

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2020

INVESTIGATING LOST LANDSCAPES ACROSS THE EAST MIDLANDS

UNCERTAIN TIMES

This, the fifth newsletter, has proved to be the most challenging one to write. It is difficult to pull together a string of words to describe the fear, anxiety and uncertainty that has plagued our existence this year.

We waded into 2020 from out of a rain drenched winter with the promise of a great year ahead of us. We would be bringing the families of Bok's Crew of 1942 together at Oving, Buckinghamshire for the Wing Commander Hull DFC commemoration day, which was planned for Sunday 17th May. It would be the launch of our ten year historic landscape study strategy, and the initial developmental stage of an inspirational local history group collaboration, to create an environmentally friendly heritage centre that will take our landscape investigation findings into the next century and beyond.

Then, it seemed as though the world had other ideas. Covid-19 was the name we came to know, and something we had to learn to live with. The world slowed down and gradually we edged into a new vocabulary of lockdowns, social distancing, tiers, bubbles and the rule of six.

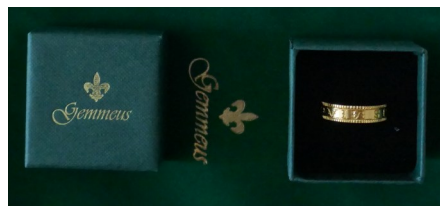
What looked like the prospect of a very quiet year for the Field Detectives turned out to be quite the opposite.

Off the field, a collaboration of many harnessed a momentum that brought about some amazing investigations. The key to the vehicle that got us there was the internet. The vehicle itself became a long train of friends, researchers, heritage sector colleagues and landowners who pulled together in a common bond of trust, and a determination to seek out the secrets of the past.

On the field, we found the crash site of Avro Lancaster MK I R5694 EM-F, which brought the crew's families closer to their loved ones. The most amazing investigation was discovering the crash site of Avro Lancaster MK I R5695 EM-C, which was lost without trace for 78 years.

What emerged from the embers of a painful year, was the strengthening of our foundation of friendship. Throughout the year, faith and trust in each other enabled incredible things to happen.

At the very beginning of the year, we were looking forward to celebrating the spirit of 1942. If selflessly working together, sharing resources and supporting each other to bring peace to people is a measure of 2020, then that spirit of 1942 is still with us today.



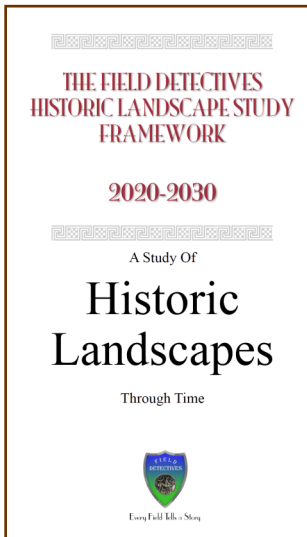
Steve Wells 'socially distanced', presenting the Langar Poesy Ring Replica to Samworth Farms Director Mr Russell Price on the actual spade that was used to find it, at the Stragglethorpe office on Monday 19th October 2020.

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**COMMUNITY PRESENTATIONS 2021**

- Bok's Crew of 1942 Commemoration Day Oving (Bucks) 15.08.2021
- Avro Lancaster MK I R5694 EM-F Commemoration Day Eaton (Leics) 07.08.2021
- 8th Nottinghamshire History & Archaeology Festival
- Owthorpe Village Historic Landscape Study Open Day



HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY FRAMEWORK

2020-2030

In setting out this historic landscape framework, we have created a ten-year vision that will build on the learning we have shared from over twenty years of evidence-based field survey work.

The foundation for this study is the strength and trust of our landowner relationships, without whom, none of this would be possible. We are also greatly indebted to our heritage sector colleagues, families and friends for their continuing support, encouragement and kindness.



Annular Brooch
c.6th Century

Our learning to date suggests that the local landscape during the Romano-British period featured villa estates run by local families. Through further investigation, we hope to prove a line of continuity heralding from the late Iron Age through to the transition into the 5th century and beyond.

We know that iron working, farming, pottery production, livestock, gypsum and the key transport networks that our region had to offer made it an important area to utilise during the early phase of the Roman occupation.

This study proposes to establish a visual summary of the Romano-British landscape informed by the findings from our field surveys, heritage sector collaborations and associated off the field research activities.

“The foundation for this study is the strength and trust of our landowner relationships”

LANGAR AIRFIELD STUDY

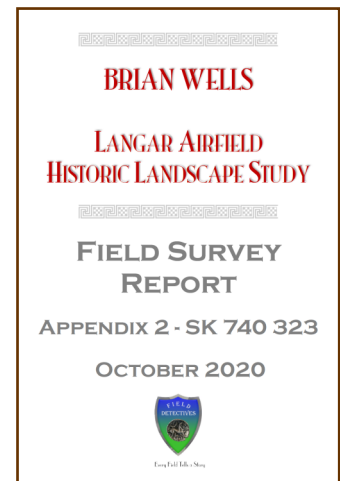


LANGAR, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

On Friday the 9th of October 2020, the Field Detectives concluded their survey of field SK 740 323. After 22.5 hours on the field allied to time spent off the field in pursuit of related research activities, we were able to successfully resolve three landscape uncertainties.

The most surprising find of the survey was a gold Victoria half-sovereign. There are three possible scenarios that could explain how the coin found its way on to the field.

Someone accidentally lost it, perhaps lost during a hunt ride, or it came in with the night soil via the Grantham canal.



VICTORIA Gold Half Sovereign
1843

As there is evidence to suggest that night soil was spread onto the field, we are leaning towards that particular ‘unsavoury’ scenario, which would make the coin evidence of a costly trip to the toilet.

There were no finds that could be reliably dated earlier than the 15th century, which was a little disappointing as we were hoping to record something that could be associated with the hypothetical Romano-British trackway that runs parallel with the west edge of the field.

All in all, this was an excellent start to the Langar airfield historic landscape study, and we are looking forward to the next phase of the investigation.

THE SEARCH FOR THE CRASH SITE OF R5694 EM-F

EATON, LEICESTERSHIRE



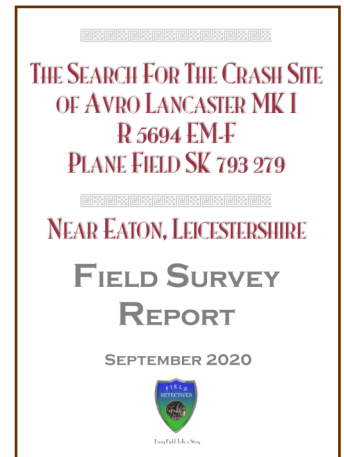
Flight-Lieutenant
R.J. Hannan DFC

On Friday the 11th of September 2020, the Field Detectives successfully concluded their search for the crash site of Avro Lancaster MK I R5694 EM-F. The initial search hypothesis suggested a crash site situated between 10 - 40 metres south of the footbridge and that all of the wreckage, human remains and munitions had been removed in November 1942.

The main concentration of aircraft-related artefacts was eventually located on the east bank of the stream, approximately 65 metres to the north of the footbridge. In amongst the metallic debris were a number of heavily corroded 303 bullets, some of which were complete. As this was a minimal extraction survey implemented to locate a concentration of remaining aircraft artefacts following full site clearance in 1942, no further survey activities were required. The cause of the crash remains uncertain. The crash site was recorded as: SK 79149 27916

Today, we are navigating our own world of uncertain times, and yet as we stood together on the east bank of the stream on that Friday afternoon, there was a shared sense of honour and privilege to be standing by a place where these very real and incredibly brave people sadly passed away.

The site is to be commemorated on Saturday 7th of August 2021, not only to remember the crew and their families, but it is also to treasure the future lives of promise that the crew's collective sacrifice gave us.



“there was a shared sense of honour and privilege”

THE SEARCH FOR THE CRASH SITE OF R5695 EM-C

BERGEN AAN ZEE, KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS

This investigation set out to find Avro Lancaster R5695 EM-C. Alfred Joseph Parkyn and his crew had been lost for 78 years. In a twist of fate, it was the written account of Luftwaffe pilot Oberfeldwebel Ernst Heesen that provided the crash site location, where he shot them down into the North Sea on Wednesday the 25th of November 1942 at 16:34.

If finding them was initially deemed an ‘impossible mission’, then bringing Alfred, his crew and their families back together, 40 miles out at sea off the Dutch coast for a memorial service had now become ‘our greatest challenge’. This is something we will not be able to achieve alone. It is an aspiration we can achieve together.



Sgt Parkyn (bottom right) and some of his crew

Over the next 12 months or so we will be working closely with the crew's families, fellow researchers and our heritage sector colleagues. We will also be reaching out to the government of the Netherlands, the Royal Air Force, the Royal Canadian Air Force and to many other associated organisations to enlist their support, advice and guidance towards the arrangement of a memorial service at sea in 2022.

We intend to honour the memories of Alfred and his crew because we owe them a huge debt of gratitude that to this day, has not been paid.



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.

Share the Learning and record the information for current and future historical research

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.). One copy is presented to the landowner, and a further copy is sent to the relevant County Historic Environment Record Office where it is allocated a unique reference number.

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. 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 collaboration.

Every field has a story to tell...

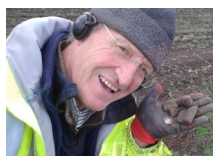
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Family Historian, Author &
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Sean Gallagher
Ecologist, & Historic
Landscape Detective



Steve Wells
Finds Photographer, Treasurer &
Historic Landscape Detective



Dr Alan Stevens
Passed Away 10.04.19
memoratus in aeternum



Sophie Chell
Historic Landscape
Detective



Every Field Tells a Story



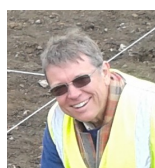
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