

The Mesolithic in the Malvern Hills

Rob Hedge

The Mesolithic period in Britain is the name given to the time between the end of the last Ice Age, c 6,000 BC, when Britain became separated from the continent due to rising sea level, and the beginnings of farming c 4300BC.

Few finds of this date from the Malverns have ever been published, although large scatters have been discovered through fieldwalking by local people and *Museums Worcestershire* hold the collections of WH Edwards, an early 20th-century museum curator and pioneer of lithic studies. Because of this the occupation of the Malvern Hills by Mesolithic hunter-gatherers is poorly understood and little-studied

This project is taking a new look at stone tools scattered across museums and private collections. The results will be published and will include learning resources to tell the story of the early inhabitants of this Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



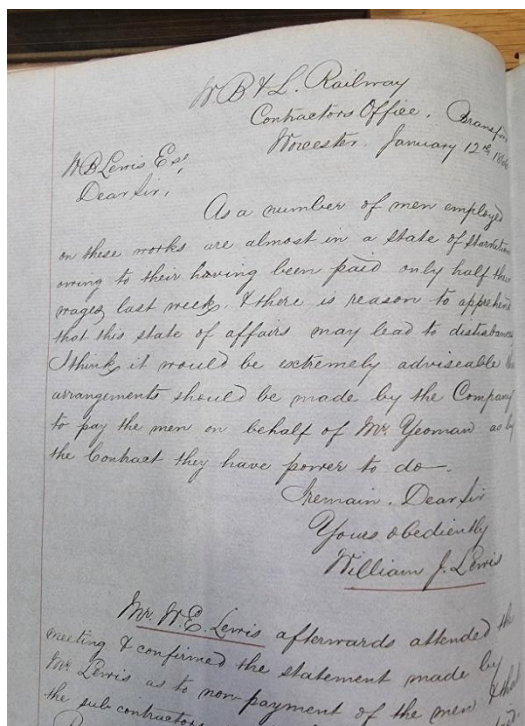
The Body on the Bromyard Line

Aidan Smyth and Emma Hancox

In 2021 human remains were unexpectedly discovered during construction works at River Lands Farm, Teme Lane, Leigh. The remains consisted of a single human skeleton buried within a railway embankment along the Worcester to Bromyard Line (built c.1864-66).

The skeleton was buried aligned north-south, face-down, with no associated artefacts. There was no evidence of a grave-cut, and the archaeological context indicates that the inhumation was likely deposited during the construction of the embankment, rather than dug in later.

The Raymer Research Grant is being used to fund analysis of dental samples for oxygen stable isotopic analysis to try to establish the origins and any possible evidence for migration for this individual as many low status railway construction workers are known to have been Irish or Romany in origin. The men were subjected to harsh treatment and “disturbances” were not uncommon as the letter from Mr Lewis implies.



“Dear Sir, As a number of men employed on these works are almost in a state of starvation owing to their having been paid only half their wages last week. There is reason to apprehend that this state of affairs may lead to disturbances. I think it would be extremely advisable that arrangements should be made by the Company to pay the men on behalf of Mr Yeoman as by the contract they have power to do.”

Roman coins from Worcestershire

Murray Andrews

In 2019 the Worcestershire Archaeological Society awarded a grant from the Garth Raymer Research Fund to Dr Murray Andrews (University of Oslo), to enable research into Roman coins found in Worcestershire. This project takes a two-pronged approach to ‘fill the gaps’ in our understanding of Roman coinage in the county: firstly, by recording undocumented finds held in museum and private collections, and, secondly, by producing synthetic archaeological and numismatic research based on a comprehensive corpus of all Roman coins found in the county by 2020. Despite disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, the grant has facilitated major new research into Roman coinage and archaeology in Worcestershire, including the publication of regionally significant coin assemblages from Bredon Hill and the Vale of Evesham, and a pioneering assessment of the numismatic evidence for a Conquest-era Roman fort at Worcester.



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Research Outputs

- Andrews, M., forthcoming ‘Roman coin hoards from Worcestershire’, in M. Andrews (ed) *Miscellanea Wignorniensia: Studies in Worcestershire Archaeology and History* for Robin Whittaker (Worcester: Worcestershire Archaeological Society)
- Andrews, M., in press ‘Roman coins from Bredon Hill and the Vale of Evesham in the Almonry Museum’, *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society* 3rd ser., 29.
- Andrews, M., 2022 ‘Coinage and Conquest: Numismatic Evidence for a Roman Military Presence at Worcester’, *Transactions of the Worcestershire Archaeological Society* 3rd ser., 28, pp. 51–60.
- Andrews, M., 2021 ‘Badsey Fields revisited: two more Roman coins from the A.E. Jones collection’, *Worcestershire Recorder* 104, p. 12.

Investigation of a probable Civil War bastion at Hartlebury Castle

Tim Cornah

A Raymer Grant was awarded to the project **Dig Hartlebury** to support a community excavation in the grounds of the Castle. The purpose of the trench was to test a crop mark identified in July 2022 which appeared to be characteristic of an English Civil War bastion. A substantial defensive ditch was found. This was 8.7m wide and around 3.4m deep with a flat base. This ditch would have run around a raised central triangular gun emplacement. On its exterior edge were three substantial postholes which were interpreted as forming a revetment for a sloping bank on top of which may have been a raised walkway or a fire step.

Finds were sparse but they included an unfired lead pistol ball and a clay pipe bowl with broken stem. Of particular importance was the discovery of a coin of James I.

The archaeological results were undoubtedly successful, though a key achievement was the enthusiastic response from all who visited.

