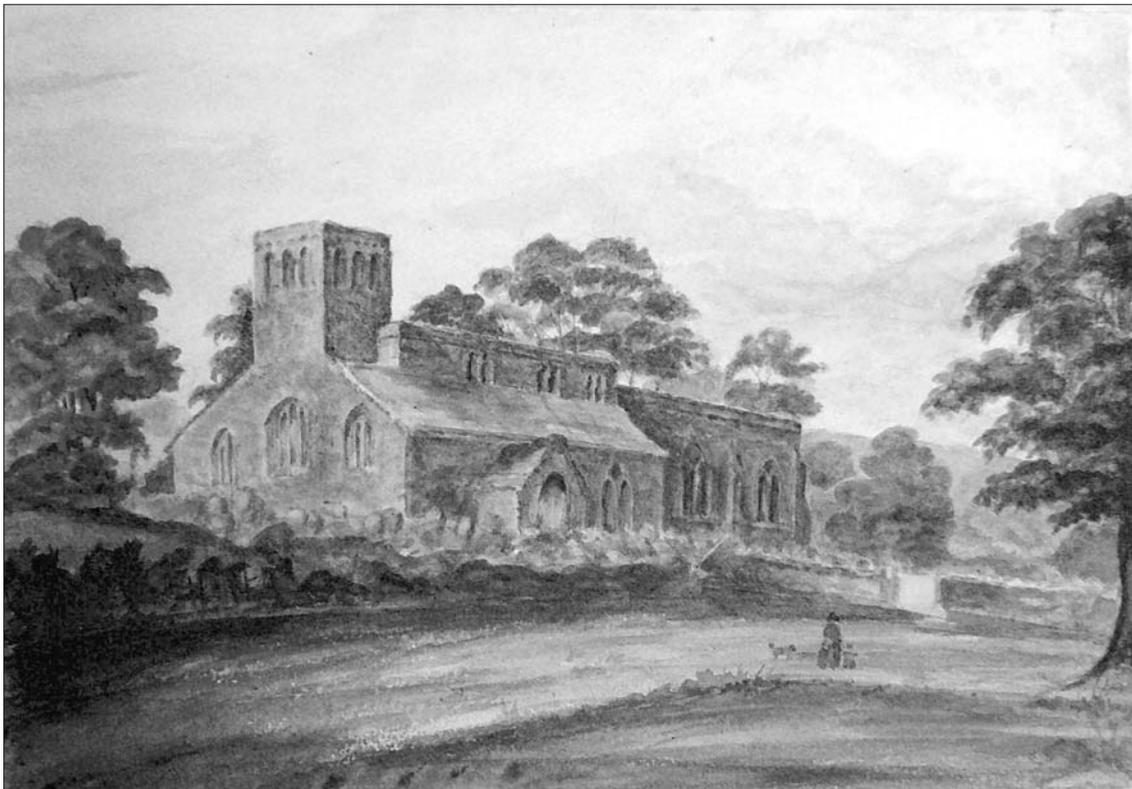


# Worcestershire Recorder

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Newsletter of the  
**WORCESTERSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY**  
Charity No 517092



Free to Members  
Membership Secretary Tel: 01684 565190

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

Kay Bodenham-Yates, Bayton	David and Maida Sharman, Malvern
Paul Dunleavey, Malvern	Sally Smith, Malvern
Canon John Everest, Worcester	Jane Tinklin, Malvern
Jean Greenwood, Bromsgrove	Helen Walker, Broadwas on Teme
Luin Harding, Lower Broadheath	Henry and Irene Walker, Malvern Wells
Richard and Jane Holding, Worcester	G C Warren, Bodenham, Herefordshire
Clive Lloyd, Leigh Sinton	Roger Whitworth, Worcester
Robert and Hilary Martin, Sutton Coldfield	Meg Winters, Alcester
Ruth Renalias, Highnam, Glos	Mike Wood, 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:**

Spot the Church No 2 (see p22)

## Chairman's Letter

Yet again another successful winter season of lectures is drawing to a close. We have had the usual wide range of topics covering many periods and a great deal of geography, from Worcestershire to Norway. As usual thanks are due to the technical team who seamlessly sustain the lectures (namely Peter Walker and his support workers). We must also thank Joe Hillaby for his usual flair and diligence in seeking out speakers and ensuring that we have a balanced programme, with a good focus on Worcestershire topics.

One issue which did arise this year was the question of continued afternoon meetings. We now have only two of these a year (including the AGM). We have discussed in committee whether or not we should persist with these meetings, but we have not concluded that discussion. If you have strong views one way or the other I would be pleased and interested to hear them (via our website where you can find a dedicated chairman's e-mail address).

We are now moving into the summer season, and the excursions programme ably masterminded by Ernie Kay and our latest volunteer, Muriel Tinsley, who is now his deputy. On this front we have the usual range of interesting visits both in and out of the county and I look forward to seeing some of you on those trips.

With all this optimism about our own programme, I cannot neglect to mention the current wider picture where we are losing professional friends at every turn. From the organisation I work for, through local government, and the university sector, the cultural/heritage business seems to be under siege from every direction. Whilst new libraries and record offices are being built, not just in Worcester but also in Birmingham (I can see the new building from my office window as I write this), the staff are under threat of slimming down, and the collections are also being looked at as a part of the necessary economies. Members will be aware of the 'basement sales' from Worcester's reference library (prior to its move) which are a concern for the Society.

The Kay bequest is forming the catalyst for the work we are undertaking on widening access to the Society's collections. This will take the form of firstly conservation, then cataloguing and digitisation to make them much more widely available. The scale of those collections was admirably addressed in the recent transactions by Stephen Price, and we now have Debbie Fox on the committee who is helping to work out what we do next.

The Society's web site continues to grow and become more useful. The archive of photographs of the Society's past excursions is expanding, and the latest useful addition to the site is Peter Walker's comprehensive listing of all the articles published since the mid 19th century. We must give Peter a big thank you for allowing this to be more widely available.

## Nick Molyneux

### WAS Committee: Farewells ...

At the AGM in November the Committee expressed its thanks to **Tim Bridges**, **Brian Ferris**, **Barbara Plant** and **Stephen Price** who resigned to make way for new blood, each having given many years' service. All remain active members of the Society. Brian Ferris continues to run the Architecture Group, which meets monthly, September to

March. Details, announced at lectures, are available on the Society's website, <http://worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk>, as is his illustrated biography of Eliza Warrington, or from Brian (01905 354224), who hopes to relate the later meetings to the Excursions Programme, as he did so successfully with Oxford last year.

#### **and Welcome ...**

to **Debbie Fox**, **Margaret Goodrich**, **Muriel Tinsley** and Hon Librarian, **Rachel Johnson**. As noted in the Chairman's Letter, Debbie Fox, who is Documentation Officer at Worcester City Art Gallery & Museum with special responsibility for the archaeological collections there, is researching the options for digitising the Society's collections and making them widely available; Muriel is now Deputy Excursions Administrator, relieving Ernie Kay of the detailed administration of the individual trips; Margaret Goodrich is already well known to many members as President of the Friends of Worcestershire Record Office and a Vice Chair of the Friends of Hartlebury Castle and Hurd Library, and author of the highly acclaimed *Worcester Nunneries* (2008); Dr Rachel Johnson is Research Librarian of the Special Collections at the University of Worcester, in whose care the Society's own library is entrusted.

#### **Worcestershire Archaeological Society: Committee Members, 2010-11**

Chairman:	Nick Molyneux, 0121 7781519
Deputy Chairmen:	Dr John Harcup, 01684 574477 Joe Hillaby, 01531 650618
Secretary & Membership Secretary:	Janet Dunleavey, 01684 565190
Treasurer:	Les Bishop, 01905 754494
Editor ( <i>Transactions</i> ):	Robin Whittaker, 01386 554886
Programme Secretary:	Joe Hillaby, 01531 650618
Archaeological Adviser:	Chris Guy, 01905 21004 (work)
Excursions Administrator:	Ernie Kay, 01684 567917
Deputy Excursions Administrator:	Muriel Tinsley, 01905 616434
Publicity Officer:	Hal Dalwood, 01905 855455 (work)
Webmaster:	Brian Browne, 01386 860745
Honorary Librarian:	Rachel Johnson, <a href="mailto:r.johnson.worc.ac.uk">r.johnson.worc.ac.uk</a>
Debbie Fox, 01905 25371	Vince Hemingway, 01905 426428
Margaret Goodrich, 01386 552771	Virginia Wagstaff, 01299 250883

For email contacts go to the Society's website: <http://worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk>

#### **Obituary: Miss Phyllis Pitt**

The Society was saddened to learn of the death last November of Miss Phyllis Pitt, at the age of 98. A Committee member from 1993 to 1998, Miss Pitt taught Classics at Worcester Grammar School for Girls. She remained a vice-president of the Old Girls Association until her death. During the war she was a Land Girl. Brian Ferris, to whom she gave a couple of books on Byzantine and Greek art and lent him a book on Greek sculpture, recalls that, with a twinkle in her eye, she gave him the distinct impression that she had a gay old time with the boys during that period of her life.

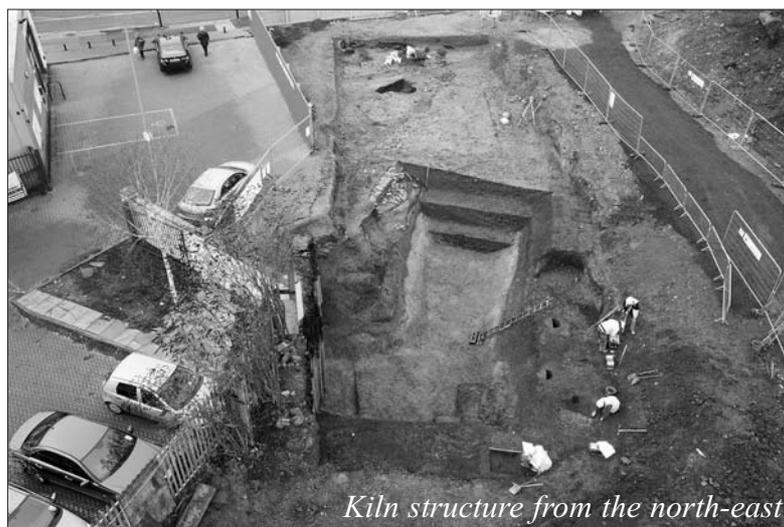
## News from the County:

### Archaeological excavations at Silver Street, Lowesmoor, Worcester.

Large-scale redevelopment is underway on the east side of Worcester city centre at the former Lowesmoor trading estate where a superstore and other retail outlets are under construction by developers Carillion Richardson (Worcester) Ltd. The area is defined by City Walls Road and Silver Street to the west, Lowesmoor to the north, Pheasant Street to the east and St Martin's Gate to the south. In recent years the area has been used by a range of businesses using existing industrial buildings but until the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century the area was a major manufacturing centre which included the Grainger Porcelain Works and the Hill Evans Vinegar Works.

Throughout the redevelopment there has been a programme of archaeological works including building recording, an ongoing watching brief and an evaluation. Excavation of the porcelain works was undertaken in which a number of circular kiln bases was exposed, with excavations also on the corner of Silver Street and Lowesmoor revealing 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century domestic activity.

The most recent and final excavation was undertaken on the western side of the development, in the footprint of a large attenuation tank for regulating the flow of rainwater into the city's drainage system. This part of the site lies just outside the line of the medieval city wall, adjacent to St Martin's Gate, the main entrance to the city from the east. An historic map showing the Civil War defences of the city at the Battle of Worcester in 1651 depicts a bastion known as St Martin's Sconce projecting from the walls around the gate. This type of defence would have consisted of a large ditch surrounding a raised and defended earthen platform from which artillery could fire in all directions and defend the line of the wall. Archaeological evaluations in 2000 and 2007 exposed parts of a large ditch in this area, surmised as a remnant of St Martin's Sconce. Following consultation with the developers and the city archaeologist, the footprint of the attenuation tank was placed over the projected location of the ditch so that it could be properly investigated.



Excavation of the 30m x 10m area was started in late November 2010 by the field section of Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service. The location and form of the Civil War ditch was confirmed and, despite heavy truncation by the ditch, a remarkable depth and complexity of earlier deposits survived.

It was known from previous excavations on the corner of St Martin's Gate that there were Roman features in the vicinity but at this site the activity was far more intensive; surprisingly so, given the site's location some way outside the estimated eastern extent of the Roman town. Two broad phases of Roman activity were evident. The earliest showed the purposeful infilling of a natural depression to the east and a long-lived succession of parallel ditches draining towards this lower-lying ground. Various small features also dated from within this sequence, including an area of *in situ* burning and the probable remains of two beam slots. There was a rich assemblage of pottery including high-status imported Samian ware, the rim of an unusual glass bowl and the fragments of a complete copper ring. The drainage ditches, and a subsequent layer of material that was probably brought in to consolidate wet ground, appear to have effectively reclaimed this hinterland. The imported nature of this material is suggested by the high incidence of slag in this and all the later Roman deposits, despite no evidence of metalworking being present on site.

A later phase of Roman activity followed which was less densely packed and more domestic in character. Two ovens were excavated to the west of the trench. Fragments of amphora were recovered from one, which was surrounded by stake holes suggesting a superstructure. The other was hour-glass shaped and in close association with a good pottery assemblage and a brooch. The material from the ovens, along with many other deposits from the excavation, was sampled for further analysis. Preliminary investigation shows that there has been very good preservation of environmental evidence across the site.

A large V-shaped ditch, 3.75m across, ran northwest-southeast across the site. Possibly cut during the later Roman period, it filled gradually at first but then appears to have been backfilled quickly in the medieval period with material that contained, amongst other things, a horse's head. A cultivation horizon formed above this, truncated by several isolated features such as pits, postholes and a small ditch signifying low-scale medieval activity, and containing examples of floor tiles and pottery that date from this period.

Cut into this layer was a complicated sequence of brick and tile-built structures that reached over 17m in length, truncated longitudinally by the Civil War period ditch. The earliest phase had steps leading down into a large rectangular chamber with a small tile-built domed structure below floor level; perhaps a water cistern. Connected to the main chamber was a circular brick-built compartment that had evidently seen intense heating. Many rebuilds later, the final phase incorporated a substantial thick-walled rectangular chamber, also heavily fired, and together the structures appear to have been part of a kiln complex. It is known from documentary evidence that there were tile kilns in this area in the early 17<sup>th</sup> century. The structures excavated on site appear to be associated with the tile industry; however layers of lime in the central chambers also suggest the production of lime, perhaps using architectural fragments from the medieval and Roman city in the absence of a local source of limestone. Archaeomagnetic dating should provide accurate dates for the final firings of these two chambers; giving a lifespan of the complex.

Precisely following the southern edge of the kilns, the Civil War ditch was aligned west to east across the site before turning sharply to the south at the tip of the bastion (and at the end of the kiln complex). A large section of the ditch was hand excavated. It was up to 9m wide and over 3m deep with steep straight sides and a flat base. Large postholes on the north side may have supported a further defensive structure, possibly a defensive bank known as a glacis.



*Civil War ditch from the east*

The primary fills remained waterlogged and contained organic materials such as shoe leather, but remarkably little evidence of debris that could be associated with the battle (a 16lb cannonball found on site sadly came from within a mixed 20<sup>th</sup>-century deposit). Bricks from the kiln structure had tumbled down the edge of the ditch, along with collapsed soil from the upcast defensive mound. Only partially filled, the ditch was then finally backfilled with dumped material containing a vast amount of roof tile. It is known that houses outside the city wall in Lowesmoor were demolished during the Civil War to prevent them from providing cover for the enemy. It may be that many of the tiles originated from this demolition, but many were also warped and unusable from having been over-fired during manufacture. These almost certainly originated from the tile works that operated here before the Civil War. Decorated medieval floor tile was also recovered, with 17<sup>th</sup>-century pottery and clay pipes, a bone comb and decorated knife-handle, and a rare Charles I rose farthing.

Once the ditch and mound had been levelled, a layer of earth accumulated. The area appears to have remained open until perhaps the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, when a tiled path was laid in association with a building, the brick and sandstone foundations of which were exposed on the southern limit of excavation. Further evidence of this period was truncated during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Remnants of a cobbled surface were also found, surviving along with the more intrusive elements of 19<sup>th</sup>- century occupation: two brick-lined wells, and steps leading down into the cellar of a Victorian house that once fronted onto Silver Street.

The excavations have shown that the Civil War ditch was cut through an area that had seen considerable activity from the Roman period onwards. Interestingly, the same east-west orientation of features was observed right through from the very earliest Roman ditch to the kilns, the Civil War ditch and even through to the 18<sup>th</sup>-century tiled path; suggesting a boundary to have been respected throughout more than 1500 years. The finds assemblage is diverse, and given the expectation for 17<sup>th</sup>-century archaeology, it is surprisingly weighted in favour of the Roman activity. The stratified deposits mean that once the finds have been analysed, the dating should be relatively tight. This will be invaluable when incorporated with the good preservation of the environmental remains, and should make for an extremely rewarding excavation.

**Tom Rogers and Fiona Keith-Lucas**

Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service

## **Iron Age Settlement at Blackstone, Worcestershire: Excavations 1972, 1973, and 1977**

An article by Derek Hurst et al, available at [http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue28/hurst\\_index.html](http://intarch.ac.uk/journal/issue28/hurst_index.html)

The Summary reads:

Aerial photography in 1957 resulted in the discovery of a rectangular double-ditched enclosure overlooking the Severn floodplain near Bewdley, Worcestershire (UK). Excavation in the 1970s, in advance of gravel extraction, provided limited evidence of Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age activity prior to occupation in the later Iron Age, when the enclosure was established. This comprised a ditch and bank, and later a palisade and ditch, with single and double portal gateways respectively, and with buildings internally. Pottery and briquetage indicate trading links with the wider region, respectively with west and north Worcestershire, and with Droitwich. The main Iron Age occupation is dated from the 2nd century into the 1st century BC.

By the 3rd-4th centuries AD the site was apparently cultivated, as small quantities of Romano-British pottery were scattered across it, probably as a result of manuring arable fields associated with a nearby, but as yet unlocated, settlement. Similarly, in the medieval and post-medieval periods a thin scatter of finds in the overlying soils indicated further agricultural activity.

Unusually, the 1979 Iron Age site structural analysis has been largely retained in the current report without full revision but accompanied by a separate modern commentary, allied with the updated finds and environmental reporting, and overall discussion.

*Internet Archaeology*, hosted by the Department of Archaeology at the University of York and published by the CBA, describes itself as the first fully refereed e-journal for archaeology, producing articles of a high academic standing. Internet publication enables archaeological research to be presented with full colour images, photographs, searchable data sets, visualisations and interactive mapping.

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## **Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project: Marsh Archaeology Award**

Following on from previous articles, the Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club are very pleased to announce that the Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project is one of only three projects to be highly commended as part of a prestigious national award.

The Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project was launched in April 2008 after Heritage Lottery funding was awarded to the club, supported by City and County Councils, to engage with local people through the fascinating historic landscape of Northwick and Bever. The project resulted in a wide variety of events, workshops and activities including excavation, photography, art exhibitions and oral history recording, and culminated in the launch of the Northwick Manor Heritage Trail.

The Marsh Archaeology Award is made to an individual or voluntary group, active in the UK, to recognise and promote high quality engagement with the stewardship of the archaeological heritage of the UK. A shortlist was drawn up by a selection panel consisting of the CBA's Director, the Director of Archaeology Scotland, and an appointed CBA trustee. Also

shortlisted were Gloucester City's Clutch Clinic Community Group (highly commended) and the Dartmoor Cairn Survey and Repair Project, which was awarded the overall prize of £1000.

Members of the Worcestershire YAC were invited to attend the CBA's Winter General Meeting to give a presentation on the project and to receive a commendation certificate, presented by the award's sponsor Brian Marsh OBE.



Various materials that were produced during the course of the project, are now available via our website: [www.wyac.co.uk/northwick](http://www.wyac.co.uk/northwick). These include a fully digitised version of Doharty's Map of the Manor of Claines from 1751-3 (via a link to Worcestershire Tithe and Inclosure Map website), fieldwork reports, oral history transcriptions and research on the area. Details of the heritage trail are also available, for anyone that would like to visit!

### **Sheena Payne-Lunn**

Worcestershire Young Archaeologists Club

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## **News from the County Record Office**

**Robin Whittaker** retired as Archives Manager and Diocesan Archivist in February this year. This is of significance to the Society on two levels. First, Robin has for a very long time provided a wonderful service to many of its members, amongst numerous other Record Office users. Not surprisingly, as the Friends of the Record Office Newsletter recounts, warm tributes were paid to him on 1 February in a packed searchroom, 'in appreciation of his dedication to the records service for most of his working life, marked by his friendly helpfulness, support and extensive knowledge of the County's history and its archives'. Robin replied that 'it is very satisfying to hear that I have been able to pass on my passionate interest in the archives and history of Worcestershire to so many people over the course of my career', adding that he already had plans for some voluntary activity at the Record Office.

More specifically, it was through his appointment at the Record Office that Robin became Editor of the Society's *Transactions*. In his own words (from his excellent article, '150 Years of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society, 1854-2004' *Recorder* 69, pp11-16):

'I attended my first Committee meeting at the Greyfriars on 22 October 1976 and was immediately appointed Assistant Editor [under Fred Grice]. I had started work as an archivist with the CRO in 1975 and on promotion to a more senior post in 1976 was told by [my then boss] Harry Sargeant that this responsibility went with the job. So started an enjoyable and continuing association with the Society.'

Robin took over as Hon Editor when Fred Grice died in 1983. He has therefore been editing the *Transactions* for 35 years! Fortunately for the Society, the link between the two jobs no longer applies, and Robin continues as Editor. It was pleasing to hear him say, after Nick Molyneux's lecture on 3 February, how much he enjoys this work, being involved in current research and publication. We look forward to celebrating his 40 years in October 2016.

Robin's successor is Lisa Snook, Temporary Archive Manager until December, when staffing arrangements will be reviewed ahead of the move to the new building. We wish her good luck in what must be a challenging situation on several fronts.

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## News from the City

Work on the Lowesmoor Trading Estate redevelopment continues, with watching briefs still underway on parts of the site. However the significant archaeological interventions – finishing with what turned out to be a very important excavation on the Silver Street frontage (reported elsewhere in this issue) – are now finished.

King's boathouse development is now under way, and work has continued at this site to record in detail part of a late-18<sup>th</sup> or early-19<sup>th</sup>-century wall built of re-used medieval stonework (part of this is to be reconstructed in the new boathouse), and to recover stonework from the cottage foundations. The medieval castle ditch has been more elusive, but boreholes have been used to test its fills.

The University of Worcester plans to build a new sports arena on the former Fruit and Vegetable Market site next to the railway viaduct in Hylton Road. This site was evaluated nearly a decade ago, and thought to have little archaeological interest. However it turns out that the true archaeological interest of this site lies much deeper, effectively beyond the reach of conventional evaluation trenching. It has instead been revealed by a series of boreholes. A series of deposits containing well-preserved organic material has been found, buried up to 4.5m below the modern ground surface. Radiocarbon dating indicates dates in the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Roman periods for these. The nature of the site at these different periods is not yet known, but there may be evidence for riverside activity alongside former channels of the Severn. Additionally there are Roman iron slag layers, suggesting the dumping of waste material to form roads, causeways or hardstandings, or possibly the presence of industrial activity (not previously recorded on the west bank of the river). Further work is planned here before the new building goes up.

A watching brief on foundations for a small extension on the south side of Britannia Square revealed the foundation of a Roman building, constructed of sandstone and limestone, and associated with rubble including roof tiles, tesserae and plaster. Pottery and other finds dated the demolition to the 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century. The site is close to earlier discoveries of Roman material in Britannia Square and Back Lane South made in the 1950s and 1998.

Smaller-scale archaeological work has included recording of the late medieval cellar at Benedicto's restaurant in Sidbury, now transformed into a dining area.

**James Dinn**

Archaeological Officer

## News from the Cathedral: The West Face of the West Cloister Wall – An Assessment

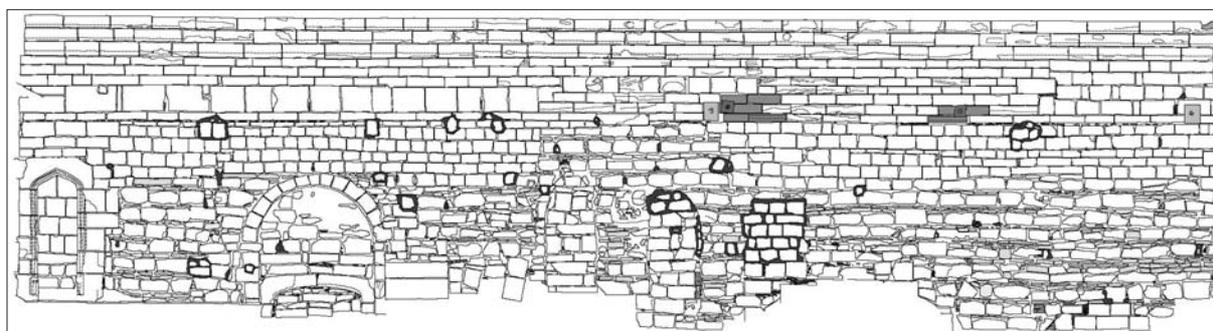
This wall is in poor condition but it is possible to see evidence of various phases of building and repair. Much of the lower part of the south end of the elevation is obscured and this is not analysed here. The majority of the wall probably dates from the early 12th century and it was built as an internal face. It formed the east wall of the monks' dormitory which – unusually – was on the west side of the cloister. The building was aligned east-west and consisted of a first-floor hall (the dormitory itself) above an undercroft. The dormitory was entered from the cloister through a high round-headed archway towards the north end of the elevation. On the east elevation of the wall there are capitals (probably set on round shafts, although these are hidden by later blocking) supporting a roll moulding round the arch. On the west elevation there is merely an arched opening with no embellishment. The floor of the dormitory was below the level of the springing of the archway and excavations in 1912 suggest that the undercroft was vaulted.

The wall in this early phase is constructed predominantly of sandstone and lias bonded with a pale cream lime mortar with frequent inclusions. The sandstone blocks are variable in size and shape and the joints between them vary in thickness. The lias blocks are generally much narrower and less regular. In places it is possible to see alternating courses of sandstone and lias but this is not consistent and in some cases there are several courses of lias or sandstone.

There was a phase of rebuilding in the 14th century. A smaller doorway was built within the Norman entrance. The space above the new doorway was infilled with sandstone and occasional fragments of roof tile. Within the Norman arch the west face of the infill was plastered.

At the north end of the elevation a 14<sup>th</sup>-century doorway has been inserted at first floor level. There is no evidence of this in the east elevation. The mouldings on the jambs and arch of the doorway indicate that it was not merely an entrance to the roof-space above the cloister vault. Instead, they suggest that the door led to a second storey above the cloister, probably with steps in the thickness of the cloister wall. This doorway may have provided a link to the former room above the west slype as there is no other evidence of a second storey to the cloister.

The stone used in the 14<sup>th</sup>-century phase is mainly sandstone, with fragments of roof tile used for levelling. The mortar used in this phase is whiter than that in the earlier phase.



In the centre of the elevation at first floor level two openings (now blocked) have been cut into the earlier masonry. On the east elevation they are square-headed but their form on the west elevation is uncertain. They appear to have been windows but their precise function is uncertain. It is possible that they post-date the demolition of the dormitory in the 17th century and were inserted to light the west walk of the cloister. Between the two openings the core of

the wall is exposed. It is possible that there may have been a buttress or vault shaft at this point that has been robbed out.

Towards the top of the elevation there are the remains of a stringcourse, which is badly weathered. Fragments of tile have been used to level it. It is probable that this post-dates the demolition of the dormitory. Above this, towards the north end of the elevation, there is a course of very large sandstone blocks. At the south end of the elevation there are again larger, slightly irregular, courses of sandstone (although smaller than those at the north end). The centre and top of the elevation has smaller, regular courses of sandstone and probably represents a 19<sup>th</sup>- century rebuilding of the parapet.

### **Christopher Guy, Cathedral Archaeologist**

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#### **Worcestershire and the Court of Chancery**

One of the most important sources for the local and family historian to be found in The National Archives [TNA] is the Court of Chancery. The author of this piece has been working on an occasional basis for three years, trying to make them a little more accessible for Worcestershire historians.

The Court of Chancery was the court of the Lord Chancellor of England. Divided into two divisions, the one that is largest and most useful is that dealing with Equity Pleadings. Typically these are disputes between individuals or corporations for which the plaintiff turns to the Lord Chancellor for 'natural justice' rather than a ruling based on common law precedent. The survival rate of these documents has been significant and the Chancery class consists of hundreds of thousands of documents from the Middle Ages to the 19th century.

There are two types of document. The Plea or Bill is submitted by the plaintiff and contains the details of the complaint. The Answer is exactly what the name suggests : the defendant's response to the complaint. The content is very varied but includes (in no particular order) disputes about inheritances, property, the repayment of loans and mortgages and the recovery of debts. What often makes these documents such a good source is the unexpected attachment to the main document; an inventory of goods; a list of transactions or costs related to the case; a tradesman's creditors. This does not happen often, but when it does it can be very illuminating. But even the standard cases can provide brilliant insights into family disputes, social attitudes and business transactions. Both the complaints and the answers are usually very detailed.

The documents themselves are packed in large A2 cardboard boxes. They are often difficult to handle. There may be anything from one to five sheets per case and they are frequently out of order, dirty and of very variable legibility. Physically accessing them is quite a slow process. It ought to be noted that both Bill and Answer do not necessarily exist for each case and even when they do, they may be separated in the archive.

There is a diverse and sometimes confusing range of finding aids for Chancery records in TNA. They include catalogues, listings and indexes. Some are online and easily accessible, others are rare printed books; others unique manuscript volumes written at the time the records were created and only available in TNA search rooms. The detail available varies considerably

from one subsection of Chancery record to another. The current work has focused on C5-C12, which cover the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

C5: Now part of the Equity Pleadings database and can be searched online by plaintiff's name and county.

C6: Also part of the Equity Pleadings database and can be searched online by name and place.

C7: Can only be searched in manuscript volume arranged loosely in alphabetical order of plaintiff's surname.

C8: As C7

C9: Can be searched online by name and date.

C10: Can be searched online by name, county and date. Organised by A-Z of plaintiff.

C11: Can be searched online by name, occupation, place and date.

C12: Can be searched online by name, institution and date.

It will be appreciated that even when records are online, only some of the potential information is available because the online records are simply copies of the contemporary manuscript volumes (usually arranged A-Z of plaintiff), which rarely contain details of individual cases.

To try and improve accessibility to these records, the cases are being examined and a very high level note of the nature of the case and the principals involved (there are often far more people involved than the plaintiff and defendant recorded in the contemporary manuscript finding aids). Priority is being given to classes C7 and C8 for which no online access exists.

If anyone would like assistance in searching this source, please contact me on [stuartwdavies@btinternet.com](mailto:stuartwdavies@btinternet.com). If an extended search is required then I will have to charge a small fee to cover my own costs.

**Dr Stuart Davies**

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### **770<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

13 March marked the 770<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an extraordinary event in Worcester. In January 1241 a writ was sent to 21 sheriffs, whose Jewries were informed that the king 'commands you, as you love yourself and all yours and so that we do not most grievously seize upon you by force, that you cause to come before us at Worcester on the Sunday next before Ash Wednesday six of the wealthier and more powerful of our Jews of [each community] to treat with us ..., knowing that unless you come at the aforesaid time we will so aggrieve you by your body and chattels that you will forever feel our hand ... immoderately.'

The king's words had their effect. On that day 109 Jews from 21 communities, as far afield as York, Norwich, Canterbury, Winchester and Exeter, assembled at Worcester. Such a Jewish gathering was unprecedented, apart from a possible meeting in 1194 at Northampton. In his *Anglia Judaica* of 1738, d'Blossiers Tovey dubbed this assembly the 'Jewish Parliament'. There is no record as to where it took place, but it was presumably either in the cathedral chapter house or refectory, or the great hall of the bishop's palace.

For more on Worcester's medieval Jewry see Joe Hillaby's article, *Transactions* (1990) 73-122

**The Stoulton Cope:** addendum to the article in *Worcestershire Recorder* 82, pp12-13

The textile expert Kathleen Hollands has had further thoughts on the Stoulton Cope in the vestry of St. Edmund's Church, Stoulton which are of great interest. She feels that the fabric could very well be dornyx, not velvet as originally thought. The wear on the background fabric therefore is not wear on velvet but wear on the woollen weft of the dornyx.

It will be remembered that in the 1552 inventory of church goods for the Oswaldslow Hundred, Stoulton was given as possessing three copes, 'one of greene satten of Byrges, one of Bustyon and another of Dornyx.' If this is the case the fragment of cope in the vestry of St. Edmunds could very well be the one of dornyx mentioned in the 1552 inventory. It is hoped that further research may throw more light on this.

**Alan Higgins**

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### **(Some of) The History of Becknor & Shell**

I first came across the names of Becknor and nearby Shell in a document among the Middleton Collection, held by Nottingham University. Three of us, two members of the Wichenford Local Heritage Group and Kevin Down, our palaeography tutor, had journeyed up to investigate a clutch of documents which, according to their summaries in the listings, related to Crown East (St Johns Worcester) and Ruggehall (Wichenford) estates.

A brief background to our reasons for being interested in these papers is as follows: throughout our local history researches we keep coming across medieval references to a certain William Abbingdon or Abbington or Abindon or even Ablington, whose property holdings in Wichenford and elsewhere make clear are one and the same man – or even a series of fathers and sons as the documents date from the late 12th century to the late 14th century. The Abbingdons originally held land in the Rugge, Wichenford before marrying the heiress of an old Wichenford family the De Boys or Attwoods and inheriting through her the Woodend estate. A descendant was then to marry one of the co-heirs of the le Poers of Wichenford Manor and half that estate then passed into Abbington, though by this time spelt Habbington, hands.

This would have left the Habbingtons as the largest land owner in Wichenford, were it not for the fact that by this time the land in the Rugge had been lost to them and had somehow got attached to the Crown East (originally Crowe Nest) estate which lies some miles south-east of the village – so firmly attached in fact that the Victoria County History (VCH) lists Ruggehall as an alternative name for the Crown East Estate and never connects its origins to Wichenford.

We had been intrigued how 46 deeds to do with these properties in and around Worcester came to be included in the Middleton Papers at Nottingham University. That explanation at least was straightforward. In the mid 13th century the Crown East estate was owned by the De Freville family. (See *Recorder* 78, pp14-16) When the last of five Baldwin de Frevilles died in 1418, one of his sisters married a Willoughby who were later to become the Lords Middleton.<sup>1</sup>

The documents were for the most part in pristine condition, as if untouched since the day they were written. Which may well be true, as none of the Worcestershire properties of the De Frevilles passed to the Willoughbys. They had been sold by a previous generation to a cousin of the de Frevilles, the Hillarys aka Greys. Perhaps our documents were bundled up with many others when the division of property was made in 1418 and put aside as they did not relate to any estates held; this would explain their excellent condition.

Document Mi D 4598 provided the biggest surprise: it detailed dower arrangements for an as yet unrecorded marriage between Alexander de Freville and Alice daughter of William Abingdon. In it William Abingdon was to receive the rents of Crown East estate in exchange for his estate of Rugehall and a house and land in Becknor and Shell.

*Matilda de Ebroycis [Devereux/Devros] and Alexander de Freville her son have granted to William of Ablington [sic] all our manor of Crowneste for term of his life. After his death to be returned to Matilda and her son and their heirs ... Given in exchange for 1 messuage, 3 carrucates of land, 12/- rent, 40 acres of wood and pasture, 4 acres of meadow at the Ruge in Wichenford. **He also gave to us 1 messuage 1 carrucate of land 18/- of annual rent 12 acres of woodland 20 acres of meadow at Beckenore [Beckenouere] and Schelve in Hanbury next to Wyke [Droitwich]** (my emphases)*

We have not yet found another officially recognised record of this marriage and it is not listed on any de Freville family tree and yet it must have taken place, because it is by this agreement that the land at Ruge in Wichenford became part of the Crown East estate. Alexander de Freville is traditionally given one wife only, Joan, granddaughter of Philip Marmion of Tamworth. Yet there are other records that could possibly be read as his having had a first wife called Alice.

For example the VCH's section on Shell states:

*The tenancy of the manor afterwards passed to a family who took their name from the estate. Alexander de Shell settled a messuage, a mill and half a virgate of land in Shell in 1268–9 upon himself and his wife Alice and Alexander his son.*

Could this be Alexander de Freville and his wife Alice under another name? It is quite common to find the same person given different estate names depending on where the document was written or what it was written about. William Abingdon himself is often referred to as William of St John's.

In 2008 the Worcestershire Historical Society published *The Worcestershire Eyre of 1275* in which case no. 35 stated:

*William de Sohelle and Alice his wife have acknowledged that they have granted all their land and their tenement at Maund Bryan [which has been] designated as Alice's dower to Alexander de Frivil and his heirs or his assigns. Alexander, his heirs or assigns are to hold [it] for the duration of Alice's life, for the payment of 40s per year to William and Alice after the end of the next 5 years, ? on the Feast of St Martin and ? on the feast of St Ethelbert for the duration of Alice's life for all services. And William and Alice will warrant the tenement for Alexander, his heirs or assigns.*

Without prior knowledge this could be read as William and Alice his wife handing over to Alexander part of her own dower i.e. Maund Bryan, for reasons not stated and unknown. But knowing that a marriage had been arranged between a daughter Alice and Alexander makes the seemingly unequivocal ambiguous at least. Was the second Alice mentioned the wife or the daughter? Was it the daughter's dower under discussion or the mother's? And if the mother's, why should Alexander hold it for her life rather than, as to be expected, his wife's life? The only unambiguous fact is the date: 1275.

If this does indeed document extra dower for an marriage between Alice and Alexander, then that means that William of Ablington/Abbington must be one and the same with William of Sohelle. And I would hazard a guess that if the original manuscript were re-read closely William's title would read 'Schelle' and not 'Sohelle' – William of Shell just like Alexander of Shell in the previous document; as we know from our Nottingham document, William Abbington did have property in Shell. In addition, no 391 in *The Worcestershire Eyre of 1275* reveals that 'Richard Pirun who brought a writ of novel disseisin against William of Abbinton for a tenement in Hanbury does not prosecute.' So William had yet more land in Hanbury, or could this be referring to either Becknor or Shell?

Records leap to the middle of the next century now and a series of documents in the Public Record Office and Nottingham University provide the next pieces in the jigsaw of fact. In 1328 Baldwin de Freville the first, son of Alexander, petitions the King requesting 'remedy as his father made a fine for an indictment for taking venison in the forest of Feckenham for which he has the king's charter, but despite this **the keepers of the forest then took lands that were Alexander de Freville's into the king's hand where they remain**'. (my emphases)

We know that the lands being referred to were Becknor and Shell, because in another petition dated 1352 made by yet another Baldwin de Freville, who is identified as the grandson of Alexander, the text makes quite clear that the lands referred to were those granted to Alexander de Freville by William Abbington. It would appear that the king had granted them to someone else and that Baldwin the second is now bringing a claim for the lands to be handed back.

*Baldwin de Friville states that he had brought a writ of formedon [formerly used for claiming entailed property] against Giles de Beauchamp, knight, **concerning some tenements in Hanbury by Wick**, before John de Stonore and his companions, justices, at Westminster, **concerning a gift made by William de Abbynton to Maud Deveros and Alexander de Friville**, and to the heirs of Alexander's body – the petitioner being Alexander's grandson – but that as Giles has claimed that he holds the tenements of lease of the king, and that he ought not to answer without the king being consulted, the justices do not wish to proceed to judgment without a writ of the king. He requests a writ to the justices to go ahead in the process and render judgment and do justice to the parties according to the law and custom of the land, notwithstanding this claim.* (my emphases)

And another document discovered at Nottingham University would indicate that he was successful – at least with Becknor, because four years later Baldwin the second is granting to his son, Baldwin the third:

*Baldwin de Freville Kt grants to Baldwin and Elizabeth his wife his manor of Croweneste and Ruggehalle and Beckenore ... Rendering to me annually 1 rose at Birth of St John's 24 June Tamworth 29 Ed 3 ( c 1356).*

The Elizabeth referred to here was Elizabeth Botetourt, first wife of Baldwin the third. When she died he somewhat surprisingly married her older sister Joyce and Becknor was again handed over in 1365 to Baldwin and his new wife Joyce (Jocosa).

*Know that I Baldwin de Freville Kt have granted to Baldwin my son and Jocosa de Botetourt his wife and their heirs my manors of Crowneast and Ruggehalle and Bicknor with all appurtenances in the county of Worcestershire, together with lands and tenements which I had as a gift of enfeoffment from John de Suthereye in the same county to have and to hold by the service of 1 rose per annum.*

Becknor appears next in an Inquisition post mortem dated 1420 for Joyce de Freville née de Botetourt. Her death occurred two years after the death of the last Baldwin, the fifth. Becknor stayed out of the male line and seemingly with Joyce for some fifty odd years despite her having married for a second time an Adam Peasenhall. It only returned to the de Freville estate after her death and was to count amongst the last Baldwin's properties which were divided between his three sisters. A 1423 document in the Shakespeare Centre Library and Archive, Stratford, details the division of lands and estates, amongst which are:

- the manors of Ashted and Newdegate (Surrey)
- **Becknore** (Worcs) (my emphases)
- Mortesbury (Wilts)
- Pinley (Warws/Coventry; with 6/- rent, viz 3/- from Corpus Christi Guild tenements, 3/- from William Swanne's)
- and half Henley-in-Arden (Warws)'s (excepting Styvechale [sic] and Ashted advowsons);

all of which go to Roger Aston in trust for his son, Robert whose mother, Joyce, had been one of Baldwin de Freville's sisters.

The Herefordshire property of Maund Bryan is listed and goes to another sister Margaret married to Hugh Willoughby. But there is no mention of Shell; in fact since the plea for the return of 'lands in Hanbury' in 1352, none of the documents mention Shell. Was Shell retained by the King? Did it stay with the Beauchamps? Was it granted to someone other than a Beauchamp?

The VCH claims that 'in 1282 William de Shell came before the king and sought to recover his land in Shell which he had forfeited for his default against John de Haulton'. This would appear to be our William Abbington again, as there is a known link between the Abbingtons and the Haulton or Hullatons. William seems to have been in possession again, only to lose it by default. Perhaps he retained some land in Shell for himself, having given only part as dower to his daughter. Perhaps he had been handed back that part of the dower – perhaps in exchange for the Maund Bryan land?

Whatever the ins and outs, our next source concerning Shell is *A Survey of Worcestershire* in which Thomas Habington, a descendant of William, records that in 1361 Lucy Bartram was in possession of Shelve Manor. He says that in her will she left it to the College of Westbury

and at the dissolution it passed to Ralph Sadler. However the VCH gives a much more detailed descent of Shell from 1292 through the Bartram family down to 1395 when the last heir died. The Webbs and Westbury College then held the land and after the Dissolution Sadler was to sell to the Fincher family and eventually Shell ended up in the hands of the Foley family c 1670. The rest is known history.

I think it is safe to conclude that William Abbington did in fact lose his holding, of whatever nature, in Shell; and that when Baldwin de Freville petitioned the king for the return of ‘lands in Hanbury’ all he got back was Becknor, Shell having passed already to the Bartram family. Becknor seemed to be used as part of any endowment to a de Freville wife, and Joyce de Botetourt, wife to Baldwin the Third, who was to marry again soon after her first husband’s death in 1388, kept hold of it as her ‘dot’ throughout her second marriage. Only after her death in 1420 did the de Frevilles regain possession. By that time the last male heir had died and the properties were split between the three heiresses, Becknor falling to the Astons. The VCH is silent about Becknor; instead it links ‘the manor of Broghton’ to Giles Beauchamp and then to the land granted by William Abbington to Alexander de Freville. So perhaps Broghton is Becknor. Unhelpfully the VCH ends by stating, ‘The further descent of this estate at Temple Broughton has not been traced.’ So research in that area should now turn to a possible descent of Becknor via the Aston Family.

I am sure there are still many other documents out there to be unearthed, which may flesh out these details or test hypotheses one way or the other. We have downloaded scores of them relating to the de Frevilles and the many William Abbingtons of the 13th and 14th century, many concerning defaults on borrowed money – the de Frevilles did not have a good record for prompt repayment! But these for the moment are the ones we have found relating to Hanbury and land at Becknor and Shell. If anyone has any more information that can help build a fuller picture, we would gratefully receive it to add to our own records.

<sup>i</sup> Sir Hugh Willoughby married a daughter of the Foljambe family, but the line was carried on through the issue of his second wife, a sister and co-heir, or a daughter and heir, of Sir Baldwin Freville, who brought him the Middleton estates, in Warwickshire. © A P NICHOLSON | CREATED31-Mar-2006

## **Heather Rendall**

Chair of the Wichenford Local Heritage Group

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## **Recent Publications**

*Sustaining Belief. The Church of Worcester from c.870 to c.1100* Francesca Tinti, Studies in Early Medieval Britain, 5 (Ashgate, 2010) 358pp, hardback, £70, or £63 via Ashgate website

Tinti employs the cathedral’s extraordinarily rich archives for this period to consider the work of its bishops and community from the arrival of Bishop Waerferth (869x872/3–907x15), whose wide-ranging achievements in the economic and cultural spheres are only now being

fully assessed, to the episcopate of Bishop Samson (1096-1182) and a consideration of the 'Samson Pontifical'.

Worcester diocese was founded to serve the ancient kingdom of the Hwicce. Thus it included the shires of Worcester, Gloucester east of the Severn, Winchcombe (suppressed by Eadric Streona 1007x1017) and parts of Warwickshire. It lost its southern parishes when the diocese of Gloucester was established in 1541.

Members interested in the county's local history will welcome Tinti's detailed analysis of the structure and contents of the cathedral's three early cartularies. The *Liber Wigorniensis*, the earliest surviving English cartulary, was compiled by five scribes working more or less simultaneously. It includes numerous title deeds, carefully divided geographically, and 76 leases, all but two issued by Bishop Oswald between 962 and 991. The date of the *Liber's* compilation remains a matter of debate; even if Wulfstan I did not commission it, he spent much time providing systematic annotations relating to places referred to in the title deeds. Members will find particularly helpful Table 3, giving the location of Worcestershire title deeds, including Worcester, Kempsey, Alvechurch, Inkberrow, Fladbury, Bredon, Blockley, Tredington, Bengeworth, Ripple and Hanbury, together with Table 7, identifying the county episcopal leases.

The second Worcester cartulary, Nero-Middleton, contains charters of which longer and more detailed copies are in the *Liber*. For Tinti its significance lies not in its contents but its context: St Wulfstan's concern for the preservation of their contents led to his order that they should be copied into a 400-year-old Bible, thus giving them 'a sacral authority which could not be matched'.

Hemmings Cartulary, the last of the trio, was ordered by St Wulfstan, 1062-95, that his successors should know which cathedral lands 'had wrongfully been taken away first by the Danes, then by unjust reeves and royal agents, and finally in this time by violent Normans'. Only after his death was it completed. For Tinti its importance lies in the cartulary's last three sections, which represent 'the New Voice of the Worcester monks', for they describe what Hemming terms 'privilege ... of estates which properly belong to the monks' sustenance'. All three cartularies, she suggests, provide 'for the reproduction of a past which could result useful for the future'.

From the evidence of the cartulary, Tinti is now able to examine the churches, lands and claims and administration throughout its extensive medieval diocese. These include the bishop's estates in Oswaldslow hundred, including Wick and Wick Episcopi, with others in Worcestershire such as Kempsey, Fladbury, Ripple, Bredon, Blockley, Tredington, Hanbury, Hartlebury and Alvechurch; in Warwickshire, Stratford-upon-Avon, Hampton Lucy and Alveston; and in Gloucestershire, Westbury-on-Trym, Bibury, Withington and Bishop's Cleeve. The monks' estates included the manors of Cropthorne, Overbury, Sedgeberrow, Harvington, Grimley and Hallow. See also Maps 20-27.

The book concludes with a chapter on ecclesiastical organization. This includes the early minsters of Kempsey, Inkberrow, Hanbury and Hartlebury, all in Worcestershire; at Stratford-upon-Avon and Hampton Lucy in Warwickshire; and Bibury, Bishop's Cleeve, and probably Withington, in Gloucestershire; as well as such reformed monasteries as Winchcombe,

Pershore and Evesham. This leads on to an interesting discussion of local churches and the origins of the parochial system, in Worcester and Gloucester as well as the countryside, together with the pastoral duties of baptism, preaching, confession, penance, visitation of the sick and dying, and burial.

One agrees whole-heartedly with Nicholas Brooks, who in his Foreword describes Francesca Tinti's book as 'This remarkable contribution ... the product of European scholarship of the highest order'.

### **Joe Hillaby**

*Early Medieval Towns in Britain* Jeremy Haslam (Shire, 2010) 64pp, £6.99

The Introduction explains that, in presenting this chronological account of physical evidence for urban development from c700 to 1140, 'it has been necessary to go against many apparently established 'truths' (in particular about the development of burhs . . .) and go beyond what many would regard as the limits of legitimate speculation'. Use is made of comparative topographical analysis, a 'hitherto undervalued historical resource'.

The author notes the role of ecclesiastical as well as royal centres in urban development in the middle Saxon period. In the 8<sup>th</sup> to early 9<sup>th</sup> century, he suggests, burhs were 'part of a defensive system which include Offa's Dyke'. Sited near bridges, they formed military units to control movement across and along major rivers. This location also facilitated trade, so that burhs may always have acted as regional market centres. Haslam notes St Clement's parish, near an early bridgehead, in Worcester, which he suggests indicates a Hiberno-Norse trading settlement and trade between western Mercia and Ireland. Such trade is also likely to have encouraged growth at Hereford and Gloucester, where the importance of the riverbank area from the early 10<sup>th</sup> century has been identified.

Burh development in the late 9<sup>th</sup> century was 'laying the basis for the present-day urban order'. Aethelred's foundations at Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford are cited as examples of planned extensions of earlier Roman and/or Mercian nuclei, and the dual function of military centre and urban foundation is noted. In the late 9<sup>th</sup>-early 10<sup>th</sup> century Edward the Elder constructed burh-bridge units to control river access much as Offa had done in Mercia. The great majority of his burhs, we are told, 'were created as instruments of a royal fiscal policy, as secure market areas in and by which trading activity could be regulated and controlled by the king'. Political and military considerations, population growth and new trading patterns led to further growth in the Norman period. The author draws attention to the destruction and modifications to the townscape caused by their castle-building. Some 47 new towns were founded in England, 1066-1140, their market-places often dominant features focused on the castle.

That references to Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford pepper this book shows how illustrative this area is in the development of early medieval towns, and conversely how useful this book is as an introduction to the subject.

***Medieval Fields*** David Hall (Shire, 2010) 56pp, £6.99

David Hall takes a multi-disciplinary approach, incorporating historical, geographical and archaeological evidence, to this study. The so-called 'Midland System' operated from lowland Northumberland through the Midlands to Dorset. Regional variations nevertheless abound and the book concentrates on the Northamptonshire area. Outside this central region the fields systems, mostly irregular, were associated with dispersed settlement, small enclosures and assarts, and were thus not communally organised.

The book opens with an invaluable terminology and structure of medieval fields, with information on historical sources. The author shows that 'various pieces of ridge and furrow are medieval', and that furlong names on open-field maps in some cases date back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century. The author next considers the operation of open fields, of necessity a communal affair. The virgate or yardland, the amount of land attached to a peasant holding, could vary from 17 to 40 acres, but was distributed so that good and bad land was shared out. A two- and three-field system included the use of fallow for common grazing. Communal regulations extended to the meadows and the number of animals that could be kept: in one instance, four beasts, four pigs and 24 sheep for 60 yardlands. The third chapter considers how archaeological techniques combined with historical data permit the reconstruction of open-field plans, enabling the identification of early estates, land use and details of topography. Later modifications of field systems and agricultural procedures show that they could accommodate necessary changes. Finally David Hall considers the various theories concerning the origins of open fields. He concludes that there is no single explanation for the complex types of field system, but that the main factors were a 'desire for equal sharing, piecemeal reclamation and possibly the splitting up of holdings between heirs'.

This is a reprint of the first edition of 1982, but the bibliography is augmented to include recent and forthcoming publications that reflect advances in medieval field and landscape studies. Altogether a highly readable introduction to the subject.

***The English Parish Church through the Centuries. Daily Life & Spirituality; Art & Architecture; Literature & Music*** Interactive DVD-ROM, £17.50 available from [www.christianityandculture.org.uk](http://www.christianityandculture.org.uk); email [candc@york.ac.uk](mailto:candc@york.ac.uk)

This immense resource is initially bewildering. Over 600 pages cover topics ranging from Christian influence on literature, music art & society to care and conservation of buildings and contents. It is structured around six 'sections': The Early Centuries (to c.600); Anglo-Saxon England (c.600-c.1066); Late Medieval England (c.1066-c.1534); The Reformation and Beyond (c.1534-c.1689); The Church in England (c.1689-c.1945) and Churches to the Present Day. Each of these has six 'themes': Introduction; Context; Daily Life and Worship; Church Art and Architecture; Interaction with Society; and Interaction with Culture.

There are over 1000 colour images of everything from stained glass to church plate; audio recordings of music and readings across the centuries; 3-D models illustrating architectural development from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> century; video introductions to St Helen's, Ranworth; St Mary's, Deerhurst; St Giles in the Fields; and St Mary, Studley Royal. Among some 230 academic and practitioner contributors are a number known to members of the Society from

book reviews and lecture programmes. They include Francesca Tinti, author of *Sustaining Belief. The Church of Worcester from c.870 to c.1100*, reviewed on p18, as well as last year's and this year's Berkeley Lecturers, Nicholas Orme and Philippa Hoskin.

Abbey Dore, visited by the Society last year, is one of 34 'case studies'. It is regrettable that the bibliography overlooks the excellent *Abbey Dore*, ed Ron Shoesmith and Ruth Richardson, written by acknowledged authorities, published by Logaston in 1997 and now in its 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.

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***The Story of an Idea*** £2 inc p&p from Alan Atkinson, 3a Haybridge Ave, Hagley, Stourbridge, DY8 2XG

Hagley Research Group, formed from members of the Historical and Fields Society, has produced this booklet by WAS member Tom Pagett, outlining the Group's activities over its 21-year history. Their numerous projects have included a Domestic Buildings Survey, Anglo-Saxon Boundaries, a Churchyard Survey, the Tithe Map Project, Field House gardens, and the Grotto in Hagley Park. Some of its ideas may be useful to others.

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### **Spot the Church No 2**

Although no-one has been able to offer an identification for the drawing of a church we published in the last *Recorder*, we have another one to seek readers' help with. Also from the Severn Walker collection in the Society's care, this is another pen and ink drawing done in the middle of the 19th century. As before, the drawing may not necessarily be of Worcestershire. Any suggestions please to recorder@worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.co.uk or Peter Walker on 01886 822137.

### **Peter Walker**

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### **WAS: Indexing the *Transactions***

The Society's *Transactions* and *Annual Reports* are a major resource for anyone studying the history, archaeology and architecture of the county, but until now it has been difficult to know whether they hold items that might be of interest. Peter Walker has produced an extremely useful list of the contents covering the period 1854 to 2010 which, thanks to our webmaster, Brian Browne, is now available online at the Society's website <http://worcestershirearchaeologicalsociety.org.uk>

Once into the site click *Transactions* on the left-hand menu and you will then be able to access 54 pages recording the published articles and annual reports since 1854. (The reports are an often overlooked resource but they can sometimes contain some detailed and valuable information about local churches and houses prior to restoration.) There is a search facility 'Find' at the top of the screen enabling you to type in places, people and subjects.

Having found items of potential interest you will need to use the hard copies of the *Transactions*. Copies are to be found in the Record Office, the History Centre and, of course, in our own Library in the University of Worcester's Peirson Library at the Henwick campus. We have plans to digitise all the *Transactions* and *Annual Reports* to make them available online, but that will take a little longer! In the meantime this online resource is a great step forward.

**Nicholas Molyneux and Stephen Price**

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### **Chimneys again**

Following the note in the last *Recorder* about smoke bays, I received a very good response from readers pointing me to other suspected examples. Within hours of hearing about one at Belbroughton I was able to follow up the lead with a site visit. Although the house did not have a smoke bay it did have the remains of an early 14th-century crown post roof. Further details will appear in the autumn edition of the *Recorder*. In the meantime, I would like to thank everyone who got in touch with me.

I am currently working on the physical evidence for chimneys and hearths in all types of 16<sup>th</sup>- and 17<sup>th</sup>-century houses in the county as a contribution to a forthcoming publication on the Worcestershire Hearth Tax, being organised by the Centre for Hearth Tax Research based at Roehampton University, London. I am therefore looking for dated examples of chimneystacks – either dates in the brickwork or stone, dated inscriptions over hearths or even documentary evidence for the building of chimneys. Quite a few can be found on Listed Buildings online ([lbonline.english-heritage.org.uk](http://online.english-heritage.org.uk)) and Images of England ([www.imagesofengland.org.uk](http://www.imagesofengland.org.uk)) websites but many more will not have been recorded as English Heritage inspectors did not normally have access to interiors. Any leads would be gratefully received.

**Stephen Price**

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### **Worcestershire Archaeological Society Excursions, 2011**

**Tuesday 19 April: Bridgnorth and the Severn Valley Railway;** by rail, organised by Ernie Kay

A trip on the steam Severn Valley Railway, talk on the line's history, visit to the Engine House at Highley, plus tour of Bridgnorth and its Museum by Bridgnorth and District Historical Society.

**Tuesday 3 May, evening: Worcester Old Bishop's Palace and Cathedral Precincts,** organised by Robin Whittaker, led by Archdeacon Frank Bentley, author of the guide to the Old Palace..

A tour exploring too often ignored buildings round 'our own' Cathedral.

**Thursday 19 May: 'Lost Worcestershire': Northfield,** led by Stephen Price. Another area once part of Worcestershire. Northfield was transferred to Birmingham in 1911. We will visit the Early English Parish Church, the village, Weoley Castle and Selly Manor.

**Wednesday 8 June**, evening: **Tewkesbury Abbey** and **supper**, organised Vince Hemingway. A tour of the Abbey looking at its associations with monasticism and the Battle. This will be followed by a two-course meal in the Refectory.

**Thursday 16 June: Lichfield**, led by John Harcup.

With guided tours of the Cathedral and the historic town, including the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum, Darwin House, the Georgian home of Charles Darwin's grandfather, Erasmus Darwin, a physician, scientist, botanist, inventor and poet, and the Heritage Centre.

**Thursday 30 June**, afternoon: **Hartlebury Castle** and the **Hurd Library**, organised by Virginia Wagstaff, led by the Friends of Hartlebury Castle; guided tour of the Library by Chris Penney.

Magnificent staterooms, Georgian Chapel and Bishop's House and nationally important Hurd Library, a very rare example of an 18<sup>th</sup>-century gentleman's library still in its original setting, with contemporary furniture, paintings etc. Tea will be provided after the visit.

**Tuesday 12 July: Much Wenlock** and **Buildwas**, led by Joe Hillaby

Aston Eyre church, with fine Romanesque tympanum; Much Wenlock Abbey, founded by St Mildburg c680, a Cluniac foundation of 1079; Buildwas Abbey, excellently preserved Cistercian buildings; hopefully, EH Atcham store to see original Much Wenlock lavabo & lectern.

**Tuesday 26 July: Wigmore**, led by Michael & Jenny Goode

A day visiting the prominent border Mortimer Castle and the Church in the morning, with a guided tour of the Abbey and grounds in the afternoon.

**Thursday 18 August**, evening: **Queenhill** and **Forthampton** churches, led by Tim Bridges Norman St Nicholas', Queenhill: fine medieval stained glass, rood screen and interesting features from Victorian restoration. St Mary's, Forthampton, rare medieval stone altar, memorials to the Yorke family, fascinating Victorian carving and stained glass by William Burges.

**Friday 9 September: Apethorpe**, Northamptonshire, led by Nicholas Molyneux

One of England's great country houses, subject of extensive repairs and research by EH, with a great sequence of state apartments. Expert guidance from EH Project Manager, Nick Hill.

**Isle of Man: Sunday 2 to Saturday 8 October 2011**

This trip is fully booked but Ernie is willing to add names to his waiting list in case people drop out.

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.co.uk by **1 September 2011**.



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