

# THE FIELDWORKER

## LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS NEWSLETTER

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### 1. THE NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be on **Thursday March 17<sup>th</sup>** at 7.30pm at Leicester Guildhall. The speaker will be Professor **Carenza Lewis** who will be speaking on '**Disaster Recovery: Test pit excavation and the impact of the Black Death in eastern England**'. Carenza is the joint author of the very important study of rural settlement in the East Midlands, 'Village, Hamlet and Field' (1997) but became famous as a member of the Time Team on Channel 4. She has recently been appointed Professor for the Public Understanding of Research at the University of Lincoln. Before this she was since 2004 at the University of Cambridge, where she set up Access Cambridge Archaeology (ACA) in order to benefit wider publics through active participation in research-orientated archaeology and heritage projects, devising and directing numerous programmes, including the 'Higher Education Field Academy' (2005-15) and 'Cambridge Community Heritage' (2012-3), involving more than 10,000 people over more than a decade in making new discoveries which advance academic research while also delivering a wide range of identifiable and measurable social benefits. Locally she ran the 'Kibworth Big Dig' for Michael Wood's Story of England series for BBC and the test pitting programme at Great Bowden.

A lecture not to be missed! Please contact Peter Liddle (contact details below) if you are planning to come to help us plan seat numbers etc.

### 2. DIARY DATES FOR 2015 - 16 (at Jewry Wall Museum at 7.30pm unless otherwise advised)

May 19<sup>th</sup>: Matthew Beamish: From Ice Age to War Games: Test Pits and LiDAR in Bradgate Park

June 16<sup>th</sup>: AGM and Turi King: The Impact of Diasporas on the Making of Britain

### 3. EXCAVATION NEWS

**ULAS** have been busy once again. At **Brooksby Quarry** the total of Palaeolithic artefacts recovered has now risen to 723. The analysis of the English Heritage funded core drilling and sampling of the Brooksby deposits is also proceeding well. At **Coleorton** initial test pits have located a post-medieval building.

At **Lubbethorpe** trial trenching has brought the total of trenches dug to 233. The current work identified a small area with struck flint consisting of some early lithic material. A little Roman pottery has been recovered over the course of fieldwork, perhaps to be related to some undated ditches. The most recent finds are 2 Middle or Late Bronze Age cremation burials (below) and 4 ring gullies of round houses.

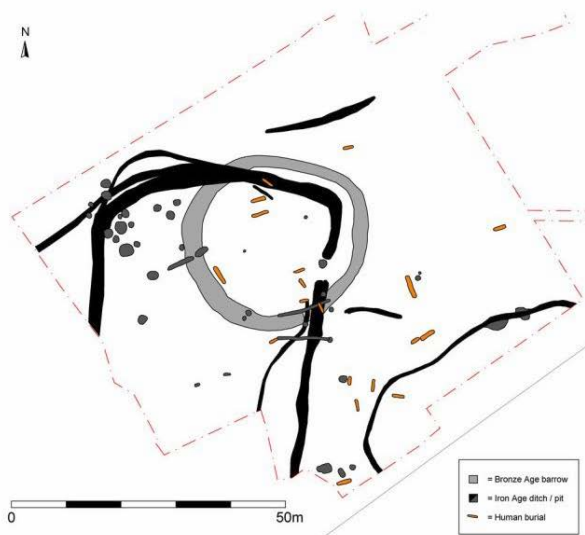


At **Melton Mowbray** (Sysonby) evaluation following a geophysical survey has produced Iron Age pottery from features ditches and enclosures.

At **Bradgate Park** the painstaking excavation of the Upper Palaeolithic site has recovered over 4,600 flints, with almost 10% being tools and by-products. Plotting of the finds has shown a circular pattern of cores c.5m across. The working hypothesis is that these larger flints have rested against the bounds of a tent wall. A concentration of burnt flint is apparent across the tent circle with a clear concentration in the southern half. There are some patterns in the tool classes, for example

there are two clear arcs of blade scrapers around the tent circle, suggesting that hide working used the external frame of the tent.

At **Rothley** the excavation of the Bronze Age barrow is completed. The earliest activity dated to the Neolithic, an axe was found in the backfilled barrow ditch, and a near-complete Middle Neolithic 'Peterborough Ware' pottery vessel was located in a pit close by. The barrow measured over 30 metres in diameter. The mound did not survive ploughing, only the surrounding ditch survived. Cremation burials were found close to the sub-circular ditches. By the Iron Age the barrow, although partly eroded was probably a landmark in the local landscape and a large rectangular enclosure ditch was constructed partly along the alignment of the barrow ditch, avoiding the central area of the mound. The area was utilised as enclosed fields, with an entrance-way on the east-side directly on the mound, with a busy pit area behind the mound on the west-side. In the early Anglo-Saxon period the barrow became the focus for a small inhumation cemetery of at least 12 burials. An Anglo-Saxon building was found in the adjacent field in 2010. The barrow mound contained six burials, one burial lay over the backfilled ditch, and the immediate surrounding area contained a further five inhumation burials (see photos above). The acidic soils had destroyed virtually all evidence of the bodies (apart from some teeth and tiny bone fragments). However, grave goods including a complete pottery vessel, spears, knives, a spike, an annular brooch, and remains of a shield (boss and studs).



Plan and view of the Rothley excavations

At **Waltham on the Wolds** Trial trenching revealed evidence for Roman activity of the 1st century AD. Three trenches contained several gullies and pits and there was evidence of small-scale iron working. Environmental remains suggest crop processing and consumption in the vicinity. The archaeological features may indicate a small Roman rural settlement or farmstead.

**MoLA** have, at **Coalville**, been following up a cremation burial found in an evaluation and found very little else except a possible ring gully.

**York Archaeological Trust (Trent and Peak)** have found a post medieval brickyard at **Ashby de la Zouch**

**Archaeology and Built Heritage** (aka Neil Finn) has been recording structural elements at Launde Abbey revealed during the construction of a lift. This includes a doorway with a locking bar of possibly 15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> century date, which was previously known but partly hidden by a later floor.

#### 4. **COURSES IN LEICESTER, ASHBY de la ZOUCH AND OAKHAM**

Peter Liddle will be running 3 courses after Easter. At Jewry Wall Museum he will be running 'An Introduction to Leicestershire Archaeology'. This will be on Saturday mornings from 10.30 to 12.30 from April 16<sup>th</sup> for 6 weeks. At Ashby Museum it will be 'Leicestershire Archaeology in 6 Projects', looking at how important projects have contributed to our understanding of Leicestershire Archaeology. This is on Tuesday afternoons from 2-4pm from April 12<sup>th</sup>, while at Rutland County Museum it will be 'The Anglo-Saxons in Leicestershire and Rutland', starting on Thursday April

14<sup>th</sup> from 2 – 4pm. Details from [peter.liddle51@gmail.com](mailto:peter.liddle51@gmail.com). Each lecture is free standing and people are welcome to attend individual lectures.

5. **GROUP NEWS – 40 THIS YEAR!**

The Group reaches its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday this year having started in 1976 as the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Fieldwork Group. We plan to mark the anniversary with events around the county including a fieldwork week at Othorpe with associated meetings. It is hoped that local groups will also mark the anniversary with events.

With the recent unsettled weather there has been little in the way of fieldwork. A notable exception is **Claire Brown** at **Braunston in Rutland** who has slogged on. Recently the **Hallaton Group** has assisted with geophysical survey of one of her Roman sites producing a fine set of enclosures. The **Oadby and Wigston Group** have also braved the elements and have got into the field. Other fields are lined up to walk if the weather permits.

6. **FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY 2016**

This year's Festival runs from the 16<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> July. We are hoping for a bigger and better Festival than ever and would welcome any ideas for new events. A **launch event** will be held on July 10<sup>th</sup> at Jewry Wall Museum. This is planned as a fun family event but also the chance to showcase the work done by groups and individuals across Leicestershire and Rutland. If you can bring displays or help staff stalls it would be much appreciated. As 2016 is the Fieldworkers 40th anniversary we would like to see the Group well represented this year. Contact Peter on [peter.liddle51@gmail.com](mailto:peter.liddle51@gmail.com) if you'd like to be involved or have ideas for events.

7. **LATEST LEICESTERSHIRE MUSEUMS ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS**

A temporary display featuring a fascinating array of intriguing objects found during recent renovation of Market Harborough's Old Grammar School is currently on show at Market Harborough Library and Harborough Museum. The items span the past 300 years and range from coins and tokens to dandy buttons, wooden toys and scraps of paper with handwriting practice. The finds were cleaned, photographed and catalogued by Leicestershire Museums' volunteer teams. Visit [www.leics.gov.uk/symington](http://www.leics.gov.uk/symington) for opening times. For any community archaeology or archaeological collections enquiries contact [archaeology@leics.gov.uk](mailto:archaeology@leics.gov.uk)

8. **PORTABLE ANTIQUITIES SURGERIES CANCELLED**

The planned surgeries by Leicestershire and Rutland Finds Liaison Officer, Wendy Scott, in county museums and libraries in March have been cancelled.

9. **NEWS FROM JEWRY WALL MUSEUM**

On March 16<sup>th</sup> there will be a **Big History Quiz** in the Museum starting at 7.30pm. Please telephone 0116 225 4971 for more details of any of the events.

There is still no firm news of the future of the former Vaughan College buildings which have been acquired by the City Council, although Sir Peter Soulsby has announced a major investment to improve the access to the museum with a new ramp and lift and an intention to work with the Friends of Jewry Wall to apply for Heritage Lottery Fund money to improve the museum displays. If you would be interested in joining the Friends of Jewry Wall email [info@jewrywallfriends.co.uk](mailto:info@jewrywallfriends.co.uk) or phone the chairman, Jennifer Macgregor on 0116 219577.

10. **BEDFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL PUBLICATIONS**

Bedfordshire Archaeological Council has FREE copies of the Bedfordshire Archaeology Journal in hard copy and to download and some Monographs in hard copy only where they own the copyright. Please go to [www.baalhs.org.uk/bacpub.htm](http://www.baalhs.org.uk/bacpub.htm) for the Journal details or [www.baalhs.org.uk/monographs.htm](http://www.baalhs.org.uk/monographs.htm) for a list of the monographs (nos 1,2,3,5,6 only). If you contact or email Kathy at [info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk](mailto:info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk) then we will work out a way of getting a hard copy to you or, email David Ingham at [david.cba-em@albiondi.plus.com](mailto:david.cba-em@albiondi.plus.com) for further info.



11. **ANGLO-SAXON RENDLESHAM**

A one-day conference on the royal centre of the East Anglian Kingdom will be held in Bury St Edmunds on 24th September 2016. Find out more at [heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham-conference-2016](http://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/rendlesham-conference-2016)

12. **CBA EAST MIDLANDS PARISH BOUNDARIES PROJECT**

The Parish Boundary Project is an initiative by the CBA East Midlands to involve local groups and individuals in a regional exercise to map their local parish boundaries and identify features of archaeological and historic interest. The result will be a unique online resource accessible to anyone with an interest in historic landscapes and will serve as an important record. The database will be built up over time and it is hoped that eventually the whole of the East Midlands will be covered. Leicestershire Fieldworkers committee had a presentation of the project before Xmas and are supporting and promoting the project to Fieldwork members. We are hosting an introductory talk and 'get started' afternoon on Saturday 16th April at 2pm – 4pm at Jewry Wall Museum in Leicester (just after Pete's talk in the morning which finishes at 1pm). If you are interested please email Kathy on [info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk](mailto:info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk) or just come along. If you are unable to attend but would like to find out more please also let us know. Previous knowledge and ability not necessary.

13. **COUNCIL FOR BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGY CONFERENCES**

Membership of the CBA East Midlands group is £5 – please consider joining and supporting archaeology in the region. Links below or ask us for further details.

Last Chance to book – Aspects of Invasion in the East Midlands – CBA East Midlands conference on Sat 19th March, Navenby near Grantham. Note particularly the talk about the Torksey excavations where the Viking great army overwintered by Prof Julian D Richards, Univ of York. Go to [www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem](http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem) for further details.

The CBA South Midlands conference Saxon Archaeology of the South Midlands will be held on Sunday 2nd April 2016 at Cuddesdon near Oxford and includes talks on the Staffordshire Hoard; Saxon Oxford; Professor John Blair on Planned Anglo-Saxon landscapes, the A/S cemetery at Wolverton, Milton Keynes, and others. Go to [www.archaeologyuk.org/cbasml](http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbasml) for further details.

14. **DAVID SMITH**

We are very sad to report the death of our member, David Smith. David was formerly a lecturer at Scraftoft College and De Montfort University and was the leading specialist in vernacular buildings in the county, having recorded buildings locally for many years. He was also an expert in the gypsy traveller communities. David was always generous with the vast amount of knowledge that he had and will be very sadly missed.

15. **MEMBER SUBSCRIPTIONS – LAST CHANCE TO PAY!**

There are still outstanding membership renewals for the membership year starting in June 2015. Those who have not paid will not receive any further newsletters. Enquiries should go by email to Kathy on [info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk](mailto:info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk) but non-payers will be notified with this newsletter.

16. **Events** – if you are planning any events this year and want to borrow banners, leaflets, books or the bookstall, (with or without helpers) please contact Kathy Elkin on [info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk](mailto:info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk)

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