



# THE FIELDWORKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS

NOVEMBER 2019: ISSUE 285

Welcome to the November edition of The Fieldworker. Read on to find out about the latest group news, what has been found recently in the county; find out about talks and training opportunities coming up and much more.

Hope you enjoy...

– Peter and Mathew

## THE NEXT MEETING



The next meeting will be on **Thursday November 21st** at 7.30pm. **Professor Klaus Oegg** of the Botanical Institute of the University of Innsbruck will be speaking on "**Ötzi**" a **Prehistoric Alpine Glacier Mummy**. We are holding this meeting jointly with the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society and the Prehistoric Society. Many people will remember the TV programmes and books following the discovery by walkers of a fully dressed and equipped 5000-year-old body emerging from the ice on the Italian/ Austrian border in the Alps. Professor Oegg has continued the research.

**BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.** Tickets are **FREE** and available from <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/otzi-a-prehistoric-alpine-glacier-mummy-tickets-71893329885>

At the time of writing over 230 tickets have been issued for a 300-seat venue so please don't leave it too late to book. We have never previously brought a speaker so far to speak to us and while he is here, we have arranged lectures at Rutland County Museum on the 19th November and Oundle on the 20th.

The meeting will be held in **Lecture Theatre 1** (not our normal one) of the **George Davies Building, Centre for Medicine, University of Leicester**. This is the striking new building on the corner of University Road and Lancaster Road. Parking will be available across the road in the Medical Sciences Building car park on the left side of Lancaster Road from University Road

and is also available after 6pm on the road. A picture of the venue and car park are on our website at <http://leicsfieldworkers.co.uk/new-meeting-venue/>

## DIARY DATES FOR 2019/20

- **November 14th:** Mathew Morris talking at Lutterworth Methodist Church on Revealing Grey Friars (see Group News for details).
- **November 19th:** Prof. Klaus Oegg talking at Rutland County Museum on "Ötzi" the Iceman
- **November 20th:** Prof. Richard Thomas talking at Melton Carnegie Museum on Bradgate House: A Complex of Buildings (see Group News for details)
- **November 21st:** Prof. Klaus Oegg talking at University of Leicester on "Ötzi" the Iceman
- **November 23rd:** CBA East Midlands and Ice Age Journeys conference (see Conferences for details)
- **December 2nd:** A Christmas 'Roman Repast' with Hinckley Archaeological Society. Details at <http://leicsfieldworkers.co.uk/hinckley-archaeological-society/>
- **December 5th:** Mathew Morris talking at Brocks Hill Country Park Centre on Roman Leicester: Life in the Roman World. Details and booking form at: <http://leicsfieldworkers.co.uk/friends-of-brocks-hill-country-park/>

## 2020

- **January 6th:** Stephen Young talking at Hinckley about post-Roman and early Anglo-Saxon burial traditions in the headwaters of the River Nene. See Hinckley Arc Soc website (above) for details.
- **January 16th:** Gavin Speed talking at University of Leicester on the Stibbe excavation in Leicester
- **March 19th:** Ian Meadows talking at University of Leicester on the Roman town at Irchester, Northants
- **May 21st:** Chris Fern talking at University of Leicester on the Staffordshire Hoard and Helmet
- **June 18th:** AGM followed by Mathew Morris talking on the excavations at Oakham Castle
- **September 17th:** Peter Liddle talking on 50 years of Leicestershire Archaeology
- **November 19th:** Professor Simon James talking on Archaeology in a colonial maritime landscape: Roman and Byzantine Akrotiri, Cyprus

## CONFERENCES

The CBA EM autumn conference, in co-operation with Ice Age Journeys, will be on **Saturday November 23rd** from 10.30am to 5.30pm, at Newark Academy, London Road, Newark, Notts NG24 3AL.

The theme is **Sites and skills of the late Ice Age**. More information and a booking form can be downloaded at:

[http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem/index.htm\\_files/CBA-EM%20Nov%202019%20programme.pdf](http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem/index.htm_files/CBA-EM%20Nov%202019%20programme.pdf)

You **MUST** book your place by 14th November.

Any queries should be addressed to David Ingham on 07717 866767 or [david.cba-em@albiondi.plus.com](mailto:david.cba-em@albiondi.plus.com)

## GROUP NEWS

The next **Melton Fieldworkers** lecture is **Bradgate House: A Complex of Buildings** by Prof. Richard Thomas at Melton Carnegie Museum on Wednesday November 20th at 7.30pm. All are welcome. Admission is £5. There are limited places available, please book early to avoid disappointment by emailing [meltonmuseum@leics.gov.uk](mailto:meltonmuseum@leics.gov.uk) or phoning 0116 3053860.

Ten members of the new **Wreake Valley Fieldworker Group** carried out their first field walk near **Hungarton**. Although, not within the Wreake Valley, an offer of a field with a promise of 'Roman' was not to be turned down. We were not disappointed. Despite it being ploughed but not harrowed and very rough, we found good amounts of Roman grey ware together with some bonfire fired pottery, a small amount of prehistoric flint, as well as medieval pottery. We have a Finds Identification session planned when we should be able to confirm the identification and distribution of our finds. We also have permission to walk the field again once it has been harrowed. This should enable us to take a more detailed look and hopefully find more, now that many of us have a better idea of what we are looking for. We are happy to welcome new members. If you would like further details, please contact Jan Butler ([janbutler2609@btinternet.com](mailto:janbutler2609@btinternet.com)).

The **Croxtan Kerrial Heritage Trust** has received a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant of £46,700 for an exciting project at the medieval manor house archaeological site in the village of **Croxtan Kerrial**. The project will conserve the manor house remains and display them to the public. The work will include display boards with information and artist's reconstruction drawings, together with car parking, access footpaths and perimeter fencing.

The location of the medieval manor house was lost for over two hundred years until rediscovered by the **Framland Local Archaeology Group** in 2012, who

excavated the site over the following six years.

**Hallaton Fieldwork Group** completed their annual excavation, this time at the **Mill Mound**. They found some interesting horse bones, which on first inspection looked like medieval ice skates that had been broken. After consulting with the owner of **Whissendine Mill** (an ex-archaeologist), he confirmed they were actually part of the mill's damsel mechanism and showed the wooden equivalent. This is quite a rare find, a unit in the North East has found similar and were unsure of their purpose, they have now been made aware. A paper will be forthcoming about this.



*The pieces of bone damsel mechanism from Hallaton.*

Another illustration course is going to be arranged, if anyone is interested, this will be a more technical one. Contact [hallatonfwg@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hallatonfwg@yahoo.co.uk) for further information, date to be announced.

The **Oadby and Wigston Group** has had a very busy summer. Its first season of test-pitting on the **Brocks Hill** estate in Oadby has ended with seven test-pits completed. There were mixed results but it helped to define the area through finds of Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery. It is intended to provide feedback to the community at a meeting in the New Year which hopefully will generate more volunteers for test-pitting next year.

The Group has also field-walked ten more fields near **Little Stretton, Laughton and Smeeton Westerby**. Two Roman sites identified by fieldworkers in the 1990s have been confirmed and another small site located. Nearly 50 members also went on a trip to Flag Fen and Peterborough Cathedral.

The **Lutterworth Group** have now completed a further three test pits at **Walton**, with several to follow next year. They are currently running a school programme at **Swinford** which will cover flint and bone activity in

the classroom followed by an after-school club centred around outside activities. The previous school programme, held at Sherrier School in Lutterworth, was so well received the group has been asked back again, probably in the spring.

The Group will be hosting a talk by Mathew Morris, '**Revealing Grey Friars: The search for Leicester's lost Franciscan friary**', at Lutterworth Methodist Church, Bitteswell Road, on Thursday 14th November, 7.30pm. Doors open 7pm. Admission £5, available from Max Electrical or on the door.

## ULAS TRAINING COURSES

Want something to do which doesn't involve Christmas shopping!?

Don't forget to book a place on one of ULAS's training workshops this winter. Courses are rapidly filling up but there are still places available. Pick up some tips on carrying out and interpreting fieldwalking and test-pitting at full-day courses on Saturday 30th November (fieldwalking) and Saturday 14th December (test-pitting). Each course is £20.

Find out more information about the courses and book your place at:

[https://shop.le.ac.uk/short-courses/courses-and-course-essentials/school-of-archaeology-and-ancient-history?fbclid=IwAR1oH2U\\_Zlh79eyK8E5AQ-mvi7hwrS0\\_byVhjQb94pM8LmlQmt8KH3y9gn0](https://shop.le.ac.uk/short-courses/courses-and-course-essentials/school-of-archaeology-and-ancient-history?fbclid=IwAR1oH2U_Zlh79eyK8E5AQ-mvi7hwrS0_byVhjQb94pM8LmlQmt8KH3y9gn0)

## FIELDWORK GUIDE UPDATES

In conjunction with ULAS's winter workshops, we have resumed updating the Fieldwork Guides on the website. There are now guides on setting up archaeological projects, test-pitting, excavation, finds processing and photogrammetry, along with a wide range of other useful documents and templates. Guides on health and safety and archaeology, desk-based research, fieldwalking and report writing will be following shortly, and we will carry on expanding the resource as we think of new things. Find the guides at:

<http://leicsfieldworkers.co.uk/our-resources/fieldwork-guides/>

## EXCAVATION NEWS

As is often the case, **University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS)** has been the busiest unit locally. At **Lutterworth** an evaluation of the allotments close to previous excavations at the former Leader's Farm has located a large number of features, mainly undated gullies in the western part of the site (these could be the continuation of the Roman field system from the Leader's Farm site), and a series of furrows to the east. The star find, however, was a

clearly defined pit filled with fragments of eight vessels of rare Late Neolithic Grooved ware pottery and an abundance of Neolithic flint chips, flakes and flake fragments.

At **Burnmill Road, Market Harborough** a complex Iron Age and Roman site is under excavation. In the western part of the site a substantial semi-circular enclosure included several features seemingly associated with metal working. An isolated crouched burial, probably a juvenile, was found with the hands clasped together near the face and holding an iron object, possibly a brooch. In the north-east corner an early Roman settlement, possibly in the classic 'clothes-line' arrangement of enclosures ranged along a single outer ditch, is being excavated with hearths, pits and other indications of occupation.



*The crouched burial at Burnmill Road.*

At **North Kilworth**, excavation following an evaluation phase has revealed Roman ditches and enclosures cutting earlier Iron Age roundhouses and other associated activity. These cut into an earlier large circular ditch at the south edge of the site. Within this is a smaller concentric circle. This appears to have been an Early Bronze Age barrow with a collared urn being a recent find. At **Brooksby Quarry** finds from the quarry's reject heap continue to accumulate with 916 artefacts now found. At **Lockington** more work around the quarry has produced pit and ditch features,

and some detail on the palaeochannel is being confirmed. At **Billesdon** an area of earthworks north of the village was trenched. The earthworks appear to be agricultural, rather than connected with buildings. Several earlier ditches were also recorded.

**MOLA (Northants)** has continued work at **Wistow Road, Kibworth** and has found a ring ditch with several phases and two entrances. In one of the ditch terminals was a crouched burial and a fragment of a prehistoric vessel. There was no obvious mound and the centre of the ring ditch was disturbed by later quarrying. On the same site a couple of Roman burials were found.

**Albion Archaeology** has been working around **Magna Park** to inform the mitigation strategy. They have excavated some Iron Age ditches and examined medieval features south and west of the scheduled area of Bittesby deserted village. These include close boundaries and trackways.

## NEWS FROM THE HER

Helen Wells (Historic Environment Record Officer) reports: Susan Ripper (Assistant HERO) and I are currently working on several enhancement projects, adding digitised photographs and detail from the old paper records to the HER. There is always more to add to the computerised record! Some work we've completed fairly recently is linking all of the old slides we've had digitised to the relevant HER records. This has been very time consuming but has made the images much more accessible. Thumbnails of the images are visible on the records available on the Heritage Gateway website, which makes all the 'Monument' HER data available online. In total we went through about 9,500 slides, many of which were taken by museums staff in the 1970s/80s/early 90s. The images are of all sorts of things – cropmarks, earthworks, buildings, fieldwork – and are invaluable.



*Ulverscroft Priory, 1977 (MLE13973)*



*Frisby deserted medieval village, 1982 (MLE1511)*

As always please do contact us at [her@leics.gov.uk](mailto:her@leics.gov.uk) with any queries you think we can help with. Though records are available online via the Heritage Gateway we can produce personalised exports with maps/gazetteers for projects, and are happy to check areas that you want to carry out fieldwork in.

**Editor's note:** and remember to send reports of fieldwork to the HER as this is the County's archive!

## FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY

We are beginning the planning for the 2020 Festival after the outstanding success of this year. We are keen to have events in all parts of Leicestershire and Rutland and would like everyone to think of new and exciting guided walks and venues for talks in partnership with local groups. If you are a member of a Local History Society or Heritage Group please suggest joining the 2020 Festival. We can help with guided walks and providing speakers for lectures. We are in discussion with several high-profile speakers.

## DIGGING FOR BRITAIN

Look out for the new series of BBC's Digging for Britain which will feature this summer's excavation at Bradgate. No details of transmission dates yet but a trailer has recently aired and it is normally on at this time of year.

## CONTACT US

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Contributions welcome!

Our webmaster is Mathew Morris who also welcomes details of events and news.

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