

Northwick Manor Community Heritage Project – A Summary

The project is based around the northern suburban fringe of Worcester City, including the large residential area of Northwick and Bevere, the Northwick Lido riverside park (or 'the Slip') and open countryside. It will encourage local people of all ages to engage with their historic environment through a series of events, training workshops, exhibitions and activities. This will lead to production of a sustainable interpreted heritage trail highlighting aspects of archaeological, natural and historic interest. Points of interest include the medieval manorial landscape once owned by the Bishops of Worcester and the later exploitation of the areas natural resources for the brick-making industry.

The Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club have received an award of up to £49,900 from Heritage Lottery Fund 'Your Heritage' to undertake the following initiatives with support from our partners:

- Heritage interpretation features incorporating historic reconstruction and wildlife illustrations
- Conservation and digitisation of historic maps to provide a resource
- Programme of educational activities leading to production of an education pack
- Art projects and exhibitions for schools and local community
- Workshops, talks, walks and fieldwork including geophysical, earthwork and building recording and ancient tree surveys designed for the local adult community
- Oral history recording and production of archive
- Field work training activities teaming WYAC with local youth groups and school children
- Provision of ecological and environmental assessment with practical workshop and event
- Web pages hosted and managed by the Worcestershire hub and linked to other relevant sites, with downloadable leaflet and route map
- Contribution to improving health and safety aspects of the trail
- Publication of heritage trail leaflet and history of Northwick booklet produced by local people in conclusion of project

Partners and other organisations supporting project

There are a number of partners in the project who are providing contributions either financially or in-kind. The project will be co-ordinated by Deborah Overton and Sheena Payne, co-leaders of the Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club, whose time on the project is being supported by the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service and the Worcester City Museums Archaeology Section.

The project partners are as follows;

- Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service

- Worcester City Museum Archaeology Section
- Worcester City Council Parks Department
- Worcestershire Record Office
- Worcester City Museum
- Worcestershire Countryside Service, Rights of Way
- Portable Antiquities Scheme
- University of Worcester
- Worcestershire Biological Records Centre
- Worcester City Conservation Department
- Setpoint

The project is also receiving advice and support from a number of other agencies and organizations. These include;

- Environment Agency
- British Waterways
- Wychavon District Council (Heritage Section)
- English Heritage
- Council for British Archaeology
- National Branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club
- Worcestershire Industrial Archaeological and Local History Society
- West Mercia Police

Organisations and individuals who have expressed an interest in being involved include;

- Local Landowners
- Local Councillors
- The Gallery at Bevere
- Worcestershire Camera Club
- North Worcester Sea Scouts
- Claines Cubs and Scouts
- Northwick Manor Junior and Northwick Manor Infants School
- Claines Junior School
- Elgar High School
- Local Historians and archaeologists

Publicity

The project is being publicised in a number of ways: -

- Through the local media (Worcester News and Standard, Radio Wyvern etc..)
- Through City Life magazine (quarterly)
- Through The Messenger parish magazine which goes out to a large percentage of the project's target area on a monthly basis
- Through leaflets and posters
- Through direct mailing and emailing of persons who have expressed an interest

- Through the project webpages via Worcestershire Hub and other links
- Through Worcester City Council, Worcestershire County Council, Worcester City Museum and Worcestershire Young Archaeologists Club websites.

Aims and outcomes

The project aims to deliver a number of initiatives which fall under the following headings: -

- Events, activities and workshops
- Education
- Conservation
- Publication
- Heritage Trail

In the following paragraphs, an attempt will be made to summarise the way in which the project co-ordinators envisage the project being structured. At this stage, this could be subject to change in order to allow flexibility to include other opportunities should they arise.

Events and Workshops

The project will be launched on **April 5th, 2008** with a large outdoor public event (final location and date to be confirmed). This will be an opportunity for all project partners and organisations to be represented, will include activities and demonstrations and will also give the public the opportunity to sign up for a variety of workshops, activities or even just further information over the coming months. At this event a calendar of events will be available.

Through the programmed events and talks it is hoped that a group of interested people will emerge who will take on their own element of research, supported by various training workshops.

A programme of talks will be running throughout the project, the first of which will be an evening talk, introducing the project to local people and giving a further opportunity for them to sign up. Talks and guided walks will be conducted by archaeologists, park rangers, special guest speakers and possibly, later on, by residents presenting their findings. Subjects covered will include history, archaeology and natural history/ wildlife.

The initial talk will be closely followed by two 'Memory sharing' events run at the local school; these will take the form of morning workshops where school children/ scouts/ WYAC members will be trained in oral history recording and interview, followed by an afternoon session where local people will be invited to share their memories of Northwick and Bevere.

Worcestershire Record Office will be providing training workshops on the use of their sources for local research with input from archaeologists on the use of the

Historic Environment Record.

Several finds identification sessions and talks are being conducted by the local Finds Liaison Officer from the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

Other practical workshops will include field survey of earthworks, building recording and possibly geophysical survey (with professional archaeologists). There will also be opportunities to get involved with ancient tree recording (organised by Worcestershire Biological Records Centre) as well as volunteering for activities such as scrub clearance of the riverside park. A training workshop on photography will take place in 2009 to launch the photograph competition in conjunction with the Worcestershire Camera Club.

Education

The project has been welcomed by local schools, and in particular will be working with Northwick Manor Infants and Junior Schools within the City area and Claines C of E School in the County area. An artist in residence is to be commissioned to work with the Northwick Manor Schools and it is anticipated that they will use the themes of the local historic environment to inspire several workshops with the children. The Worcester City Museum Access and Learning Officer is to co-ordinate with Northwick Manor Schools. An educational programme is anticipated to begin in the autumn term 2008. Co-ordination with the Worcestershire Record Office will enable the production of an education pack based on themes already established by the Access and Learning Officer.

Conservation

The project has various aspirations to conserve aspects of the areas historic environment. Most obviously, the grant will pay for the professional conservation of the 18th-century Map of the Manor of Claines, by John Doharty, Junior, which covers the area of Northwick and Bevere and is one of the key sources for research into the area, though currently in a poor state of repair. This map will also be digitised by the Worcestershire Historic Environment and Archaeology Service to enable ease of use and access for future research. Through this process it will be available on-line or via CD-rom which will in itself help to conserve the original map.

It is hoped that the project will also help to preserve the historic environment of Northwick and Bevere in a less direct way, by raising awareness of the area's rich heritage, and via recording of existing monuments. All records created as part of this process will be entered on to the City or County Historic Environment Record (as appropriate) thus enhancing our collective knowledge of existing monuments and helping to inform future management of the identified sites.

Publication

Throughout the two years of the project, web pages linked to the Worcestershire Hub will be designed, maintained and updated by degree students from the University of Worcester. These will also be linked to the Worcester City Museum, Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council websites. The pages will be used not only to publicise ongoing events and activities as part of the project, but also will be available for local people to upload their research findings, as an on-line publication. Linked to the website at the conclusion of the project will be downloadable trail guides and maps.

An environmental assessment of the area will be undertaken by environmental archaeologists, during the course of the two years, and this will be recorded in a final report, available through the local Historic Environment Records, as well as a downloadable .pdf file.

In conclusion of the project, a booklet drawing together people's experiences, photographs and research will be produced and will be freely available to residents. It is hoped that a CD-Rom may also be produced containing a digital copy of the John Doharty map, for the purposes of research; the digitised copy will certainly be available on-line.

Any oral histories recorded as part of the project will be copied to archive quality disks and stored at Worcestershire Record Office. It is also hoped that sound bites may be available through the website, or via CD-Rom.

Heritage Trail

The idea for a heritage trail was partly inspired by the 2007 Young Archaeologist of the Year Award, which required the members Of Worcestershire Young Archaeologists' Club to design their own trail around an area of archaeological interest. The resulting entry based on Northwick and Bevere was highly commended as part of the competition and can be viewed via the national YAC website at: -

<http://www.britarch.ac.uk/yac/WYAC.pdf>

The proposed trail follows a circular route around existing public footpaths and rights of way, covering a distance of £5km, and taking in the riverside from the Northwick Lido Nature Reserve (managed by Worcester City Parks Department), along past the historic Bevere Island and across to the road through Bevere Green, joining Northwick Road and following this along to the green at the centre of Northwick hamlet, then turning off down Old Northwick Lane, back down to the riverside. The trail begins at what is a small parking area and ends at the same point. Along its route are a number of features of archaeological and natural interest, including;

- The riverside brickworks, dating mainly from the post-medieval period and present in the landscape as a series of clear earthworks
- Northwick Slip; originally a fordable crossing point of the River Severn, believed to have been the point at which Prince Edward (later to be

crowned King Edward I) crossed the river on his way to the Battle of Evesham. This was also a trading wharf from the medieval period onwards.

- A Site of Special Scientific Interest; an open area of species-rich marsh occupying the disused brickpits and supporting not only a variety of rare grass and reed species, but also bird species such as the teal, reed bunting, yellow wagtail and on occasion the jack snipe. It is also known to have grass snakes and the great-crested newt.
- The River Severn; itself an important historic trading route
- Bevere Island; a place of refuge for hundreds of Worcester people during the Black Plague and at a time when the City was under attack. It is also believed to have been the site of a Viking encampment, and there are known archaeological finds from the island including prehistoric flint and Roman pottery. A listed iron and brick-built bridge gives access to the island although the island itself is privately owned.
- 18th-century landscaping; the landscape leading down to the river at Bevere was altered during the 18th century as part of the estate of Bevere Manor.
- Buildings; Bevere Manor east and Bevere House are two impressive country houses that survive in this area. There are also a variety of interesting farm buildings and walls.
- Bishops Fishponds; the Manor of Northwick was an important land holding of the Dean and Chapter of Worcester and included several large fishponds in the medieval period. A remnant of one of these still survives along the trail route.
- Medieval Bishops' Palace; an important Bishops' residence at Northwick is recorded from the early medieval period onwards, the site of which has now been completely obliterated by modern housing.
- Northwick House; another interesting locally-listed building, once home to the owner of the brickworks and partly rebuilt using bricks from the Northwick site. It was also home to a local glove maker.

It is proposed that the funding will pay for 8 interpretation panels within oak frames (with another 2 supplied and installed by Worcester City Parks Department as partners in the project). These will all be constructed and installed by Worcester City Parks department. The funding will also pay for 4 reconstruction illustrations of aspects of the area's history, as well as illustrations of wildlife native to the area, to be represented on each panel.

It is proposed that through the various workshops, local people will be able to have their say and contribute to the design and content of the trail panels.

The project partners include Worcestershire Rights of Way who have agreed to consider the route at Northwick as a priority for upgrading of stiles and access points, and in order to ensure sustainability of the trail will be adding the trail to its published list of managed walking routes.

The City Pride scheme (through Worcester City Council Conservation Section) will be donating a new bench to be provisionally located on Northwick green.