



THE WOOLHOPE NATURALISTS' FIELD CLUB

Registered Charity No. 521000

NEWSLETTER NO. 49 AUTUMN 2024

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Woolhope Club Newsletter: President's Report, August 2024

As I begin writing this report in the aftermath of the General Election, and in the wake of the resignations of Vaughan Gething and Gareth Southgate, it is clear that change is in the air. But change is not confined to politics and football. More prosaically, but of no less significance for our purposes, we are also entering a period of change for the Woolhope Club.

As has previously been announced, your committee is looking to update the club's constitution to make it appropriate for an important academic body and registered charity in the 21st century. The transition from an unincorporated charity with members to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) is a complicated business, and I am grateful to both Joseph Goldsmith and Jonathan Comber, the club's treasurer, who have taken the lead on this vital work. As reported in the Spring Newsletter, a draft constitution is now ready, which clarifies the club's legal status, charitable purposes, and governance, and gives us greater flexibility to respond to changing circumstances in uncertain times. The document will no doubt be scrutinised carefully by the Charity Commissioners in due course, but only after the approval of the membership.

To this end, you will find enclosed within this mailing a full copy of this draft constitution, as well as a brief summary of key points which have prompted your committee (the charity's trustees) to recommend the change to CIO status. Please read these documents carefully and, if you are free, come to the Extraordinary General Meeting on Saturday 14 September. The EGM will be held in the Town Hall at 1.30pm, before David Whitehead's lecture on Brilliana Harley that starts our 2024-25 programme. Provided that the membership formally approves the proposed new constitution at that meeting, it will then be forwarded to Mr Jeremy Wilding, a senior solicitor at Gabbs & Co, for his legal endorsement, before submission to the Charity Commissioners.

Other changes, led by Terry Morgan, our editor, are also being steered through by members of the strategic planning group. These include improvements in our financial and other procedures, and—with the aid of Toby Cusworth, our new membership secretary—better communications with prospective members. One aspect of this is the formation of new sub-committees to

streamline our operation. Let me illustrate this by saying a little about the programme and collaboration committee, with which I have an involvement. As well as planning our regular activities like the winter programme and field trips for 2025-26, this group has been looking further forward as to how best we might mark the WNFC's 175th anniversary year in 2026-27. It should quite a year in the Club's history.

But there is a more immediate celebration to be had, 150 years to the day from the opening of the Hereford Free Library and Museum in Broad Street. The 8th October 1874 was a great day in the history of the city and county, and it is right that the club that was instrumental in the Free Library's founding, and whose prominent member and twice president, James Rankin, was the benefactor, should hold a conference to commemorate such a momentous event. It was heralded by the *Hereford Times* in this way: 'Never was public gift [from James Rankin] received with more general or more hearty thanks of gratitude; never was public institution opened amid more enthusiasm, hearty and general wishes for its long duration and its usefulness'. Hyperbole certainly, but there is sufficient evidence to suggest that the city was indeed *en fête* as perhaps never before on that day. The details of our 'Celebration of Libraries' conference, which will take place in College Hall, Hereford Cathedral, on the afternoon of 8 October, can be found on the back page of this newsletter. I do hope that many of you will be able to subscribe to an important event that not only takes due notice of our Woolhope past, but also looks forward to our future as a city and county of learning.

So, as one historian observed over 450 years ago in his *Description of England*: 'Times change and we must change with them' (or, if you prefer Latin: '*Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*'). The Woolhope Club is changing but it continues to be deeply conscious of its heritage. This will be physically manifested when we eventually return to a refurbished Woolhope Room, in the new building that is being created behind the magnificent façade of the old free library and museum. And our historical and scientific roots are also acknowledged in the statement embedded in our objectives in the draft CIO document. Let me quote from one portion of clause 3: We 'promote practical study and original research relating to the geology, archaeology, built environment, history, natural sciences, ecology, biodiversity and the wider cultural and environmental heritage of the county of Herefordshire and its surrounding areas'. This seems to me an admirable statement of one aspect of our mission, which has been fully clarified in this way for the first time. Your committee, to whose support I am indebted, is intent on fulfilling it in new and old ways. Thanks to the careful stewardship of our past officers, as well as to the initiatives of our current honorary office-holders (the ten are listed in clause 12 of our proposed new constitution) and other committee members, we can look forward to the future with confidence.

Howard Tomlinson

GW SMITH FUND

Since the last newsletter, we have received two applications for grants from the Smith Fund, which have been considered by the sub-committee. Our recommendations will be considered for approval at the main Club committee meeting on 9 August, and as I am writing this prior to that (17 July) the results will be communicated to members in the next newsletter. I am also aware of another application for a grant which will be made in the autumn, which demonstrates the ongoing need for the Fund. If you are considering making an application for a grant towards a publication, or bringing information into the public domain, please get in touch for a preliminary discussion, either on 01432 271141 or by email at jceisel@btinternet.com.

John Eisel

PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE

Once again I must express our gratitude to Terry Morgan for all the work he does in not only producing our *Transactions* to a very high standard, but for encouraging new authors to come forward, and guiding them through the process. He aims to produce a balanced volume, reflecting all aspects of Herefordshire and environs which fall within the Club's interest, and in this he is eminently successful. I should also mention that he is playing a leading role in the necessary reorganisation of the Club, which adds to his load of work. We are extremely grateful for the time spent on this, and the Club is the beneficiary.

John Eisel

EDITOR'S REPORT

The 2023 *Transactions* are scheduled for publication late in 2024. A good range of papers includes the first paper on a botanical topic—rather than a recorder's report—for some time. Our excellent recorders will again keep us in touch with many matters of interest to the Club, its members, and the public.

Considerable material is already pencilled in for the 2024 edition and beyond. A variety of authors—some well-known to readers of the *Transactions* and several who are not—wish to contribute, as active research about our area continues.

We're now building use of our online-only channel, *Transactions Extra*, to make available reference information too extensive to appear in a paper. We also anticipate that at least two new papers will appear there over the next six to nine months, additions to those published in the *Transactions*.

Finally, the Club is beginning to plan how publication capabilities might help celebrate the 175th anniversary in 2026/27. Watch this space!

Terry Morgan

WINTER PROGRAMME

Included with this newsletter is the usual card, giving details of the winter programme of lectures, both for the wide-ranging series of talks on a Saturday afternoon and for the Geology meetings on Friday evenings. Our thanks to Anne Harbour and Sue Olver for organising two highly promising programmes. If at any time members have a suggestion for a lecture that might be suitable for inclusion in the Club programme, please get in touch with any member of the committee to pass your idea on.

HEREFORD MUSEUM AND ART GALLERY – PROGRESS REPORT

Members of the Club will be delighted to learn that planning permission and listed-building consent has now been granted for the redevelopment of the Broad Street building, a crucial step forward. In the meantime, Damian Etheraards, the Museum and Art Gallery Lead, has updated us about investigative and preparatory work taking place within the building, the action in hand to review the gallery designs submitted to the National Lottery and to take design forward, and the appointment of retail consultants to help achieve best results in that area. The appointment of ten people to his team since the spring is of the utmost importance, a huge step forward after years of running on a skeleton staff.

We look forward to working with Damian and his new team, not only with respect to the Woolhope Room and library, that core of the Club, but also to contributions that knowledgeable members might make to the content of the museum. We wish the team every success in bringing to Hereford a fine, stimulating, and engaging museum, of which the city and the county will be proud, and a cultural hub where the Club will be able to thrive and to play an active, collaborative role. We're especially pleased that both Damian and Jon Chedzoy, the Herefordshire Libraries and Archives Manager, will give talks at the Club conference of 8 October about the future of the Broad Street building and the city library.

JOE HILLABY

Members will be sorry to hear of the death of Joe Hillaby on 1 May 2024, at the age of 91, as reported in the *Hereford Times* on 29 May. He joined the Club in 1962, soon became assistant librarian and a member of the committee, and became President for the first time in 1969. He also served in that office in 1986, 2003, and 2013. Over the years he published many papers in our *Transactions*, the first being in 1967. As a professional historian, his papers in our *Transactions* formed only a fraction of his output over a very long period. A full obituary will be published in the 2023 *Transactions* later this year.

WENDY FENN

We are sorry to hear of the death in May of Wendy Fenn. Long-established members will remember her as the driver of the coach for many of our Field Meetings a quarter of a century ago, which she much enjoyed. A true Herefordian, and deeply interested in the county, she much appreciated the work of the Club, so much so that in 1988 she joined, and remained a member thereafter. In recent years, I occasionally bumped into her in Hereford, and she would tell me of her extensive and adventurous travels abroad. She was still interested in what was happening in the Club, and always reminisced about Jim and Muriel Tonkin. The funeral was held at Sarnesfield on 12 June.

John Eisel

REPORTS OF FIELD MEETINGS

The Club is grateful to Sue Olver for arranging the programme of field visits and to those who contributed their knowledge and expertise in delivering them. Reports are included for meetings that took place up to the end of July.

First Field Meeting: Five Silurian Anticlinal Inliers, 4 May 2024

The first field trip was to two major crustal fractures—the north-south trending Malvern Fault system and the north-west / south-east trending Woolhope Fault system. The weather was good and the twelve Woolhopians were joined by two members of the Teme Valley Geological Society. At Stallion Hill, our leader, Dave Green, handed out a map, a LiDAR map, and sketch showing the geological structure between Clifford Mesne and Linton, as well as the names and relative ages of the various Herefordshire rock units of the marine Silurian.

At this point we looked towards the Black House Anticline and the Cotswolds. In the distance was May Hill, the Aston Ingham Anticline, and the Clifford Mesne Anticline, where Dave Green pointed out the Glasshouse Fault. The layers below were folded, causing many minor faults around this area. These were reactivated by the late Carboniferous Variscan Orogeny, caused by the continental collision that created Pangea. The crust was moved violently but very slowly along pre-existing planes of weakness running through the rock, particularly the north-south trending Malvern Fault and the north-west to south-east trending Woolhope Fault, resulting in a thrust upwards. The anticlines of Aston Ingham, Gorsley, and Woolhope appeared, and over time the soft layers were gradually eroded, leaving the harder layers of rock that are seen today. The Silurian period stretches from 444 to 416 Ma.

Our next stop was an old quarry where a new brick house backed onto the Clifford's Mesne quarry. Here we saw a lovely exposure of Downton Castle Sandstone as well as some fossils found by Lucy Cornelius. This was followed by our next exposure in Aston Ingham quarry where we viewed the Downton Castle Sandstone and Upper Ludlow Siltstone, as well as Wenlock Limestone.

After lunch in the Penny Farthing Inn at Aston Crews, the next visit was to Upton Court Farm, where the party walked into a field and uphill to Upton Crews. Layered below our feet was Raglan Mudstone, Downton Castle Sandstone, Upper Ludlow Siltstone, Aymestry Limestone, Lower Ludlow Siltstone, Wenlock Limestone, and Wenlock Shale.

The party moved on to Chibler's Rough, a poor exposure as the new house there was having some landscaping for a drive. After tea in Gorsley, the last exposure was at Gorsley Linton Quarry, which showed Downton Castle Sandstone above Upper Ludlow Shales lying unconformably on nodular Wenlock Limestone. Afterwards, at Linton Wood, Gorsley, we saw the stream flowing and cutting down through that limestone not far from a fault.

Finally, the party returned to the cars at Gorsley Baptist Church and thanked Dave Green for a great and enjoyable field trip.

Second Field Meeting: President's Choice, 8 June 2024

On a warm afternoon, a full complement of members met at the north-east



corner of the Cathedral Close for a visit to some of the older buildings of the Cathedral School, of which our President is a distinguished former headmaster, and author of a highly acclaimed book on the school. We were privileged to be able to visit these fascinating and important buildings, which are not open to the public, beginning at 5 Harley Court, the home of the headmasters of the school since 1970 (Figure 1),

Figure 1. No. 5 Harley Court, the home of the headmaster of the Cathedral School. A three-bay hall can be identified inside

Duncan James spoke on the features of the three-bay hall, built with timber felled in 1431. He has identified a further three open halls, built around the same period by the same group of craftsmen, and has talked to the Club on the subject. On the north side the hall is joined by a building dating from the 17th century, all hidden behind a Georgian brick façade. Outside, Duncan showed an image of an 18th-century watercolour of the exterior, which was used to demonstrate the alterations to the fenestration.

Round the corner from Harley Court and facing over the Close is the Old Deanery, now the main centre of organisation of the school. This was rebuilt by Dean Merewether in the middle of the 19th century, although earlier elements survive. This was the home of the dean of Hereford until 1945, although latterly requisitioned in the war. After being taken over by the school in 1945, until 1995 it was used as a boarding house, and is now used for administrative purposes. It includes the headmaster's study.

1 Castle Street is another building with an earlier core behind a 19th-century façade. John Eisel spoke on its ownership before it came into the possession of the school in 1910 and, in the entrance hall, briefly outlined how this happened. From late in 1911 it became the home of the headmaster and his family, and until 1976 part was used a boarding house, and then for a few years as a house for the choristers under the supervision of the late Egerton Parker.

We moved on to view nos. 28 to 31 Castle Street, which have all come into the possession of the cathedral school in comparatively recent years. No. 28, the Junior School, dates from the mid-18th and 19th centuries, and we heard of its history in the unspoiled panelled entrance hall. Next door, no. 29 incorporates the substantial remains of a 15th-century hall, once occupied by the Vicars Choral. To the rear of this group is a fine panelled room, with plaster ceiling dating from the late 17th or early 18th century. The school music room is next door in no. 31, a 17th-century and later house, with mediaeval cellars.

The story of the main school buildings on the corner of the Cathedral Close is much more complicated, with elements dating from the 18th century onwards. On the opposite corner of the site is an L-shaped building, built in the 1880s on the back of a spurious claim about the date of foundation of the school, which has been much developed in recent years. On the first floor is Big School and the Gilbert Library, all laid out as a study area. Here we had a very welcome cup of tea or coffee, and a large slice of cake. Suitably refreshed we enjoyed a talk on some of the most interesting of the former headmasters, given by our President. This concluded a very interesting and informative day which was much enjoyed by the participants, on behalf of whom John Eisel expressed gratitude to our President.

Third Field Meeting: Croft Castle, 29 June 2024

On a dry sunny day our party of ten met at Croft Castle for a Landscape, Art and 'The Ghost Tree Walk', led by Richard Gilbert, David Lovelace, Paul Ligas, and Sara-Jane Arbury, with poems for each of the trees.

Croft Castle is surrounded by 1,500 acres of woods, park, and farmland, and there are still some ancient veteran trees from as far back as 1,000 years ago, left where they were first planted. Of these, seven form 'The Ghost Tree Walk'.

Each tree was introduced by Richard Gilbert with his paintings, followed by Paul Ligas with the digital photographic artwork and relevant words on material which allowed the light to illustrate the tree. David Lovelace expanded on other aspects of the tree. Then Sara-Jane Arbury explained her interpretation of each one and recited her poem. In the Barn area there was a display of the artists' work and more information about it.

The first tree forms part of a double line of oaks marking a probable pathway approaching the house from the south. With the help of aerial photography and a map of 1769 they can be lined up with the modern grid, giving an accurate analysis of the landscape. Using part of the poetry that Sara-Jane had created, these old trees 'sustain new life from old' and are not dead but develop ecosystems in their own right, providing habitat for fungi and beetles, and food for birds and bats. This theme is common to all of the seven trees we visited.

The second tree connects with the Battle of Stokesay of 1644, where Sir William Croft was shot. He was later laid to rest at the tree's foot. It lost a large limb and part of the trunk during a storm in 2021. The upper part has been struck by lightning and, although partly fallen and crumbling away, still has a living life system.

Tree number 3 is a sweet chestnut forming part of another avenue, created



from 1580-1680 and linking to the Spanish Armada. This tree was also struck by lightning in 2012. Like others nearby it has suffered from ink disease that turns the roots to dark blue (Figure 2).

Figure 2. A Sweet Chestnut, the third Ghost Tree

Another sweet chestnut, the fourth 'Ghost Tree', was sandwiched between two other trees, looking like (to quote from our poet again) 'a boiling cauldron of a tree'. It certainly deserved close-up viewing as it had an enormous bole and was full of contortions that change with the light and seasons.



After lunch, we continued to tree number five. This was another sweet chestnut, and, like the previous tree, part of a triple line of trees planted as if they were 'approaching' the Castle. Here we had a tree that had regrown a branch back into the ground, phoenix-like, thus forming two trees in one, one with leaves and the other without.

The penultimate tree was one of three oaks that had all been ring barked, a procedure whereby the bark is cut into all the way round the tree, which ultimately kills it. This was carried out after the First World War in order to plant large areas of spruce trees (Figure 3).

Figure 3. David Lovelace shows ring barking

Our last and seventh tree was a perfect specimen of a dead oak, planted about 100 to 150 years ago as a landmark on the crest of the rising ground, and also central to the park. It stands within viewing distance of the entrance to the castle. The party then returned to the café area where Jane Adams gave the vote of thanks.

Additional Field Meeting: Wilden Farm, St Michael's, 9 July 2024

After heavy overnight rain, eight members met Stuart Hedley and Moira Jenkins, and the landowners Tim and Adeline Jones, at Wilden Farm, for a walk around the unimproved farmland. Tim and Adeline briefly described a history of the farm, which extends to 213 acres with adjacent rented land and has been in the hands of the Jones family since 1932. The farm buildings date from the 17th century, and Tim described how recent work on the floor of the barn, constructed mainly from sandstone, had revealed that it had no substantial foundations but was built upon bricks, supported upon charcoal.

The farm lies close to the Chapel Point (Bishop's Frome) Limestone which extends as a thin ribbon through the Old Red Sandstone, the dominant rock in the geology of the area. The farm buildings lie below the quite steep

escarpment of the higher ground on which Leysters lies. It is believed that the parts of the farm on this higher ground and the escarpment have not been ploughed for at least 100 years, probably much longer, and Stuart confirmed that it represented one of the best examples of unimproved pasture in Herefordshire. Observation of the variety of plants growing in this pasture formed the major part of the visit.

Stuart laid out a 1m-square quadrat on the higher ground above the escarpment and members (with help) identified the visible plant species. The soil here is on the sandstone and acidic, and members identified well over twenty species within the quadrat including indicators of unimproved acid soil and also the unusual Adders Tongue Fern. A similar quadrat on the side of the scarp was then investigated, again producing a count of well over twenty species but with less clover and with plants which are indicators of water seepage, explained by pockets of marl in the scarp which would lead to seepage of water filtering through the sandstone.

Overlooking the valley, with views towards Clee Hill, the party had a picnic in an area where Wordsworth, the poet had spent time when visiting these parts.

A third investigation of the botany was carried out near the base of the scarp where a spring emerged. Here, there was a wide variety of plants from all types of soil and moisture conditions, as well as limestone indicators. A discussion about the geology took place, and the high lime content of the spring water was confirmed by proceeding into marshy woodland slightly further downhill, where Tufa deposits were abundant and lime-loving plants, such as Marsh Valerian and Tufa Moss, were plentiful.

Adeline confirmed that the wide variety of species and flowering plants observed in the quadrats led to the pasture being 'alive' with insects in summer, with a consequent increase in bird life. Adeline had identified forty-one species of hoverfly on the farm and attributed the increasing insect population partly to a reduction in the amount of animal worming, which correspondingly reduced the amount of insecticide in the animal faeces.

After a very interesting day at Wilden Farm, the Club members set off for home just as the rain returned.

Fourth Field Meeting: Cydach Gorge, 20 July

Eighteen people met our leader for the day, Alan Bowring, at the car park which serves the remains of the ironworks at the Clydach Gorge. Alan is Development Officer for the Forest Fawr Geopark within the Brecon Beacons National Park, and has long held a strong interest in the Clydach Gorge, even though it lies a little outside the Unesco-scheduled area. His energy, leadership, and

knowledge - of geology, industrial archaeology, and, as the President put it in his vote of thanks, lots of other 'ologies' - gave rise to a day of sustained interest as the party climbed high above the gorge, with its very steep sides and dizzying views, before returning via a circular route.



Figure 4. Some of the party in discussion with Alan Bowring near a tunnel

Only a careful report, especially on the considerable geological detail, will do justice to what was learnt and discussed on such a day, and this will appear in the 2024 *Transactions*. In the meantime, one can only communicate how, in so many ways, the gorge typifies this part of South Wales. The geology, which attracted such major industrial investment by the Victorian age, is massively present in towering quarries (Figure 6); the remains of limestone-kiln complexes, the impressive ironworks, and the traces of inclines and railway lines, supported by tunnels and viaducts (Figure 5), all attest to tough working lives and enterprises long past; and now nature is reclaiming a very beautiful



landscape, protected for its Beech woods and its bats, with orchids to be seen at frequent intervals.

Figure 5. The viaduct crossed by the party *en route*—stunning architecture

Eventually, the group reached the famous ironworks, which originated in the late 18th century. It was now only a short distance to the car park, and participants were well aware of a good day's exercise, but there was more to

learn. Even though modern scholars might differ about detail, the sketches of the former industrial complex, presented on information boards, were fascinating, as were similar sketches for the lime kilns encountered earlier. A brief detour to the river opposite the ironworks led to Smart's Bridge, a cast-iron structure with a date plate for 1824. It remains in use today.



Figure 6. Large quarry near the end of the walk. A former road teeters above it

All present thanked Alan Bowring with great warmth and kept him with us for some time with many questions.

Fifth Field Meeting: Arthur's Stone, 25 July

On a cool but clear afternoon, Profs. Keith Ray (Cardiff University) and Julian Thomas (University of Manchester) welcomed thirty-four people to view progress in the fourth summer of work at and around Arthur's Stone. Once again, the results had been remarkable.

Keith summarised previous work, which had demonstrated a complex sequence of development of the scheduled monument itself, its use for burial in the Neolithic, how it probably extended to the modern junction of hedges across the lane, the presence of obsidian-like Arran pitchstone, and the location of a quarry from which stone for drystone walling of the latest phase of the tomb's development had been sourced.

This year's work had taken place in the field to the south (Figure 7). First, additional information had been gathered about the previously discovered twin rows of postholes—holding wooden posts and later upright stones—apparently forming an avenue leading to the monument on the approach from the valley. It remained uncertain how far they extended down the hill and in what format.



Newly discovered, divergent postholes suggested additional architectural features; further investigation would be valuable. Secondly, work to the south-west of Arthur's Stone had revealed the traces of a stone circle, some 20m in diameter. This is thought to be the first certain stone circle found in Herefordshire.

Figure 7. Prof. Keith Ray in the field to the south of Arthur's Stone, with members taking up the likely position of stones in the unexcavated part of the stone circle

Julian explained that multi-spectral drone survey had faintly suggested the presence of the circle. Half of it, represented by postholes—more accurately holes for stones—had been uncovered; part of a damaged standing stone remained in one of them, but otherwise the stones had been removed. Only half of each posthole had been excavated, to enable cross sections to be drawn but crucially to leave material for future archaeologists with presumptively better investigative technology (Figure 8). The architecture of the circle needed further investigation; already, straight sections within the overall arc were evident and stones in some areas had been closer together than in others. He hoped that further excavation, as part of the current series, would include the more southerly half. In the meantime, he noted the similarity between the holes and the Aubrey holes in the early phase at Stonehenge. A date in the order of 3200 to 3000 BC was therefore likely for the stone circle.



Figure 8. Prof. Julian Thomas talking about the stone circle. Nb. the size of the holes

The circle and the stone avenue leading to Arthur's Stone were probably contemporary and integral parts of the same ritual landscape.

Prof. Ray then moved the party across the hill to consider what had evidently become a far more developed ceremonial landscape than recognised hitherto. The slight linear hollow followed by the public footpath rising from the Dore valley to the south would have created a marked visual effect, focusing on the monument, with somewhat higher land on both sides. The newly discovered stone circle had been built on a terrace above the western flank of the hollow. As yet, it was unknown if any monument had existed on the eastern side. Prof. Ray took questions and noted that possible key features of the Neolithic landscape (such as henges and settlements) remained to be discovered and may have been located at or close to the River Dore itself. Howard Tomlinson, the President, thanked him for an outstanding afternoon and expressed his astonishment at the effort and techniques deployed by archaeologists!

HEREFORDSHIRE VCH UPDATE

The Cradley publication has been considerably delayed but is now on track for early 2025. In contrast, good progress for other parishes means that drafts of Coddington and Donnington can be read on the VCH website:

<https://www.history.ac.uk/research/victoria-county-history/county-histories-progress/herefordshire/herefordshire-vol-iii-radlow-hundred-ledbury-and-malvern-hills>

Mathon is almost complete. The draft will be uploaded once our editor, Hannah Ingram has revised it, following the comments of the VCH committee. Hannah will give a talk on her Mathon research on 21 September at the Burgage Hall, Ledbury, at 7.30pm. Woolhope Club members will be welcome.

The plan is next to research Ledbury rural, which includes Wellington Heath, and to update the 2 EPE books on Ledbury. We are identifying the research required and likely costs. We can then work on producing the first VCH Red Book on Herefordshire since 1908. Also, we have met the Mortimer History and Leintwardine Local History Societies about work in the north-west of the county, probably starting with Leintwardine. A launch event is planned for Spring 2025. More details will be given in due course in a Woolhope news email.

Jonathan Comber, Treasurer, Herefordshire VCH

PUBLICATIONS OF LOCAL INTEREST

The Old Words of Herefordshire, edited by **Richard Wheeler**, x + 182pp. (Logaston Press 2024), ISBN 978-1-910839-76-8, hardback, £12.99. This book draws on the long study of the dialect words of Herefordshire, from Duncumb to the extensive work of Winifred Leeds, our first woman president, and Andrew Haggard of Ledbury, to open a fascinating window into the past.

Lost Realms: Histories of Britain from the Romans to the Vikings by Thomas Williams (William Collins, hardback: 2022; paperback: 2023) 413pp., ISBN (paperback) 978-0-00-817198-8, £10.99.

This up-to-date introduction to some of the 'lesser' kingdoms of early medieval Britain includes major sections about peoples adjoining Herefordshire—the Hwicce in Gloucestershire / Worcestershire and groups in Powys / Shropshire.

Mortimers of Wigmore, 1066-1485, the Dynasty of Destiny; Dryburgh and Hume (editors), (Logaston Press, July 2023), 352 pp., ISBN 978-1910839652, hardback, £25.

A beautifully illustrated collection of essays, offering 'new perspectives on the history of one of the most important and influential noble dynasties in medieval England—the Mortimer family of Wigmore'.

'IN CELEBRATION OF LIBRARIES': A WOOLHOPE CLUB CONFERENCE

This event will take place in College Hall, Hereford Cathedral, on 8 October 2024, the 150th Anniversary of the Opening of the Hereford Free Library and Museum in Broad Street, on 8 October 1874. It is hoped that as many members as possible will attend.

Optional lunch is available at 1pm, the first lecture will begin at 1.30pm, tea is at 3.15 pm and the conference will close by 5pm. Advance tickets cost £20 including lunch or £10 without. Tickets will cost £25 and £15 respectively on the door. ***Please see the back page of this newsletter for details of the conference, and how to buy tickets, from the Cathedral shop or website.***

It was, so the *Hereford Times* reported, a day of memorable celebration for 'an ornament to the city'. 150 years on from that great day, the Woolhope Club, which was instrumental in the founding of the free library and museum, and whose prominent member and twice president, James Rankin, was the benefactor, are commemorating this great event with a celebratory conference.

The speakers will include:

- Simon Pepper, Professor Emeritus of architecture at Liverpool University and an expert of the free-libraries movement in Britain and its buildings
- John Eisel, distinguished local historian and five-time president of the Club
- Howard Tomlinson, the Club's current president.

The conference will end by looking forward, with talks on the future of the Broad Street building and the city library by (respectively):

- Damian Etheraads, the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery Lead
- Jon Chedgoy, the Herefordshire Libraries and Archives Manager.

'IN CELEBRATION OF LIBRARIES' A WOOLHOPE CLUB CONFERENCE TUESDAY 8 OCTOBER 2024 | 1 - 5 pm

On the 150th Anniversary of the Opening of the Hereford Free Library and Museum in Broad Street on 8 October 1874, the Woolhope Club is commemorating this great event with a celebratory conference.

Following a buffet lunch at 1 pm, lectures will begin at 1.30 pm, including:

SIMON PEPPER - The Free Library Movement in Britain and its Buildings

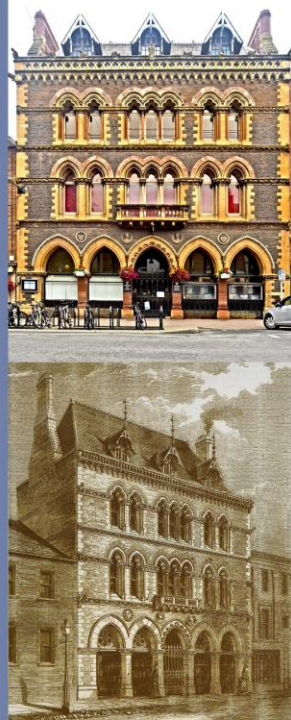
JOHN EISEL - Libraries in Hereford in the early Nineteenth Century

HOWARD TOMLINSON - The Building of the Free Library and Museum in Broad Street

DAMIAN ETHERAADS - The future of the Broad Street building

JONATHAN CHEDGZOY - The future of the city library

Tea will be taken between the talks at 3.15pm, and the conference will conclude by 5pm.



This event is open to all and will take place in the College Hall of Hereford Cathedral.

Advance tickets £20 (to include lunch) or £10 are available from the Cathedral Shop (01432 374 210) or website:

www.herefordcathedral.org/event/in-celebration-of-libraries

Tickets on the door will be £25 or £15.