

# SHROPSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

# NEWSLETTER

No. 43, Spring 1997

Newsletter Editor: Hugh Hannaford, 42 North street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JJ  
Membership Secretary: Miss B Rose, Wayside, The Common, Bomere Heath, Shrewsbury, SY4 3LY

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS

#### Stirrings in Craven Arms

**STOKESAY (SO 4363 8175)** The guidebook to Stokesay Castle shows a picture of a medieval dovecot. The dovecot stood somewhere to the northeast of Stokesay church and some stonework is found when digging in the Garden of Remembrance. The Inquisition Post Mortem of Sir William de Ludlow recorded a dovecot in 1316 and Thomas Wright when he wrote his book about Ludlow and this area in 1824 said that the dovecot was taken down 'some years since'. It was a fine cylindrical building with a conical roof and similar to the one at Court Farm, Richard's Castle which is still extant. It is thought that the annular mound just over the present churchyard wall represents the foundations.

**STOKESAY/WHETTLETON (SO 4387 8220)** A green lane from Whettleton farm towards Stokesay Castle gives a clue to the whereabouts of the Domesday mill. Medieval paving and glass can be found on the bank of the river; some modifications to the river bed may have been carried out but the site needs thorough surveying. A small piece Niedermendig basaltic lava was found nearby, typical of some early medieval millstones.

**NEWTON, Upper Mill (SO 4383 8240)** Upstream of the Domesday site, where the mill leat started, old OS maps (1903, 1: 10000) record 'Weir, remains of' but the remains seem to be far more exciting than that statement implies. Paul Stamper (Shropshire Archaeology Service) and Kate Clark (English Heritage) spent their Bank Holiday Monday wading in cold water to record the measurements. English Heritage have agreed to fund a dendrochronological study of the timbers here and of the next item: samples were taken in September 1996 but the results are not known yet.

**NEWINGTON FARM (SO 4332 8366)** Further up the river Onny than the modern town of Craven Arms, by Newington Farm, three massive timbers have been found in the river bed. This is where the old coach road crossed on its way from Ludlow to Bishop's Castle. The green lane to the east of this bridge site has a medieval road surface under the silt and mud, and beneath that there may be evidence of where a Roman road ran (*see* A W J Houghton, *Trans.Shrop.Arch.Soc.* 56 (1960) pp.233-243). A bridge at 'Hancforde' is recorded in the Haughmond Abbey Cartulary for 1260-90 (items 821 and 823). Three trenches were dug in the lane in September 1996 and whilst there was plenty of evidence of several generations of engineered roads using graded limestone chips the underlying soil and any Roman road was not reached. The only datable find was a Charles II half-penny, dated 1675.

**A WATER MILL** In the Shropshire Records and Research archives there is an 1889 photograph, which came from the album of someone who used to live at Ticklerton, of a mill 'near Craven Arms'. Not much notice was taken of it until the very same mill turned up as a painting at the sale of Stokesay Court in 1994 but without its location or artist. A local informant then produced a picture showing Stokesay Castle in the background and the riddle was solved.

**MILESTONES** Renovating old milestones is much in fashion! One in Long Lane, the Bishop's Castle road (SO 4255 8375), has been rescued from the attentions of the flail cutter and a damaged one at Onibury near to the level crossing (SO 4523 7888) has been found after mowing. A third stone was found being used as a paving

stone in a garden at Newton and has been restored to its original site at the junction of Whettleton Lane and the A49, where the toll gate used to stand (SO 4395 8150).

**STOKESAY CASTLE PARK (SO 43 81)** A comparison of the description of Stokesay Castle land by the Commonwealth Commissioners in 1652, when Lord Craven forfeited his possessions because of his support for the Royalists, with the description of the regained estate done in 1772 by Matthias Baker, and the Tithe map of 1840 has enabled the extent of Stokesay Park to be defined. No longer is the green circle on Saxton's map of Shropshire (1577) a mere symbol: the park was about 110 ha, to the north west of the castle, and a perambulation of its perimeter can be made on public footpaths affording fine views of the Onny valley which is overlooked by Norton Camp and the Weo or View Edge, an ancient religious site. (You can walk: Castle pond - Paddock - Park Lane - Clapping Wicket - Stoke Wood - Castle pond).

**ALDON (SO 43 79)** On Church Way between Stokesay Church and Castle, and the earlier settlement at Aldon is a mound which may be an ancient lookout point or minor hill fort (SO 4353 8055). At Aldon are the tangible remains of the manorial dovecot, now adequately fenced in to preserve it (SO 4346 7948). In 1086 Aldon was almost as valuable as Stokesay but the site of its church has not been located yet - it had gone before the Reformation.

**WISTANSTOW (S043708430)** Across the River Onny from where The Grove, a large country house, once stood is a 20m square enclosure with a bank and deep ditch. It is south of where Berrymlil used to be. Could it be the 'burh' that gave its name to the nearby wood, mill and houses?

**TURNPIKES AND TOLLHOUSES** John Clarke is conducting a countywide survey of turnpike roads with their attendant tollhouses and milestones. He would be pleased to hear from others interested, to be given information and to see, or even copy, old photographs (Telephone 01588 676129).

**The Say Family** Robert de Sai, alias Picot, was Baron of Clun and his descendants gave their name to Stokesay which took over from Aldon as the main focus of settlement. Was Picot also the notorious Sheriff of Cambridge who was described by Ely Abbey as 'a hungry lion, a roving wolf, a crafty fox, a filthy pig, a shameless dog'? What a man to put in border country as a landlord and peacekeeper! History is being unravelled down by the Onny. There is more to Craven Arms than just a town of the railway age.

**Graham Berlyn, John Clarke and Harry Everitt**

## **SHREWSBURY URBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATABASE**

The Archaeology Service of Shropshire County Council is currently compiling an Urban Archaeological Database for Shrewsbury, on behalf of Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Council, with funding from English Heritage.

Amongst the thirty or so historic towns and cities preparing UADs, only in Shrewsbury has a substantial fieldwork element been part of the funded programme. This was undertaken between July and November 1996 and involved visits to cellars, buildings, and back yards in over two hundred properties in Shrewsbury town centre and Frankwell. Results have been in line with those of the 1995 pilot study in the High Street - Fish Street area (see Newsletter no 39, Spring 1995): about thirty previously unknown or hitherto poorly-located structures or fragments of structures (mainly cellars or retaining walls) of probable medieval date have been found, mapped, and briefly recorded, together with a further eighteen or so cellars of probable 16th - 17th-century date.

Cellarage thought to be of medieval date is principally identifiable from the use, underground, of high quality Grinshill sandstone ashlar work. Widespread re-use of medieval building materials in later centuries can be demonstrated: about eleven cellars wholly constructed of salvaged materials have been identified; additionally, fourteen buildings have been found to have medieval-type crested ridge-tiles on their roofs, but three of these buildings are certainly of 18th-century date. Particular attention has been paid to the location and fabric of retaining walls, in part to understand and help predict the presence or absence of archaeological deposits, in part to resolve 19th-century arguments concerning the town's medieval defences. The database will be completed in mid- 1997.

**Nigel Baker**

## **SHREWSBURY BLACKFRIARS, ST MARY'S WATER LANE**

In January 1996 a small-scale evaluation was undertaken on behalf of the site owners, Shropshire Homes Ltd. Three out of four trenches replicated the results of an evaluation undertaken on the site by BUFAU in 1989, which showed that very few stratified deposits had survived the demolition and levelling of the friary in the 16th and 17th centuries and subsequent extensive disturbance. However, the fourth 1996 trench revealed a small area of intact medieval mortar floor surface bounded on one side by a robbed masonry wall (probably for a timber-framed superstructure), sealed by friary demolition deposits. Two further evaluation trenches by BUFAU in

December 1996 demonstrated that this survival was exceptional, and confined to a single very small area.

**Nigel Baker**

## **News from the Wroxeter Hinterland Survey**

### **The Wroxeter Survey**

The geophysical survey programme continued in 1996 with the Ancient Monuments Laboratory concentrating on the large field in the north-west of the town and Geophysical Surveys of Bradford finishing the survey on the 'football field' behind Wroxeter Stores. The AM Lab survey found evidence for considerable industrial activity in their area including a 40m long dump of industrial waste or kiln debris in the town ditch. GSB also found some evidence for industrial activity. Within the village, the University of Liverpool looked at the fields adjacent to the southeast ramparts. The geophysical survey will be completed and written up during the course of 1997 due to the generosity of The Roman Research Trust's Special Award. Earthwork survey of the town circuit was carried out by RCHM(E) and will be completed within 1997. Evidence for trackways on the western, river-cliff, side of the town were mapped accurately for the first time giving hints of possible ancient routes down to the flood plain. David Pannett and Roger White also surveyed the river at Wroxeter in high summer looking for evidence of cutwaters, weirs and building stone marking possible riverine structures. The town and other areas of the hinterland were also surveyed using remote sensing instruments by the NERC survey aircraft which also took a series of high quality colour prints of the town.

### **Fieldwalking**

Over 300 hectares were covered in the final fieldwalking seasons of the project. Activity was concentrated in the north-west transect arm including substantial areas at Wroxeter (SJ5609, 5709) Berwick Wharf (SJ541 1), Huffley Bank (SJ4916), Walford (SJ4220 & 4320), and Baschurch (SJ4322) and smaller areas at Allfield (SJ5007), Atcham (SJ5309), Conover (SJ4805), Fitz (SJ4417), and Wykey (SJ3824).

Finds throughout these areas were sparse although fresh sherds of a Roman grey ware jar at Walford indicated a probable site here, further strengthening the suggestion that the modern road line is following the route of a Roman precursor. This possibility was strengthened by the work at Huffley Bank which produced a reasonable background scatter of Roman pottery but no concentrations. A similar pattern was observed at Berwick Wharf but here a sherd of Iron Age pottery and some Roman sherds adjacent to an enclosure suggest a date for this settlement. There was no pottery at Baschurch but a scatter of flint work suggests that the area was utilised in prehistoric times. Around Wroxeter, Roman pottery was found in considerable quantities within 500m of the town defences but rapidly tailed off beyond that point. Finds also included the base of a grey ware cremation urn adjacent to the Horseshoe lane and beads of Iron Age and Roman date. At Uckington, Roman and medieval pottery were found in some quantity suggesting that the site is a long-lived one. The investigations of possible villa sites at Allfield Farm and Grove Farm, Conover both proved negative, the only discovery being a burnt mound at Grove Farm. A proposed intensive survey of the immediate hinterland at Wroxeter in autumn had to be called off due to legal difficulties and so the last areas surveyed included the remainder of a field on the north-west side of Wroxeter (SJ558094) and the site at Upton Cressett (SJ6492, 6493). The Wroxeter survey located the ploughed out remains of an industrial site (probably an iron-working hearth) of late 1st - 2nd century date and, nearby, the probable remains of a building defined by a dense spread of tile and pottery measuring approximately 30m by 20m. Again, a second century date may be indicated. Both sites lay within 100m of the town's defences. At Upton Cressett, a dense concentration of Roman pottery and a few sherds of Iron Age pottery confirmed a major site here spreading over about 4ha. The area is apparently defined by a bank extending around the lower slope of the site perhaps suggesting that it is an enclosure although this has yet to be confirmed either by aerial photography or excavation and the intriguing possibility that this is an unenclosed site must not be ruled out. The quantity and quality of the pottery was unusual for Shropshire and there was in addition a background scatter throughout the 67 hectares surveyed indicating a classic manuring spread. Flint work of Mesolithic - Bronze Age date was also recovered.

### **Awards**

The success of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project has been recognised nationally through three awards made in 1996. These include the *British Telecom University Development Award* which funds work to develop computer-based teaching materials utilising the research of the VMP which will be available for students and the public alike. The *Roman Research Trust Special Award* has already been mentioned in the context of the geophysical survey work at Wroxeter and will enable this vital work to be completed. Finally, *The Queen's Anniversary Award for Higher and Further Education* is recognition of the very considerable educational and community work of the project.

**Roger White**

## PARISH REGISTERS

Since the revival of parish register publication the Society has published three small registers whose production costs were correspondingly small. These cheaply published registers have been distributed to members gratis. The production of a much larger register has begun with Bishop's Castle part 1, and production costs make it impossible to distribute this free. The Society's Council has accordingly decided that one copy will be available to each member at half the cost charged to non-members, which was fixed at production cost plus a small profit to the Society. The free distribution of the small early registers was decided upon partly to familiarise all members with this side of the Society's work on its resumption. The policy now adopted will be that for future registers. For further details, please contact George Baugh, c/o Shropshire Records and Research Centre, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, SY1 2AQ

## EVENTS

### Conferences and Day-schools

November 29th "**Recent Archaeological Work in Shropshire**" Saturday 29th November, 10.30am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Details and tickets from the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council, Information and Community Services, Winston Churchill Building, Radbrook Centre, Radbrook Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9BJ Tel. (01743) 254018

## TRAINING EXCAVATIONS

**Richard's Castle** (Hereford and Worcs). The Oxford University Dept. for Continuing Education is running a training school on the site of the castle and failed borough from 23rd to 31st August 1997. Cost £200 for 9 days. For further details, contact: Liz Miller, OUDCE, Rewley House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford, OX1 2JA.

**Fishbourne Roman Palace** (Sussex). The Sussex Archaeological Society is running training excavations at the Fishbourne Roman Palace between 14th July and 16th August 1997. Cost £180. For details, contact: 1997 Training Excavations, Fishbourne Roman Palace, Salthill Road, Fishbourne, Chichester, Sussex, PO19 3QR

**San Vincenzo** (Molise, Italy). The University of East Anglia is running 3 16-day training programmes linked with excavations on a late Roman agricultural settlement and an early medieval abbey complex between 1st June and 1st August 1997. Cost £520 - £540 per session. For further details, contact: Oliver Gilkes, The San Vincenzo Training Programme, University of East Anglia, World Art and Museology, Norwich, Norfolk, NR4 7TJ.

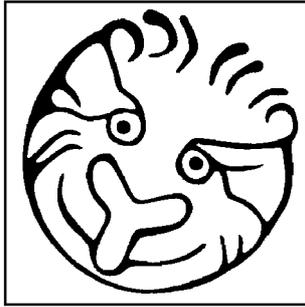
## OTHER NEWS

### Revision of the *Oxford English Dictionary*: you may be able to help.

Work is now in progress on a complete revision of the *Oxford English Dictionary*, and one of the most important aspects of this is the improvement of the range of the quotation evidence which illustrates the history and development of words. Often the existing quotation evidence can be antedated or postdated, or new evidence of the changing use of a word can be found.

The editors are concerned that a great deal of the research which has been and is being done on manuscript sources such as wills, inventories, accounts, letters, and diaries, and which is subsequently published, is not being brought to their attention. The period of greatest interest to us is that from about 1500 to 1900. but earlier and later evidence will also be welcome. A team of researchers has started work recently on extracting material from some sources of this kind, with very encouraging results.

If you are aware of any sources which you think might provide useful material, please contact the Call for Research Materials, Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford University Press, Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP, either by letter or by fax on 01865 267810, or by e-mail to oed3@oup.co.uk.



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No. 44, Autumn 1997

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### MEMBERSHIP NEWS

#### NEW SUBSCRIPTION RATES FROM JANUARY 1st 1998

At the AGM in September 1996 it was agreed that Subscription Rates should be increased to:  
£14 for individual members  
£15 for family \* and institutional members.

(\* Family membership is for two or more people living at the same address.) This is the first increase for 9 years and reflects increased printing and postage costs.

The new rates start on January 1st 1998. Please amend bankers orders! If any member would like to start paying by Banker's Order, please ask the Membership Secretary for the appropriate form.

40-50 members now covenant their subscriptions enabling the Society to increase the value of their annual payment by reclaiming the tax paid. If you would be prepared to start a covenant, please contact the Covenanting Secretary, Barry Sherratt, at Robin Hill, Old Churchstoke, Montgomery, Powys SY15 6DH.

### ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS

#### WAT'S DYKE, MAES-Y-CLAWDD, OSWESTRY

H Hannaford

In March 1996 sample excavations were carried out in advance of development on a section of the earthwork known as "Wat's Dyke" at Maes-y-Clawdd, Mile Oak, Oswestry.

Wat's Dyke is a linear earthwork which stretches intermittently for approximately 60km from the River Morda at Maesbury, near Oswestry, to the Dee Estuary at Holywell. The earthwork consists of a bank with a ditch on its west side, making full use where possible of the natural drainage and topography to present a barrier to the west. The function and even the dating of the Dyke is uncertain; it is usually held to be a boundary dyke, marking the frontier between the kingdom of Mercia and the Welsh lands to the west, and is thought to date to the 8th century AD, perhaps predating Offa's Dyke to its west.

The course of the Dyke was traced and described in the early 1930s (Fox, 1955); profiles recorded across the line of the Dyke in 1933 as part of this exercise show that the bank survived in the sampled areas to heights of between 0.6m near its junction with the River Morda and 1.4m near the Ruabon - Overton road in Ruabon (Denbighshire). At a height of 1m, the section of the bank at Maes-y-Clawdd compared well with the average of these samples (Fox, 1955, Fig. 116).

Wat's Dyke has been the subject of a number of archaeological interventions. Much of this work, however, remains unpublished. The largest-scale excavations on the Dyke in recent years took place in 1984-5 at Pentre Wern near Oswestry, in advance of the construction of the Oswestry Bypass. These showed that the ditch component of the Dyke at this point was 8m wide and up to 4m deep, with the bank surviving to a height of up to 0.35m and a width of about 7m (Cane, 1996).

The 1997 Maes-y-Clawdd excavations showed the ditch component of the Dyke to have been some 7.4m wide by about 2.3m deep. It appeared to have been allowed to gradually silt up, and the ditch fills were seen to be intact on excavation and uncompromised by later intrusions. No finds were recovered from the lowest fills of the ditch, and the earliest finds were recovered from the middle silts; these finds comprised a number of sherds of 13th-century pottery.

The upcast from the ditch had been used to create a bank immediately to the east of the ditch. The bank had been built onto the surface of a buried soil, at one point sealing a small hearth or fire site which lay directly on what would have been the old ground surface. This feature was sampled for radiocarbon dating, the results being expected in August of this year. The feature probably represented the site of a small cooking fire or bonfire and its location immediately beneath the bank suggest that it may have pre-dated the bank by only a very short space of time.

The bank itself was 10.2m wide, and although it survived to a height of c.0.8m, it was presumably originally considerably higher. The core of the bank seems to have been created from turf and topsoil removed from the line of the ditch, with the underlying natural clay and gravels placed on top and behind, to heighten and widen the structure. There was no evidence for any revetment of the bank, or berm between the bank and the ditch, nor was there any sign of a kerb along the eastern edge of the bank, as has been noted on other sections of the Dyke. The deposits which made up the bank produced a small quantity of residual Romano-British pottery.

**Cane, J**, 1996: "Excavations on Wat's Dyke at Pentre Wern, Shropshire in 1984/5", *TSAHS* LXXI, 1996, pp10-21

**Fox, Sir Cyril**, 1955: "Wat's Dyke: from the Dee to the Middle Severn (1934)" in *Offa's Dyke*, London

**Hannaford, H R**, 1992: *An Archaeological Assessment and Field Evaluation at Wat's Dyke, Pen-y-Cae Close, Gobowen, Shropshire*, Shropshire County Council, Archaeology Service Report No. 11

**Hannaford, H R**, 1997: *An Interim Report on Archaeological Excavations on Wat's Dyke at Maes-y-Clawdd, Oswestry*, Shropshire County Council, Archaeology Service Report No. 111

**Stanford, S C**, 1980, *The Archaeology of The Welsh Marches*, London

## **THE SHROPSHIRE MINES TRUST**

The Shropshire Mines Trust is a charitable trust set up in March 1996. Its aims are to preserve and interpret all aspects of Shropshire's mining industry.

Mining of coal, clay, metal ores and other rocks and minerals has taken place throughout the county. Mining has played a key role in shaping the landscape and economy of Shropshire. However, as with all archaeological features, the physical evidence for mining is under constant threat, either from various land reclamation schemes or simple neglect. The Mines Trust aims to ensure that mining archaeology is recorded and preserved where possible. Recently it has acquired the site of the Tankerville Lead Mine, near Shelve, where the pumping engine house, ore bins and other buildings are to be consolidated, followed by excavation to recover the original plan of the site. Whilst this is the chief project with which it is involved, it is also monitoring developments at other sites throughout the county.

Membership of the Mines Trust is open to all, cost £4 pa (individual). For further details of the Trust and its work, contact Adrian Pearce, 72, Hopkins Heath, Shawbirch, Telford, Shropshire, TF5 0LZ. See also details on the Internet at [wkweb4.cablnet.co.uk/adrian.pearce/INDEX.HTM](http://wkweb4.cablnet.co.uk/adrian.pearce/INDEX.HTM)

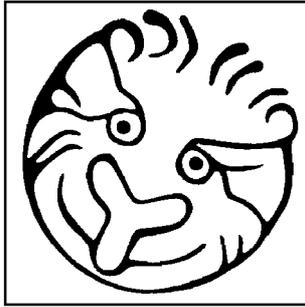
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## **BOOKS**

**Mary Richards** "*That Fine Hall*" *Shrewsbury Music Hall in Victorian Times*. 42pp, 27 illustrations; price £4.95. A useful and entertaining account of Shrewsbury's Music Hall between the years 1837 and 1901. The writer draws largely on material from the Shropshire Records and Research Centre, giving an account of the origins of the Music Hall as an institution and the activities and personalities seen there in the Victorian era.



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**No. 45, Spring 1998**

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Membership Secretary: Miss B Rose, Wayside, The Common, Bomere Heath, Shrewsbury,  
SY4 3LY

### **ARCHAEOLOGICAL NEWS**

#### **Wroxeter Hinterland Project**

There was little active fieldwork in this, the final year of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project. Work was limited to continuing the field survey of the site at Upton Cressett, near Bridgnorth, where a strong concentration of late Iron Age and early Roman pottery was detected, and to completing the survey of National Trust land north of Wroxeter. The latter survey produced a ploughed-out Romanized building marked by considerable quantities of tile and, nearby, a ploughed-out hearth associated with early Roman pottery and glass. This latter feature may have been an industrial site.

Two excavations took place. The first was the undergraduate and continuing studies training excavation run at Whitley Grange Roman villa. The poor weather meant that work was hindered but significant advances were made. The aim of this final season was to uncover the second half of the villa which it was realised lay to the south (uphill) of the area excavated last year.

As expected, the main or 'curtain' wall in blue sandstone that we had traced from the south-west corner of the bath house continued up the hill for an equal distance so that the mosaic room was centrally located behind it. We also found a second narrow rectangular room mirroring the similar room found last year. The total length of the curtain wall was thus 38m (roughly 130 Roman feet). It then turned eastwards, parallel to the bath house, extending for another 19m to a point level with the original end of the baths. There is some evidence for a covered walkway (portico) along the west and south sides of the courtyard. The curtain wall continued to the east before turning in a right-angle, whence it was traced on a north-south alignment for a further 28m where it linked up with features uncovered in the 1995 season, thus closing the courtyard.

In the west trench, there was evidence for a corridor leading from the south-west corner of the mosaic room and continuing out of excavated area, perhaps leading to the kitchens and/or servants quarters, or, alternatively, to a separate compound, as is seen so often in other villas.

Whitley villa 1995-7. Post-Roman occupation shaded.

Overlying the remains of the villa was evidence for post- or sub-Roman use. At the south-west corner of the villa, a rubble platform 7m by 3m with post-settings around its edge and a floor of beaten earth with plaster overlay the south-west corner of the compound. Fragments of box-tile in the platform suggest some of the material could have been derived from the baths, which scientific dating has shown was disused and robbed in the period between AD 420-520. We also found evidence for people living, or perhaps dumping their rubbish, in the south-east corner of the compound. Here, a hearth was overlain by a thick dump of tile containing lots of pottery, including riveted sherds of black-burnished ware showing that whoever was living here could not replace broken pottery with new vessels and had instead to rely on makeshift repairs, and animal bone.

The hearth we found last year in Room 5 was also re-examined and cleaned. In doing so, sherds of Shelly-tempered ware of late fourth or early fifth century date were located. These too may be associated with the sub-Roman use of the site.

As a result of the three-year excavation at Whitley Grange, a number of conclusions about the site may be drawn. The first is that it is largely a late complex. The mosaic and the west and south walls all date to the mid to late fourth century but we don't know how long the building remained in use. The baths were earlier, having three phases: an initial build, a refurbishment, and then disuse with robbing. It may be that the baths were built at the end of the third century, a date suggested by the pottery and earliest coins. If so, we have no evidence of residential buildings of an appropriate date to match the baths.

Second, we only have three 'residential' rooms, and the service corridor, all of which are dwarfed by the large bath house. Clearly, this is not a farm and we are perhaps more justified in thinking of Whitley villa as a 'weekend cottage'. It is, after all, only half a days journey from Wroxeter and is visible, but not accessible, from the main road which lies north of the Rea Brook. Such villas were very popular among the late Roman aristocracy, as shown by the poems of Ausonius (writing about the Mosel region in Germany) and the letters of Sidonius Apollinaris (in Aquitania). Both celebrate the pleasures of *otium*, the life of leisure (as opposed to *negotium*, the duties of town life), which involve the use of lavishly decorated bath houses, feasting, and hunting in the countryside.

Third, the post-Roman occupation on the site is an important confirmation that the settlement found in Wroxeter's town centre was not isolated to an urban situation and was mirrored in the countryside. Sites of the immediate post-Roman period are very difficult to identify in western Britain due to a paucity of securely dated artefacts and the identification of sub-Roman continuity on a late Roman villa site may provide a context for further research into this difficult period.

The second excavation was a small-scale investigation of the possibly early Roman military enclosure at Duncote Farm (SA45). This work was carried out at the request of the National Trust archaeologist for the Mercian region who was concerned to monitor the deterioration of this and other sites in the light of continued deep ploughing in Wroxeter's hinterland. The site had previously been investigated in 1975 when a double-ditch was found, inside of which were a number of possible structural features. The four trenches excavated in 1997 located the ditches on the west and east sides showing that the enclosure still survived. Nonetheless, some truncation was apparent since the topsoil had doubled in depth in the intervening 20 years and no internal features were found.

Within Wroxeter itself, geophysical work was concentrated on finishing the magnetometry map of the city, work which was funded by a special one-off grant from the Association for Roman Archaeology. The results of the survey have far exceeded expectations and considerable work remains to be done to interpret the resulting plots, although a provisional plot has been finalised. This has located significant elements within the city, such as a possible *mansio* (inn), temples, a cattle market, zones of pits and industrial features, and pre-Roman features including a possible Bronze Age barrow cemetery similar to a well-known complex at Cross Houses, 3 miles to the south-west, and two possible Iron Age farmsteads.

### **Wroxeter Hinterlands Survey**

Following the conclusion of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project, English Heritage agreed to fund a further three months fieldwork with three specific objectives: completion of the fieldwalking programme, evaluation of a possible villa site, and environmental sampling. The evaluation was carried out at Berwick Alkmund Park, north of Shrewsbury. The evaluation, which was preceded by extensive and intensive fieldwalking and a geophysical survey using gradiometry and resistivity, located a regular single-ditched enclosure in the north-east corner of which was a simple bath-house. Only the very lowest level of foundations of this building survived but the complete plan of one room, 3m by 2.5m in size, was recovered. More rooms were glimpsed to the north and these presumably represent a bath-house. The associated residential rooms were not located, the only other structural feature being a possible industrial hearth 30m west of the bath house. Three sections were cut across the enclosure ditch on the north, south and east sides. The southern section proved to have a very large assemblage of pottery and tile, the former of second to third century date and the latter including *tegulae mammatae* (ribbed tiles). These finds are of unusually early date for a villa site in Shropshire and show particularly precocious development at this site. Also in the same trench was a crudely sculpted stone carving, a simple figurine which was deposited face-down in the ditch fill when the buildings were demolished.

**Roger White**

## **Wat's Dyke**

In the last issue of the newsletter I reported on the recent excavations by the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council on a section of Wat's Dyke at Maes-y-Clawdd on the Mile Oak Industrial Estate, Oswestry. The excavations not only showed that both the bank and ditch components of the dyke at Maes-y-Clawdd were exceptionally well-preserved, but also found that the bank sealed an old land surface on which was the site of a small hearth. A sample of charcoal from the hearth was sent to Queen's University, Belfast, for radiocarbon dating. The results of the tests were received back in October last year, and gave a calibrated date for the hearth of AD 446 (ie between AD 411 and AD 561)

This radio-carbon date suggests a 5th-century date for the construction of Wat's Dyke, which perhaps now should be regarded as being contemporary with other great 5th century linear earthworks, such as the Wiltshire Wansdyke, rather than as a near-precursor to Offa's Dyke, and should be considered as an achievement of the post-Roman kingdom of the northern Cornovii rather than a work of 8th century Mercia.

**Hugh Hannaford**

## **MUSEUM NEWS**

Members will be pleased to hear that re-display of the archaeological collections at Rowley's House are now well underway. Stage one has seen significant change to the Wroxeter gallery, bringing several items into public gaze for the first time in decades. Work has also begun on a total revamp of the geology and pre-history galleries which will allow us to show, for the first time ever, the entire pre-history collections. The work is being supported by grant-aid from the Areas Museums Council The next financial year will see work on the Mediaeval and Tudor collections.

## **EVENTS**

### **Conferences and Day-schools**

**"Recent Archaeological Work in Shropshire"** Saturday 28th November, 10.30am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Details and tickets from the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council, Information and Community Services, Winston Churchill Building, Radbrook Centre, Radbrook Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9BJ Tel. (01743) 254018

**"Pots, People and Processes"** Friday 24th - Sunday 26th April 1998, at Stoke-on-Trent. A Joint Conference of the Northern Ceramic Society and the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology. For details, Times and Prices please contact David Barker, City Museum and Art Gallery, Bethesda Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3DE Tel. +44 (01782) 232500

## **Meetings**

### **Whitchurch History and Archaeology Group**

**Summer Visits.** Meet at site at 7.30pm. Phone (01948) 840 760 for directions.

21st May St Margaret's Church, Moreton Say, Martin Smith £1.00  
18th June Old Oswestry Hill Fort, Terry Betts £1.00  
16th July Bury Walls Hill Fort, Dr Roger White £1.00

### **Social Evening**

Thurs 11th June Pear Tree Farm, Norbury, Mary and George Perry 7.30pm

### **Coffee Morning**

Fri 3rd July Whitchurch Civic Centre 9.30 am - 12.00 noon Cakes, Bric-a-Brac, Plants, Draw

## Rowley's House Museum

### Friends of Shrewsbury Museums:

23rd April Dr Nigel Baker - Underground Shrewsbury

21st May Mike Stokes - Early Anglo-Saxon West Midlands

both at 7.30pm in Rowley's House -visitors and new members welcome.

### Shrewsbury & Shropshire Archaeological Reference Group:

Following a successful preliminary meeting at Rowley's House on 12th February, this Group will meet 2 - 3 times per year. It is intended to provide a professional forum for those who undertake any aspect of archaeology in this county, eg those units whose base lies further afield as well as 'in-house' workers. Future meetings will examine the effects of local government reorganisation and similar problem areas, and provide opportunities for general information exchange. Enquiries to Mike Stokes at Rowley's House Museum (01743 - 361196).

### Temporary Exhibitions:

14th March - 19th April: "The Chosen Letter" - examining letterforms and calligraphy from Past to present.

7th July - 31st August: "The Science of Museums" - the influence of science and technology on archaeology, conservation, documentation and visitor services.

30th May - 6th June: Archaeology Week West Midlands - a variety of lectures, displays and events to communicate archaeology to the community.

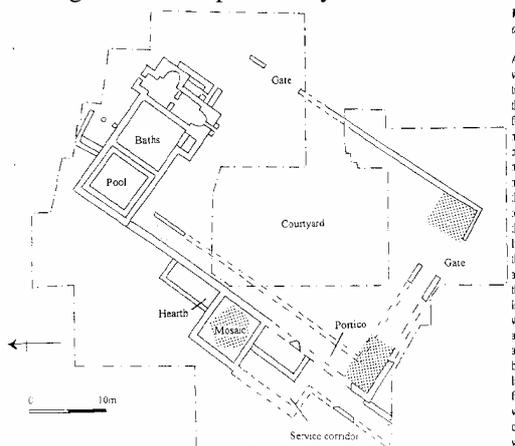
25th & 26th July: National Archaeology Day - open house for enquiries, identifications, advice on conservation from objects to buildings (25th July only).

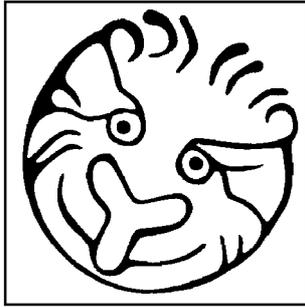
Members may also be interested to note that Phillips International Valuers hold monthly valuation advisory days on a variety of artistic, ceramic and other themes. These are on Thursdays from 12.00 - 4. 00pm at Shrewsbury Castle. Details of dates from Rowley's House

### Study Tours:

Mike Stokes will be leading two archaeological study tours on behalf of Filoxenia Tours, Sourdock Hill, Barkisland, Halifax HX4 OAG.

From 10th - 24th September: "Macedonia - in the footsteps of Alexander" will examine all the major sites (and some obscure ones!) and the superb museums of this wonderful area; and from 5th - 12th October: "Mycenae & the Argolid" - from pre-history to the breathtaking ruined city of Mistras.





# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY NEWSLETTER

No. 46, Autumn 1998

Newsletter Editor: Hugh Hannaford, 42 North Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JJ  
Membership Secretary: Miss B Rose, Wayside, The Common, Bomere Heath, Shrewsbury,  
SY4 3LY

## MEMBERSHIP NEWS

**WANTED!** : Volunteers to deliver copies of the Transactions in the Shrewsbury area - North, South, and Centre of the town. Please contact Brenda Rose, tel.: 01939 - 290778.

## ARCHAEOLOGY

**News from the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council.** A rescue excavation was carried out on a burnt mound which lay on the route of a Severn-Trent Water pipeline at **Rodway** on the Weald Moors. The excavations were part of a salvage recording exercise undertaken on the pipeline route on behalf of Severn Trent Water, who have also generously funded the radiocarbon dating of a sample from the burnt mound. **Bridgnorth's** medieval town ditch was seen to lie immediately beneath Moat Street during a watching brief on a housing development on the north side of the street. Investigations during building work at 2-3 Milk Street, **Shrewsbury**, revealed the remains of an early post-medieval sandstone cellar and a sequence of stratified deposits dating from the 13th century to the present time beneath the yards to the rear of the property. And the remains of a medieval sandstone building were recorded during a watching brief on work in the churchyard of St Michael's Church, **High Ercall**. The building may possibly have been the medieval dower house at the bottom of the gardens of High Ercall Hall, which William of Ercall V turned into a home for the chaplains of a chantry he founded in 1334.

**Hugh Hannaford**

## EVENTS

### Conferences and Day-schools

**Friends of Shropshire Records and Research** Annual Lecture (subject to be confirmed) 7.00pm  
Shropshire Records and Research Centre, Shrewsbury. Phone 01743 255350 for details. Advance booking essential.

**"Recent Archaeological Work in Shropshire"** Saturday 28th November, 10.30am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. For details see enclosed leaflet. Advance booking essential - tickets (£8.00) from the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council, Community and Economic Services, Winston Churchill Building, Radbrook Centre, Radbrook Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9BJ Tel.: 01743-254018

## Courses

**"Roman Britain in the Roman Empire"** with Geoffrey Toms. Saturday 10th and Sunday 11th October 1998, 10.30am - 5.15pm daily, at The Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Chester Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 1NB. Course fee £24.00. For further information, please telephone 01743-355159 / 361120 during office hours. Course no. W042.

**"Aphrodite's Island - 7,000 years of the life in Cyprus"** with Geoffrey Toms. Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th January 1999, 10.30am - 5.15pm daily, at The Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Chester Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 1NB. Course fee £24.00. For further information, please telephone 01743-355159 / 361120 during office hours. Course no. W043.

**"Sicily and Malta - their archaeology and history"** with Geoffrey Toms. Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th April 1999, 10.30am - 5.15pm daily, at The Gateway Education and Arts Centre, Chester Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 1NB. Course fee £24.00. For further information, please telephone 01743-355159 / 361120 during office hours. Course no. W044.

## Meetings

### Oswestry & Border History and Archaeology Group

**Hon. Sec.** Mr Gordon Hillier, The Smithy, Maesbrook, Oswestry, Shropshire SY10 8QW. Tel. 01691 682484

**Venue:** Oswestry Library, Arthur Street, Oswestry, at 7.45pm, *except March 12th at 7.30pm*. Visitors are always welcome

#### 1998

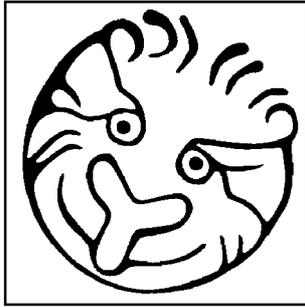
- 11th Sept. Recent Archaeological Work in the Midlands. Mr Andrew Josephs, Principal Archaeological Consultant, Entec (UK) Ltd, Shrewsbury
- 9th Oct. Historic Landscape Characterisation in the Tanat Valley. Mr W J Britnell, Director, Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust
- 13th Nov. The North West Wetlands Survey (Shropshire/Staffordshire). Mr Mark Leah, Cotswold Archaeological Trust
- 11th Dec. Some Aspects of Mining in East Denbighshire. Mr D Pratt

#### 1999

- 8th Jan. Farming and Farm Buildings of Montgomeryshire. Dr Melvin Humphreys
- 12th Feb. Snailbeach Lead Mines and their Buildings. Colin Richards, Conservation Officer, South Shropshire District Council
- 12th March Annual General Meeting and Presidential Address. Dr Paul Stamper, English Heritage
- 9th April Britons, Angles, and Saxons - "Who was Who in the West Midlands". Mr Mike Stokes, Keeper of Archaeology, Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury

## Field Meetings

20th Sept. "Archaeology of Bishop's Castle Motte & Bailey Castle" led by Emma-Kate Burns, Curator of Archaeology, Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council. Meet 3.30pm, Sunday 20th September 1998, at the Market Square, Bishop's Castle. Price £1.00. (A Shropshire Hills Countryside Unit event.)



# SHROPSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

# NEWSLETTER

**No. 47, Spring 1999**

Newsletter Editor: Hugh Hannaford, 42 North Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JJ  
Membership Secretary: Miss B Rose, Wayside, The Common, Bomere Heath, Shrewsbury, SY4 3LY

## NEWS

### **The Council for British Archaeology - West Midlands**

At the last AGM held in Hereford, three changes in the executive committee took place. The new Chairman is Mike Hodder, Birmingham Planning Archaeologist; Vice-Chairman is John Hunt of the WEA and the new Secretary is Mike Stokes of Shrewsbury Museums. Although we can be contacted via our respective workplaces, we all serve in a personal capacity not as representatives of any particular authority and are pleased to offer help or support to those with concerns for the archaeology/ heritage of the area.

Membership of CBA West Midlands costs only £6.00 per year and entitles members to receive a biennial Newsletter; a copy of '**West Midlands Archaeology**', the annual volume recording archaeological work in the area; an afternoon guided visit to a site or town with free entry etc following the summer AGM; and significant reductions (worth more than the annual subscription!) to two or more major archaeological dayschools held each year in conjunction with the University of Birmingham.

Applications for membership to John Haslam, 32, Turner Road, Chapelfields, Coventry CV5 8FI, enclosing cheque/P.O. made payable to 'CBA West Midlands.'

This year's CBA West Midlands AGM will be held on June 19th in Lichfield Cathedral and will be followed by a guided tour of the historic core of the city by Bob Meeson.

### **Selattyn Hill, Oswestry**

Selattyn Hill is situated about 5km northwest of Oswestry in northwest Shropshire. The hill is an outcrop of carboniferous limestone and millstone grit, rising to 372m above sea level and giving extensive views across northeast Wales and Cheshire (and beyond), and east to southeast Shropshire. On the summit of the hill there is a Bronze Age ring cairn (SMR no. SA347), which was partially excavated in the 19th century when a folly or belvedere in the form of a square tower was erected.

The cairn on Selattyn Hill appears to be a typical example of an early Bronze Age ring-cairn, comprising a low, stone bank c. 22 metres in diameter, enclosing a flat open area. A gap in the bank on the southwest side of the cairn may be an original entranceway into the cairn or may be partly or entirely the result of later degradation.

In 1847, a belvedere tower was erected on Selattyn Hill by a Mr Crewe of Pentrepat to commemorate Prince Gwên, one of the sons of Llywarch Hen, a sixth century British prince, who, according to legend, was killed in a battle between the British and Saxons near to the Morlas Brook, which runs c. 0.5km to the north of the hill. The tower was erected within the ring cairn, just to the south of its centre, and it was (presumably) during the construction of the tower that an urn containing human remains was found (OS 1:2500 1st edition).

There is one near-contemporary written account of the find. Two miles west of Selattyn, at Yr Orsedd Wen in Denbighshire on the west side of Offa's Dyke, another barrow was excavated in 1850 by W Wynne Ffoulkes, and found to contain the skeleton of a man 6'2" tall, whose body had been covered in charcoal and then encased in clay. The remains of a bronze dagger were found with the inhumation, and two small fragments of iron were found within the cairn above the burial. The excavator identified the barrow with the burial place of Gwên. In his

account of the excavations, Wynne Ffoulkes contrasts the inhumation burial at Yr Orsedd Wen with that at Selattyn: " a *carn*, composed entirely of stone, situated on an eminence of Selattyn mountain, about half-a-mile or rather more to the southeast...In the *carn* twelve urns, each containing burnt bones, were discovered..." (Wynne Ffoulkes, 1851, 12). This is almost certainly the cairn on top of Selattyn Hill (despite the fact that it is northeast not southeast of the Orseddwen barrow). It is possible that a more detailed excavation of the Selattyn Hill cairn was undertaken, although if so, no records or account of the excavations appear to survive.

In 1853 the bronze dagger and two fragments (?of iron or pottery) from the tumulus at Orsedd were in the possession of W. Ormsby Gore Esq., M.P., and were temporarily exhibited at Hengwrt Library (Arch. Camb., 1854, 251-2), and for a while an urn from Orsedd (probably one of the urns from the Selattyn Hill cairn, as none were apparently found at Orsedd) was on display in the Museum at Ruthin (Arch. Camb., 1854, 238), although today the whereabouts of the finds from either of the excavations is unknown.

During the early part of the present century, the tower fell into disrepair, and the roof collapsed. Despite the ruinous state of the tower, it was used in World War II as a look-out post by members of the Local Defence Force Volunteers. In the early 1970s, the landscape of Selattyn Hill changed dramatically when the entire hilltop was ploughed and planted with conifers, and the ruins of the tower and the cairn were gradually lost from view amongst the maturing trees.

In 1997 the cairn and tower were rediscovered by members of a local group, the Selattyn Village Project Group, and in June 1998, this group, together with the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council, carried out a survey and evaluation of the site as precursor to a possible programme of repairs to the tower. Trees, saplings and scrub were cut down and removed from around the perimeter of the ring cairn, and scrub was then removed from the cairn bank and from within the cairn itself, and a tape-survey was made of the monument.

Three small evaluation trenches were also excavated across the cairn bank and within the interior of the cairn. These revealed that the cairn consisted of a spread of rounded boulders resting on the surface of a light grey sandy subsoil, surrounded by a low bank, also of large rounded boulders. The boulders were almost certainly loose, weathered material gathered from the surrounding hilltop and the size of some of them suggests that they had probably not been gathered from any great distance. A few fragments of late Neolithic or early Bronze Age pottery and burnt bone were recovered from amongst the boulders near the centre of the cairn, and whilst these provided confirmation of the prehistoric origins of the monument, they probably represented debris from the 1847 excavations on the cairn. A sequence of deposits associated with the life and decay of the tower was also identified.

The Selattyn Village Project Group has also been re-instating and marking the footpaths to the top of the hill, and the cairn and tower are now accessible once more.

References: Arch. Camb. vol. V, new series, 1854, 238 & 251-2; Grinsell, L V, 1984: *Barrows in England and Wales*, Ayelsbury; Hannaford, H R, 1998: *An Archaeological Evaluation of a Bronze Age Ring Cairn on Selattyn Hill, Shropshire*, Shropshire County Council Archaeology Service Report no. 146; Ordnance Survey 1882: 1:2500 1st Edition, Shropshire Sheet Nos. XI.8 and XII.5; Wynne Ffoulkes, W, 1851: "*Tumulus, Gorsedd Wen*", Arch. Camb. vol II, new series, 1851, 9-19

H Hannaford

## **Shrewsbury Museums Service**

### **Changing Displays**

Work on changing the archaeology displays in Rowley's House is now virtually complete, meaning that more items from the collections are now displayed than ever before.

### **Friends of the Museum Lecture Programme**

Members are welcome to join the Friends or to attend lectures as guests (small donation appreciated). Remaining lectures this season are: Wroxeter Project - latest developments by Roger White on April 22nd; and The Regimental Museum by Peter Duckers on June 3rd. All are held at Rowley's House Museum at 7.30pm.

### **Events in the Museums**

March 16th - May 1st : "A celebration of Tibet" an exhibition of images and objects from a nation under threat.

## EVENTS

### Conferences, Dayschools, and Lectures

**The Herefordshire School of Sculpture** Saturday 22nd May 1999. A dayschool on this important regional school of sculpture will be held at the University of Birmingham, Arts Building. Speakers will be Dr Ron Baxter and Hazel Gardiner from the Corpus of Romanesque Sculpture in Britain and Ireland; Professor George Zarnecki, probably the greatest living expert in the field; Professor Malcolm Thurby of York University, Toronto, whose book on the school will be launched in April and Dr John Hunt of the Institute for advanced research at the University of Birmingham. This is a unique opportunity to hear the results of the latest research into the field. Details from the School of Continuing Studies, University of Birmingham (leaflets at the Museum and at the Gateway).

**"Recent Archaeological Work in Shropshire"** Saturday 27th November 1999, 10.30am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Further details, programme and booking form will be included with the Autumn Newsletter.

**The Graham Webster Lecture** Saturday 23rd October, at the University of Birmingham, Arts Building. This year's lecture will focus on "Rescue", it being 25 years since the publication of the volume edited by Philip Rahtz.

### Meetings

#### Whitchurch History and Archaeology Group

**Chairman** Mrs Mary Perry (01948) 663742 **Programme Secretary** Mrs Joan Barton (01948) 840760

**Summer Visits 1999** Meet at site at 7.30pm. Phone (01948) 840760 for directions or lifts

20th May. The Battle of Blore Heath (nr Market Drayton); Mr Graham Clarke. Cost - £1.00

17th June Atcham Church; Mr R Jones. Berrington Church; Mr D F Williams. Cost £1.00

24th June MIDSUMMER SOCIAL EVENING - with Steam Trains - Spring Hill, Heath Lane, Marbury; by kind invitation of Mr & Mrs C Taylor-Nobbs

2nd July (Friday) COFFEE MORNING, Whitchurch Civic Centre, 9.30am - 12.00 noon

15th July (Friday) Wroxeter Gallery, Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury; Mr Michael Stokes. Cost £2.00

#### Archaeology Walks: Summer 1999

On Thursday evenings during June and July, the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council, will be running a series of guided walks to a variety of archaeological sites and historic monuments in the county. Each walk will start at 7.30 pm and last for approximately 1 hour 30 minutes. No advance booking necessary; pay on the day. The price will be £2.50 per person, per walk.

3rd June CLUN CASTLE - meet at car park by Clun Bridge

10th June MITCHELL'S FOLD STONE CIRCLE - meet at car park, Stapeley Hill (OS ref SO 302 980)

17th June SNAILBEACH LEAD MINE - meet at car park, Snailbeach Village Hall

24th June WHITE LADIES PRIORY - meet at car park near monument (OS ref SJ 826 076)

1st July LILLESHELL ABBEY - meet at the Abbey

8th July MEDIEVAL CRAVEN ARMS - meet at car park Craven Arms Library

15th July MUCH WENLOCK PRIORY - meet at the Priory (English Heritage members free of charge)

22nd July OFFA'S DYKE - meet at road/track junction on Llanfair Hill (OS ref SO 250 797)

#### Study Tours

Mike Stokes will be leading a number of archaeological study tours this year:

1. April 27th - May 4th **Mycenacan and Classical Greece**

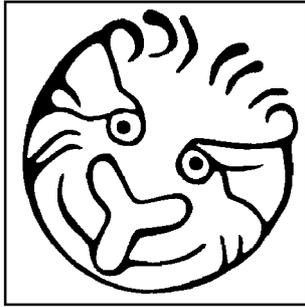
2. June 14th - June 24th **Macedonia**

3. September 10th - 24th **Macedonia**

4. October 4th - 11th **Mycenaeen and Classical Greece**

All dates inclusive

These study tours are led by Mike Stokes, Museums Archaeologist for Shrewsbury Museums' Service. Details can be obtained from Mike Stokes or from Filoxenia, Sourdock Hill, Barkisland, Halifax HX4 OAG. Tel.: 01422 371796.



# SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY NEWSLETTER

**No. 48, Autumn 1999**

Newsletter Editor: Hugh Hannaford, 42 North Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JJ  
Hon. Membership Secretary: Tim Trown, 21 Old Coppice, Lyth Bank, Shrewsbury, SY3 0BP

## NEWS

Brenda Rose has stepped down as the Society's Membership Secretary after serving in this role for the last seven years. Brenda's sterling work for the Society over this time is much appreciated, and I'm sure we'd all like to offer her many thanks. And may I, on behalf of newsletter readers, take this opportunity also to extend a warm welcome to Mr Tim Trown, who has taken over as our new Hon. Membership Secretary. (ed)

## The Treasure Act 1996

In September 1997 the new Treasure Act was introduced to England and Wales. The Act replaced the old common law of treasure trove which had many failings as a tool to record and preserve archaeological finds. Firstly, the new Act gives a clear definition of treasure and removes the need to prove that an object was intentionally buried. This new definition of treasure covers any object which is 300 years or more old and contains at least 10% precious metal, all groups of 10 or more coins which were buried together and which are more than 300 years old and any object found in association with an item of treasure.

The new Act has also made it a legal requirement to report finds which are thought to be treasure within 14 days to the District Coroner. Failure to report a find can now lead to imprisonment or a fine of up to £5,000. A network of Advisers has also been established to provide archaeological advice to each Coroner. The local arrangements for Shropshire are described below.

Every year hundreds of thousands of archaeological objects are discovered, mostly by people using metal detectors but also by people out walking, digging in their gardens or simply going about their work. Only a small proportion of these finds are ever seen by a museum or field archaeologists. This means that a great deal of potentially important information about the past is being lost. Therefore, The Department of Culture, Media and Sport also took the introduction of the new Treasure Act as an opportunity to address the recording of archaeological finds which are not covered by the revised treasure definition. A number of pilot voluntary reporting schemes were introduced across the county. The liaison officers employed by the scheme have worked hard to improve relations between archaeologists and museum curators and metal detectorists. They have also publicised the need to record archaeological finds and offered the public a Finds Identification and Advice Service. Although Shropshire has not been part of this pilot scheme 1,429 finds were recorded in northern Worcestershire, northern Warwickshire and southern Staffordshire between October 1997 and September 1998. It is hoped that lottery funding will allow this scheme to be introduced nation-wide in the near future. In the meantime, both the County and Borough Museum Service's continue to offer a Finds Recording and Identification Service.

**Telford & Wrekin Coroner's District:** M.T. Gwynne, Police Station, Wellington, Telford, Shropshire (01952-256464); Adviser on Treasure: Ironbridge Gorge Museum (01952 432237)

**Mid and North Shropshire Coroner's District:** R.D. Crawford-Clarke, West Merica Constabulary Police HQ, Clive Road, Monkmoor, Shrewsbury (01743-264711); Adviser on Treasure: Shrewsbury & Atcham Borough Museum Service (01743-361196)

*South Shropshire Coroner's District*: A.F.T. Sibcy, 18 Broad Street, Ludlow, Shropshire (01584-873918);  
Adviser on Treasure: Shropshire County Museum Service (01743-254009)

**Emma-Kate Burns, Curator of Archaeology, Shropshire County Council**

## **Shrewsbury Museums Service Programme to December 1999**

### **Exhibitions:**

'**Gone to Earth**' continues until September 5th at Rowley's House Museum.

The **Shropshire Mammoth** September 11th - November 6th at Rowley's House Museum. (courtesy of the Shropshire County Museums Service)

**Pictures from the Collections** and Craftwork : November 20th - December 18th at Rowley's House Museum

### **Clive House Museum**

Members will be aware that there has been some doubt over the future of Clive House Museum. Recreation and Leisure Committee (Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council) are recommending to Full Council that the Museum be closed to the public from October 1999, but that it will be retained pro. tem. for storage and other functions, and as an 'asset' for the future. Any decision regarding its disposal will take place in the light of the full review of the Museum Service's operations which is currently underway. Elements of displays, currently at Clive House, will be moved to appropriate galleries in Rowley's House in due course.

### **Three Seventeenth Century Portraits**

Thanks to grant aid from the Victoria and Albert Museum and the generosity of the Friends of Shrewsbury Museums, through public appeal, we have been able to acquire portraits of Thomas Jones, first Mayor of Shrewsbury, named as such in the charter of Charles I, 1638, and his wife. These were painted in 1615, perhaps on their betrothal. We have also been able to purchase a slightly later portrait of Thomas Parr, Shropshire's oldest man. These are currently being conserved and will be displayed at Rowley's House later in the year, We are grateful to all those who contributed to this.

### **Giant Irish Deer on the move!**

Some members will be aware of the fine set of antlers of this beast that hung in Vaughan's Mansion (now part of the Shrewsbury Music Hall). Donated to the Museum in the late 1880's, these have now been moved to the new Geology gallery of Rowley's House Museum where they will be mounted after cleaning and conservation work by Michael Eastham who has worked in the past on the great Forum Inscription from Wroxeter and on the carved panels of Shrewsbury Abbey Pulpit after it was vandalised in late 1995. Over 20,000 years old, these creatures were extinct long before the Shropshire mammoths met their end at Condover!

**Mike Stokes, Museums Archaeologist, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council**

## **EVENTS**

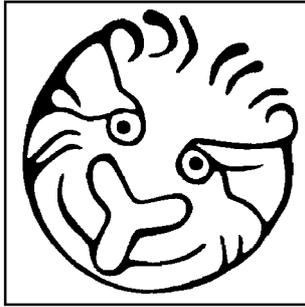
### **Conferences, Dayschools, and Lectures**

**The Graham Webster Lecture:** Dr David Thackray on **Archaeology and the National Trust**. Saturday 16th October 1999, at the Arts Building Lecture Theatre, University of Birmingham. Free public meeting.

**The Charles Darwin Millenium Lecture:** October 17th at 2.30p.m. in the Music Hall by Steve Jones, Professor of Genetics at London University asking the question: "Is Evolution Over?"

"**The Archaeology of Letocetum (Wall)**", November 6th, CBA Dayschool, Arts Lecture Theatre, University of Birmingham. Bookings to School of Continuing Studies, PO Box 363, Birmingham B15 2TT

"**Recent Archaeological Work in Shropshire**" Saturday 27th November 1999, 10.30am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Further details, programme and booking form will be included with the Autumn Newsletter.



# SHROPSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

# NEWSLETTER

No. 49, Spring 2000

Newsletter Editor: Hugh Hannaford, 42 North Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JJ  
Hon. Membership Secretary: Tim Trown, 21 Old Coppice, Lyth Bank, Shrewsbury, SY3 0BP

\* \* \*

*In the last issue of the Newsletter, Emma-Kate Burns, Curator of Archaeology, Shropshire County Council, gave us an introduction to the new Treasure Act. In this issue, Mike Stokes, Museums Archaeologist, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council, tells us about some of the results of the new act.*

**The Internet:** *The Society's Council is currently looking into putting together a Web site for the Society, and would be very grateful to hear from any member with Internet access who might be willing to host a site on behalf of the Society.*

\* \* \*

### TREASURE ITEMS

A number of exciting items have recently come before the Shrewsbury Coroner and Shrewsbury Museums Service. Full reports on these will appear in the Transactions in due course but members might be interested to hear that a silver ring found near Albright Hussey and inscribed WELIAM:BA - probably William Bannister, owner of the Hussey in the late 13th/early 14th centuries - has been declared Treasure and valued by the Valuation Committee at £800. A fine gold and ruby ring of the mid 14th century from The Isle at Bicton is yet to be considered by the Coroner but is likely (if found to be Treasure) to be valued at over £2000, and two fine, silver 9th-century Trewhiddle-style strap ends from Frodesley are likely to require a similar price. Two other items shortly to be examined at a Treasure hearing are small silver ingots of 10th-century type (such as those found in the Cuerdale hoard in Cumbria), found near Clive; these are the first such items to be recognised in the county.

As an important codicil to these exciting items, which we hope will soon reside in the Museum or in the County Museum in the case of the ingots, is that it is very clear that the valuations being placed on items of Treasure under the 1996 Act are increasing at an alarming rate. Whilst it is of course inherently fair that finders should receive the market price for their artefacts and for having reported them in accordance with the Act, there are worrying implications for museums who have to fund their purchase. British Museum staff have indicated that they are now having to deal with over three times as many treasure enquiries as before the Act, a fact that will inevitably filter down to provincial museums in due course. We are also seeing an enormous increase in the general reporting of finds through the Portable Antiquities Reporting schemes.

In contrast to the boom in discovery is the stagnation in provision of funding through not only the local authority purse, for obvious reasons, but particularly through the national grant-giving bodies such as the Victoria and Albert Museum, who at the time of writing (March

2000) have no idea yet what if any funds they will have to support us from April, only a few days away! We should take every opportunity to lobby the appropriate government departments to make sure that this does not become a self-defeating situation, whereby museums are no longer able to acquire items due to lack of funds, thus putting the objects straight back onto the open market - the very thing the Treasure Act was designed to avoid!

**Mike Stokes**

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## **OBITUARIES**

John Shipley Clarke, 1933-2000

John studied at Oxford University, gaining a good degree. Later he taught Chemistry at Alleyns School, Dulwich, where he also led a Scout Group. John retired to south Shropshire where he was a founder member of the Craven Arms Historical Society. In 1981 he joined this Society, and in 1997 an article of his on the subject of "*The Manor of Stokesay and its Park*" was published in our *Transactions*. He was to become our treasurer, but unhappily suffered a heart attack and was told to cut down on his commitments, and so concentrated on local history studies. He underwent a triple heart bypass operation which improved his health for a while. In January 1997 he was awarded an MA in English Local History by Leicester University.

For several years John was a churchwarden, and later the treasurer, of St John the Baptist Church, Stokesay. He was co-author of a guide to that church, and he also wrote a guide to nearby Halford Church.

Because of deteriorating health he gave up practical local history and archaeology, but continued to write. Latterly he was revising a 1993 history of Craven Arms. This is now being completed by another member of Craven Arms Historical Society.

John was a respected and good friend to all who knew him. He will certainly be missed.

**Graham Berlyn**

Roger Bassett

We regret to announce the death of Roger Bassett, a long-time member and loyal supporter of the Society who died on 6th December 1999 at the Mid Wales Hospice, aged 79 years. Roger had a distinguished career, but was always a very modest man and beyond recording his military rank as captain in the South Staffs Regiment and his achievement in co-founding the Somaliland Scouts he did not wish for further tributes. He leaves a widow, Nyria, three sons, Stephen, Jeremy, and James, and two grandchildren.

**Madge Moran**

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## **EVENTS: Conferences, Dayschools and Lectures, Meetings and Events Shrewsbury Museums Service Events in 2000**

Currently on display in the Exhibitions gallery at Rowley's House Museum is 'Unseen Stories', a stimulating and provocative response to the Ditherington flax mill by international artist Terry Smith. This ends on April 14th.

From 20th June to July 30th, the same gallery will house an exhibition of early 'Icons of the Orthodox Church', all from private collections, many of them from Germany, curated by specialist Nicholas Thon. This is part of the Orthodox Christian Millennium festival, which also includes exhibitions of modern icons at the Bear Steps Gallery and the Gateway Centre (further information on 01939-291078).

National Archaeology Days on July 22nd and 23rd will celebrate "the Maths of Money" as part of the current National Maths year activities and will draw on the museum's collections of coins and tokens from Ancient Greece to the present.

Last, but not least, an early warning and appeal. From September 16th to December 16th will be a show entitled 'I know what I like!', a major display of collections both serious and light-hearted belonging to local people. Any member who has a collection of items of any type, which they would like to share with the rest of us for a while, should phone Mary White on 01743-361196 for details.

**Friends of Shrewsbury Museums** have two lectures left of their season, on April 11th, Furniture restoration will be the subject, whilst after the AGM on May 23rd, the subject will be Treasure and Portable Antiquities, with lecture and discussion by Mike Stokes and Angie Bolton, West Midlands Portable Antiquities Officer.

**Study Tours:** Mike Stokes is leading a number of study tours to various parts of Greece during summer and autumn 2000 - these need only a small number of people to make them viable which means that we can use minibuses to get around - and hence get to sites which are otherwise impossible to reach - details from Filoxenia (the tour operators) on 01422-371796.  
**Mike Stokes, Museums Archaeologist, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council**

#### **Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council**

**Events** (*For details, contact Emma-Kate Burns, Curator of Archaeology, on 01743-254009*)

- 31st May Archaeology Activity Session: Roman Villas. Hands-on activities and exhibition looking at life on a Roman villa. Acton Scott Working Farm Museum (Archaeology Service/ County Museum Service joint activity)
- 22nd July & 23rd July National Archaeology Days: Rebuilding the Past. Storytelling with medieval artefacts and medieval art workshop. Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms / Stokesay Castle.
- 3rd August Archaeology Activity Session: PARATE.OPPERITE.COCITE. Hands-on activities looking at Roman cooking. Acton Scott Working Farm Museum. (Archaeology Service/ County Museum Service joint activity)

#### **Archaeology Walks: Summer 2000**

On Thursday evenings during June and July, the Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council, will be running a series of guided walks to a variety of archaeological sites and historic monuments in the county. Each walk will start at 7.30 pm and last for approximately 1 hour 30 minutes. No advance booking necessary; pay on the day. The price will be £2.50 per person, per walk.

- 1st June ELLESMERE (meet at Meres Visitor Centre, Ellesmere, OS map ref SJ 405 347)
- 8th June LLANYMYNECH HILL (meet at car park immediately before entrance to Golf Course, OS map ref SJ 267 220)
- 15th June HANWOOD (meet at St Thomas' Church, Hanwood, OS map ref SJ 443 096)
- 22nd June MORE (meet at St Peter's Church, More, OS map ref SO 343 915)
- 29th June NORDY BANK (meet at car park alongside minor road to Cockshutford, OS map ref SO 572 850)
- 6th July EDGMOND and LONGFORD (meet at St Peter's Church, Edgmond, OS map ref SJ 720 193)
- 13th July QUATFORD (meet at St Mary's Church, Quatford, OS map ref SO 739 907)

20th July TITTERSTONE CLEE (meet at car-parking area in former quarry, OS map ref SO 593 776)

### **Dayschool**

**"Recent Archaeological Work in Shropshire"** Saturday 25th November 2000, 10.30am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Further details, programme and booking form will be included with the Autumn Newsletter.

### **Council for British Archaeology - West Midlands**

Saturday April 8th at 2.00pm. The (re-arranged from 1999) Graham Webster Lecture - given by Dr David Thackray, Director of Archaeology for the National Trust, on the implications of archaeology in the Trust's care of its monuments, followed by Phil Bethell who will deliver a case study of his work for the Trust at Chedworth Roman Villa. Admission is free to all. Venue: Arts Lecture Theatre, University of Birmingham.

Saturday June 17th 2.00pm. The Annual General Meeting of the group takes place in Rowley's House Museum, followed by a short talk and visit to discuss recent work in the town. Admission free. This is the first local event in Archaeology Week West Midlands - details from Peter Leather at 0121-4145597 in early June.

Saturday July 1st. The Crusaders and their world. A dayschool in the University of Birmingham. Four leading specialists will discuss the ideals and motivations of the crusaders; recent published research at Belmont Castle; Jerusalem at the time of the Crusades; and art and sculpture in the Holy Land. (One of the speakers is actually flying in from Jerusalem especially! Details from Continuing Studies on 0121-4145606

Dates for your diary: Saturday October 14th: The Graham Webster Lecture & Saturday November 4th: a dayschool on the archaeology of the landscape. Details available in September from Mike Stokes.

**Mike Stokes, Museums Archaeologist, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council**

### **Whitchurch History and Archaeology Group**

**Chairman** Mrs Mary Perry (01948) 663742 **Programme Secretary** Mrs Joan Barton (01948) 840760

### **Meetings**

20th April "The History of Horn", Paula Hardwick, collector of horn antiques. Joint meeting with Audlem Historical Society and the Malpas Field Club. At the Civic Centre, Whitchurch, 7.30pm

**Summer Visits 2000** Meet at site at 7.30pm. Phone (01948) 840760 for directions or lifts

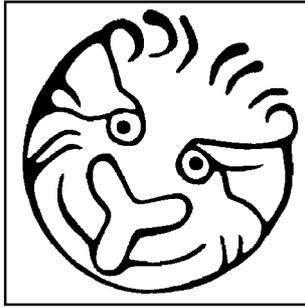
18th May. Old St. Chad's, Rev. Paul Winchester, Vicar of Tushingham. Cost - £1.00

15th June Highfields House, Buerton, Audlem, MR & Mrs J Baker. Cost £4.00 (towards restoration)

23rd June (Friday) COFFEE MORNING, Whitchurch Civic Centre, 9.30am - 12.00 noon. Bric-a-brac, cakes, draw, plants.

20th July (Friday) St Giles Church, Wrexham. A Church Guide. Cost £1.00

*The views and opinions expressed in this Newsletter are those of the individual authors; unless otherwise stated, the Council of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society is not responsible for any statement made, nor opinion expressed, in this Newsletter*



# SHROPSHIRE

## ARCHAEOLOGY AND HISTORY

# NEWSLETTER

**No. 50, Autumn 2000**

Newsletter Editor: Hugh Hannaford, 42 North Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JJ  
Hon. Membership Secretary: Tim Trown, 21 Old Coppice, Lyth Bank, Shrewsbury, SY3 0BP

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### **Museum-on-the-Move**

Museum-on-the-Move is an exciting new project aimed at bringing imaginative and stimulating displays to isolated rural areas. The project is run by Shropshire, Worcestershire and Herefordshire museum services, and is just one of four projects from over fifty applicants to be chosen for funding by the Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust.

The basic aims of Museum-on-the-Move are to provide a community-based museum service, to encourage life-long learning, to improve access to museums and to promote lasting relationships between local communities and their museums.

A timetable has been drawn up allowing each county use of the vehicle for six-week blocks throughout the year. All staff are trained to drive the vehicle and to interpret the exhibition on board. We can visit schools and training centres, day centres and sheltered housing schemes, village centres, hospitals, youth centres, shopping centres and special events.

For further details please contact the Museum-on-the-Move Project Officer at the County Museum Service, Acton Scott Working Farm Museum, tel : 01694-781306

**Emma-Kate Burns**

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### **Eric Donald Gates**

We regret to announce the death of Eric gates at his home in Whitchurch on April 16th 2000, aged 51. Eric was a long-time and loyal member of the Society and enjoyed coming to the meetings though severely disabled by his illness contracted some years ago. A scaffolder by training, in his later years he became a qualified cheesemaker and also with his wife Pat and son Andrew took great interest in local history and architecture.

**Madge Moran**

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### **EVENTS: Conferences, Dayschools and Lectures, Meetings and Events**

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**Mike Stokes, Museums Archaeologist, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council**

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### **Shropshire County Museum Service: Acton Scott Historic Working Farm Exhibitions**

**Shropshire Landscapes** Exhibition by David Threlkeld. Tuesday 4 July - Sunday 3 September

**The Working Countryside** Tuesday 5 September - Sunday 1 October

**Munch! The Story of Food Through The Ages** Tuesday 3 October - Sunday 29 October

### **Council for British Archaeology - West Midlands**

Dates for your diary: Saturday October 14th: The Graham Webster Lecture & Saturday November 4th: a dayschool on the archaeology of the landscape. Details available in September from Mike Stokes.

**Mike Stokes, Museums Archaeologist, Shrewsbury and Atcham Borough Council**

### **Oswestry and Border History & Archaeology Group Programme 2000 - 2001**

**Chairman:** Mrs Leanne Seward; **Hon. Secretary:** Mr G R K Hillier (01691) 682484; **Venue:** Oswestry Library, Arthur Street, Oswestry - Friday evenings at 7.45pm *except for AGM in March 2001 at 7.30pm*

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| Sept. 3 | 'History Marches On' (Local History Day) at the Peter Humphreys Centre, Oswestry School (Sunday)                     |
| Sept. 8 | Offa's Dyke (Recent work funded by CADW and English Heritage). Mr Ian Bapty, Clwyd Powys Archaeological Trust        |
| Oct. 13 | Mummies, Dry Bones and Bog Bodies. Mr Robert Connolly, Senior Lecturer, Dept. of Human Anatomy, Liverpool University |
| Nov. 10 | Early Travel by Stage and Mail in North Wales. Mr E. Rothwell-Hughes   |
| Dec. 8  | The Breidden Hillfort. Mr Christopher Musson   |
| Jan. 12 | Thomas Telford's Shropshire Legacy. Mrs Dorothy Nicolle  |
| Feb. 9  | John Davies of Middleton - Oswestry's First Historian. Mr John Pryce-Jones   |
| March 9 | AGM and Presidential Address. Dr Paul Stamper, English Heritage. (7.30pm)  |
| April 6 | Abbeys, Churches and Chapels. Religious Life in Shropshire. Dr Tom Hill  |

### **Whitchurch History and Archaeology Group**

**Chairman** Mr Don Fitzjohn (01948) 665517 **Programme Secretary** Mrs Joan Barton (01948) 840760

#### **Meetings 2000 - 2001** (Lectures are held in the Civic Centre, Whitchurch, 7.30pm)

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| 21 Sept  | Serendipity in Family History. <i>Mary Tither</i> , Family Historian  |
| 19 Oct   | Mapping Bury Walls. <i>Roger White</i> , Archaeologist  |
| 16 Nov   | Thomas Cook and the Story of tourism. <i>Colin Thaw</i> , Tourist Manager   |
| 21 Dec   | History of Cheshire Cheesemaking. <i>David &amp; Jill Hutchison-Smith</i> , Cheesemakers  |
| 18 Jan   | 10,000 Years of Human History Condensed into 500 Boxes. <i>Emma-Kate Burns</i> , Archaeologist                                      |
| 15 Feb   | Annual General Meeting followed by The History of Books, <i>Mary Perry</i> , Bookseller   |
| 15 March | One Woman's War - Enigma and All That. <i>Kay Staddon</i> , Former W.A.T.S.   |
| 19 April | Bess of Hardwick _ A Cameo in Costume. <i>Lizzie Jones</i> . Joint meeting with Audlem Historical Society and the Malpas Field Club |

#### **Summer Visits 2001** Meet at site at 7.30pm. Phone (01948) 840760 for directions or lifts

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|---------|--|
| 17 May. | Shropshire Records and Research Centre Introductory Tour. <i>Tony Carr</i> . Cost £2.00                  |
| 8 June  | (Friday) COFFEE MORNING, Whitchurch Civic Centre, 9.30am - 12.00 noon. Bric-a-brac, cakes, draw, plants. |
| 21 June | St Mary's Church, Ellesmere. <i>Estelle Parker</i> . Cost £1.00  |
| 19 July | St Bartholomew's Church, Tong. <i>Anne Taylor</i> . Cost £3.00 (inc. coffee)                             |