

Extract from the leaflet Visit Herefordshire – Tourism Matters dated Summer 2007.

Provided to the Committee at the request of Councillor Blackshaw, Cabinet Member (Economic Development and Community Services)



A number of Directors of Visit Herefordshire have visited the site and agree that in this situation there has to be a balance – between supporting economic regeneration and preserving the cultural heritage of the county.

Having met the archaeologist on site who explained that the area uncovered has already suffered degeneration from both historic farming practices and Victorian land-drains, there was a discussion on what more exciting finds MAY be found either side of the new road. With further investigation by English Heritage, there could perhaps be opportunities to develop a form of tourism attraction.

It is evident that the Rotherwas access road is essential for the support of the economy of the City and South Herefordshire and the retention of jobs throughout the county and should, therefore, go ahead. Work is already taking place to protect the exposed site.

At present, we believe, there is not a visually impressive feature to view and be used to promote tourism-also the issues of access and funding have to be considered. Hopefully following more research by English Heritage, above and below the line of the access road, there could be the possibility for an alternative site with full interpretation opportunities.



Just to remind you that we are coming to that time of year when many Visit Herefordshire memberships will be due for renewal. Don't miss out on your chance to join the official fourism organisation for Herefordshire and take up one of the exciting advertising packages available. For further details, contact Claire at cbdckland@herefordshire.gov.uk or call 01432 383 602 – Wed-Fri.



The Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire and Worcestershire of Commerce Response to the Environment Scrutiny Committee – Monday 24th September 2007.

The Rotherwas Industrial Estate is the premier business estate in the county, with the site being used for employment and industry as far back as the 1st World War. The estate and surrounding area is host to over 130 businesses and employs approximately 3,000 people. Some of these companies operate in the global economy, employing highly skilled local labour, which contribute to the local economy and wealth creation for the county. The Access Road is vital to the existing businesses on the estate to create an appropriate route for large volumes of traffic carrying goods in and out of the estate on a daily basis. This road provides also provides flood free access, improves the environment for residents for people living on the Holme Lacy Road and allows for expansion of the estate to bring more jobs and wealth to the Herefordshire economy.

The Hereford Industrial Association arranged a visit to the Rotherwas Ribbon, which was attended by a number of businesses located on and around the estate. The view from this visit was that the Ribbon was very interesting and important find, although it was apparent that the site does not have the visual impact to attract and hold the attention for tourists. The view was that it could not be compared to Stonehenge.

The visit was guided by the Council's Manager of Herefordshire's Archaeological Team and who's view was that in order to protect the Ribbon, it needed to be covered over. At the time of the visit, some weather damage due to the exposure of the site had already taken place. The Chamber believes that English Heritage, who are the recognised Government experts in this field have had sufficient time to assess the significants of the Ribbon and its protection, as such finds on other construction projects happen and are dealt with under similar procedures. The issue that the Council has is that the Ribbon runs north to south and the Road runs east to west, therefore at some point it will have to cross the road, this cannot be avoided. It is clear that from the reports that any significant delay to the road will cost the Council and Herefordshire taxpayers significant expense.

In terms of the tourism opportunity that the Ribbon could create, this is very subjective and dependent on a significant amount of external funding, which is by no means guaranteed. The Chamber supports the exploration of future opportunities and funding to enable the smaller items from the site to be displayed from the find and the Ribbon be documented. However it should be remembered these would not have been found, if not for the Access Road project. The Chamber would support the application for external funding to explore further but this should not be at the expense of the delivery of the road project on schedule.

In conclusion, the Chamber calls for the vital Access Road project to be completed to schedule and wishes to remind Councillors than the Association of Rotherwas Enterprises undertook a petition to lobby for the road in June 2006, of which 125 businesses signed and only one business declined on the whole estate. This shows support for the road and its importance to the businesses on the estate.





Environment Scrutiny Committee - 24th September 2007

E-Mail from Mr Bill Klemperer at English Heritage dated 21st September 2007 Received by P James, Democratic Services Officer

FAO Paul James, Democratic Services, Herefordshire Council. Re: Rotherwas Ribbon Environment Scrutiny Committee 24th September

Dear Paul.

Thank you for inviting English Heritage to attend the Herefordshire Council Environment Scrutiny Committee on Monday 24th September 09.30hrs, and for forwarding the Call-In Report by the Director of Corporate and Customer Services, along with background papers.

English Heritage have decided not to attend the meeting.

I have reviewed the reasons for the call-in (Report item 3), especially within the context of existing English Heritage advice to the original cabinet meeting of 6th September. In my view the 6 reasons stated for the call-in are all dealt with within the existing advice letter from Tim Johnston, Regional Director, dated 14 August 2007 (and included with background papers to assist the Scrutiny Committee of 24th September).

I phoned Bill Bloxsome of Herefordshire Council today and have discussed the call-in reasons with him (Dr Ray is on leave). In three of the six reasons EH does not have a locus and offers no comment. Some additional clarification may be useful on the other three, as follows.

- 1. 'the Report and Cabinet decision do not give sufficient consideration to the implications that arise if English Heritage decide to schedule the site early next year'

 EH comment. If, in the future, EH recommends that the site is scheduled, the remains would be carefully defined in 3-D (as the thorough level of recording allows), and the road surface and non-archaeological make up layers would be excluded from the recommendation.
- 2. 'The report and cabinet decision fail to give sufficient consideration to the timescale to which the extent of the find could be established. This would allow more precise consideration of the practicality and cost of diverting the road to the north or south'.

 <u>EH comment.</u> In our letter of 14th August we stated that:
 - we agreed with Council staff and archaeological contractors that an appropriate level of recording has been undertaken within the road corridor;
 - that the remains are fragile and that in-situ preservation was appropriate whether the remains are scheduled or not.

Further work to complete the 'writing up' of the excavation within the road corridor, and some additional fieldwork in the adjacent fields, (that EH are considering funding) will assist the fuller understanding and interpretation of the site, but will not alter the essential fragility of the site and our view that preservation-in situ is appropriate.

3. The Environment Scrutiny Committee is meant to scrutinise Process as well as Policy.

There is a great deal of public concern (and concern by members) about the whole way this matter has been handled. Both Cllr Matthews and Cllr Edwards addressed this point at the Cabinet meeting. The failure to produce the Peer Review of procedures in time (commented on by Cllr Phillips) is only the latest example in a long history of concerns.

EH comment. EH is the Governments key advisor on the historic environment and has a role in advising local authorities on local provision and approaches. EH notes, therefore, the Peer Review undertaken by Stuart Bryant and included as a background paper for the Scrutiny Committee. The author of this Review is a well respected local authority historic environment professional who has a long association with the professional standard setting body. The preliminary conclusions suggest scope for improvement in some areas, and EH will take these forward in discussion with the Council. The report, however, makes clear that these are not significant concerns and EH supports the overall conclusion that project planning and execution has been appropriately structured and that PPG-16 guidance has been adhered to.

Please get in touch if I can be of further assistance,

Bill Klemperer

Team Leader, English Heritage West Midlands Region, 112 Colmore Row, Birmingham, B3 3AG



4 COURT BARNS HUNTINGTON LANE HEREFORD HR4 7RA

Councillor Bob Mathews Chairman, Environment Scrutiny Committee Herefordshire Council

21 September 2007

Dear Chairman

Rotherwas Ribbon / Dinedor Serpent Environment Scrutiny Committee 24th September 2007, Agenda Item 6

I have been asked by Councillor Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes to attend and give evidence at the meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee on Monday 24th September 2007, Agenda Item 6, which is "To consider the Cabinet decision on the preservation of the Rotherwas Ribbon and completion of the Rotherwas Access Road."

In particular, the "key decision" of 6th September 2007, under consideration by the Scrutiny Committee, was to proceed with immediate road construction over the newly discovered monument known as the Rotherwas Ribbon / Dinedor Serpent, the "ribbon of fire-cracked stones" of about the same period as Stonehenge.

I much regret that due to the very short notice of this meeting I have unavoidable work commitments in Bristol on that day, but would be very grateful if Committee Members could take the following points into account in deciding how to exercise their powers. I am grateful to Committee Services for agreeing to ensure that this letter is circulated to and considered by the Committee on 24th September 2007. I have read the 'Reasons for Call-in in accordance with Standing Order 7.3.1 and Scrutiny Committee Rules set out in Appendix 2 of the Constitution', and can confirm that the points below are relevant to <u>each</u> of the stated Reasons for Call-in, and to the Scrutiny Committee's functions, which are summarised in the papers for this meeting as follows –

- "5. It is for the Committee to decide whether it wishes to accept the decision of Cabinet or to refer the decision back to Cabinet for further consideration and if so what recommendations to Cabinet it wishes to make."
- 1. In summing up the issues immediately prior to the vote on 6th September 2007, Council Leader Councillor Phillips stated that it depended on the view taken of the monument's "significance". Presumably, in voting to build a road over it, he took the view that its significance was not all that great: but it is not at all clear on what he could have based that assessment, given that the Council's own County Archaeologist has publicly described the find as without any parallel in Europe and of "international significance", a view not contradicted by anyone else or any other evidence. For a key

decision to be based upon an absence of evidence in such a critical area could expose the Council to the risks of judicial review, or other outside scrutiny of a decision which might be regarded as irrational, and taken without the necessary evidence. The Scrutiny Committee is in a position to prevent that.

- Much store is set by the Council on the opinion of English Heritage, but that body has only formally endorsed the appropriateness of measures taken for the shortterm protection of the find 'in situ', while in the most recent letter to me from the Chief Executive of English Heritage of 12th September 2007 (attached), it is clearly stated that no consideration will be given to the issue of scheduling the monument before early 2008. This is inconsistent with an internal briefing, obtained under the Freedom of Information Act, given to Councillors by their own public relations officer, and claiming that English Heritage was "unlikely" to schedule the monument, but "we are not saying this in public". In their context, both statements cannot be correct, which raises the question of whether the Council, or the public, are in possession of the full facts, especially as the Herefordshire County Archaeologist appears to be of the opinion (again reflected in papers obtained under the FoI Act) that all the published statutory criteria for scheduling have been met. Further particulars are being sought from both Herefordshire Council and English Heritage under further FoI requests, but English Heritage has not yet replied, and the Council says that it expects to do so by 9 October 2007.
- 3. Further FoI requests have been made of the Council, asking for a copy of the contract under which the Rotherwas relief road is being built (with commercially confidential figures redacted); for copies of any assessment made as to the tourism and economic potential of development of the monument before the decision was taken to build a road over it (if none, why not?); and for details about the numbers of children in primary and secondary education and students in further education in Herefordshire who have been given the chance to view the find before it is built over. Replies to these requests have not been received, and are not expected before 9 October 2007.
- 4. These are critically important issues, which may well inform the validity of the "key decision" and an assessment of how it came to be taken, and I respectfully suggest that the Committee ought to have the answers to these questions before it endorses the Council's decision indeed, it is hard to see how the Scrutiny Committee could properly discharge its own responsibilities without being informed about these matters itself. It is a slow process trying to assemble this kind of evidence as a member of the public from an (understandably) reluctant local authority. If the Committee is minded to use other means to obtain this information sooner, so much the better.
- 5. I would only add that the element that is missing from so much of the debate is the public interest. The point has been well taken by some of the students attending Council meetings that this is not just about the heritage of a small number of Councillors, but the heritage of everyone in this County, and beyond it, as demonstrated by the very high level of public concern. The public have had almost no chance to see this unique discovery of international significance on their own doorstep, and the "key decision" is being railroaded through the Council's agendas with such haste that critical evidence is being disregarded or not given proper

consideration. The Scrutiny Committee is in a position to insist that the decision be taken properly, with proper consideration of the relevant evidence and enough time to evaluate that evidence.

I believe that Herefordshire deserves a much more imaginative outcome to these debates than finding a potential World Heritage Site and promptly building an access road over it. I would respectfully urge the Committee to exercise its considerable powers to try to ensure that decisions of this importance are taken properly, and in this case to refer the decision back to Cabinet for further consideration, with (if it is so minded) recommendations that before any decision is taken to build a road over the Rotherwas Ribbon/Dinedor Serpent, Cabinet ought to have before it —

- (i) credible external assessments of the full archaeological significance of the monument, which could include international experts, given the "international significance" claimed for the monument by the Council's own County Archaeologist;
- (ii) a final decision on scheduling by English Heritage, who could properly be asked to give evidence to the Scrutiny Committee;
- (iii) a full evaluation of the potential tourism and economic potential of development of the monument site in other ways as alternatives to construction of the road over the monument:
- (iv) a public account of the claimed contractual penalties to which the Council believes it may be subject under the contract for construction of the Rotherwas access road if any delays in road construction take place, backed up by publication of the relevant contract, (redacted as necessary to protect only genuinely commercially confidential information);
- (v) a report from Education Services on arrangements to give all children and students in Herefordshire the opportunity to view this unique Archaeological find;
- (vi) a public report on any discussions held by the Council with government departments and other bodies as to possible alternatives to destruction of this monument, whether through the exercise of other powers, the introduction of other sources of finance or otherwise; and
- (vii) the results of a genuine exercise by the Council to inform and involve the public in the resolution of these issues.

Yours sincerely,

William Wilson

William Wilson

Attachment: English Heritage Chairman's letter of 12th September 2007 cc. Scrutiny Committee Members

Mr William Wilson 4 Court Barns Huntington Lane Hereford HR4 7RA

12 September 2007

Our ref: BS3801

Rotherwas Relief Road

Thank you for your letter of 2 August.

We are very aware of the controversy surrounding the relief road at Rotherwas and the public interest in the discovery of Bronze Age remains.

Our role is to provide advice to the Local Authority on how the remains can best be preserved and to establish whether the site meets the criteria for scheduling.

Taking these in order: It is our view that given the fragility of the remains that they should be preserved in situ and we have commented on the technical suitability of the scheme proposed by Herefordshire Council engineers. The Local Authority have subsequently provided a temporary protective covering and, we understand, will be considering the road scheme at a full meeting of the Council on 23rd August.

We believe that, while an appropriate level of recording has been undertaken within the road corridor, there is insufficient information to allow a recommendation regarding scheduling at this stage, while the full extent of the site is unclear. We have therefore recommended that specialist analysis is undertaken as well as work outside the road corridor. Project designs for this work are being considered together with the financial implications, however, given the specialist nature of this work, and the need to assess the report being prepared by Herefordshire's archaeological contractors for the road corridor, it is not anticipated that the case for scheduling will be considered until early 2008.

Cont/...2

However, I would add that our advice to Herefordshire Council is that the design solution to preserve the remains in situ is appropriate whether the remains are scheduled or not.

We will update our website as more information becomes available.

DR SIMON THURLEY



SAVE THE ROTHERWAS RIBBON CAMPAIGN

Bob Clay 19, Nelson Street Hereford HR1 2NZ 01432 270105

Councillor Bob Matthews (Chair. Environment Scrutiny Committee) Councillor Phil Edwards (Chair. Strategic Monitoring Committee)

24.09.07

Dear Cllrs Mathews and Edwards

I have already raised in a letter to the Strategic Monitoring Committee the question of budgets for scrutiny committees. The "Local Government Act 2000; Guidance to English Local Authorities;" states 3.46 "Local Authorities should provide overview and scrutiny committees with a discrete budget to allow them, for example, to engage independent consultants to assist in their enquiries or to cover the expenses of witnesses they may wish to call".

My clear understanding is that this particular matter is 'scarlet', ie it is statutory and must receive "due regard" from the Authority. Consequently, I would expect that since Herefordshire are not in compliance I will be shown a documentary record of when and why the Council decided not to follow this guidance.

This matter is of great importance. Mr Paul James, the officer 'assisting' the Environment Scrutiny Committee, has now told me that not only is there no budget for any of the scrutiny committees but that any expenditure for consultancy, witnesses etc would have to be "transferred from other services".

The issue impacts in a very major way on Monday's meeting of the Environment Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Mathews has actually told a member of the public that witnesses are restricted and that the matter has to be "done and dusted" on Monday because "there is no budget".

The Council's standing orders quite clearly provide for scrutiny committees to call witnesses but this process has been undermined and interfered with by officers.

Clearly the Committee should have met to discuss and agree a number of witnesses and a timetable for dealing with this matter.

Cllr Matthews agreed with Cllr Marcelle Lloyd-Hayes that I should be co-opted to the Committee (the right of the Committee to co-opt members of the public is clearly set out in standing orders) but Mr James has once again intervened and refuted this.

The assertion that the scrutiny process has to be concluded within ten days is clearly incompatible with the achievement of due process and the events of recent days demonstrate that reality. Of course, your Committees could have been dealing with these matters long before the Cabinet decision, let alone the call in.

Many people are likely to take the view that all the matters complained of above are simply part of a deliberate campaign by council officers to prevent any proper scrutiny of a seriously flawed Cabinet decision.

Finally, the cumulative effect of all this is that the extremely brief period from call in to first meeting has been dominated for both concerned Councillors and campaigners by the issues raised above rather than preparation for dealing with the substantive issues when the committee meets. It is also arguable that some Officer's conduct would cause such unnecessary anxiety and stress to some Councillors that it could prevent them from doing their job.

Even at this late stage I would urge you to assert your authority in these matters and stop any further undue interference. If you do not, it seems more and more likely that these matters will end up in far more formal complaints than this letter and / or the Courts. Furthermore, those who advocate a direct approach to combating arbitrary and authoritarian decision making will claim further justification.

Yours sincerely

Bob Clay

Copies for ESC.



Sent: Fri 21/09/2007 10:48

Hubbard, Mark (Clir)

Subject:

Andy Boucher [AndyB@aihereford.com]

To:

Hubbard, Mark (Clir)

Cc:

RE: [Scanned]

Attachments:

Answer to each question below

Andy Boucher BSc MIFA

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1) Has Archaeological Investigations Ltd been approached by Herefordshire Council to undertake geophysical surveys to discover the extent of the recent bronze age find, named the Rotherwas Ribbon?

We were asked to design a programme of geophysical investigation as part of a wider scheme of further investigations. The whole scheme of further investigations is the subject of a current bid to English Heritage for funding. Herefordshire Archaeology (of Herefordshire Council) co-ordinated this initiative. The project was also discussed with English Heritags. I believe it is currently the intention that we undertake the survey should funding be made available.

2) How long will it take you to establish the length and shape of the find?

Firstly depolitions is not a finite science - so you should perhaps ask "Lan we detect the feature?" We content and could potentially give high magnetic readings. This means that those stones that are burnt and iron-rich (which is by all means not every stone in the feature) should be visible to a magnetic-based instrument such as the fluygete gradiometer we propose to use. However, the feature is also located in a hollowiguity and the survey instrument has a finite depth of dateofich. Should the heliomiquity ser any deeper then the possibility that the feature will neve out of the detectable range of the survey manufocht

must also be considered. To this end we proposed the use of the deepest detecting equipment commonlapplied for this purpose in archaeology at present – but success is never guaranteed in geophysical surv. We also proposed the use of 3 other methods. Two of these might be capable of identifying the compact layer of stones, the third can indicated the presence of historic burning in the landscape and is more for the purposes of interpretation of results than specific mapping of features.

A survey using all these methods within the scope of the work currently proposed would take about 2 weeks to complete in the field followed by a further 2-3 weeks to complete a report depending on the current work-load at the time.

Unfortunately I must offer a further caveat — the survey we were looking to undertake only covers the immediate environs of the discovery along a 50-60m wide corridor. There is always a risk that the feature will not follow the predicted line for the proposed survey, and also that it will extend beyond the survey limits.

So whilst a successful survey could provide more information about the shape of the feature, it is quite probable that it would not establish its length.

3) How much would this work cost?

Whilst out of commercial confidentiality I do not feel it appropriate to divulge the precise figure of the cost the work (not least because these answers are to be public knowledge and it is not in my employer's besinterests for me to divulge information that might put the company at a future disadvantage) I think I can disclose that the survey and reporting costs for the scope of the work we proposed to undertake would be under £10,000.

4) Would you have been able to undertake this work during July, and what difference would a July start date have made to the answers you have given to 2) & 3) above?

Looking back – I was first contacted about the feature in early July. I collected samples for analysis on the 12th July 2007. I received the results from the measurements on these on 6th August 2007. These assists in the finalisation of the project design.

Of course it is possible to undertake work without any care or consideration - but this might not be in the commissioning body's interests - and certainly when obtaining funding from English it is necessary to demonstrate the likelihood of success.

Within the timescales we were considering my recollection was that we were geeing up to undertable survey in August. I think that if we had been tooking to undertake the work in July then we would have beeded to start the process in June or at least 2-2 weeks earlier that the been the was men in it were

https://webmail.herefordshire.gov.uk/Exchange/mhubbard/Inbox/RE:%20[Scanned].E... 23/09/20

likely that a survey could have been undertaken in July.

The difference to Q2 is that we would have had to wait for the farmer to mow his crop.

The difference to Q3 is that the farmer may have wanted compensation for loss of crop.

Further differences to Q's 2 and 3 are that should we have to alter the direction of the survey to follow th feature then there would be a delay whilst more crop is destroyed and there would be more compensation to pay to the farmer, and additional hire costs of equipment whilst we wait for that to happen. Personally prefer a completely open site.

I hope this is of assistance

Andy



An alternative vision for the Rotherwas Ribbon

What is the Ribbon?

- it's at least 4,000 years old
- it is unique in the world
- · no-one actually knows what it was for
- it is located in Herefordshire

What Herefordshire Council have said about the Ribbon

- it is a deliberately constructed Serpentine shape made of firecracked stones
- it may be part of an extensive linear monument created for ceremonial use that involved passage along its length.
- some timber structures were seemingly built or incorporated along its length to direct and guide such movement.
- of considerable importance in its use of deliberately burnt stone to pave a purposely-sculpted surface
- it expands the known repertoire of monumentality in Neolithic/Early Bronze Age in Europe
- it's likely date and highly unusual character (representing a hitherto unknown aspect of Neolithic/Bronze Age cultural activity) make it of high potential archaeological importance and interest
- it should provoke a considerable re-think of the of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity here
- it is an important discovery both locally and more widely, and adds a new dimension to our understanding of Herefordshire's remote past. Along with discoveries to either side of the structure within the road corridor (pits and especially the post-holes of a timber circular building) it firmly puts Herefordshire on the map of earlier prehistoric Britain
- archaeological and cultural advice has highlighted the difficulties of both
 conserving and displaying a structure of this nature, but that does not mean that
 such display cannot be achieved and the tourism potential of such a discovery
 realised somewhere within the course of the monument.
- there have been many well-informed contributions to the debate and a widespread belief that this discovery represents an opportunity for the county to develop its resource of important heritage sites.
- the latter in particular should give good pause for thought more widely than this
 monument. The Iron Age fort at Dinedor Camp itself is, for instance, in Council
 ownership, and plans have been in formulation for some time to make more of this
 important local heritage resource.

A proposal

Fed up with observing the limited discussion that seemed to be taking place (stop the road and save the Ribbon v. continue the road and preserve the Ribbon), I felt a positive alternative option should be developed for consideration.

This allows the work already done on the road construction to be utilized creatively avoiding the cost of reinstatement, and gives a vision for a new visitor facility which could provide not only an interpretation for the Ribbon, but a tourism Gateway for Herefordshire. It could also reduce traffic on the Holme Lacy road.

The proposal for is:

- completion of A49 roundabout junction
- creation of a visitor centre and carpark adjacent to this junction
- completion of the road route but redesigned as a 'green avenue' to become a pedestrian/cycle/light transit route to take people down to the area of the Ribbon and other archaeology
- possible light rail station to give non-car access to the from the centre of Hereford
- creation of a nature reserve on the land adjacent to the 'green avenue' to display an interpret the 'essence of Herefordshire' and point to its sustainable development into the future
- creation of an archaeological study area around the Ribbon with the Ribbon itself properly preserved. It could then be exposed within a small structure, have sections revealed on occasions, or be 'modeled' on the land surface in a similar way to the Ohio Serpent
- establishment of a walking route up to the Dinedor Hill fort with viewing platform enabling viewing of the full extent of the Ribbon in the landscape

Concern about the need for access to Rotherwas is understood, so in this proposal the carpark could also become a 'park and ride' for workers at Rotherwas, which together with the light rail link station could significantly reduce commuter traffic on the Holme Lacy Road.

