

THE FIELDWORKER

LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS NEWSLETTER

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1. THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be **Thursday September 15th** at 7.30pm at Jewry Wall Museum, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE1 4LB. The speaker will be Mathew Morris of University of Leicester Archaeological Services on '**Buried between road and river: Investigating a Roman cemetery at Western Road in Leicester**'. Today, standing in Leicester's West End amongst the Victorian terracing, the old factories and the student bars, it is hard to imagine that only 150 years ago this was still largely open countryside. Look closely, however, and clues to the area's past are recorded in the street names – Roman Street, Saxon Street, labels that remember discoveries made by workmen in the 1890's of skeletons buried in the vicinity with Roman and Anglo-Saxon artefacts. In '**Buried between road and river**', Mat Morris (a new member of the Fieldworker Committee) will reveal how the recent excavation of eighty-three Roman skeletons at Western Road is revealing exciting new insights into the diverse lives of the people living in Leicester over 1,600 years, including rare evidence of a late Roman soldier.

2. DIARY DATES FOR 2016-7 (at Jewry Wall Museum at 7.30pm unless otherwise advised)

November 17th: Grahame Appleby - 'Cambridgeshire - Twenty years of extraordinary archaeology' including the Must Farm excavations.

January 19th: Richard Clark - 'Planning for Leicestershire's Past'

March 16th: To be confirmed

May 18th: Prof Julian D Richards – 'The Viking camp at Torksey', (Lincolnshire).

3. EXCAVATION NEWS

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) have had another busy summer of excavation. At **Blaby**, on the Leicester Lions Rugby Ground, two Iron-age roundhouses and a possible four-post structure have been revealed, partially disturbed by ridge and furrow. At **Enderby**, excavation has continued of a very large (around 5 hectares) prehistoric site. The southern area has produced six roundhouses, and a series of enclosures, with both Bronze Age and Iron Age features. A large ditch runs for some 300m and is almost certainly associated with a post alignment and palisade trench in the central area of site. Other smaller features have produced evidence of charcoal production, indications of metalworking whilst loom weights and a fired clay spindle whorl show textile working. There are many querns. The North area has produced enclosures and post-built structures including another roundhouse. At **Great Bowden**, medieval archaeology, mainly ditches, was revealed, and also a post-medieval cobbled trackway. At **Leicester Castle** a watching brief during the conversion of the Castle Hall into De Montfort University Law Centre included the excavation of an exterior service trench across Castle Yard, the lowering of internal floor layers and the removal of the civil court furniture. Observations within the service trench, including remains of a porch added in the 14th century and the 1695 east wall rebuilding, corroborated evidence from previous archaeological work, notably in 1994. Three truncated undated east-west inhumations were uncovered towards St Mary de Castro Church perhaps suggesting the church graveyard extended further west. Two of these were lifted. Pockets of rough yard surfaces (medieval?) and a possible "oven" feature (undated) were identified within the castle yard. At **Lockington Quarry** extension more field boundaries and pits were found. At **Cadeby Quarry extension** monitoring of the topsoil strip produced some dispersed features including a double-ditched roundhouse (or ploughed out barrow - to be confirmed). Otherwise dispersed pits and post-holes and a field boundary system, perhaps Iron Age. At **Sutton in the Elms** Iron Age ditches, gullies, pits and postholes were found.

Finally, work at **Wymondham**, near the known Roman villa, produced 2 east-west stone walls overlying earlier ditches while other linear features and pits produced good assemblages of Roman material. A fine flint axe was recovered.

Other contractors have also been active over the summer. **Allen Archaeology** completed their excavation on **Lubenham Hill**. The site proved to be a large area of Iron Age and Roman enclosures with some earlier finds and features. **Albion Archaeology** started excavations in advance of the extension to **Magna Park**, south of Lutterworth. Iron age and Roman features have been revealed in several areas. A linear boundary with attached enclosure (a so-called clothes-line enclosure) appears to be associated with a possible round house, whilst well-defined linear features have been found near the A5 associated with Roman material. It is hoped to arrange a site visit here (see below). **Pre-Construct Archaeology (PCA)** have been excavating at **Nether Broughton** where Late Anglo-Saxon and early Medieval post-holes, pits and ditches represent occupation finishing in the post-Black Death period, and **Trent and Peak Archaeology** (now part of York Archaeology Trust) have been excavating a medieval site at Long Clawson.

4. **GLENFIELD PARK CAULDRONS**

The saga of the Iron Age cauldrons found at Glenfield Park, Kirby Muxloe continues. You may remember that ULAS excavated the site after an evaluation by Cotswold Archaeology found what was thought to be two cauldrons. Scans now show that there are actually three, while scans of another cauldron-related find – what was thought to be remains of an iron rim, has also been shown to be remains of two cauldrons. These new discoveries take the total cauldron count to 11 complete or near complete examples, with 8 of them arranged around a large ring ditch.

5. **ROTHLEY BIG DIG**

The last Charnwood Roots Project village test-pitting exercise was undertaken at Rothley with 28 test-pits across the village. Some medieval pottery was found but not in great quantities. However, one pit produced a good assemblage of Roman pottery and others were producing some good lithics.

6. **BRADGATE EXCAVATIONS**

The second season of the University field school excavations at Bradgate Park took place during June and July. The stone building on the moated site, which had been partially excavated last year, was fully stripped and was an impressive 20m by 8m with two projecting chimney bases. The building is probably a base cruck hall with a service room at the western end. The meagre pottery but extensive ridge tile finds suggest a 13th/14th century date. A small trench and 2 test pits were excavated next to the mansion. In the trench fewer midden deposits were found due to 20th century features but a nice group of early flints, at least some Upper Palaeolithic, were recovered. One of the test pits produced beneath a brick rubble layer a decent assemblage of animal bone and pottery, some of 16th century date. The other, unexpectedly produced a narrow stone wall with slates on one side and a stone floor on the other. The date is unclear. Geophysical survey of an irregular enclosure in the deer sanctuary produced a possible rectangular structure but only excavation will help in dating the feature.

7. **MAGNA PARK EXTENSION EXCAVATIONS**

It is hoped to arrange a trip to see the Albion Archaeology excavations close to Magna Park at the most appropriate time. Please contact Peter Liddle on peter.liddle51@gmail.com if you would like details and keep an eye on our website.

8. **FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2016**

The 2016 Leicestershire and Rutland Festival proved, once again, to be by far the biggest in the country attracting well over 7000 people. Thanks to everyone who helped. We are now looking forward to the 2017 Festival which runs from July 15th – 30th.

9. CASTLE HILL BEAUMONT LEYS

A lottery funded community dig, managed by ULAS, will run from the 19th to 30th of September (9 – 4.30 Monday-Friday). If you are interested in taking part please email Lucy Brown on brownlucy112@gmail.com and you will be sent forms. There will be an open day on Saturday September 24th with a possibility for another one on Saturday October 1st if the archaeology is worth looking at!

10. BRAUNSTON TEST PITTING

Over the weekend of 17th-18th September Claire Brown has arranged test pitting in Braunston in Rutland. If anyone is interested in helping please contact Claire on claireandadambrown@gmail.com

11. COURSES

Peter Liddle will be running a course on 'Medieval Leicestershire and Rutland' lasting 6 weeks and starting on September 8th (2pm -4pm) at Rutland County Museum and a course, also 6 weeks, on 'Roman Leicestershire and Rutland' at Jewry Wall Museum starting on September 10th (11am – 1pm). Both £30 for the course or individual talks at £6. Details from Peter on peter.liddle51@gmail.com or see the 'post' on our new website front page to download the leaflets - <http://leicsfieldworkers.co.uk>

12. SUBSCRIPTIONS

2016-7 subscriptions became due at the AGM in June. You should have received a letter or email with a renewal form in early July or one can also be downloaded from our new website. The response has been good this year, and thanks to all those who have paid, those who have still to pay will receive their 2nd reminder email after the September talk (or enclosed to postal members). Queries to Kathy on info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk

13. GROUP NEWS

Lutterworth Group have continued their dig at Shawell this summer. They have targeted, what appears to be a roundhouse identified on the magnetometry survey. While this has been found, they are still investigating it to ascertain the age of the feature, while they have also located a possible beam slot. To date they have found pottery from Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman, within the area. Although minimal, metal finds include an ox goad and iron spoon. A number of post holes have been found as well as the apparently dumped remains of a kiln.

Hinckley Group have continued excavations on the course of the Fosse Way finding cobbled areas and small finds.

14. FIELDWORK TRAINING

The indoor training will take place on Sunday 25th September from 10am until 4pm. The morning session will concentrate on identifying flint and pottery finds while the afternoon will look at techniques of research and fieldwork. The field training will take place at Othorpe between the 3rd and 7th October with a round-up day for anyone interested plus additional talks on Saturday 8th at Slawston village hall. As in previous years, participants can book in for a half or full day of fieldwalking alongside an experienced walker. To book for training please email Peter on peter.liddle51@gmail.com . If you are booking for the field training please state your preferred date with an alternative.

15. LIZ THOMAS

We are very sad to report the death of Liz Thomas, a leading member of Great Bowden Heritage and Archaeology Group. Liz had been battling cancer for over a year. She will be sadly missed.

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