



**Report on Phase 2
beginning June 16th 2014**
G. Morral

This is the non technical
report from an
organisational and
personal point of view.
The archaeological report



will follow in due course.

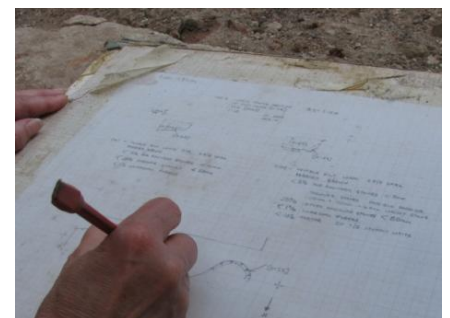
First and foremost, I would like to thank the volunteers who helped in any capacity. Andy C. only came on site once (that we know of) but has worked everyday behind the scenes updating the Toton Unearthed website. Karen has also worked on this site, updated it before most of us even got home. In all we had 47 volunteers who worked on site for either one session, three sessions or were gluttons for punishment (or addicted) and worked 20 sessions or more. It has been an amazing experience but also a unique opportunity for hands on practical archaeology close to home. The time spent by volunteers is converted to a monetary value which is counted as a contribution in kind (match funding) to the Lottery contribution. Initial calculation show volunteers on site, plus admin time, plus I.T. specialist contribution total £6000. My estimate when completing the lottery form for all 3 stages was £8950 (Phase 1 Voluntary contributions came to £4200)



Word is spreading about our archaeology project, with people signing up for phase 3, either online or by visiting the site, seeing the site, talking to one of us and signing up there and then. Even on the last day

we had an extra volunteer sieving the spoil heap soil, looking for medieval pottery from the ditch fill. There are currently 25 volunteers signed up for phase 3. We have 12 Hi Viz jackets plus 1, plus an extra plain one which has turned up in the collection. Thank you Julie for washing them.

The volunteers have tackled many different aspects of archaeology. We have learnt how to handle a trowel and scrape carefully and evenly in layers, revealing different surfaces. We used the pointed bit of the trowel to scrape away between cobbles revealing the cobbled surface. Some of us dug and heaved huge amounts of soil and debris out of the trenches, some sieved the spoil heaps, some washed the finds, some sorted the finds into bone, pottery or metal, some of us learnt how to do context drawing by identifying the soil type on a special chart and describing the soil and stones in our feature. Some measured, recorded and some drew under expert tuition.



It has been gratifying to read the Evaluation sheets which have been returned with comments such as

- ❖ “The working atmosphere was great, friendly, open and everyone seemed willing to work together and share ideas.”
- ❖ I have really enjoyed this opportunity as I have never experienced this before. I cannot wait ‘til we get to start the dig in August.”
- ❖ “Thoroughly enjoyed every moment.”

It has been pleasing to see that the volunteers have come from many sectors of the Community. We have had many local residents, many retired people, a student from Nottingham University, a graduate from Nottingham University, a student visitor filming from Trent University, an A level student from the local Community, a member of the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) a work experience lad who came with Trent & Peak. Our only disappointment was that more people who work could not take part because this phase took place Monday to Friday daytime. Although the archaeologist were willing to work at the weekend the limitation was the use of the Sports Pavilion as this facility is used at the weekend by sporting groups and therefore unavailable to us.

Three Community groups were able to visit the site on the last two Monday evenings. First the Beavers came and enjoyed practical activities such as washing and sieving. The following week the Brownies and Guides came and also enjoyed their time. This could not have happened without the archaeologist Laura Binns giving up her time in the evenings.

Phase 2 was extended by a day (giving another weekend) because so much material was found under the ground. This enabled Norman to organise an impromptu Open day on the last Sunday July 6th. Soil was moved on the Friday to create "Viewing platforms" where the visitors could get a better view of the exposed walls and trenches. Over thirty visitors came and viewed. Word spread without any advertising. This will be a good event to add to the next phase.

The weather was wonderful. Three weeks with only periods of rain on one day meant no time was lost.

The use of the Sports pavilion has been a great and necessary asset. Without it the project could not have happened. This building housed the toilets, the kitchen for refreshments, and chairs for lunch. The tools were stored there overnight and a small exhibition was accessible during working hours or when there was a park attendant on duty. The exhibition proved popular with some people just dropping in when passing while others made special trips to view the information. A very rough estimate of visitors based on observation of 7 visitors in one hour on one day suggests that between 5 and 40 visitors viewed the boards inside the pavilion each day.

The A frame notice-board was appreciated. Having watched people sitting on the ground to read the notices, and having listened to suggestions that the board was higher to enable it to be read, a table was found for the board to sit on. This was a great improvement. A Trent University media student studying Community events commented that of all the sites he had visited our board was the most up to date. During the three weeks of phase 2 there has been a constant trickle of visitors reading the notices and watching the dig.

Three weeks of activity have revealed

- Walls of brick – thought to be Georgian
- Walls of brick – thought to be Tudor/Stuart
- Walls of Stone – thought to be medieval
- Brick/pottery underneath stone walls
- Stone underneath brick walls
- Floor black & white
- Floor black ash
- Floor tiled/brick possibly Tudor
- Red and white possibly medieval



Various holes kept appearing. The first was the known cellar of the last house with its collapsed barrel vaulted ceiling. Another hole appeared in the western trench. This may be another earlier cellar as it was lower down and underneath Tudor type rubble. There was a large deep hole. This one was dug by Dave B (who eventually had to dig 2 steps to access it) to reveal the foundations of the brick house. At the bottom of the hole were worked flints showing the site has been used for thousands of years.



Other features uncovered included

- Cobbled floors
- A ditch 3 m across at the top and tapering down (and down)
- A pillar base with mortar in the centre where a column may have been
- Post holes (some maybe post holes for wooden scaffolding)

A great variety of pottery and other artefacts were uncovered. The western trench (pointing to Long Eaton) produced some green medieval pottery. There was more medieval pottery including parts of glazed medieval tiles in the large ditch, which therefore dated the ditch as an early one. (Was it the moat?)



Some pottery pieces were yellow and patterned, some of which turned out to be Staffordshire Slipware. There was pottery which had been made locally in Swadlincote, and some blackish pieces glazed only on the inside. These latter pieces seemed similar to those on display at the University Archaeological Day which were from Ticknall. Much of the pottery appears to be domestic, plates, etc and also kitchen ware – pancheon rims and bowls proving that we had found a house. The most exciting find (beside the medieval pottery) was a coin dated to between 1603 and 1649. Another interesting and exciting find was a key, small delicate with images on both sides. There was a ceramic hen's egg discovered early on giving evidence of a farming, agricultural period.



Beyond the big ditch was a huge amount of pottery in a "midden". This could be in another ditch. This huge find was very useful as it gave ample material for the Brownies, Guides and Beavers to wash. There is still a lot of this material in the ground. The pottery pieces, bone, shell, window lead, glass, metal etc have all been bagged up and are currently in Trent & Peak offices awaiting identification and dating. Following that the information will be entered into a database.

July 4th saw the final recording of all the finds, measuring, drawing and the opportunity for sorting and washing more finds. The tools and equipment were loaded into the van, the Sports Pavilion emptied of boards, cups and boxes. The Hi Viz jackets were collected for washing. July 7th the "back filling" in day dawned bright as all the others. This day was a very long day for Richard our archaeologist. He arrived at 6.30 a.m. to move the fencing, begin work in covering the walls with Terram, a flexible geo-textile material which allows the walls to breathe, water to drain through while still protecting the structures. This protection will make the job of an archaeological investigation in the future, easier. Norman arrived at 8.00 a.m. as the JCB driver and machine arrived. Barrow loads and barrow loads of bricks, were dumped in the trenches, the JCB moved turf and soil. The work was heavy and tiring. Tom arrived from Trent & Peak to help shift soil and rubble. More volunteers will be needed next time who can shift this material.

The archaeologists have been brilliant. All have explained the tasks clearly, shared their knowledge and generally made everyone feel part of a team. No question was too silly to be asked, no find was dismissed out of hand. The archaeologists trained us to scrape in layers, dig, measure do context drawings, and most important look at the changes in soil colour, type and texture. Most people have had a go at different activities.

- ❖ “I didn’t expect to do things like context drawing which I thought would be left to the professionals.”
- ❖ I enjoyed the washing and sorting as you really got to handle and understand the objects you had found.!
- ❖ “Archaeologist and volunteers all very approachable.”



Beside the main two trenches (Evaluation trenches) there were other activities taking place during the three weeks. In the area of long grass, the medieval ridge and furrow area, five Test Pits – 1 metre across and theoretically 1 metre deep were dug. These proved to be a challenge. The dry weather and the tussockly long grass made digging the pits difficult. The soil was clay, heavy and sparse with finds. The day of the rain (middle Friday) the soil was impossible to sieve but the stalwarts still continued and even managed to find a tiny piece of medieval pottery.



The water channels, discovered during phase 1, were investigated with an auger in series of boreholes. The large mechanical auger was unavailable for the boreholes. This did have its advantages as more boreholes could be attempted with a cheaper hand driven auger. The purpose of the boreholes was to discover which channel was in use during different periods. Borehole 1 did not go well. The auger was unable to go below 42cm so a Test pit was dug by Paul (2) who discovered that 42cm down was a large flat stone. He continued down. In this pit a few pieces of pottery was discovered.



Borehole 2 (near the brambles and the possible circular depression) revealed blue/grey clay. The third borehole was thought to be in the leat, the channel bringing water to the mill (by the basketball court). The auger went much deeper. The samples brought up revealed changes in flow, as the particles changed size in different layers. The colour of the samples also changed. This also necessitated a huge deep Test pit, manfully dug by Duncan. This channel would have been the leat bringing water to a mill.

Boreholes 4 & 5 dug on the Notts TV filming day turned out to be possibly from the same channel. One hole was in the grassland and one in the wooded area where there is a lot of litter. For the channels to be one there must have been a sharpish turn probably hidden by vegetation. The auger went through several different layers of silt, silty clay, and clay. Some of the layers had inclusions of manganese. At the base of these holes there was green gungy smelly clay. Paul F thought this kind of clay was reminiscent of medieval “cess” type material. Apparently in the samples taken from these boreholes a piece of charcoal has been recovered which is datable.

On a personal note I have enjoyed the experience, the willingness of many people, the camaraderie, the fresh air, the butterflies (near the Test Pits), and the birdsong and have been amazed at the amount of material uncovered.



It has also raised questions. What is beyond the trenches?

- What is the extent of the walls, especially the stone walls?
- Was the pillar base outside the chapel of the medieval house? Was it a porch of Georgian house?
- Was there an Anglo Saxon hall house on the other part of the mound?
- Were there other channels beyond our survey area?
- Where were the barns?
- Where was the smithy, evidence of tools, weapons?

Improvements for Phase 3 Suggestions received

- ✚ Sticky name labels (needed because of ever-changing personnel)
- ✚ Signing in sheet with refreshment requirements e.g. T +1 = tea with 1 sugar C + 1 Coffee with 1 sugar L lemon juice
- ✚ Viewing platforms for visitors
- ✚ Notice-boards left up
- ✚ More Strong volunteers for back filling day
- ✚ Visitors book
- ✚ Another Open day
- ✚ Another tray
- ✚ Chalk board on site describing the day's activities
- ✚ Bigger display A frame board

Looking forward to Phase 3

A local school- Chetwynd Road Primary school will be visiting with their Year 5 and 6 classes and will do follow up in school. They have had an introductory session in school led by Genevieve Carver who showed finds from Phase 2 and discussed life in medieval times with the children.

Discussion is ongoing to fix a date for an Open day (possibly Sat Sept 6th) and also for a parents and Children day or two in August.

Volunteers may be need to mann the display in the pavilion as this is so much further away from the excavation site.

Another consideration will be refreshment time in the morning – How to keep the drinks hot and carry so many across the ground. During Phase 2 week 3 16 drinks were made each morning and these were quite heavy.

Phase 4 Interpretation Suggestions for the final outcome should be collected from the Community.

So far we have

- Paving slabs of different colours outlining the Manor house changes
- CAD 3D images on the computer CAD mock up for visual work through on Manor House
- Permanent boards
- Pottery pieces used in a mosaic or sculpture