

Upton Heritage Open Day

Archaeologists have been working alongside the Environment Agency during the building of the new Upton flood defences.

The Archaeological team are from Worcestershire County Council's ACS Archaeology Unit.

The Environment Agency have been working to ensure that evidence for the story of Upton is not lost during the work. By carefully planning the construction work we have ensured that the archaeological recording will not slow down the completion of the new flood defences.

The work has revealed evidence for life, and death in Upton over the centuries. The remains that have been found have been carefully recorded, with the results being presented to the public later in the year.

The story so far

We know that in 1852 the large 16th century bridge that crossed the river here came down. It appears in some early pictures but no trace of it has been seen for over 160 years. The current archaeological work has exposed its footings, which can be seen in the trench here today. The huge foundations are being recorded and will help us understand how the bridge was built, whether there is any trace of the bridge's role in the English Civil War (it is thought that the King blew part of it up!) and if we can see any sign of an earlier bridge.

When the existing churchyard was full a new burial area was created close to the modern road bridge. Our work has exposed part of it and has allowed the archaeologists to carefully examine the skeletons of a number of people who died in the 1850's and 60's. It is hoped that these remains may hold clues about the health of the population of the town at that time, providing a rare glimpse into the lives of people who lived here over 160 years ago.

Archaeologists are finding evidence that the quayside has changed greatly over the centuries; what was a gently sloping river bank has been gradually modified to allow larger boats to be brought up against the quay and to prevent buildings being threatened by flooding and erosion. By recovering finds and recording layers of soil the team hope to be able to explain how and when this work took place. This will help build up a clearer picture of Upton's story.

The Dig

The trench in front of you has been opened in advance of construction to allow the archaeological team the time to work. They are recording evidence for at least two lost bridges in this area.

Feel free to ask the team questions