

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2023

INVESTIGATING LOST LANDSCAPES

KEEP ON, KEEPING ON

We came into 2023 under a heavy dark cloud with the sad news of Sean's death. This was our fourth Field Detective loss in just under four years, to say we were devastated is a momentous understatement; we were in shock. Time they say, is a great healer, for us, it became a moment for reflection and an opportunity to recognise just how much Sean had helped us to achieve since he joined us twenty years ago. Sean is a foundation stone on which we continue to build, and this year we have much to celebrate.

We are edging ever closer to completing our very first set of complete historic landscape studies. At Mill Farm, Long Clawson, following two successful surveys at the beginning of the year, we have two fields of the eight-field block to survey before we begin to write up our findings.

At Owthorpe, there are five fields of the ten-field block to complete and at Canal Farm, Harby, we have three fields to survey to complete the investigation. Once written up, these studies will represent an embryonic model of historic landscape investigation that is arguably, the first of its kind in the country.

Collaboration, trust and a strong sense of helping others sit at the very heart of our methodology. It is a privilege and an honour to work alongside so many people who share our philosophy.

The wonderful welcome we received early this year on the Isle of Wight from the National Poo Museum, the ongoing support and encouragement from the Royal Armouries Museum and the National Civil War Centre, and the amazing helping hand from Sam and the team at RAF Wittering 71 (IR) Sqn NDT, regarding their stunning x-ray facilities, are just a few of the many who continue to help us in our investigations.



Working together to make new and exciting discoveries which bring people closer was evidenced by the marvellous turnout at St Guthlac's church at Stathern in October.

We shared our Search for Stathern Hall findings which lays the foundation for further community involvement and opens the door to new avenues of investigation.

This newsletter provides an insight into the world of the Field Detectives, and if you want to find out more about us, please visit our website at www.the-field-detectives.com.

Alan, Mel, Peter and Sean, for you, we are going to Keep On, Keeping On...

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HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY

MILL FARM, LONG CLAWSON, LEICESTERSHIRE



“The initial hypothesis is that this footpath was once a well used ancient trackway ”

On Friday 3rd February 2023, The Field Detectives began a field survey primarily focused on two sections of a footpath that runs southward from the end of Mill Lane and up a steep hill towards the line of the old Salt Way.

The two sections in question are on the east side of a stream, and the line of the footpath sits at the top of a fairly steep embankment. The initial hypothesis is that this footpath was once a well-used ancient trackway.

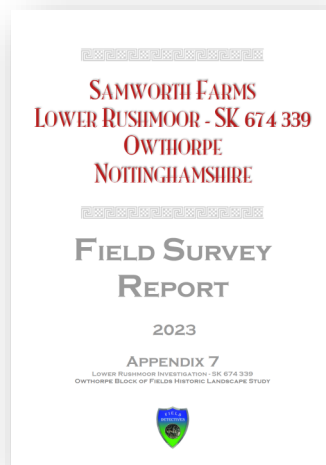
The earliest datable artefacts recorded during the survey were musket balls, however, caution needs to be applied here as fellow Field Detective, Sean Gallagher, quite correctly pointed out, “These lead projectiles were still in use right up to the early part of the 19th century.”

Therefore, if we take the remainder of datable artefacts recorded during the survey into account, we have a footpath dating to the mid-18th century at the very earliest.

The broader historic landscape study is beginning to tell us another story, and so therefore, this trackway investigation will add valuable information in our pursuit of revealing the ancient Mill Farm landscape.



Sometimes, what you find isn't what you expect to find!



HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY

OWTHORPE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

On Sunday 15th September 2019, The Field Detectives began their seventh field survey investigation at Owthorpe. We were hoping to record evidence of Romano-British activity on the landscape in support of our findings from the previous findings on the neighbouring fields.

The artefacts recorded during those surveys suggest that the modern-day public footpath that runs northwards from the northwest corner of St Margaret's graveyard towards Cropwell Bishop was in use as far back as the beginning of the Roman occupation.

The good news is that the Romano-British artefacts that we recorded during the survey prove that the trackway was being used around 2,000 years ago. Even better news is that we are relatively confident that we have discovered a Romano-British farmstead in close proximity to the trackway and the nearby spring-fed pond.

The next phase of the investigation is to focus on the neighbouring fields to examine the landscape in search of further Romano-British clues and to continue with our broader Medieval and English Civil War investigations.



Roman Brooch c. 1st - 2nd Century AD

THE DISCOVERY OF MR LOCKHART

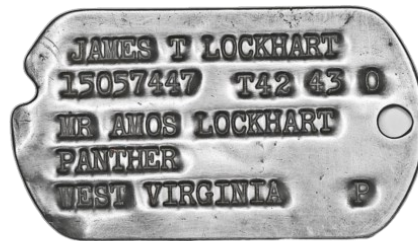
OWTHORPE, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

On Friday 30th June 2023, The Field Detectives began to survey a field situated on the hill to the west of Owthorpe village, Nottinghamshire. The main focus of the survey was to record evidence to support the existence of an ancient trackway that once ran from Owthorpe to Cotgrave and to locate the site of Owthorpe's early medieval mill. If we could locate this trackway, it would greatly enhance our understanding of the Owthorpe Knights Hospitaller site and its relationship to the broader landscape.

Over the course of 20-plus years of historical landscape investigation, we have found ourselves on a different historical research pathway due to an unexpected find in the field.

This time, the mission was diverted by the discovery of an American soldier's dog tag.

Private James Troy Lockhart introduced us to a pre-Normandy invasion landscape that bore witness to the 507th Parachute Infantry Regiment and their preparations for a jump into what I can only describe as, a hell on earth.



James also introduced us to the historian, author, and researcher Adam Berry, who specialises in the 82nd Airborne Division and Troop Carrier Command. James continues to help us build up a picture of the local landscape during those pre-invasion months, which fits nicely into our broader research investigations relating to Langar Airfield.

THE SEARCH FOR STATHERN HALL

STATHERN, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

On Friday 18th October 2019, The Field Detectives began an investigation into the history of a wooden post mill that once stood on a field to the southeast of Stathern village. One aspect of the investigation involved archival research at the Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland and an examination of



Geophysical re-examination of the previous archaeological dig

the family history timeline of the Stanley family who resided and worked at the mill during the late 18th and early 19th century. It was during this avenue of investigation that we came across a postcard via the Bottesford Heritage Archive, depicting some of the key moments in the history of Stathern Village. Intriguingly, the postcard featured an artistic impression of a mill and a group of 17th-century soldiers on horseback dated AD 1642.

This was our introduction to Colonel Francis Hacker, and where our 'Search for Stathern Hall' investigation began. The hall is where the Death Warrant of Charles I was kept from 1649 to 1660.

FRANK ABLEWHITE FIELD
SK 666 336
OWTHORPE
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

FIELD SURVEY
REPORT 2023

APPENDIX 6

FRANK ABLEWHITE FIELD INVESTIGATION - SK 666 336
OWTHORPE BLOCK OF FIELDS HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY



*“preparations
for a jump
into what I
can only
describe as, a
hell on earth”*

THE SEARCH FOR
STATHERN HALL

REPORT

OCTOBER 2023

A Summary of Our Findings
and Recommendations

The Field Detectives



www.the-field-detectives.com

The Field Detectives

Historic Landscape Studies

WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

By sharing the stories that we uncover from our investigations, we help to inform a better understanding of how our historic landscapes have evolved over the centuries.

Once our historic landscape investigation reports have been processed, the related artefacts are curated as a landowner held collection where they are safeguarded for further research and study. With landowner approval, a community presentation/display can then be arranged where our findings are shared and an opportunity is presented to engage people in future research activities.

By submitting the 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.

The artefact collections 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.

If you want to be the focus of our next investigation, give us a call - Every field tells a story...

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Find us at: www.the-field-detectives.com



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