

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2022

INVESTIGATING LOST LANDSCAPES

ON AND OFF THE FIELD

The Field Detectives have a saying; ‘whether you are on the field or off the field, we are all on the field’. It is a phrase we created to pay respect to our broad collaboration of research colleagues, whose collective contributions to our historic landscape studies have proved invaluable. This year we have seen this fellowship of study and learning grow to new heights.

In March, working alongside the Leicestershire Police, the Heritage Watch Team and the Leicestershire and Rutland Finds Liaison Officer, we helped to create a nighthawking guide for landowners explaining what to do about unlawful metal detecting.

At the Leeds Royal Armouries Museum, in May, we sat down with a landowner and experts in the field of firearms, to review progress on the investigation into the Langar Lead Bullets and to set in motion the next phase of the study.

Our search for Hacker Hall investigation picked up pace with the completion of Catherine’s book on the Hacker family. This involved a fabulous visit to the Magdalen College at Oxford University and a generous offer of support from the National Civil War Centre in Newark, Nottinghamshire, who provided the costume that Sean modelled for the front cover of Catherine’s book. We are now in communication with residents at Stathern and other interested parties, as we forge ahead with further related Hacker Hall enquiries.

This year was also a particular highlight regarding our Grantham Canal Night Soil Study. We came across a small museum on the Isle of Wight called, would you believe, The National Poo Museum. It wasn’t long afterwards that we began work with the museum on a Night Soil Poster, which is now part of the museum’s installations.

This is brilliant! We’d love to display this in the poo museum’s history cubicle. It’s clearly very well researched and laid out, full of interesting information, engaging, accessible and fun - just the combination we aim for ourselves. (Daniel Roberts -museum curator)

The good news stories don’t end here. Perhaps the most exciting week of the year came in October when fellow research colleagues from the Southampton, Exeter and Northumbria Universities were able to confirm that there are compelling reasons to think that the Owthorpe Mount we found during the Owthorpe Calvin Plateau investigation, could have an association with France.

To end the year on a WOW! was the perfect way to launch a revitalised and motivated focus in 2023.



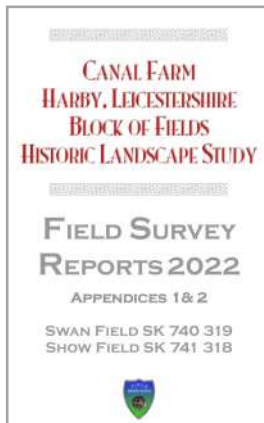
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SWAN FIELD & SHOW FIELD

CANAL FARM, HARBY, LEICESTERSHIRE



In October 2020, we set out on an investigation to learn more about the Canal Farm landscape, with a specific focus on the hypothetical Romano-British trackway that ran from Goadby Marwood to Margidunum.

The ironstone working communities that populated the roadside settlements from Great Casterton to Goadby Marwood during the Roman occupation period are, to a degree, fairly well understood, although much more investigation is required. The landscape below the Belvoir ridge is much less understood.

What we do know is that the potential for a trackway that linked Ermine Street to the Fosse Way would make good sense.

Take into consideration that the Salt Way intersects this trackway at Goadby Marwood, and we have the highly probable assumption that these transport links were busy, well used and regularly maintained for a very long period of time.

In addition to this, we know that there was a well established Roman Villa with a tessellated floor and underfloor heating system situated on a nearby field, adjacent to the Stroom Dyke at Hall Farm, Langar.

The Field Survey Report details our findings.....



An expensive night soil loss!

“The potential for a trackway that linked Ermine Street to the Fosse Way would make good sense ”

MILL FARM HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY

LONG CLAWSON, LEICESTERSHIRE



Over the years, we have found ourselves increasingly making use of the phrase, ‘You Don’t Know What You Don’t Know’. It is also a very good way to describe the beginning of a new field survey.

Our initial findings from the Long Field survey (Appendix 1, May 2019) identified a significant gap in the artefact timeline from the end of the Roman occupation through to the 13th century.

It suggested that the local landscape here in Long Clawson did not support a large settlement at that time. This is an assessment based on the percentage of artefacts recovered during the survey, so, we do have to be

careful. People living during those years didn’t own a great deal, and they would have had very little money to spend on items of adornment. As we often say, finding evidence of early medieval people in the landscape is like looking for string.

The Home Field survey did close that artefact timeline gap. It also recorded further evidence to support the existence of a thriving Romano-British settlement.



LANGAR HISTORIC LANDSCAPE INVESTIGATION

SAMWORTH FARMS, LANGAR, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

We set out to interrogate Langar Hill field for evidence relating to three specific periods of history. Sadly, the survey did not produce any artefacts to affirm that there was human activity on the field during the Roman occupation c. AD 43 - 410.

The broader Langar landscape can evidence a significant Romano-British presence, therefore, the lack of that evidence on Langar Hill field is intriguing. Interestingly, although there were a number of artefacts that could be assigned to the medieval period, they weren't found in sufficient numbers to suggest that the field represented longevity of access to people during c.1066 - 1485.

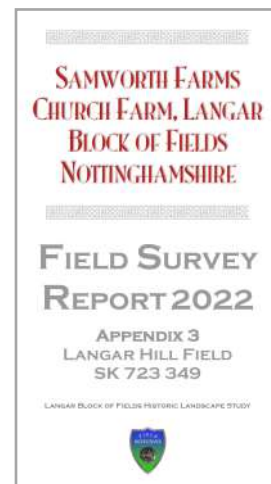
Importantly, there was no evidence to confirm that people crossed this field on their way to the St Ethelburga pilgrimage site.



As for the Langar bullets, we have some good news to share. The three bullets we recorded during the 2022 survey will help our fellow lead projectile and munitions consultant, Justin Russell, to analyse the Langar bullets,

associated projectiles and their find locations in more detail. A process that adds weight to the learning we were able to glean from the neighbouring Barnstone Drain field survey.

“ We set out to interrogate Langar Hill field for evidence relating to three specific periods of history”



RAF LANGAR INVESTIGATION 1942-1943

HOSPITAL FIELD, LIMES FARM, LANGAR, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE



Although there were no finds that could be assigned to the RAF Station Sick Quarters, the site's physical remains stand as a testament to a place where people cared for their comrades and friends.

On the St Ethelburga Roman Villa and medieval pilgrimage site, the survey proved to be more successful. Enough evidence was found to confirm that the broader landscape around the site was well populated during both the Roman occupation (c1st-4th Century) and medieval (1066-1485) periods.

The Roman villa, with its tessellated floor and underfloor heating, would have been the home of a major landowner. If we could travel back in time 2,000 years ago, the

imagined landscape we can see before us is busy, with lots of people working the land, serving the needs of the landowner's estate and living close by in small farmsteads. The Romano-British artefacts we are finding belong to these people, and it is their stories that are hidden away with them.



The Field Detectives

Historic Landscape Studies

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

The Field Detectives seek opportunities to survey fields that can tell us more about how our historic landscapes evolved - By sharing the stories that we uncover from our field survey activities, we help to inform a better understanding of how our historic landscapes evolved over the centuries. On completion of the field survey activities, a field survey report is produced that precisely records all of the associated survey finds (coins, artefacts, pottery etc.).

Once the field survey reports have been processed, the artefacts are curated as a landowner held Historic Landscape Study Collection where they are safeguarded for further research and study. With landowner approval, a community presentation/display can then be arranged where the information is shared and an opportunity is provided for the local community to get involved in future research activities.

By submitting the completed field survey reports as an exact finds location record, and by working closely with our heritage sector colleagues, we are establishing a growing archive of landscape focused historic studies. These context-recorded studies, are held in trust by the respective landowners who act as heritage custodians, which in turn, safeguards a unique set of rich historical landscape investigations for further study and learning.

Every field tells a story...

If you want to be the focus of our next investigation contact us:

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John Barlow
Historic Landscape
Detective



Barry Topliss
Historic Landscape
Detective



Peter Ball
Historic Landscape
Detective



Aileen Ball
Historic Landscape
Detective



Mel Steadman
Passed away 19.08.2022
Sorely missed



Dr Alan Stevens
Passed Away 10.04.2019
memoratus in aeternum



Tim & Jenson Elsworth
Historic Landscape
Detectives



Alan & Sylvia Massey
Prehistory Consultants &
Witch Bottle Experts