



# THE FIELDWORKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS

MARCH 2020: ISSUE 287

Welcome to the March 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 March 19th** at 7.30pm when **Ian Meadows** will talk about **Recent excavations at the Roman town of Irchester, Northamptonshire**.

Ian is the Archaeological Project Manager for the Chesters Farm Project. He will be talking about the excavations at the 'small' Roman town of Irchester where over the last decade fieldwork has explored the defences, a shrine, and a large part of the suburbs, including burial grounds. The work has had a strong emphasis on volunteers and involvement of amateurs on site and several have gone on to work professionally in archaeology. Irchester was once interpreted as a summer camp for the Romans. What we now know is it was a thriving hub tied into the larger imperial infrastructure and road network, and it may owe its origins, at least in part, to the fact that this location was a good river crossing point.

The meeting will be held in **Lecture Theatre 2** 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 2020

- **March 9th, 2pm:** Mathew Morris talking at the Oadby & Wigston Fieldworkers on the Archaeology of Medieval Leicester.
- **March 14th, 10.30am:** Matthew Beamish talking at Lutterworth Methodist Church on The Enderby Iron Age Shield. All Welcome, admission £5.
- **March 17th, 7.45pm:** Vicki Score talking at Wymeswold on Buildings, Burials and Bones: The lost chapel of St Morrell, Hallaton. All Welcome. Jubilee Room, Wymeswold Memorial Hall, Clay Street LE12 6TY. Non-members £3.
- **March 19th, 7.30pm:** Ian Meadows talking at University of Leicester on the Roman town at Irchester, Northants
- **April 5th, all day:** CBA East Midlands spring conference on Life and Death in the East Midlands at the University of Leicester. More details below.
- **April 6th, 7pm:** Kathy Sedar talking at Hinckley Archaeological Society on The Art of Illumination. More details below.
- **May 21st:** Chris Fern talking at University of Leicester on the Staffordshire Hoard and Helmet
- **May 31st:** LAHS History Fair at Beaumanor Hall, Woodhouse Eves.
- **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

## GROUP NEWS

The wet winter has more or less made fieldwalking impossible particularly as many fields have not been ploughed.

**Hinckley Archaeological Society** will have a talk on **Monday April 6th** by **Kathy Sedar**, on **The Art of Illumination**. Kathy has a special interest in the traditional skills of manuscript production and the use of illumination for decorating and lettering. The talk will be at The United Reformed Church, The Borough, Hinckley, LE10 1N. Doors open at 7pm. Cost £5.

HAS will be celebrating their 25th anniversary on June 1st at St Peters Church, Mancetter. More details in a later issue.

The Market Bosworth Society AGM on **March 19th** will hear from **Richard Knox** on **Battlefield Search to the Gods of War - the discovery of the Bosworth Roman Temple**.

The weather has thwarted any attempts by the **Oadby & Wigston Fieldworkers** to get on with fieldwalking over the winter. However, they have now completed the recording of 60 fields walked over the last five years and passed the information on to the HER. Many thanks to Mike Bruce for this herculean task and many hours of dedication to develop a comprehensive recording system. They have also held a well-attended meeting in Oadby to feedback on their test-pitting programme last summer. This has also generated a number of new volunteers to continue the search for evidence of Roman and Anglo-Saxon settlement on the Brocks Hill Estate this year. If there are any members in the area who want their garden digging please contact them via [info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk](mailto:info@leicsfieldworkers.co.uk).

Meetings have also included a guided walk around St Peter's Church in Oadby and an introduction to the Arch-I-Scan Project at the University by Victoria Szafara. Mathew Morris and Peter Liddle are already scheduled for talks this Spring. Mathew will be talking on the **Archaeology of Medieval Leicester** on **Monday March 9th**, 2pm at the Royal British Legion Club, Oadby.

The next indoor meeting of the **Wreake Valley Group** will take place on **Tuesday March 31st**. New members are always welcome. Please contact Jan Butler at [janbutler2609@btinternet.com](mailto:janbutler2609@btinternet.com) for further details.

**Lutterworth Fieldworkers** are having a meeting on **Saturday March 14th** at 10.30am when Matthew Beamish will be talking about the **Enderby Iron Age Shield**, its discovery, importance and preservation as one of the most significant Iron Age finds in Europe. The venue is the Methodist Church, 1 Bitteswell Road, Lutterworth. Tickets £5 each, at the door or from Max Electric in Lutterworth.

## THE FINDS REPORT

Welcome to a new feature – an opportunity to share your latest discoveries! Mike Southall of the Lutterworth Fieldworkers reports:

### Livery button

We have made the assumption that it is a Livery button. It was found at Talbot House, in Walton, which used to be the Talbot Inn and originally was called the Boot & Shoe Inn (1725).



*Livery button from Walton.*

It was found in the back garden when it was dug over for a new pond.

The cross crosslets are interesting, and we thought they may relate to a local Lord. Walton was split between two parishes: Walton in Kimcote and Walton in Knaptoft and, according to White's Gazetteer & Directory of Leicestershire and the small county of Rutland 1846, the inn was in the parish of Knaptoft.

John Nicholls recorded a coat of arms that included cross crosslets but stated that it belonged to a visitor to Knaptoft Hall. The Coat of Arms Society could find no record we could associate with the area.

The Walton riot, in 1846 (a popular date!) ended up with a fight at the Talbot Inn between the police and railway navvies. Lutterworth police station was open at the time and we don't know if there was any connection between the fight and the button (great story if it was). The button is brass.

### Rowel

We made the decision that this was a Rowel (the spiked revolving disk at the end of a spur) as we couldn't think what else it could be - even though there are only four points.

It was found at Shawell where we were digging an IA/Roman site but there was no particular stratification and we have assumed it was 'field scatter'.

We know that Prince Rupert, when on his way from Rugby to Swinford - and subsequently Naseby, passed through Shawell. Nehemiah Wallington (Historical Notes & Meditations 1583-1649 - published 1869) recorded that Prince Rupert was opposed by the villagers (or townfolk) of Shawell and he subsequently hung, at least, one resident and burnt down, at least, one house. Shawell had a strong Parliamentary connection at the time.

So, could the 'Rowel' be associated with that time?



Rowel from Shawell.

**NOTE FROM THE EDITORS:** The editorial team wonder if an alternate interpretation of the 'Rowel' could be the decorative knob from the top of an 18th/19th-century tea caddy or tobacco jar, or something similar?

If you have any interesting finds you would like to share, please send photos and captions to the editors (contact details at bottom of page).

## CONFERENCES

The **CBA East Midlands** spring conference this year will be on the theme of **Life and Death in the East Midlands**, to be held at the George Davies Centre in Leicester on **Sunday April 5th**. As this is on our patch Fieldworker members will pay the CBA members rate of £20. There are a host of local speakers including Mathew Morris, Vicki Score and Oliver Harris. Details can be downloaded at [www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem/cba-em%20events.htm](http://www.archaeologyuk.org/cbaem/cba-em%20events.htm)

The **Nene Valley Archaeological Trust** is running a **Science in Archaeology** conference at Castor, near Peterborough on **Saturday March 28th**. Find out more at <https://www.nenevalleyarchaeology.co.uk/2020-conference>.

## GRANTS

The Grants page and application form are now available on the Fieldworkers website at <http://leicsfieldworkers.co.uk/about-us/grants/>

## PETE'S COURSES

**Peter Liddle** is running 2 courses at The Guildhall in Leicester. The first, called **Discovering**

**Leicestershire Archaeology**, runs from Thursday February 27th to April 2nd from 2pm to 4pm and the second, **Roman Leicestershire and Rutland**, from Thursday April 23rd to June 4th also from 2 to 4pm. Both courses cost £30 for 6 lectures or £6 for individual lectures. Contact Peter on [peter.liddle51@gmail.com](mailto:peter.liddle51@gmail.com) for details.

## ULAS TRAINING COURSES

There are still some spaces left on the final ULAS training course **How to write up and archive your archaeological project** on **Saturday March 14th**. Details here <https://shop.le.ac.uk/short-courses/courses-and-course-essentials/school-of-archaeology-and-ancient-history>

ULAS are also happy to take their courses out to groups. If you feel a course might be suitable for your group and you have a venue, contact ULAS at [ulas@le.ac.uk](mailto:ulas@le.ac.uk) for more information.

## EXCAVATION NEWS

The wet weather has also made commercial excavation difficult particularly on heavy soils where sites have often disappeared under water at times. Despite this **ULAS** has managed some sites.



ULAS's excavation at Burnmill Road, Market Harborough has taken on a marine character.

At **Shawell Quarry** a mid-late Iron Age site has been recorded, comprising four roundhouses along with fragments of another two, indicative of at least two phases of occupation. Accompanying these is an enclosure/boundary ditch which also has evidence for a couple of phases. The site is close to the Roman small town of *Tripontium* and further work may reveal the edges of the town.

At **Tugby** Roman ditches and gullies, many recut on many occasions, have been found although the centre of the site may lie beyond the limits of the excavation. A 3rd century military baldric terminal plate was found in the evaluation here in 2017 – a very unusual and intriguing find.



*Roman military baldric terminal plate found at Tugby.*

It would have been attached to the end of a wide leather strap from which a sword scabbard was hung. The openwork design incorporates a stylised 'native' Briton or 'Celtic' head with pudding bowl haircut and lentoid eyes. The grooved hinge loops at one end would have held a pendant. Only a handful of similar examples are known from Britain and this is the first from the county.

In **Leicester** work under the arches of The Great Central Railway station on Jarvis Street mostly

revealed deep garden soil, although the edge of the town defences was found.

Elsewhere, at **St Andrew's Church, Carlton** three test pits have found that the present 18th-century church uses the earlier church foundations. At **Brooksby Quarry** Palaeolithic finds continue to be made bringing the total to 927 so far.

**Headland Archaeology** have been evaluating an area at **Glebe Farm, Lutterworth** and have found a system of ditches, perhaps fields or enclosures associated with Roman material and a post-built building, perhaps a barn.

**Phoenix Archaeology** have been evaluating around **Greetham Quarry**. Previous work has produced Anglo-Saxon sunken featured structures but this time two areas of Roman activity are indicated.

## FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY

The 2020 Leicestershire and Rutland Festival will run from June 27th to July 26th. Work has started on putting the programme together and we hope to have around the same number of events as last year (c.100).

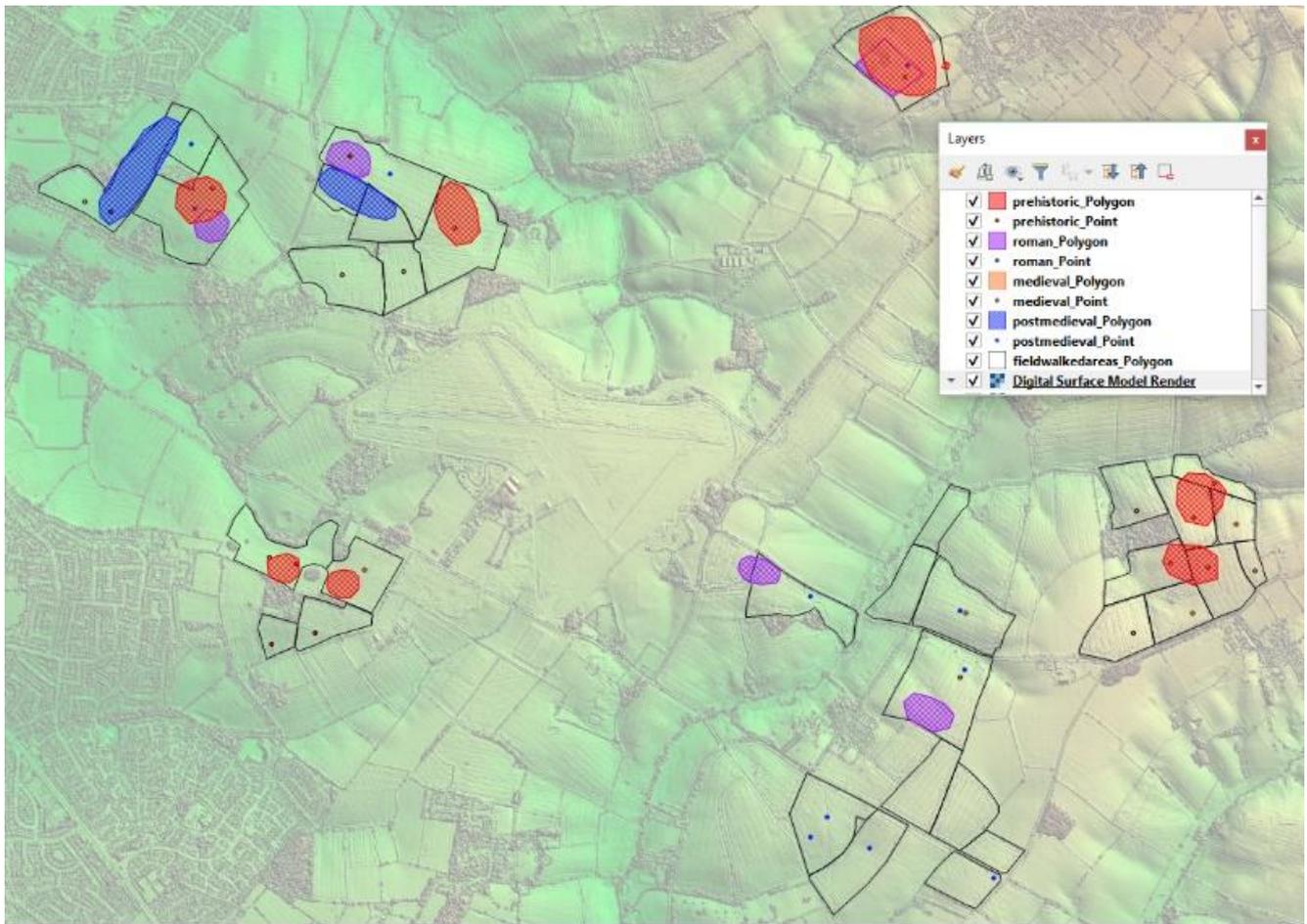
The Festival will kick off with an exciting Day Conference on 25 years of Leicestershire Archaeology, marking ULAS' 25th birthday. The Francis Pryor lecture will be on July 15th, with Michael Wood's lecture probably on the 22nd. All 3 of these events will be at the George Davies Centre. Already many talks and guided walks around Leicestershire and Rutland have been planned but any ideas or offers are always welcome.

## FLAG FEN LECTURES

On Thursday March 12th, 7.30pm Dr Sue Brunning (Curator of European Early Medieval & Sutton Hoo Collections at The British Museum) will be talking on **Respect your Elders: Old Swords in Anglo-Saxon England** at Flag Fen.

In Anglo-Saxon England, old swords were highly prized treasures coveted by warriors, warlords and kings. They were placed in burials, depicted in art and lauded in literature. This talk explores the evidence for the phenomenon and seeks to understand why older was better when it came to one's sword. Book tickets at: <https://vivacity.org/heritage-events/respect-your-elders-old-swords-in-anglo-saxon-england/>

There will also be a talk by Dr Julia Farley (Curator of British & European Iron Age Collections at The British Museum) on Thursday April 2nd, 7.30pm, titled **Twist and turn: Cross-craft connections in Iron Age Britain**. The talks takes place at Flag Fen Archaeology Park (PE6 7QJ). Tickets are £5 per person.



## NEWS FROM THE HER

Helen Wells, Historic Environment Record Officer reports: I recently sent the Oadby & Wigston group some data derived from their 2015-2018 fieldwalking efforts, having added 39 fields to the HER. This has been a great test of the group's recording system, which has definitely made things easier at my end! I have now received another collection of data from the group, so it will be interesting to add that and see how it adds to existing records and/or creates new ones.

Above is an image showing 34 of the fields walked by Oadby & Wigston with amended and new HER records of various dates.

While this may not be the most useful way to present the data, it does give an idea of what has come out of the group's work. It's important to record all the fields, even when not much was found, and the number of adjacent fields is helping build up some landscape-scale analyses for different periods.

## NEWS FROM THE PAS

Megan Gard started as the Portable Antiquities Scheme's new Finds Liaison Officer for Leicestershire & Rutland on 2nd March, replacing Wendy Scott. She will be employed by Derby Museums but based at Rutland County Museum as no Leicestershire office space could be identified.

## BOSWORTH LINKS 2019

Last year, seven further test-pits were dug in Market Bosworth, bringing the total to 60 dug across the town between 2017-19. The reports for every test-pit, videos of the project and the overall report can all be found at <https://www2.le.ac.uk/services/ulas/discoveries/projects/community-archaeology/bosworth-links>.

## FACEBOOK

Don't forget to like the new Facebook Page to keep up to date with all the latest news and events. Just go to [www.facebook.com/leicestershirefieldworkers](http://www.facebook.com/leicestershirefieldworkers).

## 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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