



THE FIELDWORKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS

MARCH 2022: ISSUE 299

As the worst threat from the pandemic has receded - at least for the moment - we are returning to face to face lectures. Our normal venue is still unavailable and we will meet at Stoneygate Baptist Church. We hope to live stream the lecture for those who do not want or cannot attend in person.

- Peter and Mathew

THE NEXT LECTURE



The next lecture will be on March 17th at 7.30pm when **Simon Markus** of MOLA Northampton will speak on **Bronze Age and Anglo-Saxon buildings and burials at Overstone, Northamptonshire**. Excavations at Overstone Leys (North) formed part of an ongoing programme of excavation and investigation works which started in 2009. From the late Neolithic the site was traversed but the area was formalised as a monumental zone in around 2000BC. Burial and monument construction continued for nearly 800 years when the site fell dormant, though a large early Iron Age settlement was established around 1km away. In the 5th century AD a new settlement comprising over 40 structures emerged around the largest Bronze Age monument as well as an associated cemetery. The richly furnished burials contained a mixture of brooches, spears, shields, buckles and beads, including the country's largest assemblage of amber beads from a site of this kind.

Simon Markus has been working for MOLA Northampton (formerly Northamptonshire Archaeology) since 2011 and is now a Project Manager. He has most notably overseen large infrastructure projects including the eastern half of the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon Improvement Scheme which won Rescue Project of the Year at the Current Archaeology Awards in 2019, as well as the majority of the open area excavations in the Overstone area in the last 4 years.

NEW LECTURE VENUE



Our next lecture will be at **Stoneygate Baptist Church** on London Road, Leicester, LE2 3ND, close to the Knighton Road / Stoughton Road traffic lights. There is parking in front of and to the rear of the building but we know there will be other users of the building so it may not be enough. We will have stewards to guide traffic but recommend parking on Toller Road, a short distance away on the town centre side of the church. We will open the doors at 7pm and we hope to offer refreshments.

Go to <https://www.stoneygatebaptist.org.uk/getintouch> for a map.

DIARY DATES FOR 2022

All at 7.30pm, venues TBC unless stated.

- **May 19th:** Kris Poole of Trent and Peak Archaeology talking on Anglo-Saxon Activity at Bottesford and Claybrooke
- **June 16th:** AGM followed by Michael Wood talking on Aethelflaed.
- **July 7th:** Rebecca Wragg Sykes talking on Kindred: Neanderthal Life, Love, Death and Art (a joint meeting with the Prehistoric Society and LAHS).
- **September 15th:** Prof Vince Gaffney talking on The Stonehenge Hidden Landscapes Project and the Durrington Walls Pits Circle.
- **November 17th:** Mike Parker Pearson talking on the Welsh origins of Stonehenge.
- **January 19th (2023):** Dr Andrew Birley talking on Excavations at Vindolanda (title TBC)

HERITAGE WATCH

Did you know Leicestershire police have a Heritage Watch Team? They are a dedicated team of volunteers who work for Leicestershire police tasked with protecting our heritage.

This work is varied, and often includes working closely with Historic England and the Diocese on church lead theft. The current focus of the team is illegal metal detecting often referred to as "Night Hawking".

Nighthawking is the illegal search for and removal of antiquities from the ground using metal detectors without the permission of the landowner, or on prohibited land such as Scheduled Monuments. Nighthawking is therefore theft, and often occurs in the day as well as at night! Nighthawks should not to be confused with responsible metal detectorists who apply for permission to be on private land and report their finds to the Finds Liaison Officer.

The Heritage Team would very much like to raise the awareness of the crime "Nighthawking", as although we know it occurs it is vastly under reported to the police. The police allocate resources based on a supply and demand system and if they don't know it's a problem they cannot task officers accordingly.

For example, with the recent announcement of the Roman Villa site in Rutland, Nighthawking is of particular concern in the area. The Heritage Watch Team would like to encourage people to report any suspicious behaviour to the police.

Reporting crimes to the police can be done by calling 999, 101 or by reporting online, a system which is monitored at all times <https://www.leics.police.uk/report-online>. If a crime is in progress always call 999!

Rather like hare coursing, Nighthawking requires vehicles parked and left in the area of farm gates or public footpaths and the occupants of the vehicles (if you happen to see them would be carrying quite large bags for metal detectors and spades etc.)

So, if you spot anything like this and are suspicious of it, please do let the police know.

If anyone would like to get in touch with the Heritage Watch Team, please drop them an email: heritagewatchvolunteers@leicestershire.pnn.police.uk or visit <https://www.leics.police.uk/news/leicestershire/news/2020/november/police-volunteers-protect-countys-heritage-sites/>

GROUP NEWS

Lutterworth Fieldworkers presented a talk by Mat Morris, in February, on the Sieges of Leicester. They held an Iron Age activity day at Sherrier School, Lutterworth, on 8th March. Looking ahead, there will

be a talk by Pieta Greaves on 'Conserving the Staffordshire Hoard' on 19th March and following this up an 'Introduction to Conservation' on 2nd April.

Hinckley Archaeological Society have two lectures planned. On Monday 4th April is the group AGM and Marianne Whiting will talk on 'Reassessing Birka chamber grave Bj.581', then on Monday 6th June Peter Liddle will talk on 'The Rutland Roman Villa Project'. Both are at The United Reform Church, The Borough, Hinckley, LE10 1NL with doors open at 7pm.

Find full details of these and other group activities at <https://leicsfieldworkers.org/hinckley-archaeological-society/>

Oadby and Wigston Fieldworkers are returning to 'live' monthly meetings. On 14th March they will be at Menphys Hub, Timber St, South Wigston at 2pm, where the guest speaker will be Peter Cousins, who will be talking about South Wigston. For their meeting on 11th April they will be returning to the British Legion in Oadby where Mathew Morris will give a talk on "Leicester: Life in the Medieval World". Planning continues for a test-pitting programme in Keyham, and field walking is also planned near Laughton.

Melton Fieldworkers next lecture is at Melton Carnegie Museum at 7pm on Wednesday 23rd March (see below for details).

MELTON FIELDWORKERS WINTER TALK SERIES

A once-a-month series of interesting and stimulating talks on archaeology held on Wednesday evenings from 7pm at Melton Carnegie Museum.

- **March 23rd:** John Thomas talking on Barrows, Burials and Bronze Age at Cossington.

All welcome – Admission £5 – Doors open 7.00 pm – Talks begin 7.30 pm. Limited places available – please book early to avoid disappointment.

Tel 0116 305 3860 or meltonmuseum@leics.gov.uk to reserve seats.

GEOPHYSICS SURVEY TEAM

Carolyn Chenery reports: The first magnetometer training session by Frobisher's (who produced the machine) has been held, with five in attendance and the professional training was excellent. We are setting up practice sessions to hone our skills before setting up training sessions to cascade the information out to other members, hopefully by late March. We will then set up resistivity training. If anyone has experience operating the TR systems TR/CIA Resistance Meter it would be most helpful. Venues to carry out training would also be very helpful.

If you can help, or would like to become involved, please contact Carolyn at cac.geophys@gmail.com for more information.



Magnetometer training in action. Left to right: Terrence Andrews (Trainer), Matt Wyatt, Simon Dodd.

EXCAVATION NEWS

It's been fairly quiet in the world of commercial archaeology this winter.

ULAS have started working at **Jarvis Street, Leicester**. This has revealed pits. Finds have included a coin of Claudius, samian ware and a chatelaine set. There was also a double horse burial. At **Newbold Verdon** an enclosure, revealed by geophysical survey, has been evaluated.



The cobble spread found by Past to Present Archaeology. Photo: Richard Clark.

A Severn Trent pipeline from **Burton Lazars** to **Burrough** is being monitored by **Past to Present Archaeology**. Two areas have been archaeologically stripped, the first being south-west of Burton Lazars. This has produced a scatter of prehistoric (IA?) and Roman (C1st/2nd) features and finds (pottery and bone) and a cobble spread – the latter defined to the

east by a boundary ditch. The work is now heading south toward Burrough Hill!

Wessex Archaeology is dealing with the archaeology for a second scheme, also Severn Trent Water, from **Oadby** to **Arnesby**. The current section under excavation is running across country south toward Kilby. The most interesting results are a brick kiln excavated north of Kilby, immediately to the south of the Leicester Junction/Grand Union Canal (at Turnover Bridge/Lock). It's not yet clear whether the kiln dates from, or post-dates the construction of the canal. Curiously a rather nice Neolithic polished stone axe was recovered from a ditch associated with the kiln. Despite a subsequent strip no other features or finds were recovered to explain its presence.



The Neolithic stone axe. Photo: Richard Clark.

At **Tinwell**, Rutland, some possible Anglo-Saxon and medieval evidence was recovered as well as the old position of the road and now demolished cottages which once faced Crown Lane.

NEWS FROM THE HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT RECORD

Helen Wells writes: Did you know that many archaeology reports are available online via the ADS library? I recently went through checking ones we had already linked to and adding new ones – I had a list of 1,985 reports from Leicestershire and Rutland! These reports are linked to with 'DOI's', which basically means that they have a web address that will never change. For instance (chosen fairly randomly!): <https://doi.org/10.5284/1076557>. If you look up a Historic Environment Record site on the Heritage Gateway, there will be a link to any available reports in the 'additional information'.

Also, a quick thanks to groups who continue to provide us with information on fieldwork they've carried out. I've recently added work from The Field Detectives, Rutland and Lutterworth groups. Please do continue to send me reports on any field walking/geophysics

etc. you carry out, it really adds to our records (even if the work is negative).

Helen can be contacted at helen.wells@leics.gov.uk

FESTIVAL OF ARCHAEOLOGY

Planning has started for the 2022 Festival of Archaeology which will run from July 2nd to 31st. We are starting to get events into the calendar. The lecture by Rebecca Wragg-Sykes on the Neanderthals will be on July 7th. We are keen to have new events. If there are events that you would like to see included (or could offer) please contact us.

GLOBAL LEICESTER HISTORY FESTIVAL

Saturday 2 April 2022 9.45am – 5.15pm, De Montfort University, Leicester

'Global Leicester' is a History Festival to celebrate Leicester's history and explore how it became the most diverse city in the UK. It is part of a UK-wide history festival co-ordinated by the Institute of Historical Research, London.

The day-long festival will bring together historians, students & community history groups to examine multicultural histories of the city. It will take place at De Montfort University in partnership with the Leicester Branch of the Historical Association.

A full programme for the day can be found here:

<https://globalleicester.our.dmu.ac.uk/2021/12/17/hello-world/>

To reserve your free place, please book via this link:

<https://store.dmu.ac.uk/product-catalogue/faculty-of-art-design-humanities/conferences/global-leicester-history-festival-april-2022>

MEDIEVAL LEICESTERSHIRE

We are looking to reduce some of our stock of Medieval Leicestershire monographs. If you are a current member of the Fieldworkers and you do not have a copy, you will now be able to collect a FREE copy at any of our face to face events. New members will also receive a FREE copy when they join.

LAARC

Members Neil Bevan and Steph Horak would like to extend a warm invitation to all Fieldworkers to join the **Leicestershire Ancient Archaeological Research Community (LAARC)** for an emergent roundhouse-building and ancient farming project. The focus of the LAARC group is to explore prehistoric methods of building, farming, and crafting, informed by the

archaeological evidence found within the East Midlands. Membership will be free with possible small fees for extra tuition from experts, as the aim of the project is to involve anyone and everyone who has an interest in, or is intrigued by pre-Roman Britain.

We have partnered with the Stanford Hall Community Supported Agriculture team (CSA) where the project begins with the planting of Emmer wheat alongside a small Bronze Age crop assemblage, stone tool-making and the building of a kiln for pottery and bronze-casting. The site is nestled in the corner of a beautiful field next to Stanford Hall itself within a 1000 acre estate. The Emmer wheat will be used to provide flour for bread-making and ancient cookery classes. As well as growing organic vegetables for local schools and members, they also invite the community to farm alongside them. Our project links in well with their aims as it provides a glimpse into a time when farming began and hunter gatherers began to settle. More information on the CSA scheme can be found here:

<https://www.stanfordhallcsa.co.uk/>

Before we begin building the roundhouse we will make all the tools and gather the materials necessary. Each activity we embark upon is an opportunity to stop and question, to scrutinise our basic assumptions about the practices of our ancestors - from axe-making, digging a hole, to cookery and weaving, we will treat every aspect as an opportunity for hands-on research. Once the roundhouse is established, the space will serve as a hub of education and community offering classes with local experts in flint-knapping, pottery, weaving, cookery, bronze-casting and other ancient crafts. There is no rush with the build however, so we can make time for design meetings and the exploration of techniques.

Inspired by the methods of Butser Farm, and Leicestershire's very own flint-knapper Bob Wells, we would like to welcome all to the group. Whether you'd like to be involved in the early activities of tool-making and wheat planting, or if you just want to get involved in the build, feel free to get in touch to express your interest. Thanks for reading!

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CONTACT US

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Contributions welcome!

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