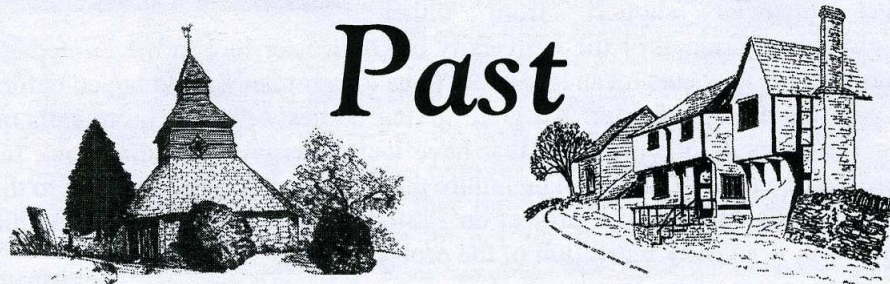


# Herefordshire Past



The Newsletter of The Trust for the  
Victoria County History of Herefordshire  
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- includes Janet Cooper's editorial, launch of 2<sup>nd</sup> *Ledbury Book*, *The Staffordshire Hoard* by Celia G.Kellett, *Recording Farm Buildings* by Philip Weaver, *Unravelling the History of a Farm* by Sylvia Pinches, *Bosbury Field-Names & Field Patterns* by Ruth E. Richardson, and David Whitehead's Review of *Herefordshire Place-Names* by Bruce Coplestone-Crow.

See also: <http://explore.englishpastforeveryone.org.uk>

See also: <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/website/Counties/Herefordshire/News/NewsletterArchive/MainContent>

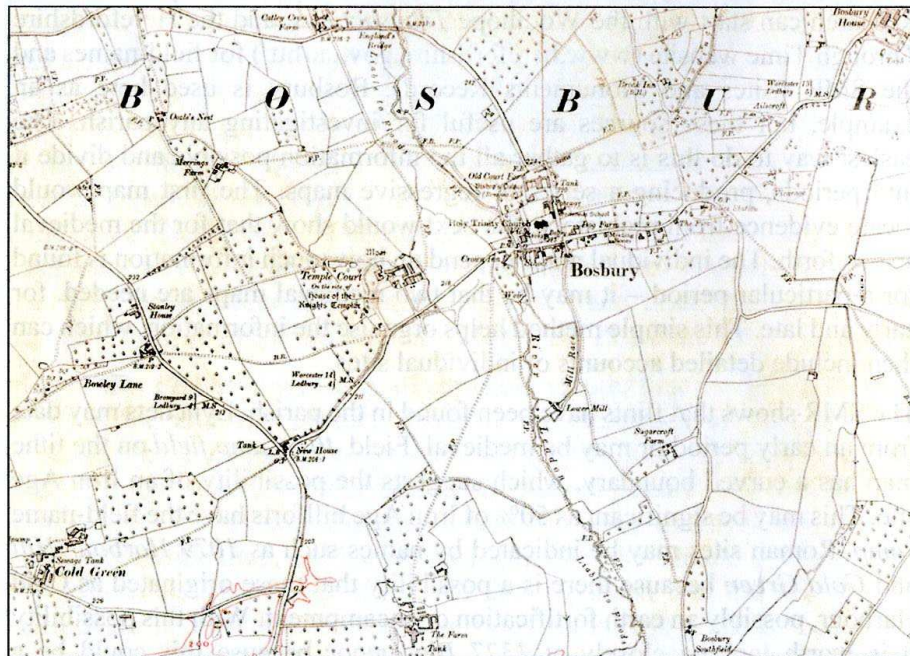
## Bosbury Field-Names and Field Patterns

The Bosbury tithe apportionment is dated 1839 while its accompanying map is dated 1840. The parish name itself, which Ekwall suggests means *Bôsa's burg*, denotes a probable fortified place. As the name appears as *Boseberge* in the 1086 Domesday Survey, it further suggests that this fortified place predates the Norman Conquest, referring perhaps to a Roman fort or fortified Mercian (Saxon) manor. Such place-names and field-names are archaeological indicators, and they do require corroborative evidence. Particular names elsewhere, identifying certain types of site, can be useful reference points. Investigation can be done by using documentary evidence and through building surveys, fieldwalking, hedge dating and geophysical surveying.

Research can start with the Woolhope *Transactions*, and the Herefordshire Through Time website ([www.herefordshire.gov.uk/htt/](http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/htt/)) for field-names and the SMR (Sites and Monuments Record). Bosbury is used here as an example, but these sources are useful for investigating any parish. The easiest way to do this is to gather all the information possible and divide it into periods, producing a series of regressive maps. The first map would locate evidence from prehistory, the next would show that for the medieval and so forth. The individual maps depend on how much information is found for a particular period – it may be that two medieval maps are needed, for early and late. This simple method helps organise the information, which can then include detailed accounts of individual sites.

The SMR shows that flints have been found in the parish. Lynchets may date from an early period or may be medieval. Field 402 *Camp field* on the tithe map has a curved boundary, which suggests the possibility of an Iron Age site. This may be significant as 50% of Iron Age hillforts have the field-name *camp*. Roman sites may be indicated by names such as 1079 *Harbour Hill* and *Cold Green* because there is a possibility that these originated as Cold Harbour, possibly an earth fortification or encampment. With this possibility it is worth looking closely at 1327 *Blackmoor* because this could be a Blacklands site, and *Stone* or *Stoney* might also be of the same period. Mercian (Saxon) sites are clearly suggested by the *-burg* name in Bosbury itself, but 25 *Winserdine* just might be a *-wardine* name.

A glance at the tithe map shows a wealth of surviving medieval strips and some of these will have relevant names that would allow the recognition of the extent of the large open fields, such as *Southfield*. In the paper *Herefordshire Field-Names* I was able to deduce the size of the open fields in Much Marcle using the field-names. Bosbury parish was divided into the three townships of Bosbury, Upleadon and Catley. Upleadon was the site of a preceptory belonging to the Knights Templar for which some evidence survives at Temple Court, in particular *331 Moat* and *324 Moat Meadow*. This land had been granted to the Templars by William Marshall, Earl of Pembroke, and eventually extended to 740 acres. When the Templars were suppressed in 1308 the estate passed to the Knights Hospitaller of St John of Jerusalem, but, unlike Garway, Upleadon remained independent of Dinmore, the most important Hospitaller preceptory in the area. The field evidence in the SMR also records medieval ridge-and-furrow and dovecotes.



Reproduced from 1926 6-inch Ordnance Survey Map

Later periods are also well represented. The *kiln fields* and *quarry fields* can be examined for connections to the road system and also for the geological reasons for their locations. Among the barns and other farm buildings note

can be taken of *152 Windmill Hill* as windmills were a necessary power source which had to be carefully sited. *417 Perry Hill* may be indicative of perry production, and mapping of *orchard fields* can show the extent of cider production, which may link to surviving traces of cider mills. Other mills may have a longer history, perhaps from the medieval period. Bosbury tithe map is very unusual in showing the line of the Hereford to Gloucester Canal overlaid onto the existing fields. This canal needed an Act of Parliament so detailed surveyed plans had to be produced. It would be useful to compare the records of the canal company at the Gloucestershire Record Office to see if these plans still exist in HRO and to compare if the tithe map shows exactly the same the route...and if not, why not? Inett Holmes' papers and photographs in the Herefordshire RO may prove extremely helpful.

The River Leadon bisects the parish, and it may be that the earliest settlements were along the river. Medieval villages required assured water, meadows, arable land, pasture land, and woodland for pigs, forage and timber. The quality of the soil was all important, and field names often preserve the crop best suited to a particular field. Field-names were a way of recording necessary information that could, incidentally, be passed to future generations. In periods when instant communication was not possible, field-names were also a practical way of identifying which field was being worked at any one time and also of remembering agricultural information about each field. Bosbury has a wealth of interesting information surviving in field-names, place-names and field evidence. It should prove an excellent parish for detailed study and a valuable contribution to the Herefordshire VCH.

Ruth E. Richardson 2010

Further sources of information:

- The Concise Oxford Dictionary of English Place-Names*, by Eilert Ekwall  
Woolhope Transactions, vol. XLVIII 1996
- Herefordshire Past and Present, an Aerial View*, by Ruth E. Richardson and Chris Musson, 2004 Logaston Press
- Herefordshire Miscellany, Commemorating 150 Years of the Woolhope Club*, edited by David Whitehead & John Eisel, 2000 Lapridge Publications
- A History of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in Wales and on the Welsh Border*, by William Rees, 1947 Cardiff
- A Survey of Historic Parks & Gardens in Herefordshire*, by David Whitehead, edited Jane Patton, 2001 Hereford & Worcester Gardens Trust
- Stephen Ballard's diaries in HRO, which describe his survey work for this canal