

THE FIELDWORKER

LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS NEWSLETTER

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1. THE NEXT MEETING – PLEASE NOTE NEW VENUE AND TIME!

The next meeting will be on **Thursday September 21st at 7.00pm** in **Ken Edwards Lecture Theatre 2 at the University of Leicester**. **Professor David Mattingly**, will speak about **Dust, donkeys and drones: new fieldwork in the Moroccan Sahara**. David is Head of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at the University of Leicester and the lecture is being held at the University as Jewry Wall Museum is closed for refurbishment. David is well known for his work on many aspects of the archaeology of the Roman Empire. For the last few years he has been leading work on North Africa. This lecture will describe the first exciting results of a new programme of fieldwalking in the Moroccan desert. Following on from earlier phases of fieldwork in southern Libya, the Leicester based team are seeking to identify evidence for pre-Islamic origins of oasis agriculture in the Western Sahara. The project utilises remote sensing to identify sites for field visits and employs new techniques of 3-D modelling for sites and individual structures to elucidate the nature of the archaeology identified. Small scale trial excavations have produced remarkable results in the form of painted funerary chapels associated with some tombs, as well as providing samples of organic materials for radiocarbon dating of many settlement sites. A fascinating picture is emerging of advanced desert societies where previously the assumption was one of thinly spread nomadic groups. The Lecture theatre is next to the Student Union building on the main University campus.

2. DIARY DATES FOR 2017-8 (venues to be announced)

November 16th: Prof Mike Parker Pearson: The Beaker Burial Project
January 18th: Mathew Morris : Recent excavations in Roman Leicester
March 15th: John Thomas; The Iron Age cauldrons from Glenfield Park

3. EXCAVATION NEWS

University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) are still pretty fully committed – although much of their work is currently in other counties.

At **Brooksby Quarry** early finds include part of a large molar, from a straight-tusked elephant (*Palaeoloxodon antiquus*) that frequented these parts some 500,000 years ago. It is over 20cm long, and has part of the occlusal 'biting' surface and much of the root surviving. The quarry is also producing further lithics, the vast majority being of quartzite as flint did not occur here in any quantity at this time. These include a pick-like artefact, on the verge of being a proto-handaxe, as well as stone flakes..

The **'Stibbe'** site in **Leicester** was completed over the summer after almost a year of excavation. All the archaeological deposits, from post-medieval through to the earliest Roman and prehistoric features cutting into the natural across (almost) the entire site, were excavated. This has resulted in a superb sequence of stratigraphy, mainly from the Roman period. Along with large Roman town houses, this site has uncovered good evidence for the rarely seen earliest Roman activity, and once post-ex analysis is complete the data recovered from Stibbe should add significant understanding of Roman Leicester. The mosaics were lifted and under the them they found lots of pottery to help date them. They also discovered an earlier Roman building (or earlier phase to the townhouse). The excavation of the other rooms in the north townhouse were completed, revealing further floor make-ups and minor alterations to the house over time. Below these were found early Roman features, namely post-holes, gullies and ditches as also the case for the townhouse in the SW corner. Below the N-S Roman street we found evidence for timber structures, a number of post-holes were discovered, two containing Augustan coins. At the far south end of the site they excavated an E-W Roman street (running roughly along the line of Friars Causeway), and adjacent to this a large Roman public building (within insula XVI containing the 'macellum'). The evidence consisted of two parallel curving walls (much of it robbed, though some parts surviving to a good height), along with floor surfaces and make-up layers. Projecting the wall lines out indicates this could be a Roman theatre! An exciting prospect, further analysis is required to help aid interpretation of this large structure.

ULAS is also assisting a team from **Wardell Armstrong** excavating on **Bath Lane**. Although it's early days medieval burials have been found suggesting that the church of the Black Friars (or the lost

church of St Clements, if they aren't the same thing) may be close by. Roman floor surfaces are also reported as well as a stretch of the north town defences.

Work has started on evaluation in advance of the **Waterside Development in Leicester**. This covers a large area north of Friars Mill up to Frog Island. Work has just started but Roman and later deposits are being found, some deeply buried. A nice group of medieval carved stones including window fragments may also be associated with the Black Friars. Robber trenches and mortar and tessellated pavements have also been found. Beyond the walls a few Roman burials and Early Roman ditches and gullies have been found, but little medieval activity.

Wessex Archaeology continue to work on the final phases of the archaeology for the **East Midlands Gateway site** between **Castle Donington and Kegworth**. A large Roman site south of **Hemington** seems to date from the 2nd to 4th centuries AD. Another Roman site has produced a large sunken area with a central post backfilled with fresh rubbish. On the associated Kegworth Bypass scheme an Iron Age site with round gullies and pits has been excavated.

Warwickshire Archaeology has been excavating part of the known villa site at **Market Bosworth** and has found a red and white tessellated pavement and a heated room.

MOLA have found an area of Post Medieval activity at **Sharnford** overlying medieval features including rubbish pits.

Headland Archaeology have recorded truncated prehistoric and Roman features at **Waltham on the Wolds**. These include a circular building, pits and ditches. Flint material recovered includes a discoidal flint knife.

4. GROUP NEWS

Membership is now standing at 417 with new local groups running in several areas, including our first outside of the two counties (just). See below for details. All membership were due for renewal in June. You will have received a reminder email last week if you haven't paid or a renewal form with this newsletter (postal members). Your attention is appreciated.

5. TRAINING DAY

The annual training day will be held in the School of Archaeology at the University of Leicester on **Saturday, 30th September**. We are experimenting this year with a shorter introductory day from 9.30 to 1pm. There will be talks on lithics and pottery identification and fieldwalking techniques. Please book a place by emailing Peter Liddle on peter.liddle51@gmail.com or ringing 0116 221 4508. All welcome.

6. LOCAL GROUP NEWS

The Oadby and Wigston Group have started the season strongly with fieldwalking on the Stoughton Estate.

Hallaton Fieldworkers have been digging again on the chapel site of St Morrells at Hallaton. They have found a lovely diagnostic piece of medieval tile, the only other example of which is a Warwickshire piece. Karen Slade of the Company of Artisans helped with finding the match. They are currently hoping to fulfil the original brief of the Roman possible temple site, before the St Morrell chapel revealed itself. At present they are still digging through the medieval, with various phases, conundrums and robber trenches

Thurcaston and Rothley Group organisers have been meeting regularly to try and get some farmers and owners on board and are planning on walking this October and November. They have also signed up to the CBA's Parish Boundary Project.

Hoby and District Local History Society have been out fieldwalking with Richard Knox and have added an Anglo-Saxon site at Rotherby to the Roman site that they found last season.

Melton Group is getting itself re-established after a period of dormancy and is now fieldwalking, producing flint and pottery. Winter lectures at Melton Carnegie Museum are planned, with **Richard Thomas** speaking about the **Bradgate Park Excavations**, on Wednesday 18th October at 7 for 7.30. £5.

Lutterworth Group had a successful turnout for their test pit weekend during the Festival of Archaeology, with 27 people taking part. It was a welcome break from their excavations at **Shawell** where they have extended their area of digging this year. This included a probable pit area which may subsequently prove to be a clamp kiln. This pit was filled with refuse that contained a lot of bone, ash and two needles. They appear to have found some foundations of a structure elsewhere in the field.

Hinckley Archaeological Society are continuing their excavations on the Fosse Way at Fosse Meadows near **Sharnford**.

Great Bowden Heritage have been test pitting near the enigmatic St Mary in Arden Church. At **Harringworth** (just on the Northamptonshire side of the Welland) a new group has been formed. A training session has been held and much research done. It is hoped to start fieldwork very soon. Contact alanclark62@hotmail.com for details of the fieldwork. **FLAG** (Framland Local Archaeology Group) have continued their excavation of Croxton Kerrial's manorial site. The excavation of the Anglo Saxon quarry has continued with many more finds of Stamford Ware and Lincolnshire Fine Shelly Ware. They have also been cleaning up and undertaking a first attempt at a photogrammetry survey of the site.

7. **FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2017**

The 2017 Festival in July was a great success with over 80 events over the 16 days. Attendances were generally up on last year. Plans are now beginning for the 2018 Festival.

8. **BOSWORTH LINKS COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT**

Over the middle weekend of the Festival of Archaeology a team from ULAS supervised a community test-pit excavation at Market Bosworth. The project, called Bosworth Links, is a two-year Heritage Lottery Funded project to learn more about the history of the town, modelled on the Charnwood Roots Project. The aim is to dig a total of 50 pits over the two years. Over the weekend (and preceding weeks) around 250 volunteers, homeowners, school children, young archaeologists and students from Market Bosworth and further afield helped dig the first 25 test-pits. It's early days, but so far it looks like there is a good spread of flint from pits across the town, as well as Roman pottery and early Anglo-Saxon pottery in some pits, and others producing late Anglo-Saxon, Medieval etc. One pit also contained a 1904 American one cent coin – the same year 'Buffalo Bill' Cody reputedly visited the town (coincidence?). The aim is to repeat the weekend next year.

9. **CBA East Midlands Conference**

On Sunday 26th November 2017 the CBA East Midlands will be holding a conference entitled 'Recent Fieldwork in the East Midlands' at the Wilson Auditorium, Oakham School, Ashwell Road, Oakham, LE15 6QG. It runs from 9.45 to 4.30 pm. It has many local speakers, including Richard Thomas on Bradgate, Mathew Morris on recent work in Leicester, John Thomas on the Iron Age site at Kirby Muxloe, Debbie Frearson and Elaine Jones on Life Before the Royal Forest of Rutland and Bob Trubshaw on Project Gargoyle. Full details at <http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem>

10. **CASTLE HILL COMMUNITY EXCAVATION – OPEN DAYS**

Excavation took place of the Sheepwash bridge next to King Williams Bridge near Anstey. Further excavations will follow to link the two bridges. Any information on the history of King Williams Bridge would be gratefully received. Send to Robin Matthewman at robinandbren@ntlworld.com. Further test pits have also been excavated in our 'Roman Glade'. More pottery and a possible track found (as usual at the very end of the day!). Further excavation work to follow.

Following the great success of the Big Castle Hill Dig 2016, the Story of Parks project is in the midst of a month-long follow up excavation which will run until 27th September and is Saturday-Wednesday to allow weekend digging. Results have been interesting with clear evidence of substantial structures within the enclosure with stone walls and slate roofs – all consistent with the identification as an establishment of the Knights Hospitallers.

There will be an **OPEN DAY** on **24th September** from 10 – 4pm. If you can't make that there will be an exclusive **Fieldworkers tour** at **4pm** on **Monday 25th September**. No booking needed. The site is off Astill Lodge Road, Beaumont Leys, Leicester LE4 1ED. Meet at the site cabins next to a gate on the road.

11. **LATEST LEICESTERSHIRE MUSEUMS ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS**

The Museum Service recently received a very kind donation of a Roman bronze spoon engraved with a personal name – TEGERNEMA. The inscription has been studied by Dr Roger Tomlin, who comments 'Since the lettering is a little irregular and would have been upside-down when the spoon was being used, it was probably inscribed by the owner himself, holding the spoon in his left hand, rather than professionally in a workshop. His name, which combines the Celtic elements *tegnos and *maglos (both meaning 'king' or 'lord')'. Further details can be found on the Portable Antiquities Scheme database under ref. Leic B9A082. The spoon was found by a local metal detectorist and will be displayed at Melton Carnegie Museum from 14 September.

For any community archaeology or archaeological collections enquiries contact archaeology@leics.gov.uk.

12. **PATRICK CLAY RETIRING**

Patrick ('Cass') Clay has been working in Leicestershire Archaeology since 1971 latterly as co-Director of ULAS, helping to guide the transition from County Council to University control. He will be retiring at the end of September after a distinguished career.

13. **ROTHLEY BIG DIG**

For those who were involved in the Charnwood Roots test pitting operation at Rothley There is a meeting to view the results from 2pm to 4pm on Sunday 1st October at the Rothley Centre ([12 Mountsorrel Lane, Rothley, LE7 7PR](#)) There will be a presentation of the findings. There will be an opportunity to view the artefacts and a display of the most interesting finds. Homeowners who would like to keep their artefacts will be able to collect them and we will be handing out individual test pit reports to all those who participated in the Dig. If you would like to attend please respond to Dr Julie Attard on jad17@leicester.ac.uk by September 27th.

14. **OASIS SEMINAR**

There are 4 remaining places available on a seminar by Mark Barrett of Historic England on the OASIS project and on the use of the Archaeology Data Service. This is an online archive of 'grey literature reports' – mostly reports on developer funded archaeological projects. It is a resource that is incredibly useful in finding out what has been found in projects that are often not fully published conventionally. This will take place in the seminar room in the Archaeology Department at Leicester University for the afternoon of Thursday 21st September at 2pm. The seminar will last for approximately 2 hours and Mark will also be showing how the system works and answering questions. This is a small room and places have been offered initially to representatives of local groups who may generate reports that could be lodged with OASIS. Places will be filled on a first come first served basis. Email Kathy at info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk as soon as possible please.

15. **RIGHTS of WAY HISTORY AT RISK**

There are many historic items lost or under threat and we can now add another to the list. Very much part of our historic past is our comprehensive network of rights of way, the envy of many countries. However some routes have fallen into neglect or vanished without trace as their original purpose ceased. Unless they were ever legally extinguished these lost ways still exist in law and as the rate of development in England increases they could once again be of great use. If they are not recorded on the Definitive Map they will be lost for ever in 8 years' time as the Government has introduced a cut-off date for any claims based on historic evidence.

The Leicestershire Local Access Forum is working with a number of user groups and the County Council to look for historic evidence of these lost ways and this is where you could help. They are searching for evidence that the gaps in the present network were originally joined up, to make the routes available again for everyone to enjoy.

The LLAF group can make digitised material available for study at home but more can be discovered at various archives. The sort of places where evidence might be found include old maps, Cassini reprints, Inland Revenue Valuation Maps, Ordnance Survey boundary records and object name books, Tithe Maps, Enclosure Awards and Railway, Canal, and Major Road Records

Quite apart from getting directly involved, if in the course of your normal research you see any evidence of old paths or bridleways the group would be pleased to hear about them

The County Council is fully supporting this initiative, providing meeting rooms, free access to their modern highway and other records, financial assistance where material held in other archives has to be copied or purchased and reasonable expenses for those involved in the research

A meeting has been arranged for **7.30 at Park House, home of Glenfield Parish Council (Stamford Street, LE3 8 DL) on November 6th**, when anybody at all interested can come along and learn more without any commitment. If you wish to come along and see if you wish to get involved you will be very welcome. If you require any further information, please contact Stan Warren: 0116 268 2415 or sjwarren01@outlook.com

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