



SHROPSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGY & HISTORY NEWSLETTER

No. 63, Spring 2007

Newsletter Editor: Hugh Hannaford, 42 North Street, Castlefields, Shrewsbury, SY1 2JJ
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SOCIETY NEWS

AGM: The Annual General Meeting of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society will be held at the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Shrewsbury, on Saturday 14th April 2007 at 11.00am. The afternoon lecture is at 2.15pm in the Council Chamber, Shirehall, and the speaker will be Dr Christopher Dyer, professor of local history at Leicester University who will speak on 'Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Shropshire'.

Subscriptions: A reminder that subscriptions to the Society for 2007 were due on 1st January. The current rates are £14 Ordinary Membership; £15 Family Membership (two or more people living at the same address); £14 UK Institutions; £18 Overseas Institutions. Cheques/POs should be made payable to "Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society" and sent to the Membership Secretary at the above address.

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OTHER NEWS

Acton Scott Heritage Project

This is a two year, "Your Heritage" funded, community project run by the Archaeology Service of Shropshire County Council. Community volunteers will be given opportunities to take part in a range of archaeological and historical techniques including surveying, field walking, excavation, historical research and interpretation.

A detailed account of the parish of Acton Scott appears in the Victoria County History Vol X. However major questions about the settlement and land use of the parish over the last 3000 years remain unanswered.

An Iron Age farmstead enclosure ditch east of Acton Scott Historic Working farm was partially excavated in 1997 and 2004, and other enclosures are known from crop marks to exist west of the village but little else is known of pre-Roman settlement and cultivation.

In 1817 a Roman villa was discovered during road works. This was later excavated by Mrs Frances Stackhouse-Acton in 1844. An aisled barn type building was identified complete with mosaic floor and a fragment of wall painting depicting a peacock's head. The uncovered heated rooms are thought to have been a bath house. Bizarrely there was also an inclusion of Greek coins of 700BC to 300 BC whose provenance is a mystery! It is not known whether the excavated building represents the original farm house or a later conversion of an agricultural building for residential use, by a bailiff for example. The exact site and extent of the villa remains to be confirmed, and other contemporary farm buildings undoubtedly remain to be discovered.

The site of the Saxon settlement suggested by the place-name and documented in the Domesday Survey is unknown as is the exact whereabouts of any late Saxon/medieval nucleated settlement,

although it was probably in the vicinity of St. Margaret's Church. In the late 18th century the foundations of a tower in Tower Yard were quarried but recorded. It may have formed part of the medieval manor house that pre-dated the existing 16th Century hall or an earlier defensive site – perhaps within a ringwork and bailey. The configuration of the building, despite some parallels with Stokesay Castle, remains a mystery. Earthworks in the field, which could represent building platforms for the original nucleated village, offer scope for surveying or geophysical survey. The extent of the parish's ridge and furrow also needs to be mapped. Castle Hill may reveal vestiges of medieval defences overlooking the main Shrewsbury to Ludlow road but might instead be an Iron Age fort, relate to a much later feature or a now forgotten local myth. Whereas two thirds of the parish was, and still is, served by St Margaret's church even the whereabouts of the chapel of Alcaston manor, mentioned in 1259 and 1349 are unknown. One suggestion is a site adjacent to a now demolished timber (tithe?) barn but it may simply have been a room in Alcaston manor house and could as easily have been sited elsewhere in the southern third of the parish.

There is a chain of fishponds between the village and Hatton, known from the 18th Century. These may however have much earlier origins. It is tempting to see them as related to Acton Scott's mill documented in 1278 and there may even have been a relationship between them and the Roman villa site. Alcaston too had a water mill site but whether on the Marsh or Byrne Brook is again unknown.

Further areas for investigation could be to trace the manner by which the parish boundary was marked over time, and the vestiges of improvements made to the Acton Estate in the early 19th Century. A tree and hedgerow survey may prove worthwhile in this respect.

It can be seen that major issues remain to be addressed by the Heritage Project and it

is hoped that this will provide sufficient challenge for volunteers to continue the project in a self-funded manner beyond its "official" end in 2008.

If you are interested in finding out more about the project or would like to help as a volunteer, please contact Phil Scoggins tel: 01694 781306 (Tuesdays & Fridays), email: phil.scoggins@shropshire-cc.gov.uk, or contact the Archaeology Service (details below)

Phil Scoggins

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Records and Memories of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI) Project

A partnership project between Shropshire Archives and the Shropshire Regimental Museum has received a grant of £49,900 from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The one year project will capture and preserve the memories of veterans of the KSLI, work on cataloguing and digitisation the written and photographic archives of the regiment and its predecessors, and promote awareness of the contribution of the KSLI to local and national life by organising a series of events in Shropshire. The project team is currently being recruited and we hope the project will start later in the Spring.

Thomas Telford 250th anniversary

2007 marks the 250th anniversary of the birth of Thomas Telford. As you can see from the programme of events, the Friends have joined with Wrekin Local Studies Forum to celebrate this anniversary. As well as the events we will be working with Telford & Wrekin Council Arts and Heritage services as part of a Heritage Lottery funded project, to create a CD ROM of resources relating to the life and work of Thomas Telford. This will be launched in September, as will a related exhibition which will tour around the county.

Discover Shropshire project

The Discover Shropshire project has made good progress. The local history centre in Bridgnorth will be up and running during April. Please look out for news of this. The

cataloguing and digitisation work has resulted in over 4,000 images relating to Bridgnorth and Oswestry being catalogued. If you would like to find out more about the project, please contact Ray Hatley, on 01743 255016 or email ray.hatley@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Discovering Shropshire's History Project

The Discovering Shropshire's History website at www.discovershropshire.org.uk now includes information from collections held by Shropshire Archives and by Shropshire County Museum Service as well as information from the Sites and Monuments Record. We would like your views on how the information is presented. Is it easy to use? Can you find what you need to know? Please have a look at the site and pass on any comments to Jason Siddall tel 01743 255367 email Jason.siddall@shropshire-cc.gov.uk The project will be finishing by May 2007 so we need you views as soon as possible in order for us to make any changes.

The Lilleshall Collection Project

This project is nearing completion. The cataloguing and conservation work will be complete by the end of April and the catalogue of over 5,000 entries will then be available on line. The digitisation and filming work will continue until the Autumn. A touring exhibition highlighting the wealth of resources in the collection will tour a range of venues across the county later in the year.

Mary McKenzie

EVENTS

Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society

See enclosure for details of the Shropshire Archaeological and Historical Society's Programme for Summer/Autumn 2007

AGM Saturday 14 April 2007 at 11.00am at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Afternoon lecture at 2.15pm, Dr Christopher Dyer: 'Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Shropshire'.

Sat 23 June: Frontiers in Shropshire

Archaeology. A one day meeting organised by the Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society to be held on Saturday 23rd June 2007 at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury to review recent progress and future directions for archaeological and historical research in the county. Cost £12.50/person, (£10 to members of this society), tel: 01562 68638. Further details and a programme and booking form are included with this Newsletter.

Council for British Archaeology, West Midlands

Sat 19 May A Day School on Archaeology & Education, at the Shirehall, Shrewsbury. For further details contact Shelagh Lewis, email: LHP@mparish.fsnet.co.uk

Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council

contact the Archaeology Service on 01743 255352

Summer Walks:

Weds 6 June: 7.30pm **NESSCLIFFE HILL** An Iron Age hillfort, a highwayman's den, and historic quarries. Meet at Oak car park, Nesscliffe Hill Countryside Heritage Park, OS map ref: SJ 386 199

Weds 13 June 7.30pm **SNAILBEACH AND LORDSHILL** Looking at 19th-century mining remains and a post-medieval squatter settlement. NB. This walk has steep climbs and some rough ground. Meet at: the car park by Snailbeach village hall, OS map ref SJ 373 022

Sun 8 July 2.00pm **CORBET WOOD AND GRINSHILL** An Archaeology and Countryside Services walk. See a medieval and post-medieval quarry and a Mesolithic and Neolithic hill-top site. Meet at: the Corbet Wood car park, OS map ref SJ 525 237 (There is no charge for this walk).

Sat 14 July 2.00pm **LLANYMYNECH LIMEKILNS** A Shropshire Historical and Archaeological Society walk led by the Archaeology Service. This former industrial landscape contains limestone quarries and 19th century limekilns, a canal and a dis-used railway. Meet at the Llanymynech Heritage Area car park, OS map ref: SJ 266 210

No need to book - pay on the day. Fee £3.00 per walk. Some of the walks are in exposed areas and may include muddy paths. Please wear appropriate footwear and clothing

Archaeology Day Saturday 10th November 2007, 10.00am - 4.15pm, at the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Shrewsbury. Further details and a programme and booking form will be included with the autumn Newsletter.

Shropshire Archives

contact Shropshire Archives on 01743 255350 or go to www.shropshirearchives.org.uk

Saturday 8 September 2007 10.00am-4.45pm
Thomas Telford Day School Programme of talks about Thomas Telford and a tour of St Michael's Church, Madeley. Co-run by Wrekin Local Studies Forum and Shropshire Archives. Venue: Jubilee House, Madeley

Sat 13 & Sun 14 October 2007 10.30am-4.00pm
Family and Local History Weekend at Shropshire Archives Talks, stalls, displays, quizzes and activities

Friends of Shropshire Archives

For more information contact Pat Kiernan: 01952 252814 or go to:
www.friendsofshropshirearchives.org.uk

Summer Walks: The cost of the walks is £3 per walk, payable on the day.

Weds 20 June 7.30pm **From Monks to Megawatts** A Friends of Shropshire Archives / Wrekin Local Studies Forum walk around Buildwas, led by local historian, Neil Clarke, and including the site of Telford's bridge. Meet on Buildwas Bridge. For parking facilities contact 01952 504135

Weds 27 June 7.00pm **Bridgnorth & St Mary Magdelene** A walk led by local historian, Alan Webb. See Telford's flair for design as exemplified in St Mary's church and experience an expert tour of

historic Bridgnorth. Meet at the Northgate Museum, Bridgnorth. Refreshments available.

Weds 4 July 6.30pm* **Tyrley Locks & Market Drayton** A walk led by local & canal historian, Peter Brown. Here, Telford's 5 locks enabled the Birmingham & Liverpool Junction Canal to descend 33 feet. The lock keeper's cottage is classic Telford! Also a short exploration of the historic heart of Drayton. Meet at The Buttermarket, Market Drayton. *Please note that this walk is approximately 3 ¼ miles long.

Weds 11 July 2.00 pm 4.00 pm **Shrewsbury Castle** Numbers limited to 50. A walk and talk led by Peter Duckers, curator of the Regimental Museum. From derelict ruin to grand dwelling. Get a behind the scenes look into one of Telford's first Shropshire commissions. Meet at Shrewsbury Castle

Tues 17 July 7.30 pm **Longdon-on-Tern** A Friends of Shropshire Archives / Wrekin Local Studies Forum walk to include the site of the canal wharf, Telford's aqueduct and the church. Led by local historian, Neil Clarke. Meet at the Tayleur Arms public house.

Thursday 22 November 2007 7.30pm **Friends of Shropshire Archives Annual Lecture** 'Shropshire Country Houses' Speaker: Gareth Williams, Curator of Weston Park. Venue: Shropshire Archives. Tickets £3.00, booking required - contact Shropshire Archives for booking form

(Copy deadline for the Autumn 2007 Newsletter is Friday 27th July 2007. Copy can be mailed to the Newsletter editor at the Archaeology Service, Shropshire Archives, Castle Gates, Shrewsbury, SY1 2AQ or emailed to hugh.hannaford@shropshire-cc.gov.uk)



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Membership Secretary: William Hodges, Westlegate, Mousecroft Lane, Shrewsbury, SY3 9DX

SOCIETY NEWS

The 2008 AGM will be held at 11.00am Saturday April 12th 2008 at the Shirehall Shrewsbury. The afternoon speaker is Dr. Christopher Dyer, professor of local history at Leicester University who will speak on 'Landscape and Settlement in Medieval Shropshire'. The talk starts at 2.15pm. (See the enclosed Winter Programme for details.)

OTHER NEWS

We hear that Rachel Lees of Hinstock has a miscellany of archive material relating to Hinstock consisting of papers, old photographs, details of houses, oral history etc. We are now looking for a volunteer(s) to sift through the collection, put it into order and, if it is thought worthwhile, prepare it for publication perhaps as a paper for the Transactions. Otherwise, if put into usable form, it could be deposited in Shropshire Archives and in the Museum at Market Drayton. Please contact Rachel Lees directly if you would like to undertake this project. She lives at Hinstock Court, Hinstock, N. Shropshire ('phone 01952 550248). It would be useful to contact Dr. Judith Hoyle at the Museum and Resource Centre, 53, Shropshire Street, Market Drayton TF9 3DA or 'phone 07763 492906 or 01630 657455. Judith can also be reached by email: jhoyle@tinyworld.co.uk.

Madge Moran

FROM THE ARCHIVES

The Records and Memories of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI) Project Work on this 12 month project is going well with over 20 interviews recorded with veterans. The cataloguing and repackaging of the archive collection is also making good progress. Project staff have also attended a number of events including the Shrewsbury Flower show. If you are interesting in getting involved with the project, please contact Project Officer Pam Freeman on 01743 255367 or email: pam.freeman@shropshire-cc.gov.uk.

Discover Shropshire project A weekly volunteer advice service on local and family history has been established at the local history centre at Bridgnorth

Library on every Friday afternoon. Cataloguing and digitisation work at Oswestry library continues. During August two history weeks were held at Bridgnorth and Oswestry which were very successful in highlighting the wealth of information available. This includes the Ancestry website, a huge family history resource, which can now be accessed for free at all Shropshire libraries. We are still looking for volunteers to help support users of the centre at Oswestry. If you could spare an afternoon a month or more, and would like to find out more about the project, please contact Ray Hatley, on 01743 255016 or email: ray.hatley@shropshire-cc.gov.uk.

Discovering Shropshire's History Project The website now includes data from the sites and monuments database, the museums service catalogue and the archives catalogue, in total over 200,000 records. If you have any comments on the website at www.discovershropshire.org.uk please email: discovershropshire@shropshire-cc.gov.uk.

The Lilleshall Collection Project The cataloguing, conservation and digitisation elements of the project are now complete. Work on filming the collection will continue until the Autumn. An exhibition highlighting the wealth of resources in the collection is now on tour and during September and October will be in libraries in Telford and Wrekin.

Mary McKenzie

ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE

Acton Scott Heritage Project The project is progressing very well. Work so far has included tree surveying, shovel pit testing (a form of archaeological investigation) and archive and historical research. For further details please contact Phil Scoggins tel 01694 781306 email: phil.scoggins@shropshire-cc.gov.uk

Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project The Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project area lies on the northern edge of the Shropshire village of Llanymynech, close to the Welsh border. The project site provides a complete and unaltered historic industrial landscape, comprising the buildings and the transport infrastructure associated

with the quarrying, production and transportation of lime – including inclined planes, tramways, a canal and railway. The building remains are also of great note, especially the impressive Hoffmann Kiln and chimney, which is of national importance, as there are only three remaining in the British Isles that were used in the preparation of lime. Out of the three, it is the most complete remaining kiln and the only one with an intact chimney. In recognition of the national significance of this unique industrial landscape, the area has been scheduled as an Ancient Monument.

Shropshire County Council, the site owner, has implemented a project, the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund and led by the SCC Countryside Service. This is a 3 year project to repair and conserve the historic structures on the site, and to improve access and interpretation to the monument.

In September 2006, the Archaeology Service led a community archaeology project at the Hoffman Kiln, Llanymynech, Shropshire on behalf of the Llanymynech Limeworks Heritage Project. The excavations provided members of the local community an opportunity to take part in a hands-on investigation of the archaeology of the kiln. The volunteers uncovered the remains of former yards and tramways beside the kiln, and parts of the structure of a steel roof that once covered the kiln. The Archaeology Service is also carrying out a watching brief on the repair and restoration works on behalf of the project. For further details on the project, contact Peter Dunhill tel: 01691 624448 email: peter.dunhill@shropshire-cc.gov.uk or look at the project's pages on the DSH web-site: www.discovershropshire.org.uk

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Archaeology Service, Shropshire County Council

contact the Archaeology Service on 01743 255352

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The Old Oswestry Hill fort Project

Saturday 15th September 1.15pm – 4.30pm **The Archaeology and Landscape of the Hill forts of the Northern Marches** Venue: The Memorial Hall, Smithfield Street, Oswestry SY11 2EG This seminar is the first of a series of events connected with the Old Oswestry Hill fort Project. It will provide an opportunity to place one of the most impressive Iron Age Hill forts in the whole of Britain in its local context and will form the basis for an even more comprehensive conference in 2008. Contributors include Fiona Gale, County Archaeologist, Denbigh; Shelagh Lewis, Madeley Living History Project and CBA West Midlands; David Matthews, Planning Officer, Cheshire County Council; Margaret Worthington, Porthywaen Study Centre. Tickets £3 (£1 Students) obtainable from Maggie Rowlands, Oswestry Borough Council, 15 English Walls, Oswestry, SY112PA, tel:01691 670985, email: margaret.rowlands@oswestry-bc.gov.uk, or from Heritage Centre, Oswestry, and Tourist Information Centre, Mile End, Oswestry.

Courses

Free interactive step-by-step online tutorials: National Archives now offer a third online tutorial. The three courses are:

Medieval Latin 1086-1733 Beginners' level:
nationalarchives.gov.uk/Latin/Beginners

Medieval Latin 1086-1733 Advanced level:
nationalarchives.gov.uk/Latin/Advanced

Palaeography 1500-1800 Reading Old Handwriting:
nationalarchives.gov.uk/Palaeography