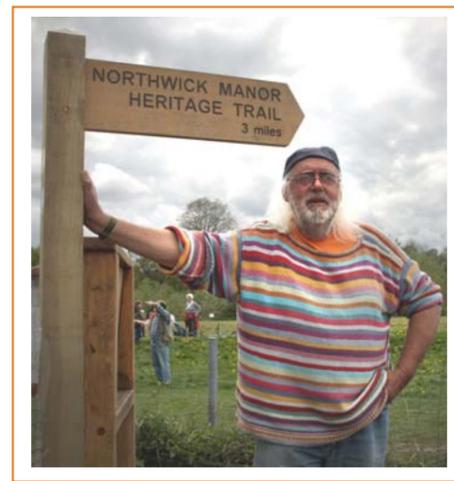


The Northwick Manor Heritage Trail

The public rights of way have been improved to make the riverside section accessible to all by the Countryside Access Team. The old rickety stiles have been removed and replaced by gates, where ever possible, by attractive wooden gates in keeping with their rural setting. The Project's Swan Logo chosen by local people, has been used as a way-marker along the route. There are now ten beautifully illustrated heritage and wildlife themed interpretation boards. The timber frames are of oak from a sustainable source and were made and installed by the City Park Rangers along the whole of the three mile circular route. We hope that everyone finds the boards interesting and informative and that children will enjoy doing the animal quiz as they walk from board to board.



Mick Aston points the way!



Trail Leaflets

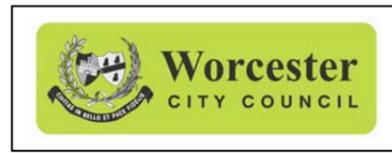
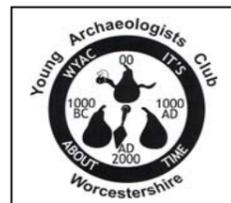
To accompany the Heritage Trail walk we have produced two leaflets, which can also be downloaded from the Project website at www.wyac.co.uk/northwick.

One is a route directions leaflet with map and the other has further information on the history, archaeological sites and wildlife that can be seen along the route.

Photographic and Art Competition

One of the most rewarding events to come out of the Project was the **Be Inspired by Northwick and Bevere** competition. There were over 250 entries from local children and about 30 adult entries. The exhibition took place in Northwick Primary School and was judged by local artist Valerie Briggs, graphic designer, Sara Fenn and Dennis Lee and Bob Tunstall from the Worcestershire Camera Club. They had a really hard task as the entries were of a very high standard and represented so many different and interesting aspects of Northwick and Bevere.

The Gallery at Bevere kindly exhibited the winning entries and many visitors to the gallery were impressed by the lovely display of photographs and paintings.



NORTHWICK MANOR COMMUNITY HERITAGE PROJECT NEWSLETTER No:3



The Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project ends after two years

Sadly, this will be our final Project Newsletter, so we would like to bring you up to date with everything that has happened since our last edition and summarise what we have achieved with your support over the last two years.

Through the Project we have provided 10 history, archaeology or wildlife themed talks, 6 workshops, 3 guided walks along the trail route and an evening bat watching walk. Wren Miller was artist in residence for the Northwick Manor Primary school and our partners have provided several activity sessions based on medieval moats and fishponds and the Romans, for the school and for local youth groups. Staff from Worcester City Museum also worked with Northwick Manor School pupils to make their own mini-museum. Vast amounts of historic research was carried out by our group of local researchers who met regularly at the record office or worked independently meeting up with local residents. We recorded the memories of many local people and created a sound archive and produced a booklet to celebrate those memories with photographs provided by residents.

The irreplaceable 18th-century map of the Manor of Claines by John Doharty, Junior was conserved and computer digitised. The digital version will be available online from the end of July at www.worcestershire.gov.uk/archaeology as well as a link from the Northwick project website at www.wyac.co.uk/northwick.

Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' undertook a building and streetscape survey and excavated some test pits in people's back gardens. We held three great events open to all, the Project Launch, The Story So Far and the final May Day event and opening of the Heritage Trail.



Mick Aston cuts the Heritage Trail ribbon whilst Young Archaeologists' Club members, local residents and Project supporters look on



Jacob learns how to use a bow and arrow

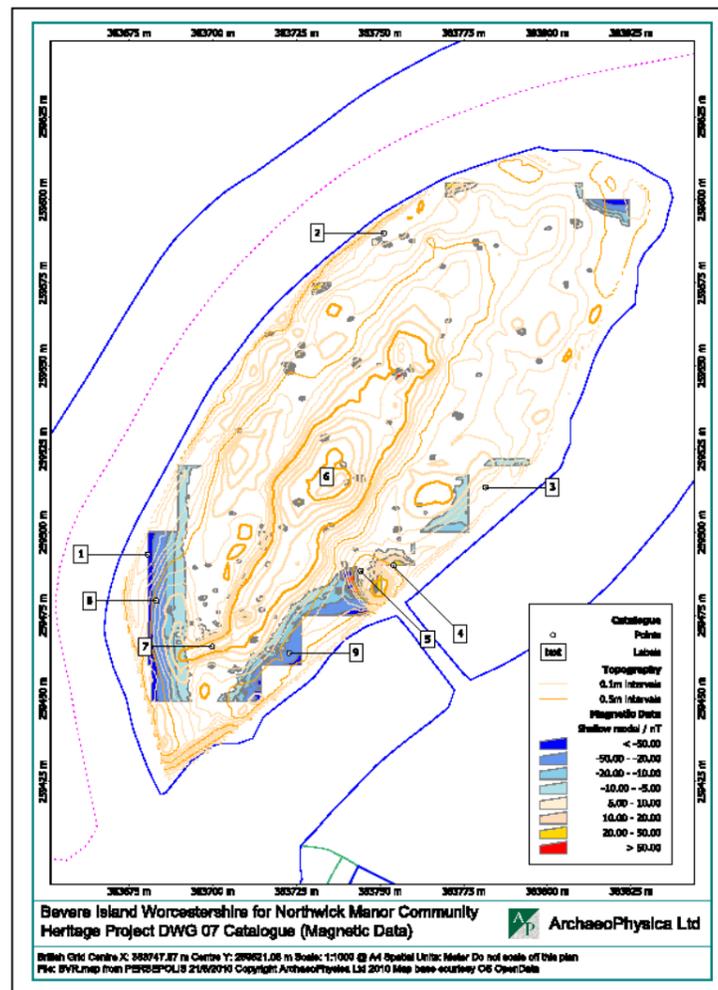


Gaunt's Retinue entertained everyone with their medieval weaponry skills

More than 600 people turned up to celebrate May Day with us and to see the Heritage Trail officially opened by Professor Mick Aston from Channel 4's Time Team programme. Once the ribbon was cut there was a blaze of orange as our Young Archaeologists took the first steps through to start the trail walk. See back page for more information about the interpretation boards.

Bever Island – Geophysics by ArchaeoPhysica Ltd

As part of the project we were able to investigate Bever Island using several geophysical techniques. The results were not conclusive but showed the raised central section which perhaps supports the folklore, that it was once fortified. One of the local names for the island is 'The Camp'. The surveys showed a large pool or water feature in front of the iron bridge. This might have formed part of the 18th or 19th-century ornamental gardens design. The photograph shows Tom De Salle undertaking the magnetometer survey on Bever Island in the pouring rain.



Above are the results of magnetic survey – just one of the many geophysical techniques used by archaeologists on site. Unfortunately, the surveys did not produce any significant results that confirmed the island had been used as a fort or settlement in the past. Constant flooding and erosion of the island over many hundreds of years has probably removed or obliterated any historic evidence.

Environmental Auger Sampling

During the earthwork survey undertaken by work experience students last summer down at The Slip, Northwick Lido Nature Reserve, several soil samples were taken using an auger. Then in May this year we were giving another opportunity to try again. Nick Daffern from the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeological Service, was able to take a few auger samples in fields further off the flood plain. Thanks to some residents who kindly gave their permission to investigate their gardens, Nick was also able to take samples from the medieval fish ponds and moat, which had been drained and culverted. We had hoped to find historic organic remains surviving in the wetter soils, such as pollen, seeds, pips, fish bones and perhaps even insect wing cases and pupae. This intriguing information would have informed us about the local landscape and suggested what it might have looked like hundreds of years ago. Sometimes it is possible to discover from the remains and pollen from plants and trees, whether the area was once a woodland or meadow, or if it was marshy ground or used for arable crops. For example farmed land has different types of weeds from a naturally wild environment.

The soil samples taken in the river meadows only brought up silty soil, which shows that the constant flooding has buried the organic remains far too deep for us to reach them with the hand auger sampling method. The samples from local gardens were also negative, as there has been far more ground moving and disturbance during drainage, house and road building and levelling for development than we had originally anticipated. So we are still looking for the exact site of the bishop's palace! If you find anything of interest we would still like to hear about it and perhaps all these little bits of information will eventually lead us to the actual location. Finally, samples taken from a field along Old Northwick Lane proved to be more fruitful – a palaeochannel (early watercourse) was identified and some early Holocene sands and clays were identified within the auger samples.

Mini-Excavation in a Northwick Back Garden

As luck would have it, - right in the last week of the Project - Mr Mike Hazelden from Beckett Road, discovered a broken tile in his back garden, which he thought might be interesting – and yes it was, very interesting! This find, turned out to be a good example of a medieval encaustic floor tile, probably of 15th century date and made locally in Worcester. The tile is terracotta in colour with a white slip pattern and clear glaze - a similar design has been seen in Claines church. Tiles of this type are only found in high status medieval buildings or chapels and churches and were used on floors and walls. They would have been very expensive so only the wealthy could afford them.

We decided that this exciting find, the only archaeological evidence so far of the medieval bishop's palace, had to be investigated further. So with the final week of the Project fast approaching, professional archaeologist, Jo Wainwright, from the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, undertook a small excavation in the area where the tile was discovered. We were hoping to find at least some similar tiles and perhaps some other finds. What was actually recovered was only a few more plain tile fragments and very little else. So unfortunately, we now have to conclude that when the site was developed in the 1930s and again in the 1960s, the higher parts were bulldozed and surplus soil deposited in the wetter lower lying areas in Linley Close to level the site for construction work. It seems very likely that any further medieval finds might be buried several metres deep!

Northwick and Bever by residents past and present

One of the Project's aims was to create a booklet from the memories and reminiscences of people who live or used to live in Northwick and Bever. The booklet we have produced contains many wonderful photos, which will remind people of what it was like to live in the area. Unfortunately, one of the photographs was accidentally omitted. This was the one showing Northwick Stores on the corner of Northwick Road and Union Place, taken in 1951 – so we have reproduced it here. Many people will remember this shop and will think of the old times.

If you live in the Project Area you are entitled to a free copy of the booklet - one per household. Or if you would like any extra copies or live outside the area the booklet costs £3.50. Please contact Sheena or Deborah – details below



If you have enjoyed reading this Newsletter and would like to send it to family or friends - please contact:

Deborah Overton on 01905 855494

doverton@worcestershire.gov.uk

or

Sheena Payne-Lunn on 01905 721133

Sheena.paynelunn@worcester.gov.uk

Or visit the Project Website
www.wyac.co.uk/northwick



Medieval tile from a Beckett Road garden
Photograph by Mike Hazelden

Deborah and Sheena would like to thank everyone who has been involved with and contributed to the Project over the last two years, particularly the County and City Councils who have provided the time they and others have spent working on the Project, as match-funding to the Heritage Lottery Funding.

Services involved: City Parks and their Rangers, the Worcester City Museum and Archaeology Service, the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service, the Record Office and History Centre and the Countryside Access Team.

Most of all they would like to thank all the researchers who have worked so hard to find information and photographs, and all those people who gave up their time to share and record their memories of Northwick and Bever.

THANK YOU TO ALL

