



# COOMBS MEADOW STATHERN LEICESTERSHIRE



## EXCAVATION # 1 REPORT 2025

### THE SEARCH FOR STATHERN HALL

PART OF A BROADER STATHERN HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY  
A COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COLLABORATION  
IN PARTNERSHIP  
WITH THE LEICESTERSHIRE & RUTLAND WILDLIFE TRUST



**Leicestershire  
& Rutland**  
Wildlife Trust



- Stathern Heritage -



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## Foreword

When we first began researching Francis Hacker, we realised there were only a few references to his family history, and each one we read seemed to be a combination of the same limited amount of information. Many myths and legends surrounded him, such as his birth date, his mother, how many children he had, why he was the only parliamentarian in his family during the English Civil Wars, where he was buried, whether the woodcut images that appear on the Internet are the real face of Francis, and whether, following his execution on 19 October 1660, Stathern Hall was demolished to remove the stain of the Hacker family from the village of Stathern.

And not forgetting the local legend that the death warrant for Charles I was signed at the Red Lion public house!

Some of these questions have been answered, such as Francis's birth date. He was not born in 1618 as commonly believed; his baptism took place on 16 March 1605 at All Saints Church, Gedling, making him 27 years old when he married Isabel Brunts, not 14, and contrary to popular belief, his mother was Anne, not Margaret Whalley.

Francis married Isabel in 1632, and they had seven children: Francis, Anne, Elizabeth, Isabel, Mary, Barbara and Samuel. Two of his daughters, Isabel and Barbara, died of the plague in 1646 and were buried at St Guthlac's.

An oil painting of the real face of Francis Hacker was discovered by Cambridgeshire businessman Charles Malcolm Brown. It was one of two copies made from an original painting previously owned by Lord Cathcart. On 25 May 2024, Charles generously donated the portrait to the National Civil War Centre in Newark.

Why was Stathern Hall demolished?

Following Francis's execution, his properties were forfeited to King Charles II; however, when a survey of his estates was carried out in 1662, a note revealed that *'as far as any lands or Tenements or Farmes in Statherne I can finde none, The Lease there held of the Earle of Rutland being Expired*. This was the property on Coombs Meadow, a leased farm of about 80 acres.

A major discovery made in 2023, of a document held at the National Archives, revealed that Francis had two properties in Stathern: the leased farm and a freehold property, where he lived (his demesne), which had two acres of land.

The hall on Coombs Meadow was demolished at some point, but Colonel Francis's son, Francis, continued to live in Stathern until about 1682, in a house known as the Hall House, the second largest house, and this property stayed in the Hacker family until at least 1715, when Colonel Francis's grandson, Francis, died, after which its ownership is yet to be discovered.

So, we are not only looking for a lost hall but also a second house that stood somewhere in the village. The hypothesis for its location at the moment is under The Crescent.

Much more information can be found in my book – A Further Account of the Hacker Family.

Catherine Pincott-Allen  
2025



Portrait of Francis discovered by Charles Malcolm Brown



Original portrait from which the copy was made, owned by Lord Cathcart





## *Preface*

The Search for Stathern Hall report of 2023, shown right, captured the previous attempts to locate the lost site of Colonel Francis Hacker's hall, which, according to the information presented in the said report, was located somewhere up Mill Hill. Great significance was placed on the description of a landscape scar that has since been adopted locally as a sunken trackway. A route, it is said, that once enabled access from the lost hall to the village of Stathern.

In 2019, The Field Detectives set out to build on the initial search, which was initiated by the newly formed Framland Local Archaeology Group (FLAG) from 1999 until 2005.

Thanks to their six years of research and archaeological activities, we had a wealth of material to help inform our own investigation. To ensure that the original information was as precise as it could possibly be, The Field Detectives carried out their own archival research, geophysics surveys, a focused boundary wall examination and two metal detecting surveys.

None of this could have been achieved if it wasn't for the generous and kind support of Sarah Bedford and her colleagues at the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust and the absolutely amazing people of Stathern.

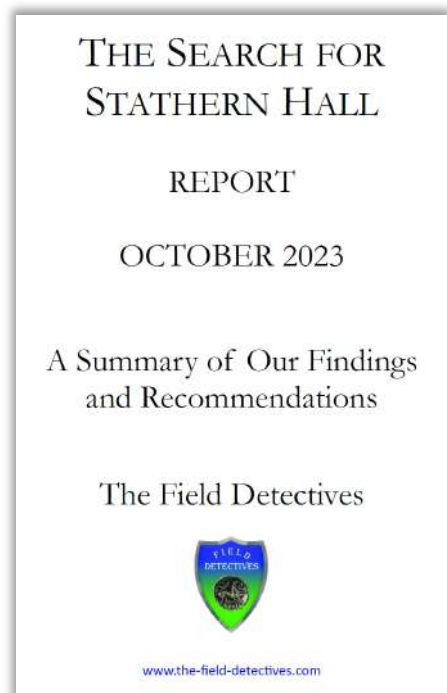
A 17th-century hall shouldn't, especially when you take into consideration the size of such a building, just vanish from the face of the earth. Surely, even after nearly four hundred years, there should be a stone foundation footprint on the landscape.

And yet, despite many years of research and archaeological investigation, the hall remains lost. We have found no maps that can help us to identify the location of the hall or any written accounts to aid us in our search. The best we can find is the 1792 Stathern enclosure award and some vague suggestions that the hall we are looking for could have an association with a priory.

There is some promising news on the horizon though; Roger Hawkins, thanks to the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund, has enabled us access to the Belvoir Castle archives. Hopefully, once the research has been carried out, we will find something that moves us a little bit closer to finding the Hacker family home.

In the meantime, please enjoy this account of our archaeological examination of a previously dug area on Coombs Meadow. Over twenty years ago, the FLAG team found a wall, and this report details our further investigation of their findings.

*The Field Detectives*  
2025



# **METHODOLOGY**

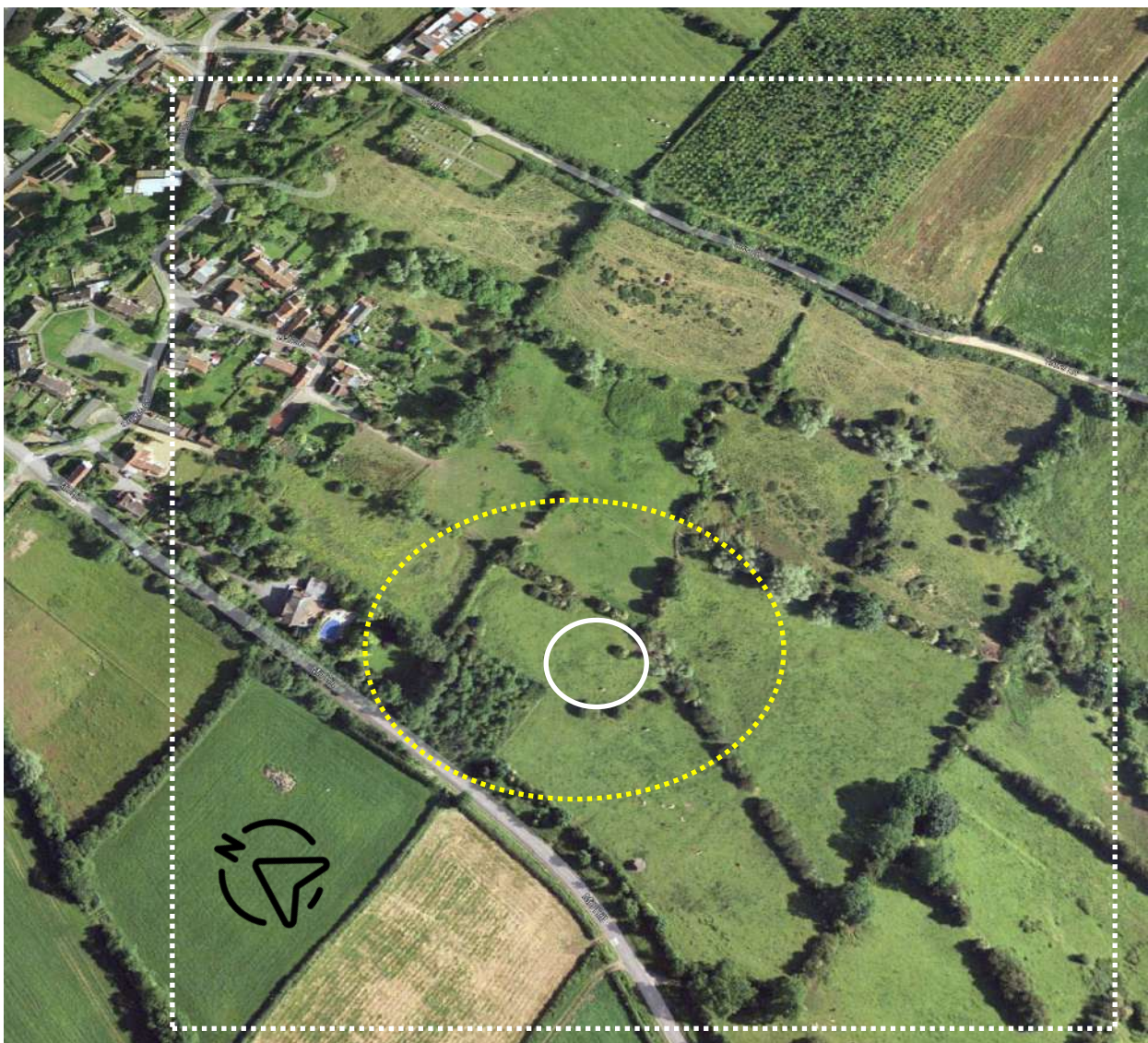
On Tuesday, 7th October 2025, The Field Detectives prepared an area of Coombs Meadow where a previously undertaken archaeological dig had revealed a section of stone wall. Confident in the positioning of three new trenches, as informed by the prior excavation reports, a community involvement dig was planned to commence on Wednesday, 8th October 2025, with the aim of learning more about the wall in question.

The three trenches were named by the dig volunteers to reflect the nature of the soil, which contained lots of stones and flint. Thus, Fred, Barney Rubble, Wilma, Betty & Pebbles became the adopted excavation reference names. As the excavation progressed, the three trenches became one, but for ease of reference, the original trench names remained in place.

A drone was used to take a visual recording of the site to assist in ensuring that the excavation could be digitally pinned into current and future satellite-enabled technologies. The images will also be used to digitally stitch future excavation images onto the revealed 2025 structural remains.

The finds were referenced, bagged, and their locations noted; the finds were later cleaned and identified. Photographs of the grid area and the finds recovered during the excavations were taken on-site, with further photographs taken after cleaning.

## **STUDY AREA OVERVIEW MAP**





## DAVID'S GEOLOGY NOTES

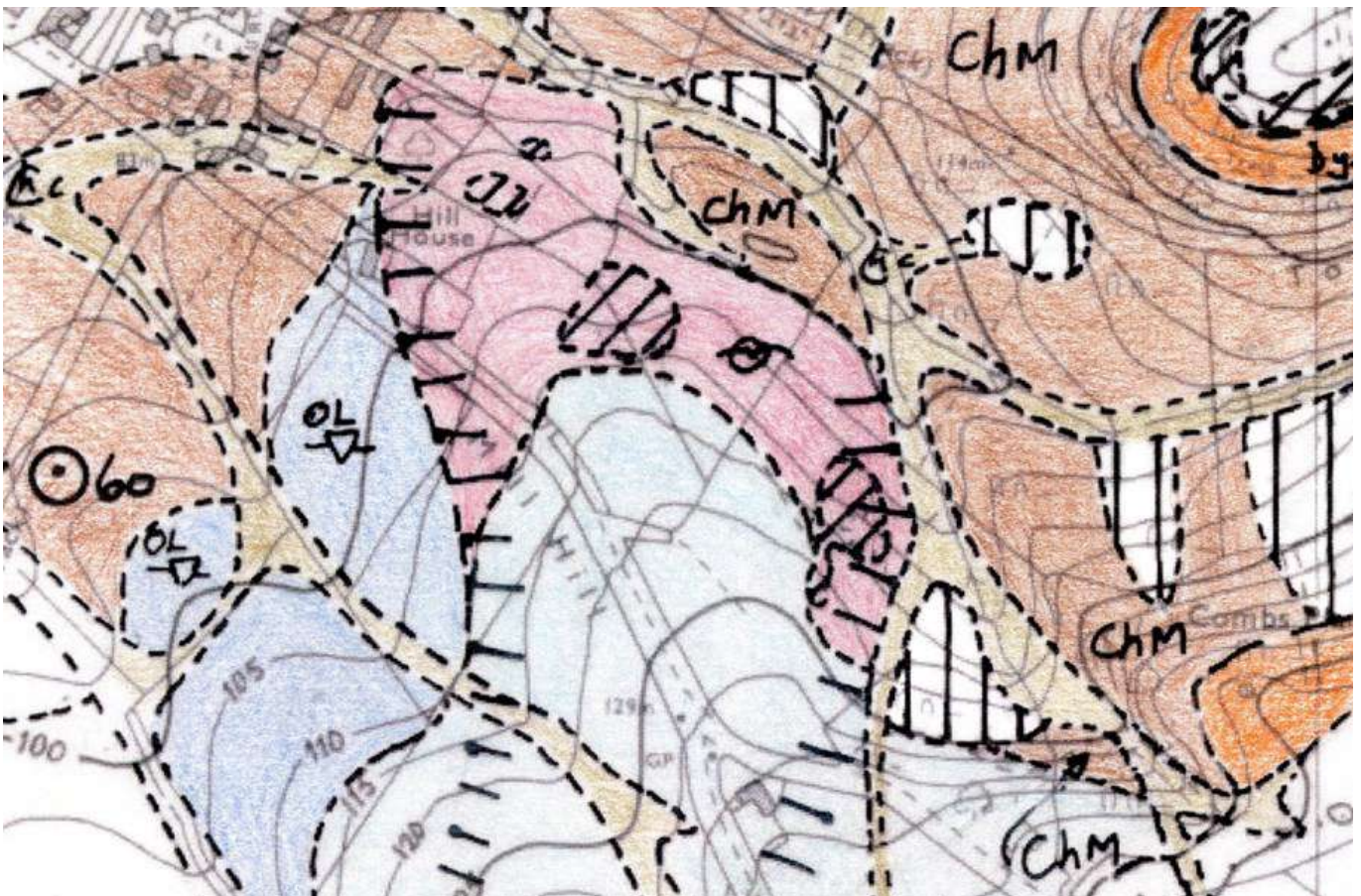
As can be seen from the geological map below (detail from British Geological Survey 1:10 000 sheet SK73NE, geologically resurveyed c.1992; not reproduced to scale), the southern half of the pillbox field, including the pillbox itself, is occupied by the Oadby Till (coloured sky-blue on map), described as a grey to yellow-brown, silty clay diamict (glacial till) with flint, chalk and Jurassic rock fragments.

This is succeeded northwards by glaciofluvial brown to red-brown sand and gravel with flint (coloured rose-madder on map and indicated with a flying bird symbol within a small circle).

The main excavation site appears to be on this latter material. From a foundation point of view, this sand and gravel deposit, which is confined to a relatively small area, is likely to provide the best-drained and therefore least waterlogged piece of ground in the Stathern area.

An earlier six-inch geological map from 1906 indicates that the deposit is perhaps more sand than gravel, and there were several sand pits in the area, including very close to the excavation site. Several areas of 'worked ground' are indicated on the newer map by means of diagonal hachuring.

There are evidently natural gulleys leading north-eastward which are floored by colluvium or hillwash (light brown on map). The darker reddish-brown colour represents the underlying bedrock, which is Charmouth Mudstone Formation (ChM on map), locally affected by landslip, shown uncoloured with vertical hachuring.



David G. Bate, 25 Nov 2025

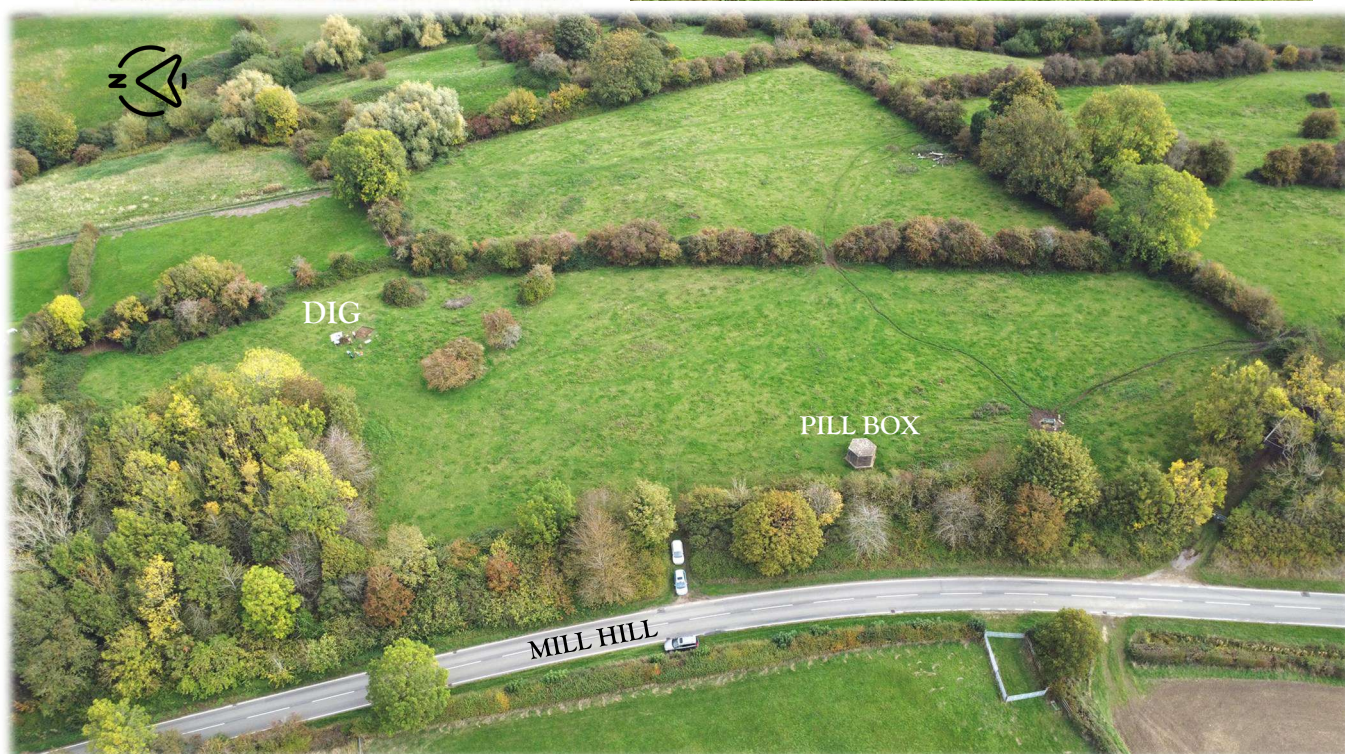


## GEOFF THE MAGICIAN



Pictured above is Geoff Kimbell positioning the first of three trenches on Tuesday, 7th October 2025. It was Geoff's remarkable ability to pinpoint the previous excavation trench to within inches of its original location that enabled the 2025 excavation to get off to such an amazing start.

Image left featured in the FLAG report 2005 – Image right wall rediscovered 2025





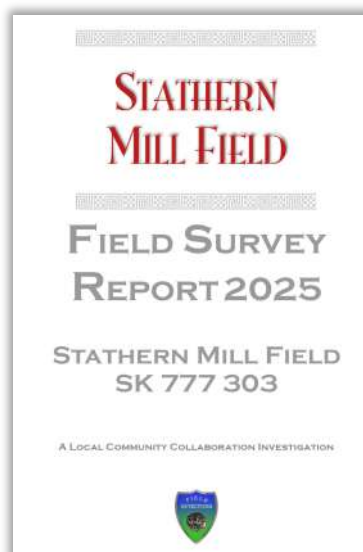
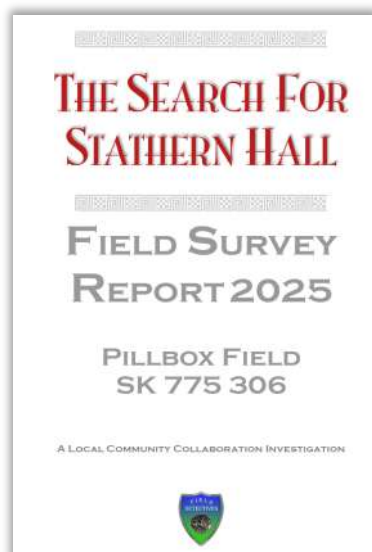
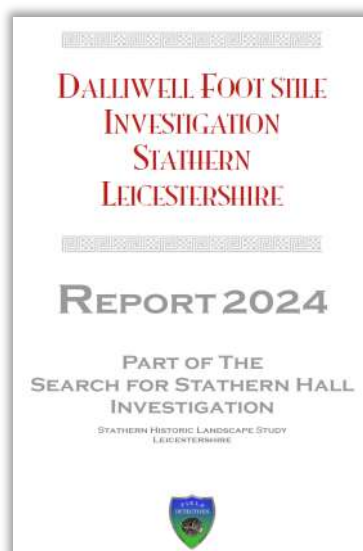
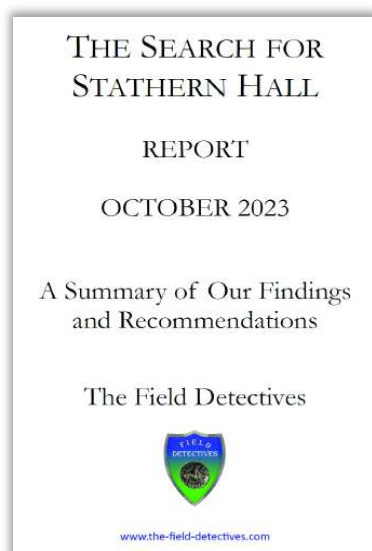
## HISTORIC LANDSCAPE STUDY APPENDICES

The Search for Stathern Hall Investigation Historic Landscape Study began back in 2019, and the field survey appendices featured here, along with the Coombs Meadow excavation summaries, will be incorporated into the final report. All of the artefacts recorded during the investigation will be curated into the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust historic landscape study collection.

The overarching report and the collection will remain with the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust for safekeeping and to assist in further research and learning.

In memory of Mel Steadman – a force of nature and a source of inspiration that continues to fuel our ambition to find and commemorate the lost home of Colonel Francis Hacker and his family.

All of the featured reports are available as free downloads on our website [www.the-field-detectives.com](http://www.the-field-detectives.com)



As The Search for Stathern Hall Investigation is part of a broader Community Involvement Partnership, The Field Detectives forfeit any claim to Treasure Trove.

## EXCAVATION PERMIT



**Leicestershire  
& Rutland  
Wildlife Trust**

The Old Mill  
9 Soar Lane  
Leicester  
LE3 5DE

0116 262 9968  
info@lrwt.org.uk  
www.lrwt.org.uk

**This permit authorises:** The Field Detectives (Richard Pincott et al)

**To visit:** Coombs Meadow Nature Reserve

**Purpose of visit:** Hacker Project: archaeological operations

**Date/period of validity:** 1<sup>st</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025

**Conditions:**

1. This permit should be carried whenever a visit is made to the reserve and be produced on demand to the warden.
2. Except with the written permission of the Senior Reserve Officer, no collections of any kind may be made. You are particularly requested not to disturb nesting birds and to generally respect the wildlife of the reserve at all times.
3. On geological sites the use of hammers is normally strictly forbidden.
4. No vehicle or caravan may be taken into the reserve and no tent or hide may be erected without written authority.
5. Any dogs with the group must be on leads.
6. Smoking and lighting of fires is strictly forbidden.
7. Visitors will be expected to comply with the above regulations and also with any proper request of a warden or other official of the Trust.
8. It is an expressed condition of the issue of this permit that the Trust accepts no responsibility for any loss or injury occurring on the reserve.
9. The Trust retains the right to withdraw this permit at any time.
10. No research programme may be carried out on the reserve without special permission from the Senior Reserve Officer. Details will be required of the nature and purpose of the research and the methods to be used.
11. All results of any research or surveys must be communicated to the Trust office in writing within six months of completion, and all publications resulting from this study, in part or in full, must acknowledge the authority of the Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust.
12. Any artefacts recovered during the investigation will remain with the respective landowners.
13. The Field Detectives are responsible for the health and safety of all archaeological operations carried out.
14. Any land disturbed during investigations will be returned to its original state before permit holders leave the site.
15. Any livestock present must be given plenty of space. Do not feed livestock. All gates and property must be left as they are found.
16. Steve Wells is permitted to fly a drone at the site adhering to any relevant flight restrictions. The operation and safety of the drone is the drone pilot's responsibility. Any drone images captured of the nature reserve will be made available for the Trust's use.

**Signed:**

Senior Reserve Officer, Sarah Bedford

**Signed:**

Richard Pincott – on behalf of Field  
Detectives and associated volunteers

### Creating a wilder Leicestershire and Rutland

The Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust Limited is a registered charity in England and Wales (no. 210531). A company limited by guarantee registered in England (company no. 561833). Patrons: Sir David Attenborough OM, CH., Lady Gretton DCVO, JP, Sir Laurence Howard KCVO, OBE. Vice President: P L Ward, MA, LLB. Chief Executive Officer: Mat Carter



## EXCAVATION PERMIT



**Leicestershire  
& Rutland**  
Wildlife Trust

# Coombs Meadow Nature Reserve



## Archaeological Operations

### The search for Hacker Hall

A team of archaeologists will be on site at this nature reserve from 1st October onwards, searching for the remains of the home of Colonel Francis Hacker.

They will be present on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

For more information on Hacker; his importance to Stathern and to English Civil War history, visit:

<https://archives.blog.parliament.uk/2024/05/28/colonel-francis-hacker/>

*Please note there will be a drone in operation at this nature reserve during the course of the archaeological dig.*

Questions? Please contact Sarah Bedford—Senior Reserve Officer

07975 660656 / 01572 827828

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Registered Office: The Old Mill, 9 Soar Lane, Leicester, LE3 5DE. Tel: 0116 2629968 (office hours). Email: [info@lrwt.org.uk](mailto:info@lrwt.org.uk)

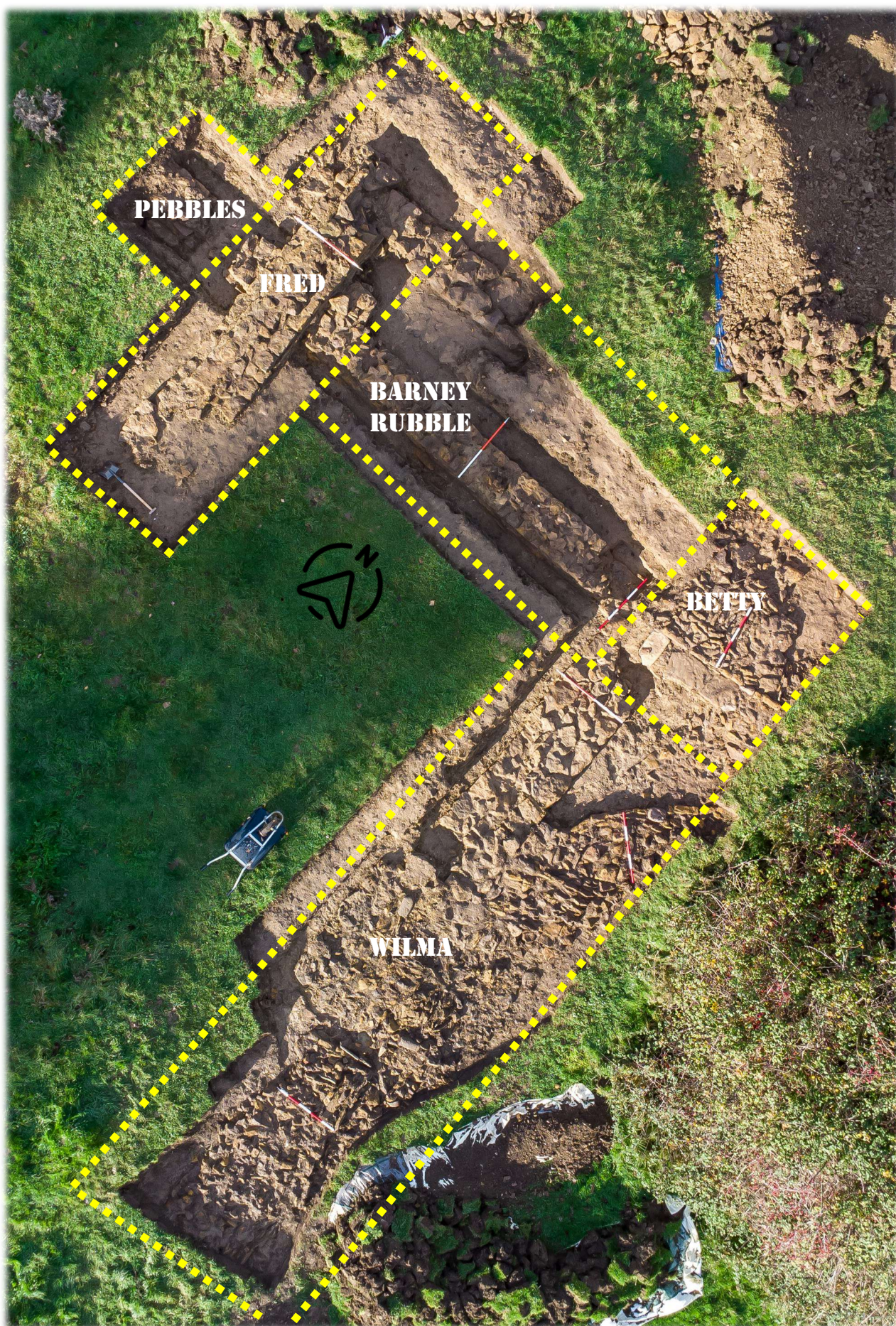
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## EXCAVATION - ZONE REFERENCE OVERVIEW





## EXCAVATION - OVERVIEW





FRED - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG





## FRED - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG

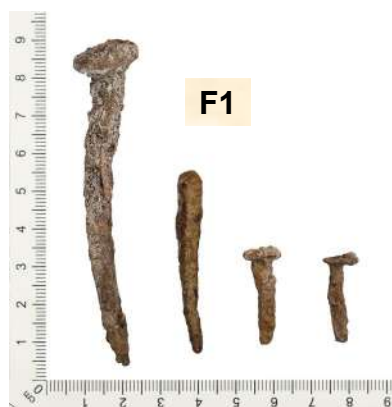
Ref	Artefact	Supporting Information	Date
F1	ASSEMBLAGE of Iron Nails	Found in soil removed from the top of the wall, west side of the wall and the east side of the wall.	Iron artefacts such as these are difficult to date with any precision.
F2	Fossil	Found in soil removed from the south east side of the wall. Bottom of the first level of stones from the top of the wall.	c. 40-200 million years ago (which is a very long time before Mr Hacker arrived)
F3	Possible Fossils X6	Found in soil removed from the west side of the wall.	c. 40-200 million years ago
F4	Fossils X3 Pieces	Found in soil removed from the north west edge of the wall.	c. 40-200 million years ago
F5	Pottery Sherd - Mottled Ware	Found in soil removed from the north end of the wall. Above the top layer of the stone wall. An uncommon ware after 1750. Largely table ware; mugs, tankards, plates, bowls, jugs.	c. 1680-1730
F6	Pottery Sherd - Cistercian Ware (Blackware). The earlier wares were thinner and more refined.	Found in soil removed from the south east edge of the wall.	c. 16th-17th Century
F7	Pottery Sherd - Wheel turned	Found in soil removed from the north east end of the wall.	c. 16th-18th Century
F8	Pottery Sherd - Midland Purple	Found in soil removed from the south west end of the wall.	c. 15th-16th Century
F9	Midland Purple/Cistercian Ware transition. Bowl, knife trimmed (second)	Found in soil removed from the south east end of the wall.	c. 16th-17th Century
F10	ASSEMBLAGE of Clay Pipe Stems	Found in soil removed from the south west end of the wall.	c. 17th-19th Century
F11	ASSEMBLAGE of Fossils	Although the majority of the fossils were found in soil removed from the Fred trench, they were also being found in the Barney Rubble and Wilma trenches.	c. 40-200 million years ago
F12	Pottery Sherd	Found in soil removed from the west edge of the wall. Above the top level of the wall, in amongst stone debris.	c. 19th-20th Century

### WHAT DO THE FINDS FROM THE FRED TRENCH TELL US?

Of the 12 bags of evidence recorded during the 2025 Coombs Meadow excavation, there were 3 bags (F6, F7, F9) which contained fragments of pottery that could have been in use during the time of Colonel Francis Hacker and his family (c. 1630-1660).

1 bag (F8) evidences that there was human activity here before the Hacker family arrived in Stathern. Perhaps suggesting that the stone foundation structures we have uncovered this year were constructed much earlier than the 17th century.

## FRED - EXCAVATION FINDS





## FRED - EXCAVATION FINDS





## FRED - AN ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE



The Fred wall has been constructed over the top of the Barney Rubble wall, and there is a gap in the continuation of the Pebbles wall. The wall that extends east from the north edge of the Fred wall appears to have been robbed out. There isn't enough datable evidence to tell us for certain whether these walls are from different construction phases, but at the moment, we are leaning towards that particular hypothesis. To be able to make a more informed timeline assessment, we will need to see much more of the site.





## BARNEY RUBBLE - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG





# BARNEY RUBBLE - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG

Ref	Artefact	Supporting Information	Date
BR1	X2 Animal Bones	Found in soil removed from north side of the Barney Rubble wall. Level with the top layer of wall stones.	To be identified and dated
BR2	ASSEMBLAGE of Iron Nails	Found in soil removed from both sides of the Barney Rubble wall.	Iron artefacts such as these are difficult to date with any precision.
BR3	ASSEMBLAGE of Clay Pipe Pieces	Found in soil removed from both sides of the Barney Rubble wall. Level with and above the top layer of wall stones.	c. 17th-19th Century
BR4	ASSEMBLAGE of Pottery Sherds and Glass	Found in soil removed from both sides of the Barney Rubble wall. Level with and above the top layer of wall stones.	c. 18th-19th Century
BR5	Pottery Sherd - Cistercian Ware	Found in soil removed from the north side of the Barney Rubble wall. Middle to top layer of wall stones.	c. 15th-16th Century
BR6	Pottery Sherd	Found in soil removed from the east end of the Barney Rubble wall. Foundations stone level. Robbed out end of the wall.	Early Medieval c. 13th-14th Century
BR7	Pottery Sherd Midland Blackware Cistercian Ware evolverment	Found in soil removed from the west side of the wall running south off the east end of the Barney Rubble wall. Second stone in from the corner, base of the second stone.	c. late 16th to 17th Century
BR8	Pottery Sherd	Found in soil removed from the east end of the Barney Rubble wall. Foundations stone level. Robbed out end of the wall.	c. 15th-16th Century

## WHAT DO THE FINDS FROM THE BARNEY RUBBLE TRENCH TELL US?

Of the eight bags of evidence recorded during the 2025 Coombs Meadow excavation, there was one bag (BR7) which contained a pottery sherd (part of a vessel) that could have been in use during the time of Colonel Francis Hacker and his family (c. 1630-1660).

Interestingly, there were two bags containing pottery sherds (BR5, BR8) that evidence human activity on the landscape prior to the Hacker family's arrival in Stathern (c. 1630s). Could these have been associated with people living in the property up on Mill Hill before Francis took up the lease?

Taking that hypothesis a step further, one of the bags held a pottery sherd dating to the early medieval period (BR6). Potentially, we could be looking at a site of human occupation that has evolved through many building phases over the years (c. 13th-17th century).



## BARNEY RUBBLE - EXCAVATION FINDS





## BARNEY RUBBLE - AN ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

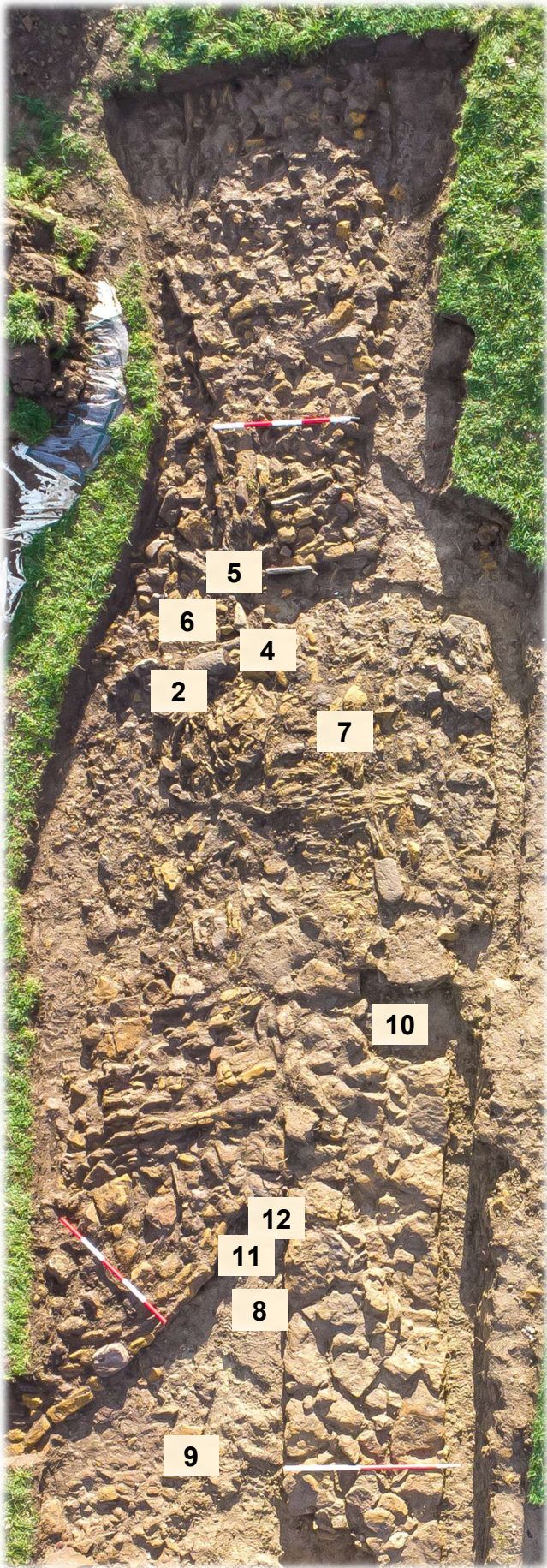


The Barney Rubble wall appears to join the Wilma wall, with the corner of the wall sitting underneath the Betty cobbled floor.





WILMA - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG



## WILMA - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG

Ref	Artefact	Supporting Information	Date
W1	ASSEMBLAGE of Iron Nails	Found in soil removed from above the level of the stone floor surface.	Iron artefacts such as these are difficult to date with any precision.
W2	Pottery Sherd Green Glaze Rim of a Jug	Found in soil removed from above the level of the stone floor surface.	Made in Nottingham c. 13th Century
W3	ASSEMBLAGE of Clay Pipe Pieces	Found in soil removed from above the level of the stone floor surface.	c. 17th-19th Century
W4	Pottery Sherd	Found in soil removed from above the level of the stone floor surface.	c. 18th-19th Century
W5	Melted Plastic Fragment	Found in soil removed from above the level of the stone floor surface.	Modern Day
W6	Clay Pigeon Fragments	Found in soil removed from above the level of the stone floor surface.	Modern Day
W7	Pottery Sherd	Found in soil removed from above the level of the stone floor surface.	c. 19th to early 20th Century
W8	Pottery Sherd Green Glaze	Found in soil and stone rubble removed from the east side of the Wilma wall. Level with the top of the wall foundation stones.	c. 12th-15th Century
W9	Pottery Sherd Staffordshire Slip Ware	Found in soil and stone rubble removed from the east side of the Wilma wall. Level with the bottom of the wall foundation stones.	Tiger Ware Pie Crust Rim c. late 17th to 18th Century
W10	Pottery Sherds X4 Cistercian Ware From cups	Found in the soil removed from sand and rubble at the south end of the Wilma wall. Level with the top of the wall foundation stones.	c. 15th-17th Century
W11	Pottery Sherd	Found in the soil removed from sand and rubble at the south end of the Wilma wall. Level with the top of the wall foundation stones.	UNCERTAIN Early Medieval or Roman
W12	Pottery Sherd Midland Black Ware	Found in the soil removed from sand and rubble at the south end of the Wilma wall. Level with the top of the wall foundation stones.	c. 17th Century

### WHAT DO THE FINDS FROM THE WILMA TRENCH TELL US?

Of the 12 bags of evidence recorded during the 2025 Coombs Meadow excavation, there were two bags (W10, W12) which contained pottery sherds that could have been in use during the time of Colonel Francis Hacker and his family (c. 1630-1660).

There were three bags (W2, W8, W11) that evidence human activity on the landscape prior to the Hacker family's arrival in Stathern (c. 1630s). Further evidence perhaps suggesting that we could be looking at a site of human occupation that has evolved through many building phases over the years (c. 13th-17th Century).

The 'uncertain' reference to Roman is an intriguing one.



WILMA - EXCAVATION FINDS





WILMA - EXCAVATION FINDS





## WILMA - AN ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE



Based on what we have learnt from the first stage of the Coombs Meadow excavation, we are looking at a very small jigsaw piece of a much larger puzzle. Wilma appears to have two cobbled trackways running from a central feature. The possible trackway heading south could turn northwards if it followed the route of what has been described as a sunken trackway that leads both downhill towards the village of Stathern and also enables access to Mill Hill.

If this is the case, then it leaves us pondering on the destination of the possible cobbled trackway running northeast from the central cobbled feature. It heads off into a large bush which sits on top of a steep hill, which is quite a drop down if it was intended to join the, so-called, sunken trackway.



If we are to better understand Wilma, then we will have to see much more.

By following the course of the cobbled floor, we should, in time, be able to resolve the mystery of this most fascinating aspect of the Coombs Meadow site.



# BETTY - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG

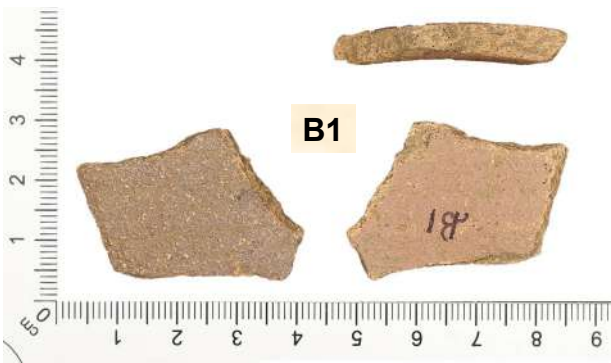


Ref	Artefact	Supporting Information	Date
B1	Pottery Sherd	Found in the soil removed from south side of the stone slabs. Level with the slab tops.	c. 14th-15th Century
B2	Pottery Sherd	Found in the soil removed from above the cobbled surface.	c. late 19th to early 20th century

## WHAT DO THE FINDS FROM THE BETTY TRENCH TELL US?

One thing the finds from Betty did not say, was anything at all to do with the life and times of Colonel Francis Hacker and his family (c. 1630-1660).

B2 was found just above the surface of the cobbled floor, but it was the pottery sherd labelled B1 which added further intrigue and mystery to the Coombs Meadow investigation. It was another piece of evidence to suggest that the site we are excavating was in use much earlier than the 17th century.





## BETTY - AN ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE

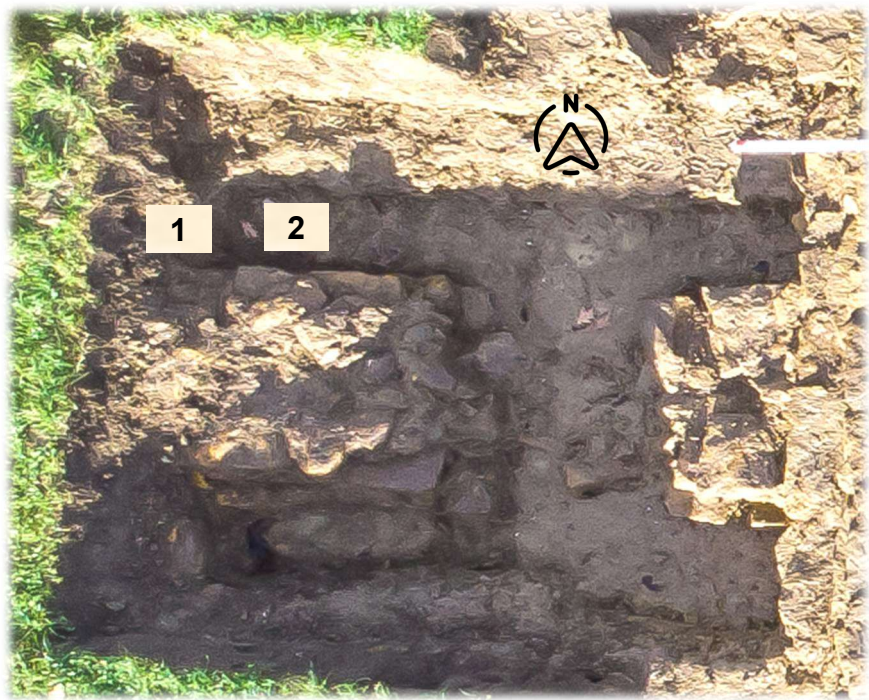


Betty appears to sit above the Barney Rubble and Wilma walls on a bed of clay, which suggests that Betty was constructed at a later date.

However, we will have to see more of the site if we are to gain a more informed understanding of the associated constructions.



# PEBBLES - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG



Ref	Artefact	Supporting Information	Date
P1	Cistercian Ware Body & Handle from a two handled cup	Found in soil removed from the north side of the Pebbles wall. One stone level down from the top of the wall. West end of the 2025 trench.	c. 15th-16th Century
P2	Iron Loop Hasp	Found in soil removed from the north side of the Pebbles wall. Level with the top stone level of the wall. West end of the 2025 trench.	c. 1400-1600
Iron Loop Hasps were probably used in connection with padlocks or simple bolts to secure doors, shutters or chests.			

## WHAT DO THE FINDS FROM THE PEBBLES TRENCH TELL US?

The pottery fragment of a two handled cup (P1) and the Iron Loop Hasp (P2) both represent a timeline before the arrival of the Hacker family.





## PEBBLES - EXCAVATION FINDS



It is quite extraordinary the things you can find in books.



### THE MEDIEVAL HOUSEHOLD

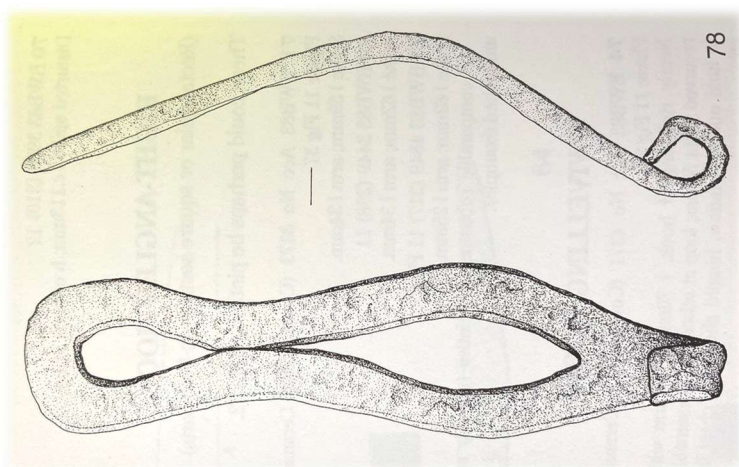
MEDIEVAL FINDS FROM EXCAVATIONS IN LONDON



### LOOP HASPS

Loops bent inwards so that the opposite sides almost touch at the centre, and bent in the other plane nearly to a right angle.

These were probably used in connection with padlocks or simple bolts to secure doors, shutters, gates etc. A hasp of a similar kind with a bent-back, looped end tab survives on a chest of about 1500 in the Victoria and Albert Museum (Tracy 1988, 183-4, pl 112, no 312) and another excavated in Hull was found associated with two U-shaped iron staples by which it is thought to have been attached and, with the help of a padlock, secured (I H Goodall in Armstrong & Ayers 1987, 199-200, fig 113, no 121).



Could this iron loop hasp have been from the chest that once held the King Charles I Death Warrant?



## PEBBLES - AN ADDITIONAL PERSPECTIVE



Pebbles might not seem like much of a wall at the moment, but first impressions are not always what they seem. As small as Pebbles is at the moment, it could well be the key to unlocking the mystery of the Coombs Meadow site. Only by following the line of the Pebbles wall will we be able to see the bigger picture. The yellow dashed lines featured in the above image show the possible route of the Pebbles wall.



## BACK FILL SPOIL - EXCAVATION FINDS LOG

Ref	Artefact	Supporting Information	Date
BFSF #1	Pottery Sherd	Found in soil removed from the spoil heap adjacent to the Barney Rubble and Betty trenches.	UNCERTAIN Early Medieval
BFSF #2	Pottery Sherd	Found in soil removed from the spoil heap adjacent to the Fred trench.	c. 15th-16th Century

### WHAT DO THE FINDS FROM THE SPOIL HEAPS TELL US?

Both BFSF #1 & #2 evidence human activity on the Coombs Meadow landscape long before Colonel Francis Hacker and his family arrived at Stathern (c. 1630s)



Backfilling is not for the faint-hearted, especially in the wake of Storm Claudia and the onset of an arctic blast.



# MOLEY'S DIG DIARY

## THE STATHERN MOLE



### The Search for Stathern Hall Dig Diary

Sometime after the execution of Colonel Francis Hacker in October 1660, his home here at Stathern was pulled down, but we don't know where it used to be. Thanks to the kind permission of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, the dig on Coombs Meadow Nature Reserve this year, hopes to resolve that mystery.

My name is Moley, and I will be writing a weekly entry in my Dig Diary to let you know what we are finding. I myself am an avid digger!

If you are not too busy on a Sunday, please come up to the hill to see how we are getting on.

**WEEK 1 Day 1 - Tuesday 7th October 2025**

#### THE WEATHER

After popping my head up above ground, I found myself enjoying a very pleasant day. A little bit windy, but that might have been too many worms this morning, but it was quite warm with a little bit of a breeze.

#### HOW MANY OF THEM WERE THERE TODAY?

There was this chap called Richard and another one called Geoff.

#### WHAT DID THEY DO?

From what I could see from the top of my hole, they were preparing the site in advance of getting started tomorrow morning. They did seem very happy with themselves and from what I saw, they had set out their initial excavation trench.



#### WHAT DID THEY FIND?

From the area where they were setting out the trench, they revealed a small section of what looks like an iron stone foundation wall.



#### ARE THEY LEARNING ANYTHING NEW ABOUT THE LOST HALL?

They went away very excited, so I think they think they know more than they did when they first got here this morning.

Now, back to my worms...



## THE STATHERN MOLE



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My name is Moley, and I will be writing a weekly entry in my Dig Diary to let you know what we are finding. I myself am an avid digger!

If you are not too busy on a Sunday, please come up to the hill to see how we are getting on.

**WEEK 1 Days 2, 3 & 4 - Tuesday 8th, Wednesday 9th and Sunday 12th October 2025**

**THE WEATHER** - Crikey, it's been very warm, hasn't it? Sitting on top of my molehill in my autumn moleskin, it's been lovely, so it was a bit of a surprise on Sunday when the autumnal mist brought in the baying sounds of Jurassic Park!

#### HOW MANY OF THEM WERE THERE THIS WEEK?

Well, they just kept on coming; on Wednesday and Thursday there were Richard, John, Steve, Geoff, Sarah, Jane, Dawn, Roger H, and then on Sunday there were even more of them; Catherine, Jill, Brian, Rachel, Tara, Jackie, Amy, Molly, Carrie, Chris, Margot, Colin & Lesley. That was 8 Detectives, 12 Volunteers and 7 visitors over the three days.

#### WHAT DID THEY DO?

Looking down the hill from the pillbox, I could see that they were busy lifting turf and carrying buckets of soil so I dug a little closer. That's 6 feet an hour folks so it's a good job they were here for three days!

I could hear one of them saying that they had sub-divided the initial two trench plan into three trenches as the building they had expected to find didn't materialise.

By the end of day four, there were more questions than answers.

I think at this stage of the investigation the word 'puzzled' best fits where they are at the moment.



#### WHAT DID THEY FIND?

By the end of Sunday, after an incredible effort from everyone who came up from Stathern to help, a wall had appeared. Whether it is a boundary wall, part of a building or built for another purpose entirely, we don't know at the moment.

What we do know is that we have three trenches with names thanks to the people of Stathern. As the ground we are investigating is full of ironstone and little bits of flint, the Stathern Volunteers have named the trenches, Fred, Wilma and Barney Rubble. A small number of iron nails, plenty of little fossils and five worms (Margot) represented the wealth of finds. So far, there wasn't a single pottery sherd to be seen anywhere on site.



Margot's dig notes 12.10.2025



#### ARE THEY LEARNING ANYTHING NEW ABOUT THE LOST HALL?

The biggest question that the first week of the Coombs Meadow excavation has raised relates to the iron stone mound on which the small-wall like structure has been built. Is it natural, or does it cloak something functional that once served the needs of the hall they are searching for?

If they can answer that question, then they are making a huge step in the right direction.

The only thing I can add is that I can't dig through the mound they are talking about.





## MOLEY'S DIG DIARY

### THE STATHERN MOLE



#### The Search for Stathern Hall Dig Diary

Sometime after the execution of Colonel Francis Hacker in October 1660, his home here at Stathern was pulled down, but we don't know where it used to be. Thanks to the kind permission of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, the dig on Coombs Meadow Nature Reserve this year hopes to resolve that mystery.

My name is Moley, and I will be writing a weekly entry in my Dig Diary to let you know what we are finding. I myself, am an avid digger!

**WEEK 2 Days 5, 6 & 7 - Wednesday 15th, Thursday 16th and Sunday 19th October 2025**

**THE WEATHER** - Unusual autumnal mildness followed by a more usual rain soaked Sunday.

#### HOW MANY OF THEM WERE THERE THIS WEEK?

Richard, John, Jill, Aileen, Peter B, Davi, Roger W, Brian, Malcolm, Carrie, Chris, Margot. That was 6 Detectives, 6 Volunteers and 1 visitor over the three days. 30 hours of digging so far.

#### WHAT DID THEY DO?

Funny, isn't it? I'm happy digging in soil, not so happy in clay and grumpy when it comes to boring old rock, but there they are, in among those stones, seemingly having the time of their lives. Under a dull sky, the shadow of a buzzard, and on the Sunday, the damp onset of autumnal change, and still, they keep on coming up to that rocky hill. But what are they finding?

Sneaking ever closer, I poke my nose over their finds trays, and there's some bits of pottery, flint, some fossils and the wall that they uncovered - well, there's more of it!

Scurrying back a little further, I can see the three trenches that they are calling Fred, Barney Rubble and Wilma. Fred is the one with the wall in it, Barney is the one full of rubble, and Wilma is the one they refer to as 'confuddled'.

When is an outcrop not an outcrop? When it's part of a sunken trackway...

Now that's something a poor little mole like me needs to learn more about.

I don't like the sound of sunken trackways; my tunnels belong to me!



#### WHAT DID THEY FIND?

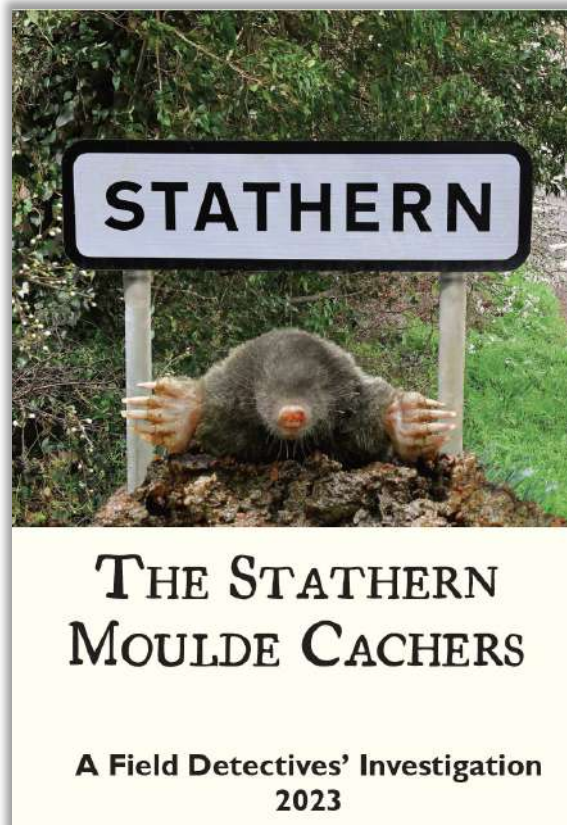
By the end of Sunday, as the rain blew in across Coombs Meadow, Fred had revealed the possibility that both ends of the wall were going nowhere, Barry was still full of rubble, and Wilma is waiting for David the geologist to return from his holiday in the Cotswolds.

#### ARE THEY LEARNING ANYTHING NEW ABOUT THE LOST HALL?

Perhaps, and at the moment it is a BIG PERHAPS, the sunken trackway is an integral part of what's happening on the rocky hill. First though, we need to find out what the purpose of the wall is.



When is an outcrop not an outcrop? When it's part of a sunken trackway...



The history of the Stathern Mole goes back a long way.



# MOLEY'S DIG DIARY

## THE STATHERN MOLE



### The Search for Stathern Hall Dig Diary

Sometime after the execution of Colonel Francis Hacker in October 1660, his home here at Stathern was pulled down, but we don't know where it used to be. Thanks to the kind permission of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, the dig on Coombs Meadow Nature Reserve this year hopes to resolve that mystery. My name is Moley, and I will be writing a weekly entry in my Dig Diary to let you know what we are finding. I myself, am an avid digger!

If you are not too busy on a Sunday, please come up to the hill to see how we are getting on.

**WEEK 3 Days 8 & 9 - Wednesday 22nd and Sunday 26th October 2025**

**THE WEATHER** - Tuesday was a good digging day. Thursday was a wash-out and Sunday, by the end of the day, was a sticky, stuggy mess, which I think was fabulous.

#### HOW MANY OF THEM WERE THERE THIS WEEK?

Richard, Jill, John, Roger W, Jane, Aileen, Brian, Malcolm, Carrie, Margot, Roger H and Tara. That was 6 Detectives, 6 Volunteers, and they had 7 visitors. They've been digging for 43.5 hours.

#### WHAT DID THEY DO?

Well, they haven't been as busy as me digging this week. They only turned up twice!

Not like me, I love the rain. It's easier to dig, and those yummy earthworms are easier to catch; it's brilliant.

There were quite a few of them here on Sunday, but there weren't so many of them once it started to drizzle in the afternoon. It was funny watching them get all sludgy and wet. Some of them were talking about clocks going backwards, which seemed an odd thing to talk about.

What did surprise me was this other wall they have found, which sort of like makes some kind of sense because I've never been able to dig for worms in there.

What I couldn't understand was how they described their progress at the end of the day:

*Fred's wall is very close to being joined by Barney Rubble, and Wilma isn't as alone as we originally believed her to be, so are they related?*

They must be talking some kind of gibberish, silly people.

Anyway, must get back to some digging.



#### WHAT DID THEY FIND & ARE THEY LEARNING ANYTHING NEW ABOUT THE LOST HALL?

Margot's dig notes 26.10.2025

Despite the wet end to their two days of digging, there were lots of happy, smiley faces leaving the field. Using my Moley superpower, I could hear people saying things like, 'we know more than what we did this morning', 'Wilma could be a trackway', 'that wall is going somewhere', 'what happened to my burnt stones' and 'I suggested that the staff at the Golden Lion should greet guests with a roar'.

I still think that they talk gibberish.



Reflection Notes, taken from the compilation of previous excavations at Stathern by the FLAG team (The Search for Stathern Hall Report - October 2023).

- Little is known of Colonel Hacker's residence. Despite recent resistivity and dowsing surveys carried out on the suspected site on 14 November 1999, (which served to highlight areas containing interesting anomalies), no physical proof exists to determine if these features relate to a lost hall
- The reference to Hacker, 'upon his marriage to Isabel Brumts of East Bridgford, the couple chose to live at Stathern Hall' suggests the hall was an established building and may date partly to the medieval period; a fact possibly reinforced by the documents referring to a second manor (Fahy 2000)
- In 1240 Simon de Borard, who at the time, held the manor. He gave some of the lands to the Priory of Haversholm in Lincolnshire and the rest to the Abbot and Convent at Croxton Kerrial
- Following the dissolution of the Monasteries in 1541 Henry VIII granted the lands, formerly belonging to the Abbey of Croxton, the Prioress of Belvoir and Haversholm, to Thomas Earl of Rutland
- The Hacker connection with Stathern began during the 1630s



#### Are Fred, Barney Rubble and Wilma related?

The wall in Fred, the rubble in Barney and the mysterious construction in Wilma appear to have no relationship at all, but, what if we could join them up to take a closer look?



#### That Was a Surprise!

What looked like 'just rubble' in Barney, turned out to be a wall. By the end of the day on Sunday the wall that we didn't know was there, was creeping ever closer to Fred.

But what about Wilma?

**“It was funny watching them get all sludgy and wet”**



# MOLEY'S DIG DIARY

## THE STATHERN MOLE



### The Search for Stathern Hall Dig Diary

Sometime after the execution of Colonel Francis Hacker in October 1660, his home here at Stathern was pulled down, but we don't know where it used to be. Thanks to the kind permission of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, the dig on Coombs Meadow Nature Reserve this year hopes to resolve that mystery. My name is Moley, and I will be writing a weekly entry in my Dig Diary to let you know what we are finding. I myself, am an avid digger!

If you are not too busy on a Sunday, please come up to the hill to see how we are getting on.

**WEEK 4 - Days 10, 11 & 12**

**Wednesday 29th, Thursday 30th, and Sunday 2nd November 2025**

#### THE WEATHER

Drizzly Wednesday, lovely Thursday and Glorious Sunday. I just never knew which coat to put on.

#### HOW MANY OF THEM WERE THERE THIS WEEK?

Richard, Catherine, Jill, John, Roger W, Aileen, Peter, Carrie, Margot, Chris, Roger H, Tara, Dawn. That's 7 Detectives, 6 Volunteers and 18 visitors. They've been digging on muddy hill for 61.5 hours.

#### WHAT DID THEY DO?



Looking down from up on top of my little hills, I saw them coming and going all week. They seemed to be having fun in the mud and playing sticky boots, which seems like a great game. One thing I did notice is that the south side of the Barney Rubble wall is very dry compared to the north side of the wall, which is very soggy. An observation that made my mouth water in anticipation of the many worms I can find on the wet side of the wall, yummy.

The only problem is that Margot keeps finding them first!

Interestingly, one of the muddy diggers' catchphrases seems to be, 'It's another wall', which is an odd thing to be saying, isn't it? I mean, who goes around saying that all the time? Another thing they go on about a lot is, 'Where's the wheelbarrow?' and 'Can you take my bucket?'.

They do make me laugh. I mean, they've only got one wheelbarrow, so how do they keep losing it?

What I would do for a wheelbarrow to put my worms in.



#### WHAT DID THEY FIND

#### & ARE THEY LEARNING ANYTHING NEW ABOUT THE LOST HALL?

When the one they call Richard asked, 'Do we know more now than we did this morning?', there was a resounding 'yes'.

To me it's all stones and more stones, but to this merry band of hopefuls, it's something along the lines of 'walls lead somewhere', so muddy hill is beginning to tell us its story.

If it was a book, I would have put it down in search of more worms, but then again, that's what we moles do.

Now, how do I get that wheelbarrow into my tunnel?



## THE QUESTION THEY WERE ASKING LAST WEEK

#### ARE FRED, BARNEY RUBBLE, BETTY AND WILMA RELATED?

The wall in Fred, the rubble in Barney, the newly discovered Betty floor and the mysterious construction in Wilma appear to have no relationship at all, but what if we could join them up to take a closer look?



#### BARNEY RUBBLE AND BETTY ARE SAYING HELLO TO WILMA

After many hours of digging through a solid dry layer of Barney Rubble ground, the team eventually broke through to Wilma. The next stage of the break through is to clean up the area to create a definitive image for the drone. Betty is a little further north and seemingly sitting above the Barney Rubble walls, which adds another avenue of mystery to the investigation.



Pictured left is the team after they had successfully broken through from Barney Rubble to say hello to Wilma.

Note the cobbled Betty Floor sitting above the abruptly ended Barney Rubble wall on the right and the newly emerged wall heading towards Wilma under the three orange buckets.



#### CONTINUING FRUSTRATION

There has been very little datable evidence recovered from the site so far.



Pictured above is the Fred wall, which was constructed over the top of the Barney Rubble wall on a north/south alignment. The robbed-out corner of the Fred wall and the Barney Rubble wall were both constructed on an east/west alignment. Interestingly, the Barney Rubble wall is much drier on the south side of the wall than it is on the north side.

**“they’ve only got one wheelbarrow, so how do they keep losing it?”**



# MOLEY'S DIG DIARY



## The Search for Stathern Hall - The FINAL Dig Diary

Sometime after the execution of Colonel Francis Hacker in October 1660, his home here at Stathern was pulled down, but we don't know where it used to be. Thanks to the kind permission of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, The Field Detectives and the people of Stathern have been provided with the opportunity to resolve that mystery. My name is Moley, and this is my final account of their adventure.

WEEK 5 - Days 13, 14 & 15

Wednesday 5th, Thursday 6th, and Sunday 9th November 2025

### THE WEATHER

Warm for the time of year, not raining while on site, but yucky on the boots, gloves & paws.

### HOW MANY OF THEM WERE THERE THIS WEEK?

Richard, Jill, John, Roger W, Aileen, Peter and Colette. That's 7 Detectives, 5 Volunteers and 19 visitors. They've been digging on muddy hill for 79.5 hours.

### WHAT DID THEY DO?



All that noise on Wednesday was rather annoying. Lots of flash bang wallop, which meant that my super-sensitive hearing was all a mess. That's a lot of missed yummy earth worms!

It also meant that I missed a lot of what was going on down the hill. Thursday was much better; I could see that the diggers were scurrying about covered in mud, which was very funny. But, because I was so hungry after the fireworks nightmare, I had to go hunting for worms, so again, I missed a lot of what was going on. It's been a bad couple of days. I'm just so pleased that they didn't decide to build a bonfire over my tunnels.

On Sunday, not only were they covered in mud again, but they were also saying things like, 'straight sides and flat bottoms', 'now we can fly the drone', 'I've found the bottom of the wall', 'has anyone seen my diamond?' and 'we're off to see Forest'. It was the mention of the drone and flying that worried me, I mean the only things up there that scare the living daylight out of me are red kites and buzzards. Now, they're talking about something up there that I've never even heard of. I mean, how scary is that!

So, not the best of weeks and yet, perhaps the very best of weeks. As the diggers were about to leave, they announced that Sunday was the last day of the dig (yahoo) and that they were soon going to be filling it all back in again. Yes, they've spent over 79 hours digging mud, and now they're going to put it all back again. I told you that they were all a little bit strange.

Still, I'm still a bit peckish, so let's see if we can find something to tide me over until morning.

### WHAT DID THEY FIND

#### & ARE THEY LEARNING ANYTHING NEW ABOUT THE LOST HALL?

There is a very odd one called Richard, and he said that what they were doing was a small piece of a very big puzzle. That small piece could be joined together bit by bit and that once the puzzle was complete, then you can see the bigger picture. Yes, Richard, that's what puzzles do. He is very odd, don't you think? Then, when he started to talk about stitching it together, I decided that it was time to head back down my tunnel. There's only so much a mole can take.

## THE QUESTION THEY'VE BEEN ASKING FOR A WHILE NOW!

### ARE FRED, BARNEY RUBBLE, BETTY AND WILMA RELATED?

The wall in Fred, the rubble in Barney, the newly discovered Betty floor and the mysterious construction in Wilma appear to have no relationship at all, but what if we could join them up to take a closer look?



Well, after lots of digging, Fred, Barney Rubble, Betty and Wilma are all re-united with each other.



Now it's time for Steve to fly the drone so that we can see the bigger picture. After that, the site will be covered back over, the report will be written and our findings presented to the broader village community at St Guthlac's church. If permission is granted, we will continue the investigation from October 2026.

For all of you from Stathern who braved the weather conditions to join us on this incredible adventure up on muddy hill, we not only salute you, but we also owe you a huge debt of gratitude - **THANK YOU.**

There is no way that we could have made it this far without you all.

## WE'RE GOING TO MISS YOU ALL



**“Then, when he started to talk about stitching it together, I decided that it was time to head back down my tunnel.**

**There's only so much a mole can take!”**



## AN ANCIENT SEA

There was one set of artefacts that was recovered from the Coombs Meadow excavation during October and November 2025 that shed light on a submerged landscape.

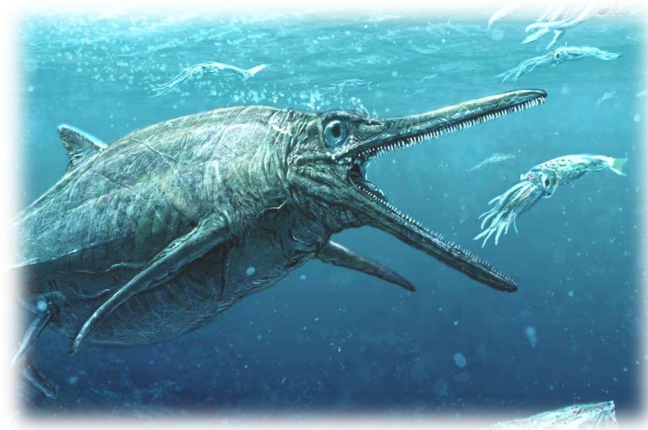
**The Vale of Belvoir was once submerged under an ancient sea during the Jurassic period and is a rich source of fossils from that time.**

Ellen Green, the 17th-century Stathern witch, springs to mind with so many Devil's toenails and Devil's fingers creeping out of the ground. Whatever did happen to Ellen, I wonder?

This would have been the very same sea that the Rutland Water Sea Dragon swam in around 200 million years ago.



In 2025, plans are moving forward to make the Rutland Sea Dragon the centrepiece of a new £3.5 million cultural and civic hub at the Rutland County Museum.



200 million years ago, the Coombs Meadow excavation would have been much more problematic.

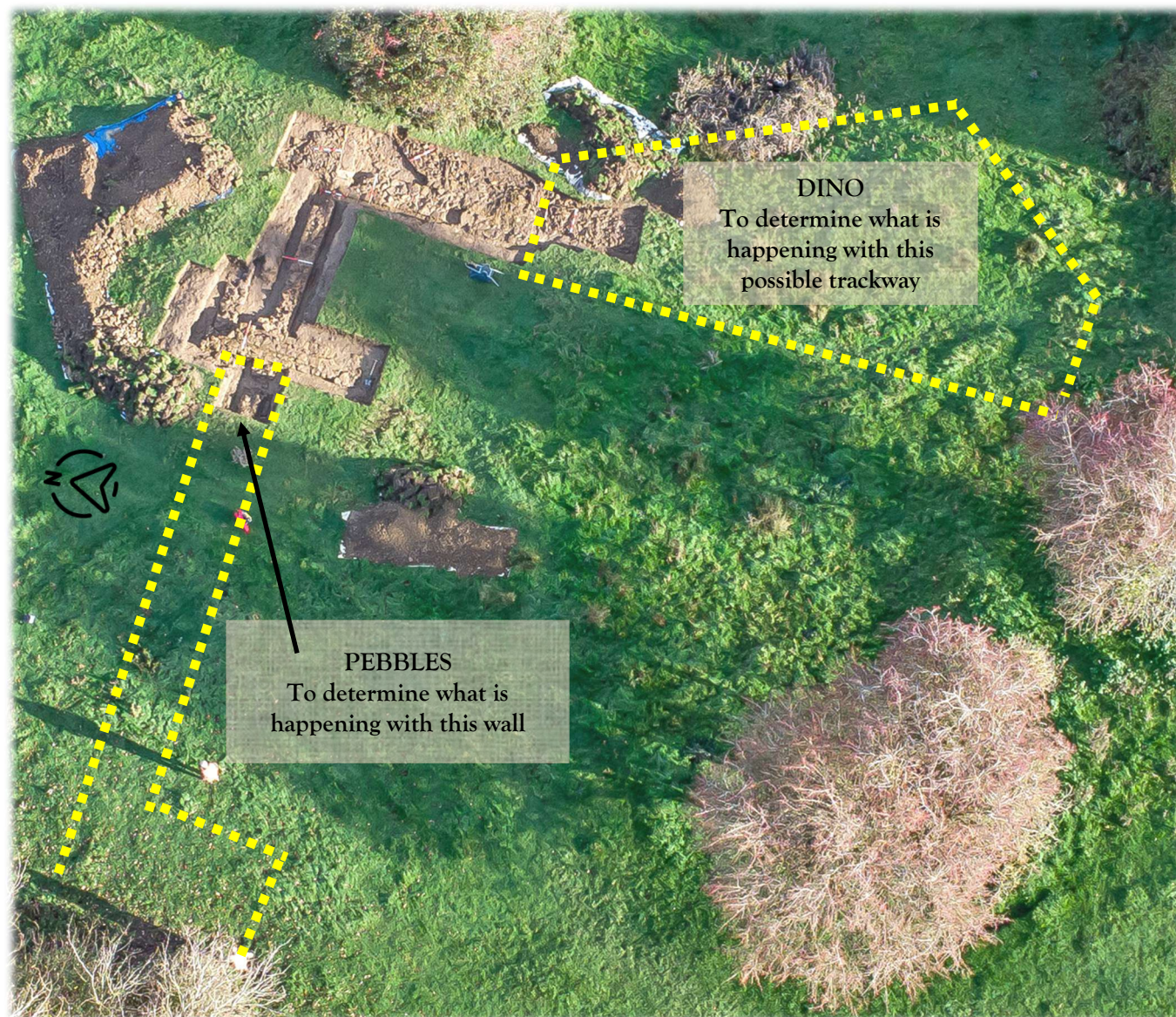


The Coombs Meadow Fossils



## PROPOSED CONTINUATION OF THE EXCAVATION FROM OCTOBER 2026

If permission is granted from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, The Field Detectives would welcome the opportunity to extend the 2025 excavation as shown below. The purpose is to enhance our understanding of the newly discovered site and to see if we can reliably attribute its structures to those that would have been used by the Hacker family of Stathern during the 17th century.



Both of the above proposed 2026 excavation extensions can be digitally stitched to the 2005 excavation. Little by little we will be able to piece together this slowly emerging ghostly site. Once we have all the jigsaw pieces in place and, with good fortune, along with an accumulative amount of supporting artefactual evidence, we will be in a position to finally answer the question: was this the place where the house of Colonel Francis Hacker once stood?

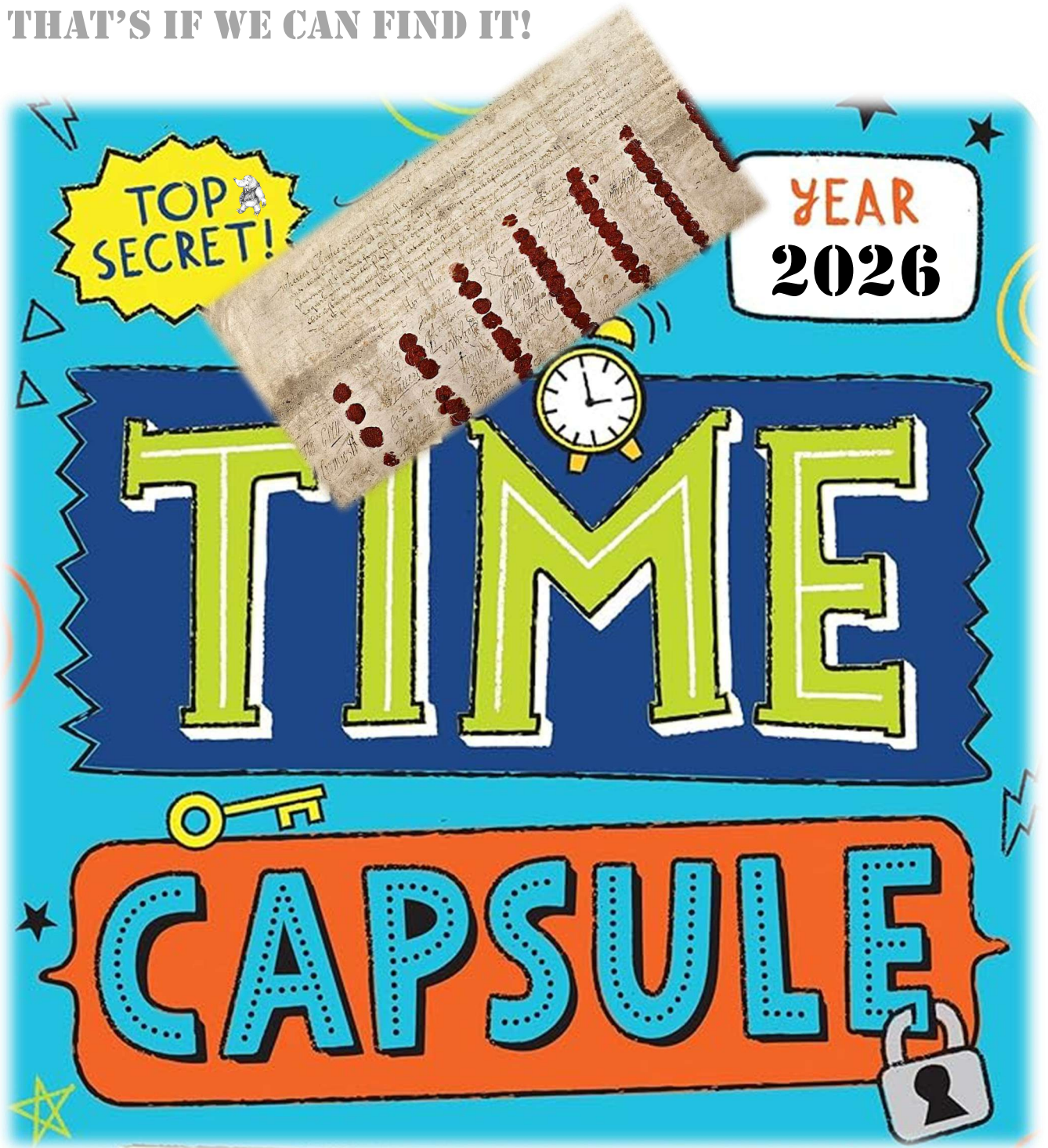




## THE COOMBS MEADOW TIME CAPSULE

A time capsule is to be placed at the site of the long lost Stathern Hall, to ensure that the voices of the people who took part in this amazing investigation can tell their stories so that they can be heard many, many years from now.

**THAT'S IF WE CAN FIND IT!**



**TO BE PLACED AT STATHERN HALL  
TO CAPTURE OUR MOMENT IN TIME**

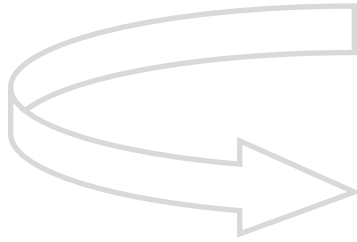


## THE COOMBS MEADOW HIBERNACULUM

Good morning, Sarah

**We hope that you are all safe and well.**

As we are collecting a lot of rocks from the Coombs Meadow excavation, it occurred to me that they might be a useful resource from a nature reserve perspective.



Morning Richard

Thanks for your message and it looks from the reports that you're making good and interesting progress.

The stone you remove can be piled up for now and could be used to construct a hibernaculum (a sheltering space for reptiles, amphibians and small mammals and insects).



Next to scrub and bracken

South facing, with some shade

Include timber and organic material

Large stones inside to create voids, smaller stones on top

Leave some stones to absorb direct sunlight

Crevice entrances

The aim of the hibernaculum is to create spaces within a structure which has stable temperatures and humidity, which creatures can use



## DETECTIVES & DIG VOLUNTEERS IN THE FIELD

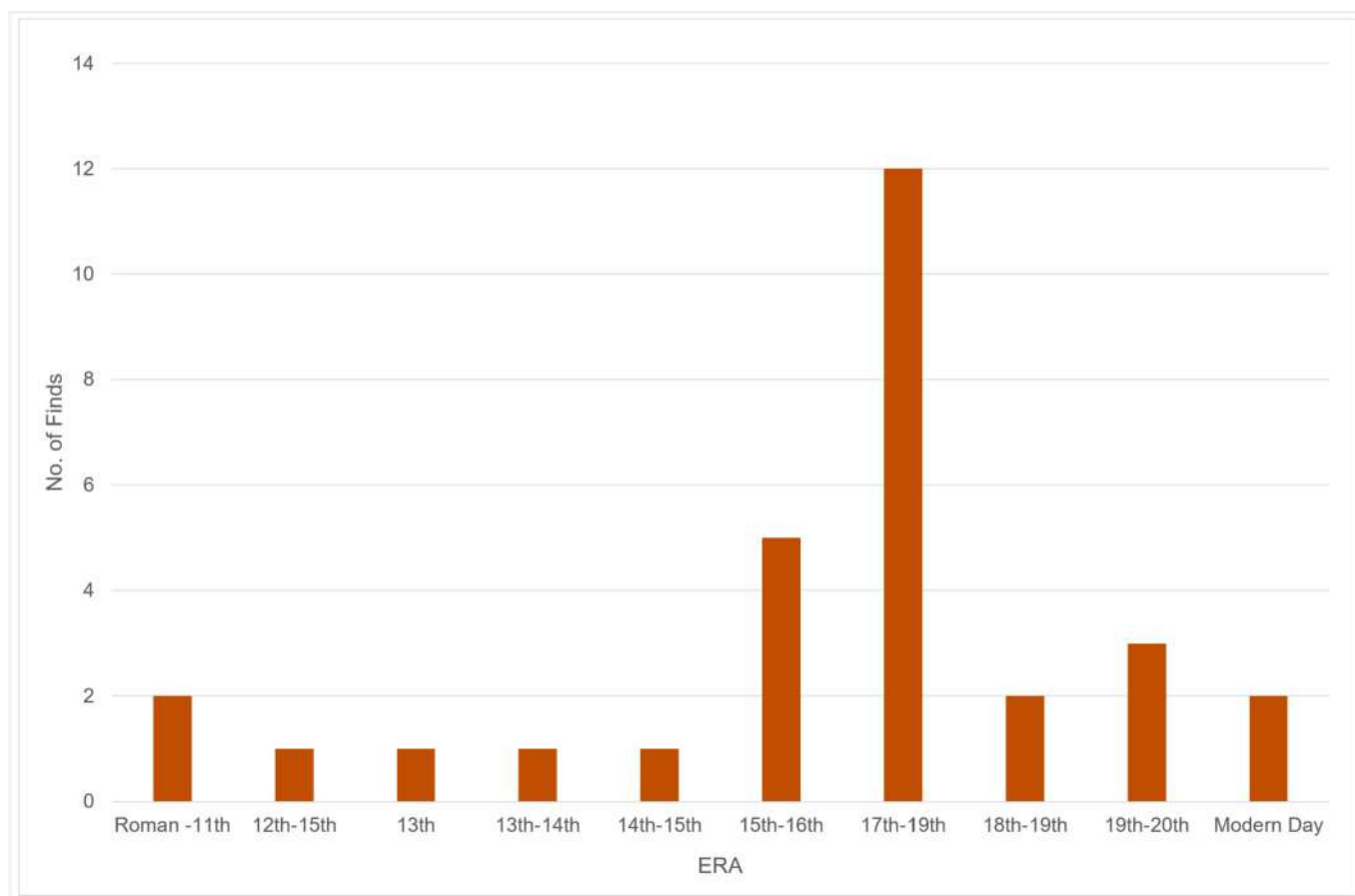


### Excerpt from Moley's Dig Diary

‘As the diggers were about to leave, they announced that Sunday was the last day of the dig (yahoo) and that they were soon going to be filling it all back in again. Yes, they’ve spent over 79 hours digging mud, and now they’re going to put it all back again. I told you that they were all a little bit strange.’



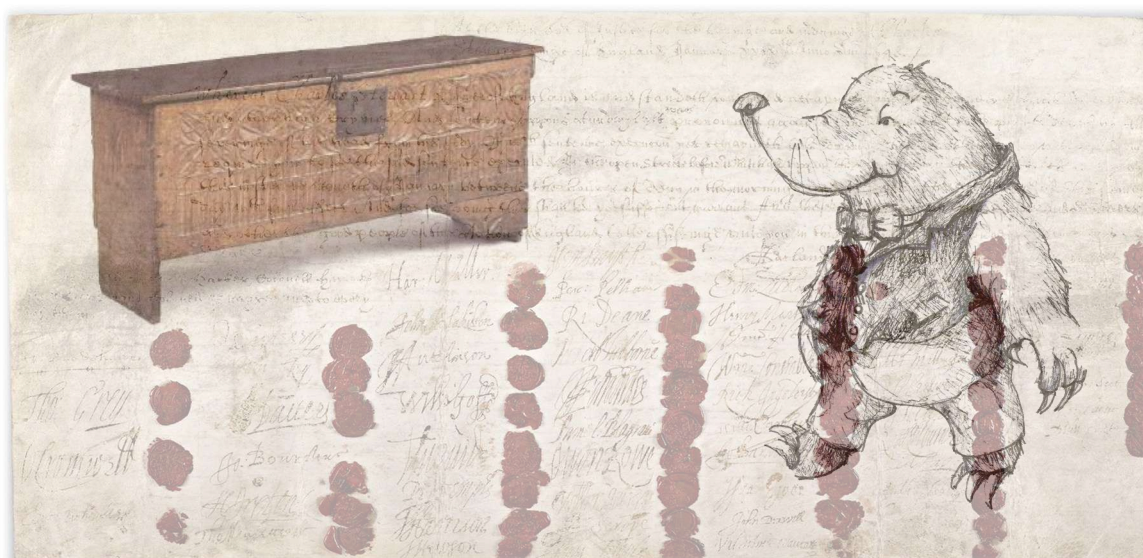
## FINDS CHART



## CONCLUSION

The dating range on the chart representing the 17th to 19th centuries is a combination of finds dated 15th-17th, 16th-17th, 16th-18th, 17th-18th, and 17th-19th. This encapsulates any finds that would have been in use during the time that Francis Hacker was living in Stathern.

The results show an increase of finds during the 17th century but also display evidence of earlier occupation on the site ranging from early medieval to the 15th-16th centuries. Written evidence suggests the building on the hill was an older manor or priory farm.





## Summary

Thanks to the kind permission of the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, the Coombs Meadow excavation at Stathern, Leicestershire, began on Tuesday, 7th October 2025, and concluded on Sunday, 9th November 2025.

The Sunday community involvement days were a huge success. Fifteen Stathern dig volunteers braved what became known as the muddy hill, and 30 visitors came up the hill from the village to see what was happening. In total, we all played our part in clinging to the muddy hillside for 79.5 hours.

We had set out together to examine a previously excavated area on Coombs Meadow (c. 1999-2005) to see if we could learn a little bit more about that earlier dig in the hope that it would lead us closer to the site of Colonel Francis Hacker's house on the hill. One account of our muddy hill investigation was captured by an unlikely observer, and I'm sure that if we omitted Mr Mole from the record, we would be disappointing a lot of people.

As you can see from the excavation images, we have found much more evidence of stone foundation constructions than we initially expected to see. Sadly, we didn't find as many datable artefacts as we would have liked, but, nevertheless, the excavation has proved to be extremely promising.

The findings strongly suggest that we are in close proximity to a related set of structures and trackways that are most probably associated with the location of a manor or priory farm. We would have liked to confirm that the structures date to the 17th century and that they are linked to the Hacker family, but we need much more evidence to be able to confidently make this a watertight declaration. There is growing evidence, following the 2025 excavation, that the site in question has a long history of use and occupation dating back many hundreds of years.

With the archival visit to Belvoir Castle in the pipeline, we could, in effect, move a little closer towards evidencing the date and ownership of the site we have discovered on Coombs Meadow. In the meantime, a community presentation will be arranged to take place in St Guthlac's Church at Stathern so that we can share our learning to date.

A key aspect of the Community Presentation is to request permission from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust to continue with the excavation on the Coombs Meadow muddy hill in 2026 and to prompt further community involvement.

The dig on muddy hill was not the end of the Search for Stathern Hall investigation; it was the end of the beginning. The next stage of the investigation is going to be even more exciting!

The Field Detectives - 2025



Visit and examine archival material at Belvoir Castle. To arrange a community presentation of our research and excavation findings at St Guthlac's Church. Prompt further heritage-focused community involvement and request permission from the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust to continue with the excavation on the Coombs Meadow muddy hill in 2026.



To Sarah & colleagues at the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, as we would be a lost historic landscape away from knowing what we know today without your support.

To Peter Liddle for your help with identifying the pottery sherds, along with your patience and support. Steve Wells for another set of fabulous artefact and drone images. To all of you Field Detectives, who freely give up your time to chase the real treasure of telling the unknown stories of people who are now sadly long gone.

To Roger, Barbara, Geoff, Carrie, Margot, Brian, Malcolm, Rachel, Colin, Lesley, Tara, Chris, Dawn, Molly, Amy, Jackie, Caroline and all of our fellow heritage sector colleagues, farmers and landowners, because we couldn't do this without you.

To Sean Gallagher, Alan Stevens, Mel Steadman, Bob Hammond & Peter Baker, because you helped to make us who we are today. Thank you will never be enough.

A special thank you to all of you who braved the muddy trudge up the hill to see us.

Margot, your dig diary drawings are amazing.



# 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 Historical 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 historical studies. These context-recorded studies are held in trust by the respective farmers and 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...

Mob: 07896 225 691 Tel: 0115 9377 318  
website: [www.the-field-detectives.com](http://www.the-field-detectives.com)



**Richard Pincott**  
Survey Director &  
Historic Landscape Detective



**Catherine Pincott-Allen**  
Family Historian, Author & Historic  
Landscape Detective



**Steve Wells**  
Finds Photographer, Treasurer  
& Historic Landscape Detective



**Sophie Chell**  
Historic Landscape  
Detective



**Brian Lovett**  
Farmer & Historic  
Landscape Detective



**Julie Penaluna**  
Artist & Historic Landscape  
Detective



**Jill Barlow**  
Historic Landscape  
Detective



**John Barlow**  
Historic Landscape  
Detective



**Tim & Jenson Elsworth**  
Historic Landscape Detectives



**Jane Morris**  
Dowser &  
Historic Landscape Detective



**David Bate**  
Geologist & Historic  
Landscape Detective



**Peter Duke**  
Archaeologist & Historic  
Landscape Detective



**Cherry Bishop**  
Historic Landscape  
Detective



**Peter Ball**  
Historic Landscape Detective



**Roger Whitehead**  
Artist & Historic Landscape Detective



**Aileen Ball**  
Historic Landscape Detective



**Lady Helen Nall**  
Historian, Artist &  
Historic Landscape Detective



**Michael Beckett**  
Historic Landscape Detective



**Justin Russell**  
Archaeologist &  
Munitions Consultant



**Colette Spencer**  
Historic Landscape Detective