other persons. These things were then sold by the Undersheriff for far less than they were worth. They also seized deeds and turned Glasbrooke, his wife and children out of their house.

Glasbrooke and Roger Glasbrooke, his brother, subsequently petitioned his creditors to take pity on their situation, accept part-payment of their debts (at the rate of 10s in the pound) and allow them sufficient time to pay back the remainder. Many agreed to this request and thought that Hanbury might have been persuaded to do the same, since Glasbrooke had been employed by him for so long and Hanbury had benefitted greatly as a result. But Hanbury refused and continued to pursue Glasbrooke for the money he allegedly owed him. Glasbrooke is not heard of again.

This tale of sharp practice, the frailty of the trading world, the importance of trust and confidence in your business partners, dodgy dealings and ruthless pursuit of advantage can only be revealed to us by deep exploration of the public records.

Stuart Davies

Sources : TNA C2/Chas 1/J5/12; TNA C8/66/87; A.A. Locke *The Hanbury Family* (1916)

NB: Professor Davies will be delivering a lecture, 'Bewdley Merchants and the Prattinton Family', on 2 February 2009.

Book Reviews:

The Worcestershire Eyre of 1275 Jens Röhrkasten, Worcestershire Historical Society NS 22 (2008) 650pp, £40

The eyre was the king's circuit court. The justices, of whom four arrived at Worcester in 1275, were usually members of the superior courts. In 1176, eighteen justices were appointed to six circuits. The eyre was replaced by the assize court in 1285. The Worcestershire records for 1275 are virtually complete, and recount in detail the crimes, criminals and victims, as well as the legal procedures of the time.

The Introduction provides useful background information and includes an explanation of the categorisation of cases, of which the majority are crown pleas. Preceded by an invaluable Glossary are three comprehensive Indexes, of persons, places, and actions and subjects. These are the key to a wealth of treasure for the local historian. Place-name specialists will be especially pleased to find the original spellings included in the index.

There are 1332 cases to peruse. To give a flavour of the volume, 'Measures, false' leads us to the people of Bromsgrove and Droitwich who 'buy grain by a large bushel' and use 'a smaller bushel when they sell it'; the town of Kidderminster 'has false gallon measures ... too small

in height by 3 fingers'. We learn that the abbot of Pershore had a market in that town 'from time immemorial', and the bishop of Worcester a fair at Blockley. Prisons are identified at places as small as Bredon. 'Leo le Levere, Jew, was arrested for coin clipping and imprisoned in Worcester prison' whence 'it is not known how he was delivered'. 'Of Christian usurers they say that Miles of Evesham used to sell his grain more expensively on credit than it was worth on the day he sold.' Among the deodands identified were a plank and a 'weak horse', whose value nevertheless was 4 times that of another also responsible for death by drowning. There are several instances of people escaping from sanctuary, most of them subsequently 'exacted and outlawed'; William the Miller who, 'charged with the robbery of William le Poer, fled to the church of Leigh ... was beheaded while escaping'.

Dr Röhrkasten and the Society are to be congratulated on the high standard achieved. £40 may seem expensive, but for those who can afford it the volume will provide a lifetime of interest and enjoyment. For others, frequent visits to the library or record office may ensue.

The Tribe of Witches. The Religion of the Dobunni and Hwicce Stephen Yeates (Oxbow 2008) £30. A discounted price, £20 plus p&p, is available to Society members by application to Oxbow quoting 'Worcestershire discount'.

More than 50 members and friends enjoyed a lecture by Stephen Yeates with the same title as this book on 27 October. Following the book, he considered first the relationship between early deities and the landscape: hills, rivers, streams and woods. He then turned to a more detailed consideration of the interconnection of local topographical features and Roman religious sculpture as reflected in the Cotswolds.

A votive relief, ploughed up near Daglingworth in 1951, is sculpted with a seated mother goddess and three standing male figures, wearing hooded cloaks, *cuculatti*. It bears the inscription CUDAE LOC..V.. Although its full meaning is unknown, scholars suggest it was dedicated to the goddess Cuda sculpted on the relief (Fig 6). This is supported by an inscription 'to the mother goddess and genius (presiding spirit) of the place' found nearby in 1690. A number of other sculptures including *cuculatti* have been found in the area. Yeates provides plans of the upper Windrush valley area, showing find spots and related place- and stream names (Figs 4 & 5). Place-names in this part of the Cotswolds associated with *Cod* are *Codeswellan* in 780, *Codestun* in 977, *Codesbyrig* c1055, and *Cottesdene* in 1210.

Turning from the *Dobunni* to the *Hwicce*, Yeates states on page 4 that the word *Hwicce* 'is directly associated with the Old English *wicce* ... the origins for the modern word witch'. No evidence is brought forward in support of this assertion. Later, on p144, he states that 'the *Hw* combination in Old English words soon disappeared becoming *wh* or *w*'. However, for Karl Brunner in his *Outline of Middle English grammar* 'until the beginning of the 13th century the usual spelling of OE *hw* was *hw*: later it was *wh* in the south, *qu*, *qw* in the north, north midlands and Norfolk, and also *quh* and *qwh* in Scotland...'.

The first reference to the *Hwicce* is in Bede. In 603, he describes how St Augustine met bishops and doctors of the nearest British (Welsh) province at Augustine's Oak, on the border between the *Hwicce* and the West Saxons. In 793-7 the site, identified as Cutsdean Hill, was said to be *in provincia huicciorum*. By the mid 8th century a charter of Bishop Wilfred refers to Worcester as *metropolis Huiccorum*. In Old English an 'H' precedes the 'u', 'uu' or 'w', for the 'w' on its own is quite a different form. The 'H' is dropped with the arrival of Middle

English. Its omission before the 'w' is a ground for accepting the 811 Winchcombe foundation charter as a fabrication. Indeed, as Della Hooke points out, as late as the 10th century the bishops of Worcester were still *episcopi Hwiccorum*.

Over 80 years ago Mawer and Stenton pointed out in the English Place-Name Society's *Worcestershire* volume that the form *Uuegorna* of 699 suggests a tribal derivative of Wigor. A link with Wyre Forest was first hinted at by Camden in his *Britannia* (1607): 'I dare not say of (from) Wire (Wyre) that woody forest'. There is room for much more work on Yeates' theme of continuity from later prehistory through the Roman era to the foundation of Anglo-Saxon minsters within the ancient diocese of Worcester, and to pursue the origins of the place-name Wigornia, and of the kingdom of the Hwicce.

Joe Hillaby

Medieval Wall Paintings in English and Welsh Churches by Roger Rosewell (Boydell, 2008)
384 pages, £39.95

This excellent book, the first major study for 40 years, sets wall paintings in their broader architectural, liturgical, devotional and social contexts for a non-specialist audience. A history of wall paintings is followed by chapters on their subjects, the patrons and painters before consideration is given to how the paintings were made and to their meaning. A thorough gazetteer is followed by a most helpful subject guide and an up-to-date bibliography. One is immediately struck by the quality of over 250 colour photographs. A personal grouse relates to the heavy black borders and unnecessary curlicues, but overall this well-written book is also handsomely presented. Already enthusiastically received by the national press, it will attract a wide readership.

Artisan Art. Vernacular wall paintings in the Welsh Marches, 1550-1650 Kathryn Davies
(Logaston Press, 2008) 240 pp, over 300 colour illustrations, £17.50 ppb or £24 hdbk

Kathryn Davies has discovered extensive painted decoration in houses surviving from the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The paintings are not confined to houses of the gentry, though theirs were generally of higher quality and have generally survived in better condition. This book considers the type of decoration; the materials used; the artists, usually local craftsmen; and the cost. Of particular interest is what these wall paintings can tell us about society in the Marches in the period. Potential sources for designs include pattern books and title-pages, embroideries and painted cloths. A sign of status, wall paintings are found principally in rooms where visitors would have been received, their designs seemingly selected to give carefully coded messages about the occupants of the house.



Pelican from Yew Tree House, Ombersley, courtesy Kathryn Davies

Each entry in the gazetteer includes building details as well as information as to context, date, type, quality of execution and estimated cost of the paintings, together with a photograph in most cases. 'Welsh Marches' here includes the English counties of Cheshire, Gloucester, Hereford, Shropshire, Stafford and Worcester (gazetteer p181), and the Welsh counties of Brecon, Denbigh, Flint, Glamorgan, Merioneth, Monmouth, Montgomery and Radnor.

One of the joys of this book is that it introduces one to paintings one would not otherwise know about, as the majority are in private homes. The book will be of considerable general interest as well as appealing to art historians and those interested in social history and vernacular architecture. Publication was made possible by a grant from Herefordshire's Woolhope Club.

Roman Roads in Britain Hugh Davies. Shire Archaeology 90 (2008) 72pp, ppb £6.99

Following a very clear introduction, the author considers the extent of the Roman road network, 'in length and strength comparable with Britain's motorway and trunk road system combined'. He explains the surveying skills required to align roads that linked important military and civilian sites 35 miles or more apart. Their method of construction was stronger and more enduring than any until the 18th century. The Four Great Roads - Ermine Street, Watling Street, Foss Way and Icknield Street - carried legal status, travellers being under the king's protection. Appendix 3 lists roads still in use under their traditional names, which can be misleading. Watling Street for example is made up of several different roads. There is no evidence of what the Romans called their roads. The book is well illustrated with maps, plans and photographs of surviving roads, and is an excellent introduction to the subject, of interest both to the student and to those interested in Roman history.

Medieval Roads and Tracks Paul Hindle. Shire Archaeology 26 (2008) 64pp, ppb £6.99

That Shire should reprint the 3rd edition of this title, first published in 1982, is witness to its popularity. Many Roman roads remained in use in medieval times, but new roads were needed to serve new towns such as Oxford, Coventry and Plymouth. Documentary evidence, though sparse, is important and fascinating maps show the itineraries of kings John, Edward I and II, and of the canons of Titchfield in Hampshire to other Premonstratensian houses as far away as Shap and Alnwick. The evidence from the maps of c1250 by Matthew Paris and the Gough map of 1360 is also brought together and well illustrated. Roads were critical to the success of towns and markets, as can be seen at Castle Brough and Market Brough, ½ mile to the north on a medieval diversion. Chapter 7 looks at the road network of Cheshire to show how the various historical sources can be used, and is followed by advice for the researcher. Rivers also formed part of the transport system, most towns being within some 15 miles of navigable water, but the road system remained the basic means of transport for most goods. Amongst the many photographs is one of Blackstone Edge which Hindle refers to as Roman, but which Hugh Davies states is 'probably of early modern origin'. A good introduction to its subject, this book will attract students of medieval history and those interested in the development of Britain's roads. The fine 13th-14th-century causeway of 17 arches at Swarkestone, Derbyshire, is likely to be included in next year's excursion programme.

Members will be interested to know that John Noake's *The Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester* and *Noake's Guide to Worcestershire* are available as brand new books printed on demand for under £30 via www.abebooks.co.uk. Of *The Monastery and Cathedral of Worcester* one bookseller explains: 'This scarce antiquarian book is included in our special Legacy Reprint Series. In the interest of creating a more extensive selection of rare historical book reprints, we have chosen to reproduce this title even though it may possibly have occasional imperfections such as missing and blurred pages, missing text, poor pictures, markings, dark backgrounds and other reproduction issues beyond our control. Because this work is culturally important, we have made it available as a part of our commitment to protecting, preserving and promoting the world's literature.'

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography www.oxforddnb.com

Possibly not all members are aware that the *Oxford DNB* and *Oxford English Dictionary* are amongst the online reference books freely available in Worcestershire, and most other, public libraries and by remote access at home to library members; just follow the links.

Noake and Bishop Hurd are among some 750 historic figures associated with Worcestershire who feature in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Others include the first woman to stand for the US presidency, Victoria Woodhull Martin, who married Richard Biddulph Martin of the Martin's banking family, and inherited Norton Park, Bredon's Norton, where she lived from 1901 until her death in 1927. There is a memorial plaque to her in Tewkesbury Abbey.

Noake's entry is one of several to have been revised by our own Robin Whittaker who, with the publication of the *Transactions* this month, will have achieved 25 years as Editor, an arduous service for which members will wish to thank and congratulate him.

English Heritage Buildings at Risk Register: Shrub Hill Station Waiting Room

The last report on this Register was three years ago, when work on Shrub Hill Station Waiting Room of c1880 was said to be 'in progress'. The current entry reads: 'Repairs commenced 2007 and now substantially complete but the southern waiting room will not be brought back into use as planned and will have to be boarded up.' However, things are not as bleak as it seems. Jim Blackwell, Conservation Officer, reports:

The Waiting Rooms were in a derelict and dangerous condition for nearly 20 years. A scheme for the buildings restoration and reuse was approved by the city council in 2006. The repair work eventually commenced in mid 2007. The work was fairly time consuming as extensive structural repairs were required to the cast iron frame and foundations. The building was slowly sinking into the platform. Specialists from the Jackfield Tile museum were involved in the restoration and repair work. The rooms will remain on our buildings at risk register until they are brought back into full use. I am hopeful the repair works and the reuse of the rooms will be complete by the new year.

Worcestershire Archaeological Society Excursions Programme 2008

Overall 2008 has seen a successful programme of excursions, well supported, financially viable and contributing to the Society's aims of promoting understanding of the archaeology and history of Worcestershire. Over 300 participants supported the programme, with some 60 members and friends involved in at least one excursion; a high proportion of the membership. Several new members have joined because of their interest in the excursion programme.

This is the fourth annual programme organised by myself as Excursions Co-ordinator and I must pay tribute to all Leaders for their willing support of the programme. I co-ordinate but they research and lead! It has been the most extensive programme over my years in post and experience has, I believe, shown that it is currently at about at the right level.

Ernie Kay

Worcestershire Archaeological Society Lecture Programme 2008-9:

- 8 December** **Royal Authority in the Counties: the example of itinerant justices in 13th-century Worcestershire**
Dr Jens Röhrkasten
University of Birmingham
- 5 January, 2009** **Excavations at Beckford 1975-9**
Jan Wills
Gloucestershire County Archaeologist
- 2 February, 2.15pm** **Bewdley Merchants and the Prattinton Family**
Professor Stuart Davies
- 16 February** **Royal Worcester Porcelain Works. Recent archaeological investigation and recording**
Gamba Mora-Ottonano BA, MSc, AIFA
Project Manager, Archenfield Archaeology
- 16 March** **Regions that never were: regional frameworks and the prehistory of Worcestershire**
Paul Garwood
- Wed 22 April**
(Berkeley Lecture) **From Earthly Paradise to Heavenly Jerusalem: Worcester Chapter House and its painted decoration in the 12th century**
Sandy Heslop
University of East Anglia

Our thanks to Peter Walker for providing and operating Powerpoint equipment for lectures.

Items for the next issue should be sent to the Editor, Caroline Hillaby, at The Roughs, Hollybush, Ledbury, HR8 1EU, tel/fax 01531 650618, carolinehillaby@onetel.com by **2 March 2009**.

