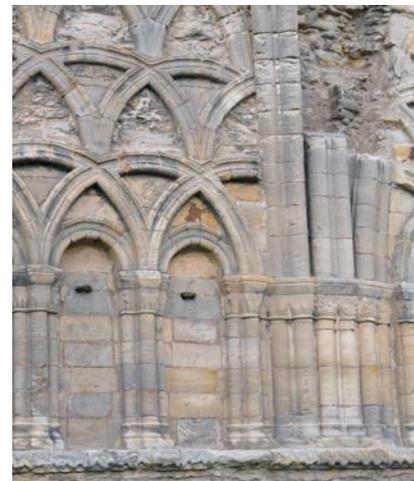


Building Stones

We have continued to pursue our interest in building stones this summer, coincidentally in association with three other organisations: English Heritage at Wenlock Priory, jointly for their members and ours; at Bishop's Castle for the "All Our Stories Archive Project" we arranged a joint community and SGS walk looking at building stones in the town; and in September I attended a visit to Stanley Quarry at Highley from which Worcester Cathedral are hoping to find matching stone for repairs from this original source.

Wenlock Priory: Christine Rayner: 28th June

Arrangements for this meeting were made by English Heritage as part of a wider programme of talks and walks for EH members. It was very well attended with a full house of 30. Chris took us on a tour of the ruins, pointing out the interesting mixture of stones involved. At first sight one is tempted to see this as a classic Wenlock Limestone building, but in fact that is only used for the infilling of walls and other surfaces that were not left exposed. In general outer layers of the thick walls are mostly in ashlar Coal Measures Sandstone. This often shows more elaborate carving, as in the walls of the Chapter House (*photo right*). David Pannett also pointed out the remnants of the ceiling which, as in a number of other churches, was made of strong but lightweight tufa. We also had a good view of the adjacent Prior's Lodgings, built in Alveley Sandstone with a fine Harnage stone-tiled roof to one side.



Bishop's Castle Stones: Andrew Jenkinson: 15th August

This was the first of two field visits in our "All our Stories - Archive Project" funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. A gathering of four SGS members and 12 people from the local community met outside the Town Hall for an evening walk around the town. After setting off up the cobbled steps (local glacial erratic pebbles) we soon encountered a typical Bishop's Castle pattern of houses built of rather inferior grey siltstone, now referred to as the Bailey Hill Formation (equivalent to lower Ludlow Shales) (*photo below*). Most of this is almost certainly second-hand castle stone, the original source being a once substantial quarry, now over-filled with soil excavated from the nearby Wintles development. The rather poor and friable stone would originally have been rendered, and is doubtless what still exists behind several rendered facades. However, a number of other stones have also been used, from the stone tile roof of the Bowling Club store to volcanic rocks from More Quarry for street walling. I was almost caught out by the Congregational Chapel of 1913 until I detected a regularity of pattern in a number of "rusticated" blocks, showing that this was artificial stone cast in moulds. I had assumed that the grey sandstone quoins and window mullions of the Church were the universal Victorian Grinshill stone until closer examination revealed a significant shelly fauna, but a non-oolitic structure. Hence my belief that this is Permian sandstone from South Yorkshire - possibly Anston or Cadeby quarries - which I had seen on a recent canal trip!



Stanley Quarry, Highley - a source for Worcester Cathedral?

As mentioned elsewhere, we had looked briefly at the outer parts of this quarry on a field-trip to Highley; but I was asked to go again on an inspection trip in mid August when its Highley Sandstone was being assessed for possible use in repairs to Worcester Cathedral. A substantial amount of stone from this surprisingly large quarry, now well hidden under woodland behind SVR's Engine House exhibition hall, went down-river to build Worcester Cathedral. Problems of extracting the stone now are considerable, but petrological analysis has located the right stone at the southern end of the quarry.

Animated discussion between professionals

