



**Oswestry & Border History & Archaeology Group
Newsletter**

Issue 5

January 2013



Old Bridge at Bangor on Dee

“Member of Oswestry Heritage Forum”

Chairman`s Page

Welcome to this edition of our Newsletter. I hope you all had a good Christmas and New year and are now looking forward to another year of talks and visits.

This season started with a talk by Peter Francis about the Stiperstones Lead Mines, it was nice to see a lot of people turned up for this very interesting talk.

In October we heard from Jeff Spencer who told us about the work of the Clywd Powys Trust. In November Bev Webber from St Asaph Archaeology came and gave us a talk on the recent dig they are doing at Ysceifiog. The final talk of the year in December, Jessie Hanson gave us a very interesting talk about the research she had done on Tithe Maps. We also had our usual festive food and drinks. There was a very good attendance and it was nice to see that most people stayed for the drinks and chat afterwards.

The Seminar went very well again and I must again say thanks to the OOLAP members for organising the event for us and to everyone else who helped out to make the day go smoothly.

The Heritage Open Days were a huge success with lots of interest from the public in what we are doing. Heather has also managed to get us a grant from the lottery fund to help us to buy some new information boards.

A meeting was held at the Hillfort to discuss a new project by OOLAP followed by an indoor meeting in the memorial hall to discuss what English Heritage want us to do. (see Page 6)

There has been no further news on the proposed development on the Hillfort as yet. It looks like a decision will be made in March this year. We will keep you all informed on any information which comes our way.

Looking forward to meeting up with you all at our meetings and visits.

Irene Milhench (Chairman)



Oswestry & Border History & Archaeology Group
Sixth Annual Seminar
'Ruling and Dividing'
Offa's Legacy in the Northern Marches

On Saturday October the 27th we held our sixth annual seminar at the Marches School in Oswestry. Everyone was welcomed at the entrance by the now familiar face of the Mayoress, Councillor Mrs Elaine Channon who has helped out on the desk for the last few years. The Mayor, Councillor Martin Bennett very kindly opened the seminar with a welcoming speech.

Our first speaker was Damian Tyler from Manchester University who told us how Mercia was formed and how it spread, taking over other territories with the use mainly of warfare until eventually it covered an area stretching from the Humber in the North East Anglia in the East, the borders of Wales and as far down as the Thames.

Next up was Martin Ryan, again from Manchester, who gave us a very well informed and at times quite funny lecture about the relationship between Offa and Charlamagne and trade relations with the continent

This led us up to lunch time when we could take a look at various displays by other groups and societies, see some videos and browse the books from the Castle bookshop.

After lunch our own President Margaret Hill explained the role of the Church in Offa's time, with particular mention to Lichfield Cathedral and Repton. Offa convinced the Pope to create Lichfield as an archbishopric in the centre of Mercia, while Repton was an important ecclesiastical centre and burial place of some Mercian Kings.

After lunch, David Stephenson, a regular to our seminars gave us the view of how Offa was seen from the Welsh side of the border or Dyke, and the reasons for it being built.

Offa made this decision to build a dyke because of the continuous problems and relations with the Welsh, the dyke was to be a defensive border between the Welsh kingdoms and Mercia.

There was then a short break for refreshments before our final speaker Ian Bapty from Herefordshire Archaeology. He showed us some photographs of the Dyke, looking at new investigations and ideas on how the Dyke was constructed, in particular, areas which have now to come to light that show that the Dyke was not as continuous as first thought and that in some places there appear to be gaps. There are also features which through erosion show how the Dyke had been built at different locations along it's length.

Finally we had just enough time for the vote of thanks to be given by myself.

I would like to thank everyone for their continued support to the seminar and hope that everyone enjoyed the day very much and are now looking forward to the next one.

Irene Milhench (Chairman)

Oswestry and Beyond Heritage Open Days

OBHAG is well represented on Oswestry's Heritage Group and this year North Shropshire community officer Corrie Davies worked with OBHAG on a successful application to the Big Lottery Fund for a grant to support the Oswestry and Beyond Heritage Open Days—Access for All Project which took place between the 6th and the 9th of September 2012.

We welcomed more than 2000 people to events over the four days which also involved 22 key providers including Llanymynech Heritage Partnership, the Tanat Valley Light Railway and many more.

The overwhelming response from visitors was.....

“When are you going to do it again?” “Fantastic, mesmerizing and hypnotic! “ Beautiful” and “more of the same please!”

The special Heritage Market on the Bailey Head hosted demonstrations of ancient crafts such as wattle and daub. There was a pole lather worker, basket maker and a bronze founder giving an overall sense of discovery and learning.

We also wanted to create a sense of atmosphere around the town with the museum acting as the hub for the various attractions within the rural area of Oswestry. Some of our OBHAG members helped out at the Guildhall and led walks at Chirk Bank and at sunset on Old Oswestry Hillfort.

Heather Hidden



Old Oswestry Landscape and Archaeology Project **(OOLAP)**

Old Oswestry and Archaeology Project (OOLAP) was originally set up as a support group for the Hillfort Improvements Project run by Oswestry Borough Council between 2006 and 2008. Since then it has organized the Hillfort Festival and the annual seminars at the Marches School.

We are now in the process of getting together a group of volunteers who will work under supervision to monitor any activities on the Hillfort, keeping an eye on the flora and fauna and reporting any problems to English Heritage, and also to become actively involved in other linked initiatives.

We had an initial meeting on the Hillfort itself in late October followed by a meeting in the Memorial Hall in early November where a start was made at planning the way forward. We are now liaising with English Heritage before meeting again early in the new year.

If you would like to join us or to be kept informed of progress please contact.

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Heather Hidden



New Members

Welcome to new members:

Ms Monica Rowlands Price, Mrs Nan Humphries, Mrs Mary McKenzie and Ms Gill Barrow.



Due to increased costs in our outgoings we are trying to find ways of keeping these costs down, one of the ways is to possibly send out the newsletter by email to most of the members, this would cut the cost of postage down.

To do this we will need to update all our records. I would therefore ask you if you could check with our Membership Secretary Mrs Margaret Ward if we have got your correct address and also let us know of any changes to email addresses as soon as possible.

If you do not wish to receive the newsletter or any other mail relating to OBHAG then please let me know and I will take you off the mailing list.

The newsletter will also be put on our website as a pdf file.

We hope to be able to inform you of any changes at the Annual General Meeting this year.

Thank You.

Irene Milhench (Chairman)



Spring/ Summer Programme 2013

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| Friday January
11th | “The temperance movement in Shropshire”
Talk by Carol James, local historian & archaeologist |
| Friday February
8th | “A look at some Shropshire Saints”
Talk by Christopher Jobson, Author & past President Eastern Orthodox Church in Shropshire |
| Friday March 8th | Annual General Meeting and presidential address with Margaret Hill. B.Ed.M.Phil |
| Friday April 12th | “Drowned, dumped or deliberately deposited”. Some Archeological discoveries and their find spots by Shelagh Hampton (Shropshire Archaeology) |
| Friday May 10th | Evening Visit. A guided walk in the Pleasure Gardens of Brogyntyn with Jessie Hanson, local historian and archaeologist.
t.b.c. |
| Friday June 14th | Evening Visit. The Llanfyllin Workhouse Old & New led by Heather Hidden
Meet at Cain Valley Hotel at 7.00pm |
| Saturday July 20th | All Day visit to Lichfield, Cathedral and Museum plus other places of interest.
More details later |

All talks are held in the Memorial Hall, Oswestry