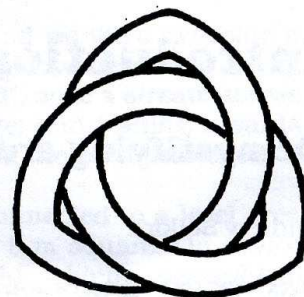


Council for Independent Archaeology



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PLEASE NOTE

Newsletter 34 has excellent papers given at the Sheffield Conference. They include:

Demystifying Archaeology by Andrew Selkirk

Some Successful Independent Projects:

Excavation at Hough on the Hill, Lincolnshire by Garland G. Grylls

The St. Aidan's Project by Eric Houlder

The Greyfriars' Site, Lanark by Ed Archer

Finding a Site:

Studying Field-Names by Ruth E. Richardson

Using Air-photos by Jim Pickering

Do-it-yourself Geophysics by Kevan Fadden & Mike Rumbold

The Electronics by John Brown

Photography:

Advanced Site Photography by Eric Houlder LRPS

The Art of Excavation:

At the Trowel Face by Tony Rook

Recording Archaeological Stratification by Neil Faulkner

Dealing with the Finds:

Analysing the Pottery by Barry Horne

Excavation of Human Remains by Melanie Van Twest

Building an Archive:

Setting up a Post-Excavation Project by Roy Friendship-Taylor

Towards Publication by Peter Clayton

How to Produce an Archaeological Report by Andrew Selkirk

The Council for Independent Archaeology brings together all archaeologists, amateur and professional. If you are interested in Archaeology then please look at the website:

www.independents.org.uk/

Finding a site

Studying Field-Names

Ruth E. Richardson

Field-names may include the oldest documentary and verbal information available to us. Although most names were actually first written down in the 18th and 19th centuries, field-names are mentioned sufficiently often in manorial and estate records to show that they were in common usage. An early famous example is in the peace treaty of 1215 between King John and the barons, later known as Magna Carta, which was signed "in the meadow that is called Runnymede", Old English for council or assembly island. In Much Marcle in Herefordshire a group of 13th and 14th century deeds has survived. They are sale transactions for the exchange of strips in the Common Fields to allow blocks of holdings to be formed. An example of a field-name on the 1839 tithe map is Normandy and this can be traced back to 1308 through these deeds. Interestingly, one deed of 1491 actually names a strip in this field, showing that at least some strips had their own independent names within the larger named field. Another example is the tithe map name of Lying Down field which can be traced back to La Lynde, or Lyndende, which shows that it is derived from the word for lime trees. Limes, even more than oaks are indicators of ancient woodland.

Field-names provide a simple and practical method for referring to a piece of land. This is only necessary if the person involved is recording information about it, or discussing it with another person. If you are working in your field you do not need to name it! It is probable that every used piece of land has, or had, a field-name because farmers, probably from as far back as the neolithic, found this useful. A farmer could leave word of where he could be found if needed. He could easily note which fields had been worked according to agricultural requirements. The field-names chosen would be something relevant to the field. The majority concern the quality of the soil, the shape of the field, the prevalent vegetation and agricultural use. They are a way of recording difficulties about the soil and the state of the field in the days before computerised records. However, an important result of such practices was to provide a way of

passing information to future generations of farmers - a stony field could break the plough - and this was especially important in the past when young adults could die suddenly.

However, for us, field-names can demonstrate changes in the landscape and they allow features to be traced. A minority of names preserves the history of the fields giving ownership names, some of which can be confirmed from other sources, or by recording significant events, which may be less easy to verify.

Two notes of caution need to be mentioned. Firstly, it is likely some fields have become subdivided. If a name was given to a particular field it is always possible that it was perpetuated attached to only a portion of the original. If the name refers to a condition like soil, or a survival like a Roman road, or indeed anything peculiar to what was once a part of a field, then it is a possibility that the name survived attached to the 'wrong' portion. This is why it is always useful to examine an area around a field-name and not just one modern field. Secondly, there is absolutely no certainty that each and every instance of a fieldname will have the same derivation, as some may come from other sources such as personal names. Care is needed as a lot of rubbish has discredited field-name use in the past when people have jumped to conclusions concerning meanings. The earliest reference needs to be found if possible. Although the original spelling of a name may be difficult to determine, deductions, with a statistical probability of a meaning, can be made by examining occurrence over a wide area.

However, such reservations do not matter if a significant field-name is considered to be only the start of an investigation. It shows a site is worth examining and one needs to remember that the reason for a particular field-name must always predate its first use for that particular field. Therefore, the age of the field-name is crucial.

Archaeological field-names are relatively few but are an archaeological tool to be used with evidence gained from fieldwalking, geophysical surveying and aerial photography. It was in order to demonstrate their usefulness that a group of the members of the Woolhope Naturalists' Field Club in Herefordshire decided to publish the tithe maps and the field-names for the whole county.

The tithe survey resulted from the Tithe Commutation Act of 1836 and the Herefordshire survey was produced between 1838-1846. Some counties already had enclosure maps so did not warrant a full survey. Herefordshire had few enclosure awards though the Woolhope Group used these to supplement the tithe survey where necessary. Indeed, as the field-names for every

parish have now been published, Herefordshire has the first complete coverage readily available for any county in Britain. All involved were volunteers and the organisation followed a set procedure, which I would be happy to describe in detail if any of you would like to ask me afterwards. Tithe maps are so large that comparing more than two is impossible. Therefore, the maps were redrawn to a uniform, and reduced, scale of 6 ins: 1 mile by a cartographer. This allows comparisons between parishes, and with ordnance survey maps, so the actual fields can be located.

Publication began in 1987 with nineteen parishes, more being added annually, usually twice a year, until all were published in the autumn of 1993.

number of people involved - 118
(collecting/publishing)

number of fields copied - 125,367

number of parishes/townships - 260, in 222 booklets

cost - from £1.25 to £4.50 per parish (total set £542)

number of booklets sold - 9,000+

They were bought by schools, libraries, the general public, the English Place-Name Society, the local Archaeological Unit and more. Requests even came from Australia, Europe and America - from people whose families used to know certain parishes. In this way more information was obtained, sometimes just about one field. In order to further publicise the potential of field-names to a wider audience the Woolhope Group entered the 1994 British Archaeological Awards and were thrilled to win. An accompanying cheque from the Robert Kiln Trust is being used as core funding for The Millennium Air Survey of Herefordshire and these aerial photographs, taken by Chris Musson, can be compared with known sites and with field-names.

The first part of The Herefordshire Field-Name Survey was simply to make the parishes, and field-names, available. The second, on-going, part is to record field-names from other sources such as wills, deeds, sales, documents, leases, etc. The information is published regularly in the Woolhope' Club transactions. People are asked to provide the field-name found /its date /source /location using the tithe number.

This information is required whether the field-name is the same as, or different from, the tithe field-name as only in this way can the ages of the field-names be properly assessed. In addition, several of our group have analysed

particular field- names and the full results will be in the next, 1996, edition of the Woolhope Club Transactions.

Field-names provide extremely varied information about the landscape and so can be of use in many disciplines. There is still an incredible amount of information to be learned from them. Fieldnames are a direct link with the past and are an invaluable resource. It is research open to anyone and I do urge you to use them.