



# THE FIELDWORKER

NEWSLETTER OF THE LEICESTERSHIRE FIELDWORKERS

NOVEMBER 2022: ISSUE 303

The autumnal rains are not stopping our fieldworker groups getting out into the fields. The geophysics team has also been busy, with some fantastic results, and commercial work continues to highlight the county's amazing archaeology. Read on for all the details and more.

– Peter and Mathew

## THE NEXT LECTURE



Our next speaker on Thursday November 17th will be **Prof Mike Parker Pearson** on 'Recent research on Stonehenge and its origins'. Research into Stonehenge and its origins has been continuing these last few years despite Covid, with new discoveries in the Stonehenge landscape as well as further afield in the Preseli Hills of Wales where its famous bluestones were quarried. Scientific investigations of isotopes and ancient DNA have also provided exciting new results about people at the time of Stonehenge, including those buried within and around the monument.

Mike is Professor of British Later Prehistory at UCL Institute of Archaeology. He was previously a lecturer at Sheffield University and before that English Heritage Inspector of Ancient Monuments for the East Midlands. He has written extensively on many aspects of prehistory and on the archaeology of death and burial and has appeared many times on television.

The meeting will be in person in the Rattray Lecture Theatre at the University of Leicester. There will be parking on campus as at previous lectures.

Please note, this is not a hybrid lecture and we cannot guarantee there will be a recording of Mike's talk. If you don't want to miss it, please book a seat in the lecture theatre via Eventbrite at:

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/recent-research-on-stonehenge-and-its-origins-tickets-461236690357>

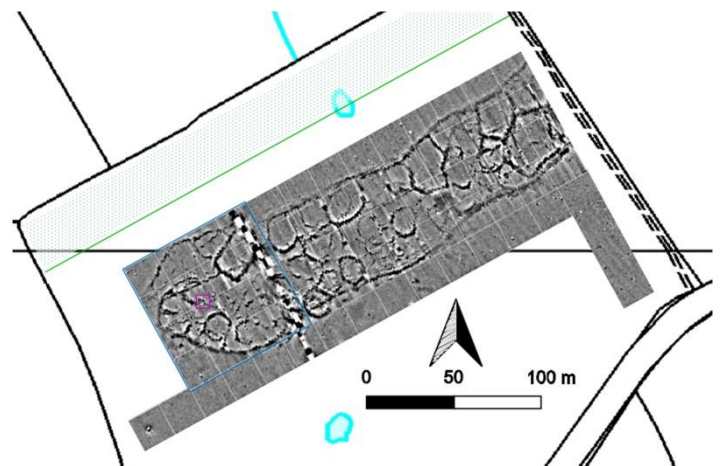
## DIARY DATES FOR 2022/23

All at 7.30pm, venues TBC unless stated.

- **January 19th 2023:** Dr Andrew Birley talking on Excavations at Vindolanda (title TBC)
- **March 16th 2023:** Dr Will Bowden talking on The Caistor Roman Town Project
- **May 18th 2023:** Chris King talking on The City of Caves Project
- **June 15th 2023:** AGM and talk TBC
- **September 21st 2023:** TBC
- **November 16th 2023:** Jane Hawkes talking on Setting the Church in Stone

## GEOPHYSICS TEAM REPORT

Following the discovery of Iron Age activity at **Frisby** in August, the team returned to continue surveying the north end of the field with the magnetometer. Our results revealed a linear Iron Age settlement with numerous round houses and boundary ditches. The settlement extends at least 300m across the north side of the field and probably into the neighbouring field.



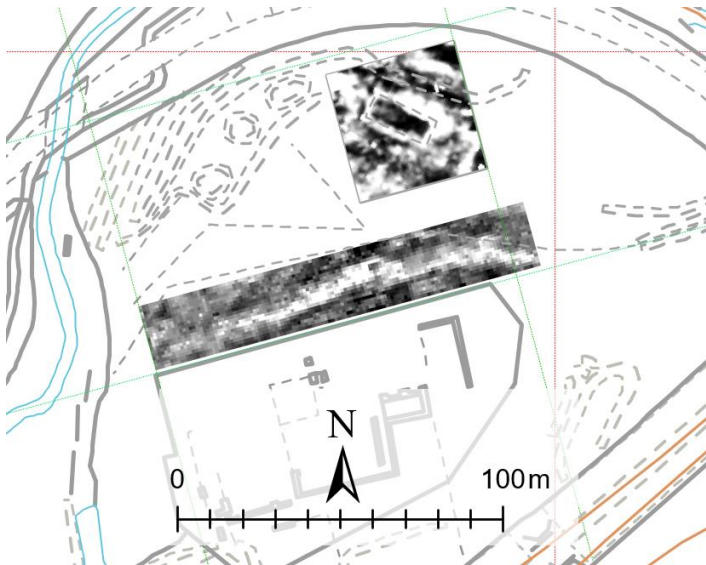
*Magnetometry results for Frisby.*

The team also revisited **Grace Dieu Priory** twice to carry out resistivity surveys and train more Fieldworkers in the method with 11 members having been trained so far.

Our first Resistivity survey was of the 'Fish' house by the fish ponds at the north of the site. Our second visit concentrated around the proposed site of the Priory cemetery, just north of the ruins. On this occasion, Keith Foster — an experienced user of the TR Systems Mk 2 resistance meter — came along to give

us additional instruction in resistivity surveying, and to demonstrate equipment features and the MK2 PC software.

To date 25 members have participated in at least one training and survey session. We are hoping that an application form for Groups to request geophysical surveys will be available online in November.



*Preliminary results of the Grace Dieu Resistivity surveys October 2022.*



*The geophys team carrying out a resistivity survey at Grace Dieu.*

## GROUP NEWS

The **Oadby & Wigston Fieldworkers** report: A test-pit near **Keyham Hall** has been completed, and two more are planned in the spring which will be close to the church and hopefully will yield more evidence of the medieval history of the village. Two test-pits near **Laughton** produced a limited number of Roman and Anglo-Saxon pottery sherds. Three fields have been walked near **Gumley**, and four more are planned over the coming weeks near **Gilmorton**. John Lacey gave a very interesting talk on the layout of villages of south-east Leicestershire, and Carol Gurnham will be giving

us feedback on her post-graduate work on landscape archaeology in the area around Gumley and Laughton.

The **Melton Group** have continued walking fields around **Garthorpe** and have made links with Goadby Marwood History Group who have themselves been fieldwalking and have discovered a Roman site at **Goadby Marwood**.

The **Lutterworth Group** has recommenced walking a series of fields at **Walcote**. They have also held another morning at Sherrier School, Lutterworth, covering the Bronze Age and Iron Age with demonstrations of flint knapping, spinning, pot making, weaving and talking about finds.

**Hinckley Archaeology Society** are undertaking an excavation next to **Aston Flamville Manor House**. They have uncovered 'granite' foundations associated with early medieval pottery. The standing building appears to be 18th century but internally contains substantial timber framed walls suggesting that it is significantly older.

## EXCAVATION NEWS

**ULAS** have two major excavations under way. At **Leicester Cathedral** over 800 burials have been recorded and lifted, ranging in date from the mid-19th century back to the 12th century. Recent work has focused on excavating the medieval burial sequence. Most burials were probably shroud wrapped, with some having evidence of wooden coffins in the form of nails and some with an ash lining. A series of large pits, probably large enough to be quarries, are now beginning to appear beneath the burial soil. Some have burials in the backfill suggesting they may be connected to the building of the church. Roman material is increasingly being found, including pottery, coins and building material, but the only features so far are areas of metallurgy and garden soils. Excavations are expected to continue into January.



*The Cathedral excavation site.*

Follow the latest news from the Cathedral dig at <https://ulasnews.com/leicester-cathedral-revealed/>

At **Rothley** work in advance of a large housing development has continued. This has revealed a large Iron Age enclosure settlement, with around 10 roundhouses, and multiple phases to the ditch systems. There are also earlier features, including earlier prehistoric pits. There are also some early/mid Anglo-Saxon (AD 410-650) post-built structures and possibly some sunken-featured buildings too. The former often survive poorly and are not often found. The excavation still has a long way to run and we can expect more exciting finds.

Work at **Quorn** in advance of a solar farm has been completed, although the high water table means some work will be carried out next year. A geophysical survey had identified areas of probable later prehistoric and Romano-British occupation in the form of linear and curvilinear features in the south-east, central, and north-west of the proposed area. The survey also identified a suspected Bronze Age barrow which was previously identified as a cropmark in Google Earth satellite imagery. Geophysical survey suggested that the ring ditch comprised two circuits and a number of new features were also suggested in the immediate vicinity of the ring ditch.



*The cropmark of the Bronze Age barrow. The excavation areas were to the right and to the bottom.*

Evaluations in February and July 2021 confirmed the survival of archaeological deposits in several areas of the development, mostly comprising linear and curvilinear ditches and gullies, with low numbers of finds of Iron Age and Roman pottery, and occasional lithics. Following a redesign of the proposed solar farm scheme, areas of clear high archaeological sensitivity including the area around the probable Bronze Age barrow and a separate focus of settlement archaeology to the east nearer the current course of the River Soar, were excluded from the development proposals.

Two areas were excavated. Area 1 examined a north-west to south-east oriented linear feature and a probable oval shaped enclosure some 40m apart. Two large pits were found adjacent and to the north of the ditch. There were few datable finds from any of these features. A large 'D' shaped enclosure was exposed

within the stripped area partly corresponding with the geophysical survey results and two additional linear boundary ditch features were found to the north of the enclosure. Finds were sparse but included Iron Age pottery, a few fragments of animal bone and some fragments of granodiorite. The long hot summer had severely parched the fields and the Bronze Age barrow cropmark was revealed once again. This was recorded by drone photogrammetry undertaken by Aerial-Cam and resulted in some excellent images of the barrow and other linear, rectilinear and curvilinear cropmarks.

Evaluation near Thurcaston Road, **Beaumont Leys**, has revealed an Iron Age settlement with roundhouses which produced pottery and burnt daub. This will be excavated in due course.

**Allen Archaeology** are working at **Uppingham** where they are recording a double ditched boundary/trackway and Anglo-Saxon cremations close to a Bronze Age barrow (or two) which are being preserved *in situ*.

## TUDOR AND STUART LEICESTERSHIRE COURSE

Peter Liddle is running a series of lectures on Tudor and Stuart Leicestershire and Rutland at Leicester's Guildhall on Thursdays at 2pm until December 1st. They cost £6 per lecture.

## BRIAN BURNINGHAM

We are sad to learn that Brian Burningham has died. Brian was the organiser of the Lutterworth Fieldwork Group and was the first secretary of the countywide group. Under his leadership the group found evidence of considerable Mesolithic to Bronze Age settlement around Lutterworth and became experts in prehistoric lithics. Brian also wrote the Fieldworkers 'A guide to the identification of manmade flint & tool types' which can be downloaded from <https://leicsfieldworkers.org/resources/find-identification/>. Brian has been struggling with Parkinson's disease for several years.

## CONTACT US

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