Worcestershire’s Past... Get Involved Today!

In this issue...
Iron Age Hindlip
Help wanted
Beyond the Butts
Potwashing as Art

Find out more online:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology
Arresting Finds at Hindlip

Excavations in the footprint of the proposed access road, car park and lodge at West Mercia Constabulary Headquarters, Hindlip, have revealed two main elements of archaeological interest. The first is a pit alignment - a line of 21 pits orientated east-west in the western part of the development. The bowl shaped pits are generally about 2.5m in diameter and the entire length excavated is about 75m. Little cultural material such as pottery was recovered from the fills but environmental remains may provide some dateable evidence.

Pit alignments are found all across Britain but with concentrations in central-eastern Scotland and the English Midlands. Their function is not known but they seem to mark boundaries and examples exist that appear to delineate fields. There is no evidence that they held upright timbers or trees but examples sometimes have a bank to one side. Their dates range from the Neolithic to the Roman periods and the presence of slag, a by-product of metalworking in some of the Hindlip pits suggests that this one is Iron Age (800BC to 43AD) or later. Several Worcestershire examples are known from crop marks, but this is the first to have been excavated.

Another discovery is the evidence of a Roman rural settlement further to the east in the central part of the site. This largely comprises a series of ditches which represent the enclosures and boundaries of a small Roman farmstead. The central feature is a roughly square enclosure, just over 40m across. Considerable amounts of pottery have been recovered from the ditch, and from several smaller features within the area, including a large pottery vessel 50cm in diameter.

To the south a smaller enclosure has been partially exposed and there may be a further example to the west. North of the main enclosure, a well preserved cobbled surface is thought to be a metalled trackway and numerous other ditches cross the site which probably represent the boundaries of Roman fields or paddocks. The only evidence of a structure is a narrow ‘L’ shaped gully which may be a beam slot, holding the ground beam of a timber building. Two cremations – small pits containing burnt human bone – have been excavated in the line of the road itself.

The pottery mostly consists of Severn Valley Ware, made in the Malvern area but there are also sherds of Samian from Central France. Other finds include part of a jade bracelet and a well preserved iron mattock head.

Post excavation examination of artefacts, environmental and structural evidence will soon begin and it is hoped that the evidence from this site will cast valuable light on the Roman town of Worcester and its relationship with the surrounding countryside.
For Art’s Sake...

One of our archaeologists was recently lucky enough to be picked for one of the spots in Anthony Gormley’s One & Other project.

Christine Elgy took to the Fourth Plinth at 2am on the 1st August. The project invited people to talk about or demonstrate something important to them for one hour while on top of the plinth in Trafalgar Square.

Having spent the last couple of months digging at the Butts in Worcester, Christine decided to spend her hour cleaning and talking about some of the Roman finds, and despite initial nerves, she was delighted at the response from onlookers.

Questions came thick and fast from people below and a conversation developed about the work she was doing. People asked her to hold up the pots so they could take pictures, and shouted goodbye, and waved as they left.

As the cherry picker took Christine away, a Dalek arrived to take her place — she said, “The time went really fast. I felt like I’d been to a party!”

You can see Christine’s contribution and also, Mike Pitts’ editor of Current Archaeology, by visiting the One & Other web pages.

Worchester Library and History Centre

The joint Worchester Library and History Centre project has taken an important step forward after the planning permission was granted for the scheme by the preferred contractor Galliford Try.

The £60 million centre is a joint project between the University of Worcester and Worcestershire County Council with support from regional development agency Advantage West Midlands and Worcester City Council. The combined facility, believed to be the first of its kind in Europe, will draw together the University and County Council’s library services along with the County’s History Centre, Record Office, the Historic Environment and Archaeology Service and the Customer Contact Centre, the Worcestershire Hub.

It will be built on The Butts site through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) which brings together the public and private sectors. Construction work will start in October this year with the project due to finish in late 2011 or early 2012.

Join in!
Be a WHEAS Volunteer.

While Christine was washing finds in Trafalgar Square, back at the offices in Worcester, we are continuing to process the thousands of artefacts found at the Butts during the excavation of this important Roman site.

The Historic Environment and Archaeology Service deals with finds from sites from all over the County that range in date from prehistoric to modern. We also identify items brought in by members of the public, and work closely with members of local archaeological societies.

Finds processing is an excellent opportunity to work with our team of archaeological specialists. Training is given, so even if you are completely new to archaeology you will soon learn about the finds, including pottery, building materials, glass, metal and stone.

You may volunteer for as much or as little time as you wish, although we are currently limited to our normal working hours Monday to Friday 8.30-17.00.

For more information, about becoming a volunteer, please contact Dennis Williams on 01905 855495, or email dwilliams2@worcestershire.gov.uk
Where in the World?

In our last issue, Alan Clapham could be seen at the Temple at Sessibo, near Dalgo, Sudan.
Not to be out done, our palynologist Nick Daffern recently contributed to field work at a very different part of the world.
He can be seen modelling the purple t-shirt in another fantastic place - but where?
No prizes – but you can find the answer on our web pages.

Work Experience at The Slip Northwick

Every year the WHEAS provides an opportunity for twelve work experience students aged 14 to 17 yrs to undertake a fieldwork project. The aim is to produce a scale plan of previously unrecorded earthworks, carry out research in past uses of the site and produce a report on their work by the end of the week. This year they recorded earthworks at The Slip at Northwick. Members of staff trained the team in archaeological survey techniques, including taking samples with an auger.

For more information visit the Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project website on www.wyac.co.uk/northwick

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

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

Contributors to this issue are - Nick Daffern, Christine Elgy, Tom Vaughan, and Dennis Williams. Unless otherwise stated all photographs and images are ©Worceshershire County Council.

If you would like to receive your newsletter by email as a PDF file, please send an email to our address below with the subject ‘NEWSLETTER PLEASE’.

For further information contact: -

General enquiries:
By telephone:
01905 855499

By post:
Historic Environment and Archaeology Service
Woodbury, University of Worcester, Henwick Grove,
Worcester WR2 6AJ

By email
archaeology@worcestershire.gov.uk

This document can be made available in other languages (including British Sign Language) and alternative formats (large print, audio tape, computer disk and Braille) on request from Corporate Diversity Manager on 01905 766938 or at diversity@worcestershire.gov.uk
Malcolm Atkin retired due to ill health as the County Archaeology Officer of the Historic Environment and Archaeological Service, Worcestershire County Council in August 2009. Commencing with Hereford and Worcester County Council in October 1993 his 16 years have seen many challenges and triumphs.

Previous to joining the County Council he worked on some of the heroic archaeological sites of the 1970s, such as Wharram Percy and sites in Norwich, before becoming City Archaeologist for Gloucester.

His time at Worcestershire saw Local Government Reorganisation (in 1998), when the country's largest inland county, Hereford and Worcester, separated into its constituent parts; both somehow ending with more resources than the combined organisation.

Many universities have given birth to archaeological units but, contrary as ever, Malcolm was a moving force (with Martin Doughty) behind the Service's move to accommodation at, what is now, the University of Worcester, and the creation of a first degree course in Heritage Studies and Archaeology. The course (now Archaeology and Heritage Studies) is partly taught by members of the Service, Malcolm amongst them, and the University has since also appointed its own archaeological staff to cope with increasing numbers.

His leadership will be sorely missed by staff (contrary also), all of whom, received considerable support, through good and bad times, and all wish him well for the future. The future, it would appear, to be made up of being roadie to his daughter's (Kate) photographic business (http://www.kateatkinphotography.com/) and bothering the Records Offices of the West Midlands.
WORCESTERSHIRE
ARCHAEOLOGY DAYSCHOOL 2009

SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER - 9.45 to 5.30
UNIVERSITY OF WORCESTER

- Neolithic pits and Iron Age settlement at Clifton Quarry
  near Severn Stoke
  - The Butts Dig update
- Iron Age and Roman settlements at Hindlip and St John's
  - Pagan Worcestershire
  - Pottery from the 1st century AD
  - The landscapes of Redditch
  - Worcester Castle
  - Post-medieval pottery from Worcester
  - The Bishop's Palace at Northwick
- Worcestershire Historic Landscape Characterisation Project

WORCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT AND
ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE
Contact Mo Bogaard on 01905 855455
or email mbogaard@worcestershire.gov.uk

WORCESTERSHIRE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT & ARCHAEOLOGY SERVICE
BOOKING FORM FOR
ANNUAL ARCHAEOLOGY DAYSCHOOL 2009
On Saturday 14th November 9.45am to 5.30pm
at University of Worcester

Tickets £15: which includes Tea/Coffee & Biscuits on arrival,
mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Please bring your own packed lunch and cold drinks

I WOULD LIKE TO BOOK ....................... DAYSCHOOL PLACES

I enclose a cheque for total amount of £ .........................
made payable to Worcestershire County Council.

Name: ...........................................................................

Phone No: .....................Mobile: ..............................

Address: ........................................................................

Post Code: .................... Email: .................................

Please return the booking form part of this flyer with your

Any queries 01905 855455