

THE FIELDWORKER

LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS NEWSLETTER

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1. THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on **Thursday January 19th** at 7.30pm at Jewry Wall Museum, St Nicholas Circle, Leicester, LE1 4LB. The speaker will be **Richard Clark** on '**Planning for Leicestershire's Past**'. Richard came to Leicester to do a Masters degree at the University and then joined the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit. In 1995 he became a Planning Archaeologist with the County Council and then City Archaeologist. He then returned to the County Council and is currently their Principal Planning Archaeologist.

The 1990 publication of Planning & Policy Guidance note 16 (Archaeology and Planning) was a direct response to a growing concern at the impact of development and the loss of and threats to archaeological sites and historic buildings, such as the Rose Theatre in London. Since then the vast majority of archaeological field work projects undertaken across Leicestershire and Rutland, and indeed the rest of England, have been undertaken to inform and respond to the planning process. Archaeological interests form one of many 'material considerations' planning authorities and developers have to give consideration to. The process has various stages, roles and respective outcomes, first, to determine the impact of development on the historic environment, second to manage risk for the parties and interests involved, and thirdly to deliver appropriate and proportionate mitigation, usually in the form of archaeological investigation and recording.

The last 25 years have seen significant changes in the way fieldwork has been carried out, the growth of commercial archaeological organisations, local authority 'curatorial' services, hosting Sites and Monuments Records (SMR), together with the adoption and developments in digital, scientific and procedural techniques to investigate and record the vast body of information the planning process has brought to light. How does this system work, what has been achieved, and in a context of increasing constraints to local authority services, a need for housing and jobs, is the future of the past in safe hands?

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

March 16th: Dr. Jeremy Taylor on 'Middle and Late Iron Age Leicestershire'

May 18th: Prof Julian D Richards on 'The Viking camp at Torksey'

June 15th: Annual General Meeting

3. EXCAVATION NEWS

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS)

At **Great Central Street, Leicester**, work has progressed on a large excavation on the old Stibbe factory which includes an east-west and a north-south Roman street with buildings alongside. Several patches of mosaic suggest that these were well appointed town houses, while the very corner of the *macellum* – a public building – was also revealed. The site is, inevitably, disturbed by remains of the modern buildings that have stood on the site (as well as medieval pits, wells and cess pits) but a good stretch of Roman Leicester will be recorded before the building of the new hotel complex. Across **Highcross Street** a site running up to the John Lewis car park is also under excavation. This is in the next *insula* to the east and, once again, evidence of town houses has appeared. One has a big patch of surviving mosaic with apparent Roman cellars close by and a Roman street has also been recorded. At **Brooksby Quarry** observations of the mineral extraction are continuing and Palaeolithic artefacts, now numbering 747, continue to be found, with recent examples including a fine volcanic handaxe and a diminutive worked out quartzite core. At **Nevill Holt Hall** the conversion of the stable block into a swimming pool and an opera house have revealed east-west walls and a north-south wall, which were all stone built with earth bonded foundations and mortared superstructures. While no clear date could be determined these are presumably part of the mysterious hospital marked on a plan of the house from 1661.

Wessex Archaeology have started excavation of around a dozen sites affected by the **East Midlands Gateway** development east of **Castle Donington**. Most of these are Iron Age and Roman in date.

Trent and Peak (now part of York Archaeological Trust) have excavated a late 18th/ 19th century brickworks west of **Ashby** revealing working areas and kilns.

Allen Archaeology have excavated between the village and the railway finding medieval activity on the street frontage. Earthwork enclosures appear to be post medieval in date.

Oxford Archaeology excavated a playing card shaped enclosure south of **Lutterworth**, which has produced Roman material. Its perfect alignment with the present road has given rise to speculation that this may also be Roman in date.

4. **FIELDWALKING**

The Charnwood Roots Project has walked 5 fields in Thurgaston parish, confirming one Roman site. Pottery has yet to be processed and it is planned to use this as a teaching exercise. The **Oadby and Wigston Group** continue to meet regularly and turn out large numbers for fieldwalking. More work is planned soon in Wigston (weather permitting).

5. **FLAG FIELDWORK**

During the close season on the medieval manor house complex at Croxton Kerrial, FLAG excavated three test trenches at Millfield in the village prior to a proposed housing development. The excavations uncovered masonry wall foundations, together with stone banks, with medieval pottery finds dating from the 12th to 14th century. It is believed that the finds are probably the remains of tofts and crofts dating from the period when the medieval village was at its maximum extent in the early 14th century.

6. **CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY AWARDS 2017**

Leicestershire has done very well in previous awards with Richard Buckley picking up Archaeologist of the Year and the Richard III Project the Research Project of the Year. This year there are 2 local projects in the running. Up for Rescue Project of the Year is the excavation of the Western Road Roman cemetery that our committee member, Mathew Morris, spoke to us about. In the Archaeological Innovation of the Last 50 years category the DNA work of the University in the Richard III project is nominated. The decisions are made purely on public votes. Voting closes on February 6th. Details and the chance to vote can be found at <https://www.archaeology.co.uk/vote>. For those who do not know Current Archaeology magazine, it is a long standing publication that is always worth a read!

7. **NEWS FROM JEWRY WALL MUSEUM**

There are a number of upcoming events at the Museum. On February 3rd at 2pm the Senior Curator will share 'Secrets of the Romans' with an exclusive look at star Roman objects from the collections £4. Book at the museum. On 19th February there will be an event: 'Coughs, Colds and Sneezes ; Medicine Through The Ages' - 11.30am to 3.30pm. Admission free.

8. **ANGLO-SAXON LEICESTERSHIRE COURSE AT JEWRY WALL MUSEUM**

Peter Liddle's **Anglo-Saxon Leicestershire** course at Jewry Wall Museum starts on Saturday February 25th from 11am to 1pm. The six lectures deal with the archaeological evidence for the coming of the Anglo-Saxons, Early Saxon settlements, Early Saxon burials, the Mercians, the Vikings and the Late Saxon period. It is booking up well but there is still room for a few more! The course costs £30 or £6 for individual lectures. Contact Peter (details below) for further information.

9. **FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2017**

This year's Festival runs from the 15th to 30th July. We are always looking for ideas for new events. A meeting to start detailed planning for the Festival will be held on Monday January 23rd at the University of Leicester meeting in the foyer of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History. All are welcome. Contact Peter for more details.

10. LOCAL PUBLICATIONS

Kathy Elkin would like to thank those people who brought or posted her copies of their local magazines. So far she has copies of: Niche Magazine; Ashby Life; Active (S Leics sport and lifestyle); Up the Wreake; East Goscote Long Furrow; Aspire; Whats Around; Ibstock Community Voice; Gt Glen Sence; Western Park Gazette; Vine Leicestershire; Syston Town News; Queniborough Gazette; Thurmaston Times; The Graphic –Mkt Bosworth (+ variations of). If you have one that has not been mentioned she'll be happy to take copies at the next meeting. We want to get some Festival of Archaeology information into them but many have long lead times so we need to plan in advance.

11. GROUP NEWS - SUBSCRIPTIONS

Membership remains strong at 410 households however there are 60 people who receive by email still to pay for the 2016/17 Year (May to June). If you are one of these you will receive an email before the meeting on the 19th. Please check your spam box as the email will have contained a Renewal form attachment. If we do not hear from you then you will be removed from the list for communication. If you receive an email that you believe is in error (it does happen!) please contact info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk.

12. NEW FACEBOOK PAGE

Our Facebook page has been launched! Containing news and views it is also the ideal place to discuss finds, techniques, identification and all things relevant to the work of the group. Many of you won't be new to Facebook. You can find us at 'Leicestershire Fieldworkers'. For those of you who are then we suggest it would be useful for you to use the following guide to join the site by creating a Facebook account:

<https://www.facebook.com/help/188157731232424?helpref=topqe>

Once you have an account, search for 'Leicestershire Fieldworkers' in the search bar and click on the 'Join Group' button in the top right-hand corner. The Group is a closed group and an administrator will approve your request and allow you to join. Take a browse, chat with fellow members and if you have something you would like to post please let us know. We hope you'll enjoy the experience.

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