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Newsletter of the
WORCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
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CONTENTS

	Page
Chairman's Letter	3
Worcestershire Archaeological Society: Committee Members, 2009-10	3
News from the County: Heat Loss and Historic Buildings	4
News from the city	6
Worcester Cathedral	7
Worcester Cathedral. Twentieth Annual Symposium	8
The Society's Interest in Churches during the Victorian period	9
Where Are They Now?	10
The Forge Mill Astley	11
The Shah of Persia's Visit to Worcestershire	14
Recent Publications: <i>King's Norton, A History</i>	16
<i>Catholics in Worcestershire, 1535-1590</i>	17
<i>Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society</i>	18
<i>List of Articles contained in the Transactions</i>	18
Dates for your Diary: Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project	18
WAS leads the way!	19
British Archaeological Association Annual Conference	20
WAS Excursions Programme	20
An Opportunity for Somebody	20
Excursions 2010-11	20

A Warm Welcome to New Members:

David Anwyl-Hughes, Worcester
Mrs Joyce Baker, Bromsgrove
John Beale, Malvern
Les Bishop, Worcester (Honorary)
Mrs Mary Edwards, Worcester
Dr Anna Frankel, Worcester
Mrs S Hodges, Bromsgrove
Ronald & Grace Scrimshaw, Bromsgrove
Rufus Segar, Pershore
Ann Spreadborough & Graham Rhodes, Worcester

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:

Bromsgrove welcomes the Shah of Persia, July 1889 (see p14)

Chairman's Letter

As always it has been a busy time as far as the Society is concerned, and for me much of the last few months has been employed working hard in my spare time to write my big article on Hartlebury Castle for the next volume of our *Transactions*, as well as helping to write another article and a minor contribution to a third. At the same time I have been abroad to Brussels to deliver a paper (both as a lecture and as a paper for publication) on the uses of dendrochronology in England: but luckily I was able to use a little of the same material for that, so the international audience will learn a little of Worcestershire's treasures.

I would invite and encourage you all to think what of your personal researches might turn into something useful to the rest of the membership and more widely on the archaeology and history of our county. Robin Whittaker performs a sterling service as Editor in terms of bringing together a wide diversity of papers on many different topics, but he is always looking for further contributions. I have been finally shamed into it after many years of promising, but as chairman I could hardly avoid it this time!

Since the last *Recorder* we have said goodbye to the County Archaeologist, Malcolm Atkin, who has held that post for a considerable period. It is reassuring in a time of severe constraints on local government finances to see that the County Council have appointed Victoria Bryant to the senior position, even if it has the rather prosaic title of 'Head of the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service'. Another change within the County is the amalgamation of the City and the County's museum services which will formally take place in April and should ensure their continued health in the changing world.

At Hartlebury Castle, the Trust is progressing slowly but surely with its negotiations with the Church Commissioners to attempt to secure the Castle for future generations, and we hope that there will be a satisfactory conclusion in due course.

Lastly, and sadly, we should note the recent death of Sir Reginald Lechmere. He was a long-standing member of the Society, and, of course, it should be remembered that his antecedents were founder members of the Society in the 1850s. He ran the very useful second-hand bookshop in Malvern for many years where I secured the basis of my personal library.

Nick Molyneux

WAS Committee: Farewells ...

At the AGM in November the Committee expressed its thanks to **Ade Gbadamosi** who resigned after three years' excellent service. We wish her well in her new employment. Saddened at the sudden resignation from the Committee of **Jean Whalley**, who had served on it since 2002, we were very pleased to see her at the March lecture meeting.

and Welcomes

Our new **Treasurer, Les Bishop**, will be known to many members through cricket, the delicatessen he and his wife ran in St.John's, or his Clerkship to Warndon Parish Council since 1991. He is also Chairman of Worcestershire Lifestyles which offers support to disabled people. Les says of himself:

Born and educated in Middlesex, I moved to Worcestershire with my family in 1966. I have a passion for cricket. From organising the first junior coaching session at the Bewdley club in 1971, when 100 children turned up, I became involved in promoting youth cricket throughout the county, regionally and nationally, and was awarded the Torch Trust Trophy. On the County Cricket Club Committee for 20 years, I was the first National Cricket Development Officer.

My interest in archaeology began when our life-long friend Margaret Rule was called in to look at the Roman pottery found at Fishbourne. I am also interested in historic buildings, paintings, music from jazz to Baroque, reading and general knowledge crosswords.

A new office has been created, that of **Webmaster**. Its incumbent, **Brian Browne**, is a retired engineer with an interest in the history of Worcestershire, particularly the medieval, and living on the site of a manor house in Charlton, near Evesham.

As this post indicates, the Society has a new website, for which Brian is to be heartily congratulated. As well as introducing the Society to website visitors, it gives details of lectures and excursions, plus links to other organisations, including museums, the Bordesley Abbey Project and Tileweb, which includes many medieval floor tiles belonging to the Society. Visit <http://www.worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk> and see for yourselves!

Worcestershire Archaeological Society: Committee Members, 2009-10

Chairman:	Nick Molyneux, 0121 7781519
Deputy Chairmen:	Stephen Price, 01905 358880 Dr John Harcup, 01684 574477
Secretary & Membership Secretary:	Dr Janet Dunleavey, 01684 565190
Treasurer:	Les Bishop
Editor (<i>Transactions</i>):	Robin Whittaker, 01905 766353 (work)
Programme Secretary:	Joe Hillaby, 01531 650618
Excursions Administrator:	Ernie Kay, 01684 567917
Archaeological Adviser:	Chris Guy, 01905 21004 (work)
Publicity Officer:	Hal Dalwood, 01905 855455 (work)
Webmaster	Mr Brian Browne
Tim Bridges, 01684 592380	Brian Ferris, 01905 354224
Vince Hemingway, 01905 426428	Mrs Barbara Plant, 01905 21554
Mrs Virginia Wagstaff, 01299 250883	

News from the County

WHEAS. Heat Loss and Historic Buildings

Historic buildings are a finite and non-renewable resource. They define local landscapes and create a sense of place. It is important to look after our historic buildings, but it is also important to make them as energy efficient as possible, both for economic and environmental reasons.

The **Warmer Worcestershire** project, funded with a grant from Improvement and Efficiency West Midlands, is 'helping deliver fuel poverty and climate change targets in Worcestershire's

Local Area Agreement'. From November 2008 to March 2009, an aerial thermal imaging survey of Worcestershire was carried out. The data captured by the survey has been used to produce a thermal map of the entire county, enabling us to see the amount of heat lost through the roofs of properties. Residents can visit the website www.warmerworcestershire.com and see how much heat their home is losing.

It is possible to use this data to look at the heat loss of older properties against newer ones. There is a general assumption that older properties are less energy efficient as they are harder to treat. Initial analysis of the data indicates that this is not always the case. The Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service used information held in the Historic Environment Record (HER) to look at the heat loss of older homes. The HER is a database of all known heritage assets in the County. Not only does the HER contain information about archaeological sites, but also historic built structures, from Grade I Listed country houses to Second World War pill boxes. The data is held in a SQL database linked to a GIS (Geographical Information System). This allows the historic environment data to be searched in conjunction with any number of other datasets.



The study found that historic (i.e. pre-1900) and non-historic (post-1900) buildings perform the same on average in terms of heat loss. Some types of historic buildings do perform poorly, but others perform better than modern properties. Older properties are just as efficient as 20th century properties, or rather both are equally inefficient, as most properties, old or new, do not have the recommended amount of loft insulation and many could benefit from cavity wall insulation. The high variability between buildings of the same date and type, particularly terraces, indicates that it is the maintenance of a building that is the key factor in determining its heat loss. This statement is borne out by other energy efficiency studies carried out by English Heritage. Historic properties need to be approached differently to modern homes as they are designed to breathe, but there is no reason why a well maintained and insulated

historic timber framed building should not be energy efficient. Maintaining and improving both historic and modern buildings in the appropriate manner is the best way to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions across Worcestershire.

The Warmer Worcestershire website includes information on ways to insulate homes and how to be more energy efficient. It also gives details on the availability of grants for loft or cavity wall insulation. There is advice on how to best insulate historic properties and contact details for district conservation officers who can provide guidance. You can visit the website to see how your home could benefit and find out how we are protecting and maintaining Worcestershire's historic buildings in the 21st century.

Emma Hancox

Historic Environment Record Officer

News from the city

Construction work has now started at the Worcester Library and History Centre in The Butts and on the new shopping area at Lowesmoor.

Nearly all the fieldwork at the Worcester Library and History Centre site is now complete and the discoveries are being analysed, with only some watching briefs and recording of part of the city wall still to be done.

At Lowesmoor, again, most fieldwork is now complete, though some areas have been identified for excavation, including areas of Roman, medieval and post-medieval occupation, part of a Civil War defensive ditch, and parts of the Grainger porcelain works. Further detailed building recording has focused on the porcelain works and in particular on nos 18-20 Silver Street, the former Infirmary. Alongside the building recording detailed historical research has defined the sequence of construction and shown how the industrial development of the area was shaped by earlier landholdings.

The investigation of the Commandery chapel walls was mentioned in the last report. Although very small in extent the work has produced important results, providing a much more secure sequence for the construction, alteration and demolition of buildings in this area. Six buildings are present in this small area, either standing or as buried remains:

- The Commandery chapel was built in the 13th century and demolished before the rebuild of the garden front (which took place after 1708)
- A north chapel or vestry was added in the 14th century and demolished before c 1475 (the walls and floor of this building extend below both the east wing and the Long Chamber)
- The east wing of the late medieval Commandery was part of the large-scale rebuild dated by dendrochronology to c 1475
- The Long Chamber was built as a timber-framed structure, also in c 1475, and encased in brick after 1708
- The kitchen wing and stables were added after 1708 following the demolition of the chapel

Elsewhere in the city, there has been small-scale archaeological work including watching briefs and building recording in Britannia Square, Lowesmoor, Farrier Street, Bath Road, Sidbury, New Street, Willow Street, Diglis and Barbourne.

James Dinn

Worcester Cathedral

Two small excavations have been carried out at Worcester Cathedral during the past year. The first was in advance of the construction of the new toilets to the south of the Chapter House, while the second was to provide a permanent electricity supply point on College Green for events taking place there.

The excavation associated with the toilets found more of some drains and building foundations that had been seen during the 1999 excavation adjacent to the Chapter House. These probably relate to a canon's house that stood to the east of College Hall until it was demolished in 1841. More significantly, a further fragment of the curving wall found during excavations in the 1990s (see *The Recorder* 57 (Spring 1998) p13), which encircles much of the Chapter House, was located beneath the former gents' toilets. This shows that the wall did not straighten up as it approached the Cloister and was definitely not an apse.



Between the Cloister and the end of the south-west buttress of the Chapter House was the base of a wall. This was stone on its southern (outer) face and brick on its inner face. It appears to date from the late 19th century and to have been built to enclose an ash pit, probably used to take the waste from the stoves that heated the Cathedral. The line of the roof of this structure can still be seen in the Cloister and Chapter House walls.

The second excavation was a trench from the south side of College Hall to just east of the site of the former flagpole on College Green. The trench was only 0.5m deep, so not deep enough to locate any ditches that may have run across College Green in the Norman or Civil War periods. However, a large amount of brick was found, probably dumped in the 19th century and possibly from the canon's house east of College Hall. College Green was used for growing

vegetables towards the end of the 1st World War, but the shallow depth of soil above the rubble suggests that the ground level of the Green has since been lowered.

At the north end of the trench the foundations for the south wall of College Hall were exposed. These extend about 1m out from the face of the wall, with their top about 23cm below the modern ground surface. They are composed of red sandstone and part was covered by a spread of mortar.

In addition to the excavations, recording has taken place of restoration work on the exterior of the two west bays of the south aisle of the nave. The restoration was mainly confined to the parapet and corbel table below it. The corbel table and the wall beneath it date from the late 12th century and some fragments of earlier stone (probably late 11th or early 12th century in date) had been re-used in it. About six carved stones could be identified, but others may have been turned round so that the carved face is towards the core of the wall. A late 12th century capital had been used in the core of the wall at parapet level. This is similar to the capitals in the west bays of the nave.



Also visible in the wall were the outline of two gables. These gables suggest that the room above the west slype (now the Cathedral gift shop) did not have a pitched roof falling towards a gutter between it and the monks' dormitory, but gables running north-south.

Christopher Guy
Cathedral Archaeologist

Worcester Cathedral. Twentieth Annual Symposium

This was held on 26 March in the so-called Abbot's Kitchen though, as we were reminded, there never was an abbot and it never was a kitchen. Chris Guy leapt into the 21st century with his first ever powerpoint presentation, with which he seemed very comfortable. He spoke about the archaeological work undertaken in 2009-10 (see above) and gave a detailed examination of the undercroft of College Hall, the former refectory, comparing his own findings with those of Sir Harold Brakspear in the VCH. His conclusions were that Brakspear, cathedral architect in the early 20th century, had oversimplified the matter!

This was followed by a survey of the Old Palace, presented by Professor John Hunter but with Chris's involvement very evident. Again the starting point was Brakspear's plan, and as we were led floor by floor and room by room to examine the evidence, it proved a highly complicated matter. One of many puzzles, the top of an arch discovered at first-floor level lacked a corresponding detail below.

Professor Tony Waldron's analysis of the chapter house skeletons proved much more straightforward. Nine levels had been excavated and there remained earlier remains beneath those found. Dated to c680-c1100, there were more male than female, which was to be expected, the usual ratio in Roman-British sites being 2:1. The average adult height was 5' 2" for females, 5' 8" for males, compared with the modern 5' 4" and 5' 9". There was a very high infant mortality rate, as is seen today in developing countries, and the majority of skeletons were of under 15s. A high incidence of dental disease was found, and an 'extraordinary' wear pattern of teeth. Other notable health issues were osteoarthritis and a lot of trauma. An intriguing aspect was the discolouration of about one-fifth of the bones. A hypothesis of fungal cause has not been proved and the examination continues. It is hoped that the bodies will be returned within a year for reburial in the charnel house. We look forward to seeing all these papers in print in due course.

The Society's Interest in Churches during the Victorian period.

When the Society began in 1854 it was known as the Worcester Diocesan Architectural Society, with the archaeological element being added to the title only in the 1870s. Although the Society covered local history and antiquities from the outset, much of its business centred on architectural matters, especially the rebuilding and restoration of Anglican churches across the old diocese of Worcester. The early volumes of the Society's annual transactions from 1854 to about 1900 are therefore rich in information about the Society's work to ensure the preservation of church architecture and monuments.

Between 1879 and 1885 the Committee sent out a questionnaire to churches in the diocese to ascertain the state of parish churches. They asked 12 questions, ranging from the date of consecration of the existing church to its plan, the style of architecture, materials used in its building, the number of bells, stained glass, and other fittings such as the font, lectern, reredos, organ and plate. Only 30 of the returns survive for churches throughout Worcestershire and Warwickshire, but they are nevertheless a valuable source of information for the Victorian restoration of those particular places. The returns range from parish churches, both old and new, to the school church at Eldersfield, a mission room at Fernhill Heath (later part of the school), and the workhouse chapel for Evesham Union. We hear of the process of building in returns like that for St Agnes Moseley in 1884 which stated, 'at present we have only built the chancel and about one third of the nave'.

Not every incumbent returned the original form, preferring to send a written account of what had taken place, while others (eg Astwood Bank) simply sent copies of printed material that had been produced to raise funds for the building work. The return for Halesowen includes a flyer for a fund-raising bazaar. These returns are useful for details of architects and builders involved, but occasionally we find details from the architect himself, as at Hartlebury, where Frederick Preedy's letter tells us what he was able to do to move and repair the Norman font. It also tells us what he was unable to do; he wanted to replace the font cover but this idea was blocked by the vicar because he would not upset the local worthy who had paid for it! In the

whole collection only one incumbent, at Rugby, answered the question about the church plan by preparing a sketch. This is particularly helpful because it marks in colour the then new additions designed by Butterfield alongside the medieval church.

The returns were used to inform the account of churches published in the Society's annual reports and both sources should be used to gain most information. Some years ago the original returns were deposited by the Society in Worcestershire Record Office (BA 3752 Ref: 705:217) where they are available for public access. The surviving returns cover Worcestershire and Warwickshire. (Some places that were in Worcestershire in the 1880s are now part of Birmingham or the West Midlands.)

Worcestershire

Astwood Bank, Feckenham: SS. Mathias & George, 1884
Balsall Heath: St. Thomas-in-the-Moors, 1883
Castlemorton: St. Gregory, 1880
Charlton: St. John the Evangelist 1883
Dudley: St. Augustine, Holly Hall, 1884
Eldersfield: School Church at Corse Lawn, 1883
Evesham: Union Workhouse Chapel, 1880
Fernhill Heath: Mission Room
Halesowen: St John Baptist, 1882
Hartlebury: St. James (font), 1882
King's Heath: All Saints, 1882
Martin Hussingtree: St. Michael, 1883
Moseley: St. Agnes 1884
Upton on Severn: SS. Peter & Paul. n.d. but post 1879

Wilden (Lower Mitton): All Saints
Wribbenhall: All Saints, 1879

Warwickshire

Birmingham: St. Alban the Martyr, 1881
Brailes: St. George, 1879
Erdington: St. Barnabas, 1882
Lozells: St. Paul, 1880
Milverton: St. Mark
Newbold Pacey: St. George, 1881
Nuthurst: St. Thomas
Olton: St. Margaret, 1881
Shirley: St. James the Great, 1882
Rugby: St. Andrew, 1879
Seckington: All Saints, 1881
Sherborne: All Saints, 1884
Small Heath: All Saints, 1883
Snitterfield: St. James, 1882

Stephen Price

Where Are They Now?

Worcester City Art Gallery and Museum is appealing for information on the current whereabouts of a number of items connected with the Victorian history of that institution. Staff are planning an exhibition about the museum's origins and its place in the county's natural and scientific history. The items of interest are:

- A set of wooden goblets given to William Matthews, a north Worcestershire botanist, and bearing a silver inscription indicating that they were made from the sorb or whitty pear of the Wyre Forest cut down in 1861.
- A wooden stool made from the same tree and presented to Edwin Lees.
- Portrait of Edwin Lees (1800-1887), the botanist and founder of the Worcestershire Naturalists Club in 1847. He was one of the first curators at the Museum of the Worcestershire

Natural History Society. We think the portrait disappeared from the City Museum in the 1940s when it was one of a dozen or so paintings from the permanent collection that were loaned to other institutions in the city.

Right: Photograph of the missing portrait of Edwin Lees.

- Portrait of Sir Charles Hastings (1794-1866) by Soloman Cole. Hastings was founder of the British Medical Association and one of the founder members of the Worcestershire Natural History Society formed in 1833. This painting formerly hung at the old museum and was exhibited at the Worcestershire Exhibition in 1882. It should still have its paper label on the back of the original frame. The painting was brought over to the Victoria Institute in the 1890s when the new Council-run was established. It seems to have gone missing sometime during the first half of the 20th century.

Right: Photograph of the more famous portrait of Sir Charles Hastings by R.B.Faulkner now in the British Medical Association. The one which Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum is seeking was painted by Soloman Cole.

Any information about these items would be gratefully received by Garston Phillips at the City Art Gallery & Museum, Foregate Street, Worcester WR1 1DT, 01905 25371 or e-mail gphillips@worcester.gov.uk



Stephen Price

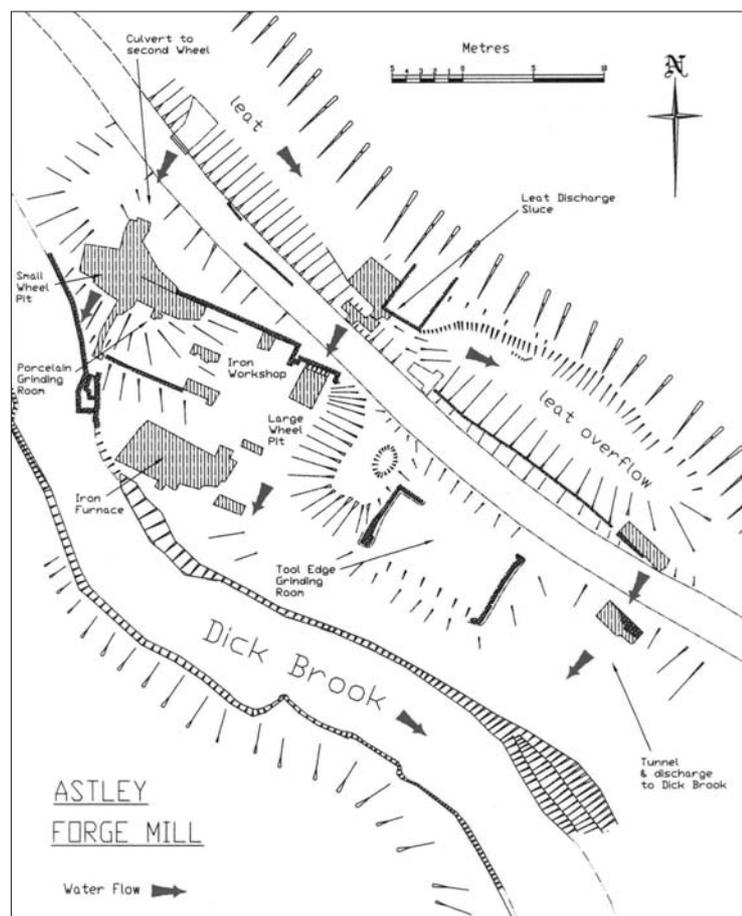
The Forge Mill Astley

The Forge Mill at Astley is situated 0.73 km westward on the north bank of the Dick Brook with its junction with the River Severn. Evidence can be seen of river traffic on Dick Brook going up as far as the Forge with wharfs and two locks and possibly flash locks going upstream past the Forge. At the junction with the River Severn there was extensive wharfing where goods were offloaded from large boats onto smaller tub boats to negotiate the narrow confines of Dick Brook and its meanders.

The site was studied pre 1929 by Cantrill & Wright and the report, including a site map, was published in the Society's *Transactions* vol VI, 1929. In January 1973 the landowner carried out an extensive excavation of the site concentrating on the main waterwheel pit area and the next bay to the west. The site was again investigated in 1982. In the autumn of 2008 Shrawley & District Local History Society, as part of a research project, conducted a non-invasive survey of the site, including line drawings of the existing stonework. In 2009 the society continued work with a series of test pits at sites previously excavated to measure, draw, and photograph features not previously documented by the earlier surveys.

The plan shows the extent of the site

The Forge has had many uses over the years: as a grinding mill for Worcester Porcelain, paper mill, a works for making buckles, wood turning of bobbins for the carpet industry, and lastly a possible factory for decorating pottery, though this has yet to be proved. In 1717, when the Forge was a fulling mill, Mercy Pope's Charity levied the sum of £20 from the tenant, to be donated to Astley School. A large quantity of tin-plated buckles was found in the previous excavation, indicating that tinplate was rolled at the mill. Horseshoe nails and harnesses were also found. There were also three or four iron hearths on site. Lumps of Gypsum or alabaster were also found, probably connected to the pottery grinding when seconds or waste material were brought from Worcester, ground up, and re-cycled back into sagger clay. Documents have been uncovered that show that Dr John Wall, junior proprietor of Worcester Porcelain Co, ground steatite or Soapstone brought from Cornwall to be ground at the mill in 1774.



The Mill was fed from a takeoff from Dick Brook 1.4 km upstream near Glasshampton Bridge. There are possible signs of two holding ponds before the water was channelled by a large leat to the mill. The positions of two waterwheels have been found, both overshot situated between the two main buildings 90 degrees from the leat. The leat emptied into the 'Dock' past the large plinth of masonry, which is described as a sluice.

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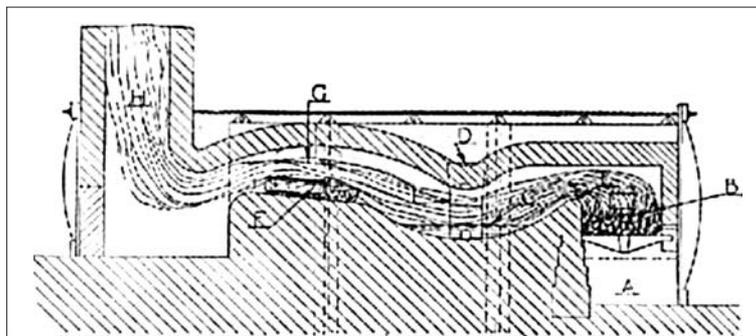
The Forge has had a long history and would no doubt have had activities associated with the water-driven blast furnace further up the valley. What is known for certain is that an iron forge existed here for a short time in the early 1800s, after the Worcester Porcelain Co. (now Fight & Barr) vacated the site.

The picture shows the typical bottle shape of a Puddling Furnace found on site, complete with a layer of slag from the last firing and the remains of the chimney to the left. The hearth area (not shown to the right) had two distinct phases of construction. An earlier grated area of 3 feet by 3 feet was extended at a later period to 3 feet by 8 feet. Excavation of the furnace bricks also show two phases, the earlier furnace



being red clay bricks and the later period furnace being yellow refractory bricks. This shows that the furnace had two lives whereby pig iron was converted to wrought iron. The first furnace associated with Andrew Yarranton in the late 1600s was a reheating furnace (hence the small grated area). Pig iron slabs would have been brought from his blast furnace and repeatedly heated to red hot and hammered using a tilt hammer driven by the main large wheel to remove impurities from the iron. The furnace would have remained dormant during the porcelain grinding period.

With the coming of the new partnership, the furnace was rebuilt using Stourbridge refractory bricks and a reverberatory furnace was constructed. These were coal-fired and fragments of coal were found in the ash residue.



The drawing shows a typical reverberatory furnace. Pig iron, which contains about 4% carbon plus other impurities such as sulphur, phosphorus, silicates, etc, was loaded at position 'F'. The gasses of combustion were directed down by the shape of the roof (hence reverberatory). The iron was away from the fire so there was no contamination of the melt. As the iron melted it ran down to the hearth at 'D'. Sulphur and carbon were carried away by the chimney stack. There was a rabbling hole at 'I' through which long iron bars were used to stir the melt and skim the slag. The stirring produced football sized spongy lumps of pure iron that were pulled out with large tongs and rushed to the hammer. This process was used well into the early 1900s to produce wrought iron.

Around 1811 the partnership was dissolved and the site was systematically dismantled. It then became domestic buildings. What remains now are a few standing sandstone walls and traces of wall foundations. After the 1973 excavations hundreds of tons of made ground were deposited on site to make a track way which has created havoc in finds recognition.

R.D. Sproat

The Shah of Persia's Visit to Worcestershire

The Shah of Persia and Hewell Grange, near Bromsgrove, make unexpected bedfellows, but this is what they were for two nights in July 1889. Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar of Persia was no ordinary bed and breakfast guest. The Shah was travelling the country, investigating technological achievements by visiting factories and talking to eminent manufacturers. He was accompanied by a large suite of courtiers and advisors including his Grand Vizier, as well as Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, British Envoy to Persia, acting as tour guide.

Having arrived in London on 1 July, the Shah was received by Queen Victoria at Windsor, where he visited the Royal Mausoleum at Frogmore. He stayed at Buckingham Palace, visited the theatre and enjoyed the first of many banquets, balls and formal luncheons. On 7 July the party began its journey north, staying overnight at Hatfield House and Waddesdon Manor, before arriving at Bromsgrove Station at 5.30 pm on 10 July.

When the Shah alighted from his special train onto the red carpeted platform he was welcomed by Lord Windsor of Hewell Grange, and walked through the booking office, decorated with festoons of green, blue and white. The Shah (who nervously buttoned up his coat hiding the jewels on his chest – or was he just cold?) and his host departed up New Road in an open barouche with four horses and outriders, escorted by the Queen's Own Worcestershire Hussars. The Queen's Equerry and the Shah's Grand Vizier, accompanied by the other important personages, followed in coaches proceeding at a smart rate up towards Bromsgrove High Street.

Lord Windsor had previously contacted both the railway company and the Local Board of Bromsgrove, asking them to arrange for the station and the town to be decorated in honour of the royal visitor, and there was a splendid display of flags festooned across the street and hanging from windows which 'imparted a liveliness and picturesqueness to the route'. There were not only four 'official' ceremonial archways constructed across the streets using wreaths, trailing ivy and briars, but the Town Hall, College School, the Hospital and several private houses made decorations using baskets of flowers and trees in pots 'that were very attractive and noticeable'.

Architect G.H. Gadd had been asked to design three of the official arches, which sported mottoes reading 'God save our Queen', 'Happiness to the Shah', 'Good Old Bromsgrove' and 'Long Life to Lord Windsor'. Being lucky enough to have a nephew conversant with that language, Mr Townsend of the furniture shop went to the extreme of writing in blue Persian characters: 'Leader of the faithful', the Shah is 'the refuge of the world', and 'The King of Kings is just, so his peasants are happy'. The arch over College Walk, possibly built by boys from the College School, said 'Vive le Schah. College de Bromsgrove. Soyés les bienvenus.' Presumably it was thought that the Shah would understand French better than English. Decorations in the town were done under the surveillance of several town worthies and their ladies, and three town builders worked on the project – Mr William Weaver was paid 8 shillings, Jos. Tilt received eight guineas, and Mr J. Leadbetter received 9 shillings.

The arches, festoons and flags were up by Tuesday evening, and on Wednesday morning the rain fell in torrents. However, as it often does, the English weather turned up trumps and the afternoon and evening 'assumed a holiday appearance'. Shops closed early, large numbers of people arrived from neighbouring towns and villages, and Supt. Jeffrey had a force of fifty men ready for action – though pleasingly they were not required.

So the town was fully prepared when the procession reached the Market Place. The church bells rang, the 2nd V.B. Worcestershire Regiment gave a royal salute, and the Bromsgrove Volunteer Band played the *Persian March* by Johann Strauss II. The party then moved up the High Street and turned towards Tardebigge and Hewell Grange where after a banquet for 40 guests His Majesty admired the ‘weird and majestic’ illuminated rockeries and fernery – proudly lit by coloured electric light.



Hewell Grange

This was not the Hewell Grange that we know today. That magnificent neo-Elizabethan mansion, architects Bodley and Garner, was in the process of being built. Started in 1884 it was not completed until two years after the Shah’s visit. So it was in the old family home [now derelict] that he was entertained. After spending the night in a large bedchamber above the portico overlooking the garden and lake, sleeping in ‘a big four-poster, with canopy, ... of the venerable massive and Royal order such as monarchs were wont to climb into in bygone days’, the Shah went by train to Birmingham where he visited Messrs. Elkington and Company, Osler’s Glass Works and the Small Arms Company. Birmingham Mint produced a commemorative medal, and His Majesty was presented with an address of welcome at the Council House.

That evening Lord Windsor entertained his guest – and ‘thousands of people’ from Bromsgrove and Redditch – with an illuminated garden looking like ‘fairylane,’ and a firework display. The Shah had ‘a quiet walk in the grounds’, passing through the ‘doorway leading to the lower fernery ... a huge solid block of stone so finely pivoted that a child may turn it and gain access through the cavernous opening it bars into the innermost recess of this bosky hollow.’ [This is still in existence.] Sadly, the story, regularly told, that the old Hewell Grange was blown up by Lord Windsor to entertain the Shah is clearly apocryphal. The newspaper *The World* was the originator of the tale.

The next day His Majesty departed from Redditch station to visit Sheffield. He was greeted at Headless Cross by a detachment of the Worcestershire Hussars, and on arrival at Church Green received a Royal salute from the Redditch Volunteers while the Redditch Town Band played the Persian National Anthem; later on in his tour the Shah requested that the Anthem be avoided, as he had heard so much of it since his arrival in England.

The Shah’s progress northwards included Sheffield where he visited the steel making Atlas Works and Messrs. Rodgers’ cutlery works, Liverpool to inspect the *Umbria* of the Cunard Line, Manchester to see the Ship Canal, shipbuilding yards near Glasgow, and the unfinished

Forth bridge (which was opened the next year). He went to Lord Armstrong's Cragside for lunch, and inspected Messrs. Armstrong's ordnance department. At Bradford and Leeds he 'visited several manufactories' – probably textile mills and machinery manufacturers – and in Brighton he viewed the 1866 West Pier and specially requested to see 'Professor' Reddish diving from the pier while riding a bicycle. He then boarded the Royal Yacht at Portsmouth and sailed round the Fleet.

During his exhausting four weeks he had attended nine formal luncheons, three garden parties, three balls, two banquets and met innumerable dignitaries; entertainments included Highland Games, opera, Kempton Races, and a state concert at the Albert Hall. He was the first Persian monarch to encourage contact with Europe, where he made several such visits, wishing to benefit his country by introducing Western industry, politics and morals. To carry out improvements – and, it is said, to enhance his own life-style – he wished to raise funds by granting foreign companies exclusive concessions over natural resources and Persian import and export commodities in exchange for cash payments; his country became a source of cheap raw materials and a market for industrial goods from Western countries.

Nasser al-Din Shah Qajar of Persia was assassinated in 1896.

Jennie McGregor Smith

Much detail about this visit may be found on <http://www.archive.org> from Sir Henry Drummond Wolff's *Rambling Recollections* (1908) and Bromsgrove Weekly Messenger, 13 July 1889, which quotes The Daily Telegraph. All quotations are from one or other of the above.

Recent Publications

King's Norton, A History George Demidowicz & Stephen Price (Phillimore, 2009) Hardback £20.

The authors of this fine new book both have long pedigrees in research and publication on aspects of West Midlands' history and archaeology, and both have played significant roles in preserving the past in the region. George Demidowicz currently heads the conservation and archaeology team at Coventry City Council, whilst Stephen Price (past Chairman of this Society) was for many years Keeper of Local History at Birmingham City Museums. It is therefore to the benefit of us all, students or interested members of the public, that they should have chosen to undertake a meticulous survey of the historic parish of King's Norton. This substantial portion of Worcestershire, which once also included Moseley and Rednal, is now largely absorbed into the southern suburbs of Birmingham, but a substantial tract of the medieval parish survives as rural landscape within present day Worcestershire in the parish of Wythall. Six chapters, which are usefully broken down into themed subsections, chronicle the history and development of King's Norton from prehistoric times to the end of the twentieth century.

The book serves as a useful reminder of the fragility of rural areas on the urban fringe. Just as one of the final sentences of the text reminds us that, although Wythall might one day be built over, for the moment the landscape just to the south of the present Birmingham boundary 'survives to remind us of the former appearance of the rest of King's Norton under Birmingham', so we also have the description by a local farmer at the close of the nineteenth

century of new 'red brick buildings creeping over the top of the hill as a prediction of changes to come. Indeed the book contains a detailed chronicle of the manors and farmhouses which can still be traced through surviving buildings (such as the remarkable timber-framed Bells Farm), or documentary and archaeological evidence, so that the lost medieval landscape in particular can be read in the suburbs of today. Reproductions of numerous useful historical paintings and photographs, as well as excellent drawn maps in the text, assist us with this, and are complemented by the collection of five maps in an appendix recording the urban development of King's Norton between 1731 and 1936.

The trades and industry of the area form an important recurring theme in this study. The development of mills for corn, paper and metalworking by entrepreneurs is a fascinating story, as is the growth of new types of communication in the canal and railway networks of the nineteenth century. An interesting historical precedent to Victorian industrial expansion is shown through comments on the links of medieval King's Norton traders across the country. Further research on this, as is suggested by the authors, could be most worthwhile.

The expansion and transformation of the village centre in the twentieth century unsurprisingly gives a focus throughout the book. The loss of many of the historic properties around the Green, as it has become more suburban, is a story repeated many times over across the country. Here it is shown in detail, with discussion of what has been lost alongside thorough assessments of the remaining buildings of significance, not least the Saracen's Head, subject of a recent much acclaimed restoration. St Nicolas' church, with its magnificent landmark tower and spire, and neighbouring part timber-framed grammar school speak of medieval importance, though we learn that the survival of the latter is partly due to the restraint of two suffragettes who entered the building in 1913 during their campaign with the intention of arson, but instead wrote on the blackboard that they had spared it because of its old world charm; just one of the many fascinating stories to be discovered within this excellent study.

There is much to discover in King's Norton. For anyone with an interest in the history and architecture of either Birmingham or Worcestershire, this skilfully researched and highly readable book will make a most welcome addition to the collection.

Tim Bridges

Catholics in Worcestershire, 1535-1590 C. Don Gilbert, Worcestershire Historical Society Occasional Publications 11 (2009) 25pp £4.50, available through Robin Whittaker

Focusing on the period commencing with the bishopric of Hugh Latimer (1535-9), this paper examines the progress of the Reformation within Worcestershire, and its impact on the county. Latimer, an ardent reformer, carried out 'the most advanced episcopal programme of change in the country'. Another key figure was Bishop Hooper (1552-5), also 'an unflinching and uncompromising reformer, though perhaps less forthright in the language than his predecessor'. Both were burned at the stake in 1555, the former in Oxford, the latter in front of the St Mary's gate of Gloucester Cathedral. The study, which also stresses the major part played by itinerant 'massing' priests, is enlivened by (near) contemporary quotations, such as 'on Candlemasse day [2 February, 1548] was noe candles hallowed nor borne. On [Ash Wednesday] was noe Asshes hallowed. 25 March was palme sonday and the annuntiation of Our Lady, and then was noe palme [hallowed], nor crosse boren as in former times. On Good Friday was noe creping to the crosse.'

Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society 54 (2010) 51-82, is an article by Frank Pexton & John McCann, 'Keeping Pigeons in Parish Churches' dedicated to Frank's memory. For those who knew him, there is a nice photo of Frank on p58.

Frank Pexton drew on the manuscript notes of George Marshall who in 1903 had continued the study of pigeon lofts in churches begun by J.T.Micklethwaite in 1888 (*Archaeological Journal* 45). Frank examined some of the surviving columbaria, but died in September 2006 before finishing his reports. John McCann completes his work with this paper, in which nine examples are described and illustrated. Of these, five are local: Overbury and Birlingham, plus Elkstone and Leonard Stanley in Gloucestershire, and Llanwarne in Herefordshire. There is also a 1554 account of the vicar of Littleton providing replacement church books in return for the profits from the pigeons using the church tower.

Micklethwaite's interest was aroused by a chamber in the north-west tower of Selby Abbey, where he noted 'a number of holes an inch or so in diameter and arranged in rows. In some of the holes there remain ... the ends of wooden pegs which had been broken off short at the surface of the wall ... the pegs appeared to have been intended to carry some rough shelving which could easily be divided by upright partitions to form pigeon holes ... and the chamber had been fitted up for a pigeon house at some date unknown but perhaps as far back as the thirteenth century'. His suggestion has since been confirmed by similar evidence found in secular dovecotes.

An 1865 description of Overbury church stated that some 20 years previously 'the space above the vaulting of the chancel was used as a pigeon house'. At Birlingham the internal walls of the middle stage of the west tower were 'chequered with square recesses for the birds to nest in', and an illustration (shown) revealed arched loops on the south and west sides, with projecting shelves or sills for birds to alight on.

A further article by Frank Pexton and John McCann, 'A Columbarium at Overbury Church', is to be published in the Society's forthcoming *Transactions*, due at the AGM later this year.

WAS member Rod Sproat has compiled a *List of Articles contained in the Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society (New & Third Series) 1923/4 to 2008*, which includes an invaluable index. It comes as a 30-page A4 booklet. Cost £3 to cover printing and paper, p&p £1.30 where applicable. Copies are available from Rod at Cherry Tree Cottage, Bank Road, Little Witley, WR6 6LS.

Dates for your Diary:

Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project – an Invitation

As we approach the final few weeks of the Heritage Lottery Funded Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project, we are afforded an opportunity to reflect on some of the highlights of the last two years and to extend an invitation to the launch of the Northwick Manor Heritage Trail. This will take place on Saturday May 1st at The Slip, Old Northwick Lane, from 2pm until 5pm and will include various activities including sword fighting provided by Gaunt's Retinue, 'Balsam bashing', a mini version of the trail panels for those who aren't able to make it around the full 5km trail, and most importantly, the grand unveiling of the trail itself by Professor Mick Aston.

The project, which has been co-ordinated by the Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club in partnership with Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council, was awarded up to £49,900 in January 2008 and sought to engage the community in a variety of ways, ultimately incorporating memories of local life and research undertaken by local people into the production of 10 interpretation panels, a website and final published booklet. Some of the highlights of the last two years are as follows:

A series of 10 talks and 6 practical workshops on the history and archaeology of the area
3 guided walks along the route of the Heritage Trail

The installation of a brick 'sculpture' in the grounds of Northwick Manor School, by Wren Miller, an artist-in-residence employed to work with the children, using the local brick-making tradition as inspiration for a variety of art projects

Several activity days for Northwick Manor pupils, including a 'Mini museum' day, Roman and medieval activities

Provision of a week of work experience for local high school students who surveyed the earthworks of Knapp's brickyard in fields by the Slip

Full digitisation (by Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service) and conservation of the 18th-century Doharty map, now preserved for future generations

Excavation of local gardens in the search for the Bishops Palace (as featured in a previous issue)

Re-examination of finds from a 1958 excavation (excavated by the then newly-formed Severn Valley Research Group) at Bevere

An Art & Photography competition which saw more than 250 entries from local people and over 200 attendees at the competition exhibition at Northwick Manor School. The winning entries are now being exhibited at The Gallery, Bevere

Recording memories of life in Northwick and Bevere and research by residents on the history of the area for inclusion within a final published booklet

Ongoing inclusion of all resulting reports and research on the project website at www.wyac.co.uk/northwick.

The project has been very well received and activities have been supported by a large number of people. We hope that this may provide a model for future work with local communities to continue the momentum that has been generated.

Sheena Payne-Lunn sheena.paynelunn@worcester.gov.uk

Deborah Overton doverton@worcestershire.gov.uk

WAS leads the way!

Following the WAS visit to **Northumbria** last October, the March 2010 edition of *Current Archaeology* (issue 240) is devoted to recent research on Hadrian's Wall and is most relevant to what we saw on our visit.

Non-subscribers to the magazine may obtain a copy of this for £4 UK (£5 outside UK). You can either call their subscription dept, 0208 819 5580, and place your order over the phone with a credit or debit card or send a cheque, payable to Current Publishing, to Lamb House, Church Street, London W4 2PD, specifying the issue you require and full details of where to send it.

17-31 July 2010. The **Annual Conference** of the **British Archaeological Association** will be based in Newcastle, a city with many impressive parish churches. Northumberland is famous for its castles, as well as houses of lesser status, fortified in a distinctively Northumbrian manner. Visits in the city will include St Nicholas's Cathedral, Blackfriars, city walls, Trinity House, Guildhall and castle keep. Excursions will include Tynemouth Priory, Jarrow, Hexham Abbey, Housesteads Roman fort, Hadrian's Wall, and Aydon Castle.

Conference fee, including lecture, site visits, receptions, lunches and dinners: £295
Bed & breakfast (single accommodation at Newcastle University): £120
Bookings to be made by 15 May. Enquiries to conferences@thebaa.org

Worcestershire Archaeological Society Excursions

An Opportunity for Somebody

Ernie Kay has been the Society's Excursions Administrator for six years, in which time he has organised 62 trips. He is now looking for a successor to take over this interesting work - or part of it - from 2011. A job specification is available from Ernie at ekmalv@tiscali.co.uk, and a gradual hand over, and support, will certainly be available.

Excursions Programme 2010

The programme got off to an early start on 18 February, when Tim Bridges led a morning visit to St James, **Birlingham**, the work of Victorian architect, Benjamin Ferrey. The Norman chancel arch now forms the lychgate; the 15th-century tower formerly held a columbarium (see p18). Inside, as well as memorials and other features from the previous church, are excellent Victorian and 20th-century fittings and stained glass, including work by Hardman as well as A. J. Davies of the Bromsgrove Guild. As Ernie Kay reports, despite the weather '*everyone* turned up. Snow started falling as we arrived but we had a hurried look at the snowdrops before darting inside for Tim's eloquence, coffee and cakes. When we came out the snow was thick and some of us had a very difficult time on the return journey. I returned with a friend a couple of weeks later and the snowdrops and crocuses were quite marvellous.'

Also due to take place before this issue comes out is the 'Lost Worcestershire' day trip on 14 April to **Tredington** and **Shipston-on-Stour**, led by Stephen Price. Both places formed part of Worcestershire until 1931. Pevsner describes the 14th-century tower of St Gregory's, Tredington, as hiding a church 'of intense archaeological interest', with remains of Anglo-Danish windows and doorways about 13ft above ground level, leading to a deep west gallery. Shipston's fortunes, as its name 'tun at a sheep wash' indicates, were built on the wool trade. When the demand for local wool fell the town continued to flourish due to the horse-powered tramway and railway, opened in 1836 and 1889 respectively. Pevsner describes Sheep Street as 'a long, fairly straight street of varying width and nicely closed at the E end', and High Street as 'a very handsome short, wide street, closed at both ends'.

Wednesday 5 May: Oxford Castle and New College, led by Brian Ferris. Of the castle built by Robert Doyly in 1071, a large grassy mound, a wall-tower that served as the west tower of St George's chapel, and the base of a round tower remain. The crypt, which originally had an

apse, is low with short round piers carrying big, carved, capitals and groin-vaults. The Prison, which housed not only prisoners but also the University's 'rebellious scholars', as recorded in 1236, remained in use until 1996.

New College, 'the new college of St Mary', was founded in 1379 by William of Wykeham in conjunction with Winchester College, to counter 'the fewness of the clergy, arising from pestilence, wars and other miseries'. Their aim was to convert 'poor and indigent scholars' into 'men of great learning, fruitful to the church ... king and realm'. Both were the work of master mason William Wynford. Part of the site was an old plague burial ground. The chapel, one of the largest in Oxford, retains much 14th-century stained glass and fine misericords, not forgetting Epstein's statue of Lazarus.

There is a pre-tour Architecture Group lecture on 27 April (Friends Meeting House, 2.30pm) to explain what we will be seeing at New College.

Thursday 13 May (Ascension Day): Worcester Cathedral: The 'Upper Reaches'. For those who could not take part in 2009, a further afternoon tour, led by Chris Guy, Cathedral Archaeologist, to parts of the Cathedral not normally open to the public. It will include some of the roof spaces and provide an opportunity to see more closely the construction of the Cathedral and its development. The tour includes spiral stairs, uneven floors, low and narrow passages and doorways and some awkward steps – so reasonable fitness is essential. Restricted to 15 people.

Wednesday 26 May: Tewkesbury. Evening tour organised by Robin Whittaker. Members of the Tewkesbury Civic Society will lead a guided walk around the historic core of the town, including the Abbey, Church Street and the riverside area.

Wednesday 9 June: Wribbenhall. Heather Flack will lead an evening walk round Wribbenhall, a place rich in history but totally overshadowed by Bewdley, of which it became part about 70 years ago. Her report on the Heritage Lottery Fund project can be found in *Recorder* 78. The hamlet boasts some fine 17th- and 18th-century buildings and three national treasures. A first-floor room at 3 Beales Corner has three painted plaster panels of rural scenes, dated to 1618-9, perhaps illustrating Aesop. Another 'good group' of houses is found in Kidderminster Road, where no. 6 has the only known example of an original dog wheel in a private house, believed to be of early 18th-century date.

According to Wikipedia, turnspit dogs were described in the old English dog book as 'long-bodied, crooked-legged and ugly dogs, with a suspicious, unhappy look about them' and have drooping ears. From engravings they look to be about 25-35 lbs and possibly 14" to 16" tall. *The Illustrated Natural History (Mammalia)* of 1853 reports that 'On the Continent, the spits are still turned by canine labour in localities; but the owners of spit and Dog are not particular about the genealogy of the animal, and press into their service any kind of Dog, provided that it is adequately small and sufficiently amenable to authority.'

The third 'national treasure' is the early 14th-century building hidden behind a later front at 5, 7 & 9 Stourport Road. Sadly, internal access to these buildings is not available, but Heather will show people pictures of the wall paintings in 3 Beales Corner and the beams inside the Stourport Road property.

Thursday 24 June: Winchcombe, Hailes Abbey and Sudeley Castle, led by Michael & Jennie Goode. An attractive town of mostly stone buildings, **Winchcombe** was of great

importance in the Saxon period, one of the chief royal centres of the Hwicce, and flourished throughout the Middle Ages. Its Benedictine abbey was in the 15th century ‘equal to a little university’. On its dissolution the town fell ‘into great poverty, ruin and decay’. The arrival of the Dent family at Sudeley Castle in 1837 restored the town’s prosperity.

The Cistercian abbey of **Hailes** was founded in 1246 by Henry III’s brother, Richard of Cornwall, in fulfilment of a vow, having survived a shipwreck. Twenty monks and 10 lay brothers came from Beaulieu Abbey and in 1251 enough of the abbey was completed for it to be dedicated.

In 1270 Richard’s son, Edmund, presented the community with a phial of holy blood, which he had purchased from the Count of Flanders in 1267, complete with the guarantee of the Patriarch of Jerusalem, later Pope Urban IV, that it was the authentic blood of Christ. This made Hailes a great pilgrimage centre and led to the rebuilding of the east end of the church where a chevet with projecting polygonal chapels was erected, providing a dignified area for the shrine and allowing ample space around it for processions and pilgrims. In 1538 the bishop of Rochester declared the relic to be ‘honey clarified and colored with saffron’. When Abbot Sagar surrendered the abbey on Christmas Eve 1539, it was the 12th richest of 75 Cistercian houses.

The museum houses 13th-century tiles from the chevet, described as amongst ‘the most technically accomplished tiles of the Middle Ages’, and 16th-century tiles from the chapter house; some fine carved ceiling bosses from the chapter house, one depicting Christ as Samson defeating the lion; and fragments of finely carved stone, probably from the shrine.

Sudeley Castle is for Pevsner ‘apart from Thornbury, Gloucester’s most splendid late medieval domestic building’. Its outer court is almost complete, with fine Elizabethan early classical work. The castle houses an impressive collection of furniture and paintings, and is surrounded by magnificent gardens

Wednesday 7 July: Hartlebury Castle and the Hurd Library. Afternoon visit organised by Virginia Wagstaff and led by the Friends of Hartlebury Castle and the Hurd Library. After at least 800 years as the Bishop of Worcester’s residence, the Castle is now unoccupied. We shall see the two magnificent staterooms, the Georgian Chapel and the Bishop’s House, which has only very recently been opened to the public. We shall also see the nationally important Hurd Library, which is a very rare example of an 18th-century gentleman’s library, still in its original setting, with contemporary furniture, paintings etc. Tea will be provided after the visit. See also *Worcestershire Recorder*, editions 78-80.

Monday 12 July: Dore and Llanthony, led by Joe Hillaby. Bring binoculars

Abbey Dore was a Cistercian house, founded directly from Morimond in France in 1147. Much of what we see today – crossing, transepts and east end – is superb Early English work of Abbot Adam I (1186-1216). There are hints of work of the same era at Worcester Cathedral. Dore is remarkable in that its east end and transepts were restored by John Viscount Scudamore on Laudian principles, and reconsecrated as a parish church in March 1634. His church is divided into two by John Abel’s great timber screen, surmounted by a splendid royal coat of arms, with those of Scudamore to the north and Laud to the south. To the east are elaborate Jacobean-style stalls and benches, and a pulpit with carved tester. The east window has virtually unique stained glass of 1634, and beside the altar is a range of medieval tiles. At the east end are five medieval chapels, where fragments of medieval sculpture and architectural work can be seen. Of especial interest are superb early-14th-century roof bosses,

portraying the Coronation of the Virgin, Christ in Majesty, an abbot kneeling before the Virgin and Child, St Catherine and others.

Llanthony (Prima) was founded c1103, originally as a hermitage, by William, a relative of Hugh de Lacy, lord of Ewias, who was inspired by a ruined chapel of St David to adopt the eremitic life in 'deep Ewias vale, an arrow shot broad encircled by lofty mountains'. The remoteness and wild beauty of its site attracted others. Under the influence of Henry I's queen, the hermitage became an Augustinian priory, with a significant political role, being on the main route between the strategically placed castles at Hay-on-Wye and Abergavenny. Of particular interest is the architecture of the late 12th- and early 13th-century reconstruction: much of the presbytery, transepts, nave, west front and outer parlour (part of the west range) still stand, as does the mid-13th-century chapter house. Time permitting, we shall also visit Kilpeck church, castle and deserted mediaeval village. For Pevsner this is 'one of the most perfect Norman village churches in England', with its remarkable south portal, corbels and chancel arch.

Tuesday 3 August: Shrewsbury. 1069 and all that led by Bernard Lowry

By 1069, when the castle was established, Shrewsbury, a 'civitas' or town in 901, with a mint by the 920s, already had six churches. We shall look at the castle, 'one of the principal strongholds in the Welsh Marches, and effectively sited', and Shrewsbury Abbey. Both were founded by Roger de Montgomery, who was reportedly buried here in 1094, 'between the two altars'. After the dissolution the nave became parochial, the choir, crossing tower and transepts being demolished. We shall see part of the town's wealth of Tudor architecture, and at least one other medieval church will be visited. There will be about a mile of walking during the day.

Wednesday 18 August: Calke Abbey and Melbourne Hall, led by John Harcup

The day will include two guided tours. **Calke Abbey** (National Trust) is a little-restored country house, built 1701-4, set in a stunning landscape park with gardens, where 'time has stood still' since the 1880s. **Melbourne Hall** is said to incorporate part of the medieval residence of the bishops of Carlisle, but the oldest fabric visible is 16th or early 17th-century. In 1628 it became the home of the Coke family, who added the east wing in 1725-6, and the east façade, of seven bays with a 3-bay pediment in 1744. The garden was laid out in the early 1700s, with radiating walks, yew hedges and tunnel, the focal point being 'an exquisite wrought-iron arbour' of 1706-11 by Robert Bakewell.

Thursday 26 August: Cotheridge and Alfrick Churches. Evening visit led by Tim Bridges
Whitewashed **St Leonard's** Cotheridge is an unusual Norman church with an impressive medieval timber-framed tower. The interior has great atmosphere. There are medieval floor tiles, good 17th-century fittings and interesting associations with the Berkeley family. **St Mary Magdalene's** Alfrick is a pretty medieval church with architectural features of several styles. It was extended in the late 19th century by Sir George Aston Webb. The charming interior has interesting memorials and a fine collection of Flemish stained glass panels.

Wednesday 15 September: Aston Hall, leaders Nicholas Molyneux and Stephen Price

The 17th-century antiquary Sir William Dugdale described Aston Hall as 'a noble fabric for which beauty and state much exceedeth anything in these parts'. Most recently that 'noble fabric' has been carefully repaired and the whole house, together with the restored stable block, re-displayed by Birmingham Museums. En route we will look at two fine medieval churches in the Birmingham suburbs.

West Wales: 6-day visit, Monday 4 to Saturday 9 October

Led by Michael & Jenny Goode. Based at The Marine Hotel at **Aberystwyth**, we intend to explore the roots of Welsh identity. Proposed visits include Castell Henllys Iron-Age fort, Celtic sites at Llandewi Brefi and Llanbadarn Fawr, St David's, Strata Florida, Machynlleth and Pennal, Lead and Silver Mines, Aberaeron, and the narrow gauge railway from Aberystwyth to Devil's Bridge. Cost to include dinner, bed and breakfast and visits £450 per head; deposit £50. The tour is fully booked but Ernie is happy to put people on a waiting list.

2011 Tour: Isle of Man. 7-day visit, Sunday 2 to Saturday 8 October

Details of this trip will be issued in November 2010, when bookings will be taken.

The Isle of Man is particularly rich in archaeological sites. The Meayll Circle is a Neolithic passage grave comprising six pairs of burial chambers arranged in an 18m-wide circle, and there is a well-preserved Neolithic chambered tomb at Cashtal yn Ard.

The isle has some 200 carved stones. The earliest dateable carvings are small slabs with simple compass-arc decoration, ascribed to between 650 and 800. In the 9th century larger slabs were erected, bearing low relief representations of the Celtic ring-headed cross. The particularly fine Calf of Man crucifixion was not a grave memorial but possibly an altar-front or reredos.

To the earlier Celtic traditions were added Scandinavian art styles such as interlacing ornament in broad, bold bands. The inclusion of motifs from Norse mythology produces some striking juxtapositions. A cross-slab at Andreas, for example, depicts Odin, with spear and raven, his foot in the jaws of the wolf Fenris, counterbalanced by a Christian figure, possibly a cleric, holding a book and a cross, trampling a serpent. Christ reigns. Later Norse cross-slabs often carried runic inscriptions, one such reading 'Gaut made this and all in Man'.

At Balladoole is an important Viking boat burial, on the site of an early Christian graveyard, within an Iron Age enclosure. Grave-goods showed this to have been a male burial, the accompanying female skeleton possibly providing evidence of suttee. There is also a later keill or chapel. At the Braaid a large complex comprises an Iron Age round house and two Norse long houses.

Within the walls of Peel Castle on St Patrick's Isle are the remains of the 12th-century St Germans cathedral. The early Christian cemetery continued in use and among the Viking burials is that of the 'Pagan Lady of Peel', whose grave-goods included a spectacular necklace of over 60 glass and amber beads. Here also are an Irish-style round tower and church, built in the 10th or 11th century. Some 20 hoards of Viking Age silver from the early 10th to the late 11th century have been recovered from the Isle of Man.

Items for the next issue should be sent to the Editor, Caroline Hillaby, at The Roughs, Hollybush, Ledbury, HR8 1EU, tel/fax 01531 650618, recorder@worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk by **1 September 2010**.



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