

Research Framework

Post-medieval period

Notes taken by Andrew Davidson during discussion group 17/09/10

Housing stock: a new heading to include houses (domestic architecture?) is required within the framework. The 'great rebuilding' concept is a key topic for this period. Dendrochronological dating is providing better information, though is not necessarily overturning established ideas.

Growth of Consumer Society: the rise in consumer goods (bed-linen, clocks etc) is well documented historically but requires archaeological response also. This can be undertaken through enhanced artefactual studies.

Economy: related to the growth of a consumer society is the question of trade – e.g. pottery crossing Severn Estuary into S Wales. Also clay tobacco pipes. This section might fall under a generic heading of 'Economy'.

Perception of the Post-Medieval period: how iconic is it? Is perception partly influenced by the name? Should we be thinking about about 'Early Modern' or 'Tudor/Stuart' or possibly 'Renaissance'?

Impact of colonialism: this should be a subset of wealth/economy. Development and influence of neighbouring major ports e.g. Liverpool and Bristol. Anglicisation of Wales might also be fruitful area of research.

Population change: to what extent is the expansion or movement of populations a factor?

Gaps in understanding? It is possible to identify lacunae in the Welsh academic approach to archaeology of this period. However there are also general problems with research because of increasing specialisation. Buildings archaeology, relict archaeology, art history, architectural history, literary history etc all need to be linked and taken into account.

There is a clear need for greater communication between academics. Historians and literary historians have studied this period extensively, archaeologists have devoted less time to it, though houses have been fully covered.

Development Control: this period needs to be better understood and managed within the process of Development Control. Certain themes might be better geared towards this than others. Urban sites are an example in particular standing buildings where re-interpretation will need to identify buildings of importance. These could be partly picked up through Listed Building Consents. Also industrial sites, barn conversions etc would make good candidates.

Identified themes for further study

Churches: holy wells, monuments, growth of family chapels

Urban buildings

Urban origins: creation of shires and county towns

Linked with trade and commerce – wealth

Identity: the gentry become Anglophone in this period. Where do influences come from in this period? This is an important theme that will resonate with people today.

Rise of 'new men': linked to new houses and architectural styles and construction on virgin sites.

Enclosure: why did it happen? – when did it happen? – what were the social and economic drivers?

Designed landscapes:

Barns and early farm buildings:

Moving Ahead

Should there be a conference on this period? Bring in all disciplines and examples from other geographic areas. RCAHMW might sponsor this.

Identification of period

The group discussed the name by which the period should be known:

General vote:

Post Medieval 1

Early Modern 6

Renaissance 3.

Andrew Davidson

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