

Worcestershire Archaeology

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Worcestershire's Past... Get Involved Today!



In this issue...
Lowesmoor
Redditch at war
Marsh Awards

Tank Makes for Top Excavation Results

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

Throughout the redevelopment there has been a programme of archaeological works including building recording, a watching brief and excavations.

On the site of the porcelain works a number of circular kiln bases were exposed, while excavations on the corner of Silver Street and Lowesmoor revealed 18th and 19th Century domestic activity. Some of these remains will become features in the new development.

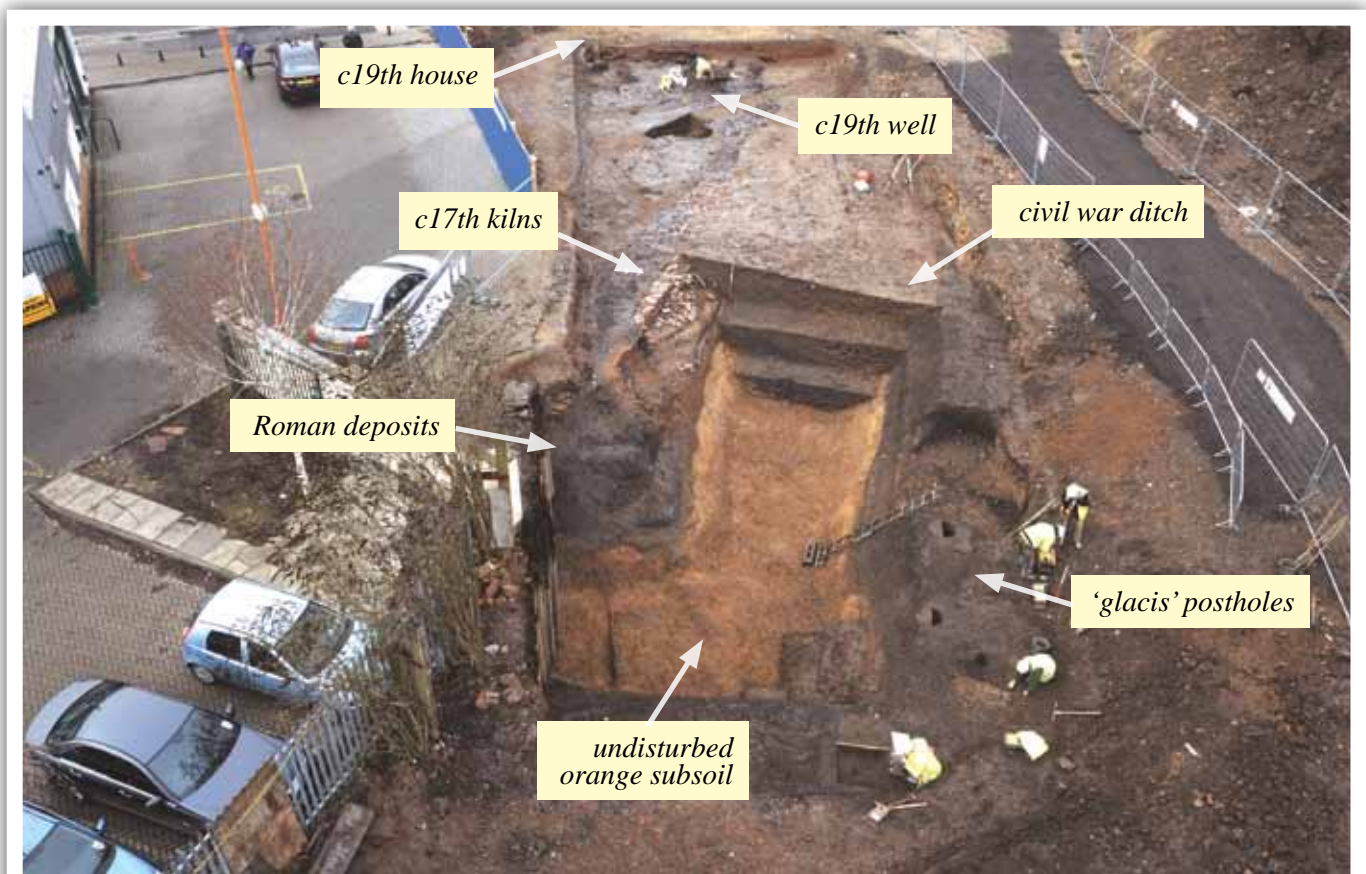
The most recent excavation was on the western side of the development, where a large tank for regulating the flow of rainwater into the city's drainage system will be sited. This area lies just outside the medieval city wall near to St Martin's Gate, the main entrance to the city from the east. A historic map showing the Civil War

defences in 1651 depicts a bastion known as 'St Martin's Sconce' jutting out from the walls around the gate. This defence would have consisted of a large ditch surrounding a raised earthen platform from which artillery could fire in all directions and defend the wall. Archaeological evaluations in 2000 and 2007 exposed parts of a large ditch in this area, and following consultation with the developers and the city archaeologist, the footprint of the tank was placed over the projected location of the ditch so that it could be properly investigated.

The excavation began in late November 2010 by staff of the field section of Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service. The location and form of the Civil War ditch was confirmed, and despite heavy truncation by the ditch, a remarkable depth and complexity of earlier deposits survived.

From previous excavations on the corner of St Martin's Gate we knew that there were Roman features in the vicinity but on this site the activity was far more intensive than expected given the site's distance from the estimated eastern extent of the Roman town.

The earliest phase showed a succession of parallel ditches draining towards the low ground to the east. There was a rich finds assemblage including Samian ware, the rim of a glass bowl and a copper ring.



• Aerial view of the attenuation tank excavation •

Northwick Project Highly Commended



The Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project was one of three projects short-listed for the National Marsh Archaeology Award presented by the Council for British Archaeology. This Heritage Lottery funded project was organised through the Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club (WYAC) and was supported and managed by Worcestershire County and Worcester City Councils Archaeology Services together with many partners and the local community. Members of the WYAC team were invited to attend the ceremony held at The British Academy in London to see if they were winners of the award for 'the individual or voluntary group responsible for looking after and promoting access to archaeology in the UK'. The Northwick project was 'Highly Commended' - a great achievement for all involved. As part of the project the local community were involved with conservation, walks, talks, workshops, an educational programme, oral history recordings, and documentary research. It culminated in the creation of a circular 5km Heritage Trail from Northwick to Bevere, improving the interpretation and access for all along the whole length of the riverside. For more about the Project visit www.wyac.co.uk/northwick.

Deborah Overton

King's School Boat House

Archaeological investigations ahead of the construction of a new boathouse for King's School in Severn Street, Worcester are hoped to reveal the route of the former castle ditch and shed light on its origin after years of speculation. Its initial construction is thought to have been for either the Romano-British settlement defences or the Anglo-Saxon burh. So far intrusive works have revealed well preserved remains of 19th century domestic properties known as Court No 6. These fronted onto Frog Lane (now Severn Street) that grew in width in the early 20th century.

Jon Webster

A later Roman phase was more domestic in character. There were at least three ovens – one containing fragments of amphora while another was in close association with a complete pot and a brooch.

A late-Roman V-shaped ditch ran northwest-southeast across the site. It appears to have been finally backfilled in the medieval period with material that contained, amongst other things, a horse's head. Cultivation soils formed above this, containing medieval floor tiles and pottery.

Cut into this was a complex sequence of kilns that were over 17m in length. Built from brick and tile, they were re-modelled many times with rectangular chambers, steps and brick compartments that showed evidence of intense heating. These would have been part of a kiln complex and appear to be associated with a tile industry known of from 17th century documentary evidence.

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

After the ditch and mound had been levelled, a layer of earth accumulated and the area remained unoccupied until the late 18th century. A tiled path and foundations of a building were exposed on the southern side of the excavation. Remnants of a cobbled surface survived along with two 19th century brick-lined wells and the cellar steps of a house that fronted onto Silver Street.

Our excavations proved that this area has been occupied from the Roman period onwards. The east-west orientation of features was repeated right through from the very earliest Roman ditch to construction of the kilns, the Civil War ditch and even including the 18th century tiled path showing that the original Roman boundaries had been respected for more than 1500 years.

The finds assemblage is diverse, and the stratified deposits mean that once the finds have been analysed, the dating should be very good. This will be invaluable when incorporated with the environmental remains and archeomagnetic dates, and we are looking forward to rewarding results.

Tom Rogers and Fiona Keith-Lucas

Wartime Redditch

The Redditch Local History Society has organised a programme of exhibitions and events to promote aspects of Redditch in World War II.

A mixture of words, photographs and objects show what it was like to live in Redditch during the War. Personal stories are presented on a Memories Wall and key events are highlighted by newspaper headlines on a Time Line. Displays depict how Redditch Industry adapted to support the war effort and how ordinary Redditch people coped in those extra-ordinary times. The exhibitions, events and talks continue until Sunday 1st May when there is a War's End Celebrations & Children's Party in the Grounds.

All events take place at Forge Mill in Redditch, see www.forgemill.org.uk for times, entrance fees and full event details.



Join us!

At our base in Worcester, we deal with finds from sites from all over the County ranging from prehistoric to modern. Helping with finds processing is a great way to work with our team of specialists. Training is given, so even if you are completely new to archaeology

you will soon learn about all kinds of finds.

We also welcome visits from small groups such as St John's Cub Scouts who recently enjoyed washing finds while they were here.

For more information about volunteering or visits, please contact Deborah Overton at the WHEAS office.



Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service is the main contact point for all information about archaeology in the county.

For information on projects mentioned in the newsletter, or to join in as a volunteer in our activities for all ages and abilities, please contact us - we will send details, or put you in touch with staff who can help.

Unless otherwise stated all photographs and images are ©Worcestershire County Council.

To receive your newsletter by email as a PDF file, please send an email to our address below with the subject 'NEWSLETTER PLEASE'.

Cover photos: Main photo - The Civil War ditch, Lowesmoor, Worcester; bottom left to right: a capital from King's School Boathouse building recording, excavating a kiln at Lowesmoor, and Redditch in Wartime ©Forge Mill Needle Museum.

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01905 766938 or at diversity@worcestershire.gov.uk



Walkpast 2011

A series of nine guided archaeological and historical walks within the County of Worcestershire, led by staff of the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service



Walk through the gates
and into the Past



WALKPAST PROGRAMME 2011

also introducing **CYCLEPAST** (NB Star Rating list on back of leaflet)

A) SUNDAY 8th MAY – WICK, NEAR PERSHORE

From Pershore Bridges we will walk across meadows and through Wick village passing a variety of historic houses to the Norman church. Then visit the building remains of RAF Comberton to discover the story of this important radar/signaling station. Then on through farmland past cropmark sites of Roman settlement and back to the River Avon. The walk is 5km (4 miles approx) easy walking with two stiles - Star Rating * *

Led by Deborah Overton

B) SUNDAY 22nd MAY - THORNE AND THORNE DENE, NR INKBERROW

An unusual walk as it includes the opportunity to see a geophysical survey in progress and some of the interesting finds from excavations. We will be able to visit a Roman kiln reconstruction, which successfully fired over 100 pots! Then observe the early medieval dyke and other landscape features belonging to the moated manor of Thorne. The walk is 3 km (2.5 miles approx) mostly level ground with no stiles - Star Rating * *

Led by Richard Axe

C) SUNDAY 5th JUNE – THE ARROW VALLEY COUNTRY PARK

A guided walk around the Arrow Valley Country Park. Evidence survives in the park from prehistory to the 20th century New Town development, including buildings and earthworks associated with the needle industry for which Redditch is famous.

This walk is about 4.5k (approx 3.25 miles) long with Star Rating * *

Led by Emma Hancox

If you are interested in this walk, you might also be interested in the **Redditch in Wartime** exhibition at Forge Mill Needle Museum from March 9th to May 1st. Redditch Local History Society is presenting a series of talks, events and exhibits. See www.worldwar2.redditchhistory.org.uk for details.

D) SUNDAY 26th JUNE – CROOME LANDSCAPE PARK

We will start with an introduction to the landscape, mansion and church designed by Lancelot (Capability) Brown. Passing the recently reconstructed ice house we will walk along the ridge with views to Defford Airfield and Malvern and visit the Owl Pen folly. Walking back alongside Croome River with the house nearby, then into the ornamental gardens with grotto and beautiful lakes all recently restored to their 18th century glory.

This walk is about 5km (approx 4 miles) long - Star Rating * *

Led by Deborah Overton

E) SUNDAY 3rd JULY – BAYTON AND MAMBLE

At Bayton we will walk through the village to see its many historic buildings and across farmland to Mamble, to discover the history and observe the abandoned sites of local coal mines along the way. Passing by Soddington Hall and moat and returning through woodland with mills/ponds to the ancient church with the best view for miles around!

Walk is 7.5k (approx 4½ to 5 miles) with several stiles, some uphill and woodland walking – Star Rating ***

Led by Tom Rogers

F) SUNDAY – 7th August – WORCESTER CITY

Starting next to the River Severn we walk through the core of the ancient city. The focus of this walk will be recent archaeological discoveries, which have changed and enhanced our understanding of Worcester in the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. This walk is fairly easy and level and approx 3k (approx 2 miles) with Star Rating * (suitable for wheelchairs users)

Led by Hal Dalwood

G) SUNDAY 21st August – ELMLEY LOVETT

Elmley Lovett nestles within north Worcestershire's gently rolling claylands. The walk will focus on all historic periods and will include the deserted medieval village (by the present church) with its strange mound, the site of 17th century mansion which would have been a remarkable building, a mill, and a Roman site (but a crop will probably cover that!).

This walk is fairly flat but with stiles and about 3km (2 miles) with a Star Rating * *

Led by Simon Woodiwiss

H) SUNDAY 11th September - BECKFORD AND KEMERTON

The villages of Beckford and Kemerton lie on the Carrant Brook, a tributary of the River Avon. Both watercourses cut through fertile valleys which have attracted settlement since prehistoric times. The route will pass many sites which, through recent time, have been exploited for sand and gravel. The walk will explore this ancient landscape, once visited by Palaeolithic hunting groups and occupied by Bronze Age and Iron Age farming settlements. Roman and Saxon communities are also very much in evidence.

This walk is about 4.5k (approx 3.25 miles) and has a few stiles with Star Rating * *

Led by Justin Hughes

I) SUNDAY 25 September – A NEW EXPERIENCE – CYCLEPAST

Starting at GREAT MALVERN STATION and visiting Leigh Sinton and Bransford. A circular guided bicycle ride to discover a range of archaeological sites. Visiting Warwick House, where well preserved environmental archaeology was discovered, then on to an area where Roman pottery kiln sites have been found. En route we will see the surrounding medieval landscapes, farms and barns. Stopping off at The Fold at Bransford for a reviving cup of tea before returning to Malvern.

Ride is 10 miles long and although there will be some hills it is not a difficult route.

Led by Liz Pearson

J) SUNDAY 2nd October – LICKEY HILLS

The Lickey Hills are a prominent feature of the North Worcestershire landscape and this Walkpast will look at how the hills and their environs have been used by humans from prehistory through to today, including an Iron Age hillfort, medieval rabbit warrens, a 16th century beacon used to warn of imminent invasion by the Spanish and the defence of Birmingham during the Second World War. We will also look at the geology that formed this landscape ranging from 510 million yrs ago, when the Lickey ridge was deposited, to 10,000 years ago when the dam of a large glacial lake broke.

The walk is 5k (3 miles) with woodland and small hillside walking - Star Rating * * *

Led by Nick Daffern

ALL WALKS TAKE PLACE ON SUNDAYS STARTING AT 2.00PM

Walks are designed for adults with a general interest in the archaeology and history of Worcestershire. You will be sent maps, meeting place and other details by post or email once you have booked your place.

THE WALKS ARE RATED BY A STAR SYSTEM

- * Very easy, flat ground or paved, with no stiles or obstacles – suitable for wheelchair users**
 - ** Fairly easy, mostly flat and level with a few stiles**
- THREE TO FOUR STARS WILL BE MORE OF A RAMBLE THAN A WALK**
- *** Some uphill or woodland walking and/or more than four stiles**
 - **** Some steep hills/deep valleys, woodland, some obstacles and/or several stiles**

There will be farm animals and horses in some fields so please do not bring dogs. Sorry but walks are not suitable for small children.

WALKS COST £6 EACH OR £4 FOR CONCESSIONS (older children half price). We may have to restrict the number of walks booked by one person to 5 walks to give other people a chance to book.

TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT PLEASE RETURN ENCLOSED BOOKING FORM WITH YOUR CHEQUE TO MO BOGAARD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: MO BOGAARD

on 01905 855455 or by email: mobogaard@worcestershire.gov.uk

or by post: Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, Woodbury, University of Worcester, Henwick Grove, WORCESTER WR2 6AJ

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