

The Field Detectives

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER 2016

NOTTINGHAMSHIRE



A Year in Perspective - 2016



Type II English Lock Flintlock Mechanism
mid 17th Century - found Bunny Hall grounds

2016 marked our 25th year, it also marks the first edition of what we hope will become our annual Field Detectives newsletter.

The newsletter presents us with a unique opportunity to reflect on our learning over the years; how we evolved from an original group of metal detectorists to become a social history field research team.

We learnt that despite the fact that we have a major Roman Road (Fosse Way) running through our South Nottinghamshire landscape, there is a dearth of information about Romano-British activity in the area, the farming landscape that preceded the arrival of Roman influence and the farming landscapes that evolved once that influence had faded away.

Working closely with local farmers, landowners, parish councils, local people and the heritage sector has enabled us to increase our knowledge to a far greater degree than by just going out on to a field and metal detecting.

Many hours at the Nottinghamshire Archives along with lots of emails, telephone conversations and meetings with our growing network of contacts across the heritage sector, continues to enable us to produce field survey reports and deliver community presentations that not only enable local people to learn more about their shared heritage, it also provides an opportunity for them to get involved in our studies.

We have identified three Romano-British sites; the one at Keyworth sits in between two villages (Keyworth and Bunny) on the parish boundary; the one at Cropwell Butler sits in the corner of a field called the Sewage Works (near to a ditch and pond) and the one at

Langar is situated on the site of the former field church of St Ethelburga (next to the Stroom Dyke).

An intriguing set of landscape similarities seem to connect the sites; they are all situated in close proximity to a sewage works treatment plant. Parish boundaries also seem to feature as do brooks, dykes, ditches and ponds.

2016 is also the year that has seen our team embrace the additional expertise of colleagues from a wider field of specialisms, each one of them bringing a valuable set of skills, knowledge and experience that is enabling us to greatly improve the presentation of our field survey reports.

But most of all, we would not have learnt much about our ancient local farming landscapes if it wasn't for the kind invitations and ongoing support from the farmers and landowners we have had the privilege of working with over the years to whom we owe a considerable debt of gratitude.



Ring Dot Brooch
Frankish-Merovingian
'equal-armed' type
c.7th-9th Century

found on the Sewage Works field
Cropwell Butler 2016

SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ St Ethelburga
- ◆ Community Presentation 2017
- ◆ Romano-British Farmstead
- ◆ Bunny Hall Grounds
- ◆ Who We Are



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The Lost Field Church of St Ethelburga at Langar



Corieltauvi Tribe
Gold Stater (5.9g)
South Ferriby Type
c.45-10 BC

Little is known about the lost church of St Ethelburga other than it lay about a mile south of the village of Langar, that it was the site of pilgrimage throughout the medieval period and that it fell under the authority of Thurgarton Priory.

The presumed site has been frequently examined by metal detectorists in the past.

On Saturday 16 April 2016 John and Shellie Parker (Hall Farm) invited the Field Detectives to retrace the steps of

previous investigations (mainly metal detecting over a period of 30 years) on the presumed site and surrounding fields, particularly possible pathways leading to the lost church.

The main objective of our re-examination was to recover, record and study any artefacts, coins, pottery and bones revealed following a deep plough on the 35 acre field.

It was envisaged that a deep plough would reveal a further set of artefacts to supplement those described in the excellent written account, completed in February 2016 by David Bate, detailing the history of the church and featuring many of the artefacts previously recovered from the site.

David was able to contact a number of the metal detectorists who had previously examined the site and surrounding fields to collate many of their finds.

The second objective of our study was to carry out a survey of the adjacent Stroom Dyke.

We hoped that the Dyke would reveal further artefacts that would otherwise have been undetected by prior metal detecting activities.

Unfortunately, due to a revised agricultural plan, the deep ploughing did not happen this year as planned. Nevertheless, we were able to carry out an initial survey of the site targeting the area around the church mound, as a preamble to another field survey in 2017.

We did not expect to find much after 30 years of metal detecting by others. But we were pleased to find three low denomination 3rd-4th century Roman coins, a 1st century Roman brooch, three 16th-18th century artefacts, a 12th century door/window fitting and the British gold stater shown here.



Take stock of the two field surveys carried out in 2016 on Hall Farm and Limes Farm through discussion with the landowners John, Shellie, Derek & Teresa, towards identifying a field survey opportunity for 2017.

Prepare for the Community Presentation at Keyworth: The Lost Field Chapel of Saint Ethelburga on Friday 6 October 2017

Set in motion the consultation process in respect of establishing a local village heritage display in Langar featuring the St Ethelburga church as a central theme.

The field over on the other side of the Stroom Dyke

The Field Detectives completed the first field survey on the site of the lost church of St Ethelburga in September 2016, but were interested in what may lie in the field on the other side of the Stroom Dyke which forms the eastern margin of the St Ethelburga field.

We were grateful to receive a kind invitation from Derek and Teresa Harwood of Limes Farm to carry out a survey on the relevant field.

We examined an area of the field that ran parallel to the Stroom Dyke and that also included the line of a footpath which ran from the site of an

old sewage works plant towards a field boundary ditch (north to south).

Following six visits to the field over the course of 26 hours, using metal detectors and by field walking we found two low denomination 4th century Roman coins, two hammered silver coins (Henry II & Elizabeth I), two 13th-15th century artefacts and a lovely Saxon dress or hair pin as featured here.

From the finds and their locations, we were able to conclude that there was human activity over on the other side of the Dyke spanning the Roman, Saxon, Medieval, post

Medieval periods and that the majority of the finds were recovered from the footpath, a few in close proximity to the Dyke and very little from further out into the field.



SAXON
Dress or Hair Pin Head
Polyhedral Design
c. 8th-9th Century

Romano-British activity in Cropwell Butler - by Alan Stevens

The South Nottinghamshire Field Detectives have studied, with the kind permission of the farmer, a field between Cropwell Bishop and Cropwell Butler intermittently between 2005 and 2016 using field-walking, metal detecting, and limited geophysical survey.

The first survey in 2005/6 involved an examination of the entire field by field walking and metal detecting. Coins and artefacts from the 4thC Romano-British period were found to be concentrated in an area at the northern end of the field near a drainage ditch and pond, together with Roman era pottery sherds, mainly grey ware. Elsewhere in the field were found coins and artefacts from later eras (14thC - 20thC)

The second survey in 2013 involved a more detailed ex-



Nummus of Magnentius
AD 350-53

amination of the area where Romano-British coins and artefacts had been found in 2005/6. This revealed considerably more Roman coinage (23 coins in all) and a few fragments of Roman brooches.

In 2016 we expanded the survey of the area examined in 2013, but also extended our investigations westward towards the road. We discovered 29 more Roman coins, a few around the periphery of the original area, but most at a

very localised area at the western margin of the field, close to the road. In total we found 60 Roman era coins; many were too worn for accurate identification, but the majority of the well-preserved coins were from the Magnentius/Constantius period (4thC). A couple of earlier (1st & 2ndC) coins and artefacts were found elsewhere in the field.

Limited geophysical survey of an area of the drainage ditch/pond site showed evidence suggestive of round building structures approximately 10 metres in diameter, possibly round houses or grain storage units.

There is undoubted evidence of Romano-British activity in the field, but full interpretation awaits more extensive geophysical survey. We are currently seeking funding for this survey.

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The Owl's Nest and The Bunny Hall Grounds 1999-2016

It was on Monday 15th November 1999 on a very cool and extremely damp morning that Mr Philip Wheatcroft and his son Clive drove us out on to a field curiously named ‘The Owl's Nest’.

Valerie Wheatcroft had initially invited us to survey the field in the hope that any finds we recovered would shed some light on to the site of a former cottage and the people who had lived there at the turn of the 20th century.

Incredibly, The Owl's Nest revealed a much bigger story than anyone of us on that cold damp morning could have ever imagined.

The two British gold staters, a mid 1st century strap or harness connector (shown here), seven Roman silver coins,



Strap or Harness Connector
Owl's Nest - Mid 1st Century AD

seventy (mostly 4th century) low denomination Roman coins, sixteen Romano-British brooches and lots of Romano-British dated pottery found during the Owl's Nest field surveys from 1999 through to 2013. These finds point conclusively towards a significant period of activity on the site during the Roman occupation from AD43-410.

A number of local landowners were interested in our findings

and very kindly offered us their support in extending our field surveys out into the wider area, and it is very much down to their continued trust and encouragement that we are able to submit our findings to the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record, for the benefit of those who wish to widen their own understanding of our shared and extremely valuable heritage.

In May 2015 Dr Stephen Ramsden and Farm Manager Mr Mike Davies very kindly offered us the opportunity to extend our field surveys into the Bunny Park grounds (former home of the Parkyns family). So far, we have found two 1st-2nd century Roman brooches and a 9th century Anglo-Saxon strap-end.

THE FIELD DETECTIVES

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Who We Are & What We Do

The Field Detectives provide benefit to ...

Local rural village communities by sharing the stories that we uncover from our field survey activities to inform a better understanding of how our farming landscapes evolved over the centuries.

Seek opportunities to survey fields that can tell us more about how our farming landscapes evolved

On completion of the field survey activities, a field survey report is produced. One copy is presented to the landowner, and further copies are sent to the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record and the Finds Liaison Officer for Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire. Once the field surveys have established an evidence-based platform (based on finds locations and additional historical research) for community involvement, a community presentation is arranged where the information is shared and an opportunity is provided for the local community to get involved in future developments.

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

By submitting the completed Field Survey Reports to the Nottinghamshire Historic Environment Record and by working closely with the Finds Liaison Officer and the British Museum et al, we are providing a collection of artefacts, coins, pottery and bones for the benefit of current and future educational research.

The Full Field Survey Reports featured in this Newsletter



PDF copies of the reports can be sent out electronically if requested - fielddetectives@talktalk.net

The Year Ahead - 2017

2017 looks set to provide us with our greatest challenges to date; with the St Ethelburga project at Langar, commissioning a full field geophysical survey on the possible site of a Romano-British farmstead at Cropwell Butler and beginning the search for Henry VII's army, taking centre stage. We will be surveying the Gotham Lane Fields to see if we can find any evidence to pinpoint the site where Henry VII and his forces spent the night at Bunny, a couple of days before the battle of Stoke Field (East Stoke) on 16 June 1487. Kevin Winter and Glyn Hughes of the Newark Civil War Centre in Newark are also joint chairmen of the Battlefields Trust East Midlands and they firmly believe that the site does exist. We will keep them informed of our progress.

We will also be exploring the possibility of forming ourselves into a Community Interest Company so that we can apply for funding to finance the geophysical survey at Cropwell Butler and future heritage related activities across the region. Part of this particular direction of travel will include the further development of our relationship with local Parish Councils and Local History Societies.

Help Us - to learn more about our Historic Farming Landscapes

If you are interested to find out more about our field survey activities, please contact us and we will be more than happy to come out to see you.

We are always on the lookout for opportunities to tell the story of a field so that it can help us to learn more about how our modern day farming landscapes evolved over the centuries.