

Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1988

by Peter Liddle

INTERIM REPORTS

The Shires Excavation — An interim report

The Leicestershire Archaeological Unit has just completed the Shires Excavation (March 1988 to February 1989), examining two areas, one on St Peter's Lane (SK58520468) directed by Richard Buckley and the other on Little Lane, (SK 585804640), directed by John Lucas. As the excavations have only just been completed, a short summary is given here and a more substantial report will be produced later.

Residual flint and pottery from the Bronze Age through to the Iron Age, was found, but the earliest identifiable features were dated to the late 1st century. The lack of any early Roman features could suggest that the original Roman town developed further to the west. These earliest features consisted of a series of re-cut ditches, orientated north to south which were possibly field ditches. The first substantial Roman activity came in the late 1st to early 2nd century when the town's street grid was laid down. Part of this grid was identified on the Little Lane site in the form of a street orientated north to south which cut across the centre of the excavation. In the early 2nd century, timber buildings were erected either side of this street. There was no evidence at all of any building pre-dating the street grid. Several hearths, associated with these early buildings, suggest some form of industrial activity was being pursued in this area of the town. Several Roman pits were located, suggesting a period of dereliction, subsequent to the early timber buildings, but ante-dating later phase of timber structures. This phase consisted of a substantial building on the east side of the street, indicated by the remains of granite packed post holes and the presence of a timber-lined and floored cellar, situated immediately adjacent to the street. The cellar dated approximately to 120 or 130 AD, and the masses of pottery used in backfilling it, indicated a demolition date of around 200 AD.

In the second half of the 2nd century some large buildings were erected fronting the north-south street to the east beyond the Little Lane excavation. Just the very back ends of these buildings were found at the extreme east end of the excavation. Two separate rooms were found, one with a plain mortar floor, the other with a floor of *opus signinum*. Evidence was also found that indicated the use of sun baked clay bricks in the construction of these two rooms.

In the period between the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries, all the structures occupying the area excavated, were swept away and stone buildings were erected on both sides of the street. Despite severe robbing of their walls and complete destruction of their floor levels by medieval ploughing, it is clear that these were very substantial buildings. They had deep granite packed foundations that suggest at least a two storey structure. Only in the building on the east side of the street is there any more evidence of the nature of these buildings. Here a small amount of painted wallplaster was found in residual contexts, but the lack of any significant amounts of painted wallplaster or *tesserae* suggests that neither of the buildings were of a very high status. On the east side of the street only the southern wall of the stone building was uncovered, the rest of the area being occupied with garden. A

cesspit dated to the 4th century was found within the garden indicating the presence of a toilet.

The truncation of the Roman levels by medieval cultivation left little evidence of 3rd and 4th century activity. The compacted gravel surface of the Roman street did resist this destruction better and so evidence of five resurfacings was found, the latest dating to the 4th century. The street-side ditches had fills that dated to the late 4th century.

The medieval cultivation not only destroyed the late Roman levels but it also removed any trace of Saxon activity in the area. The presence of residual Saxon material, in the form of pottery and a 5th or 6th century bone comb does suggest the possibility of some Saxon activity in the area.

The medieval period was much more productive with both sites having a large amount of medieval pits dug between the 12th and 17th centuries. Although all of these contained rubbish in varying quantities only a few were dug for this purpose. Some were cesspits and wells, whilst the majority were quarries for the underlying sand and gravel or clay. The finds not only provide valuable dating evidence, but also show what was being eaten by studying the animal bones, fish bones, shells and seeds. Bones gnawed by cats and dogs give some idea of the diet of medieval pets too! Other finds give an idea of what clothes were being worn — from the study of cloth and various dress fastenings, of the types of cooking and table wares, of building materials being used and of industry in the area — such as smithing, lime burning and bone working. The pits also produced some more unusual examples of medieval rubbish, like a bone ice skate, part of a crossbow, an iron arrowhead, and a number of tuning pegs from medieval musical instruments.

Although no domestic or commercial structures of medieval date have been found at the Shires, this has to some extent confirmed the theory that the north-east quarter of Leicester was sparsely occupied in the medieval period, in fact right up until the late 18th century. The massive build-up of garden soil — some 2.5 metres — from the 15th-18th centuries, sealing the earlier pits, perhaps indicates that the area was intensively farmed and manured in this period.

One of the aims of the excavation was to find the remains of the lost church of St. Peter, demolished in 1573, thought to lie at the junction of St. Peter's Lane and West Bond Street. A heavily robbed wall built of local sandstone was found, which probably represents the south wall of the church. All floor levels had been destroyed by later cultivation. Adjacent to it, and partially filling what may have been a robbed-out Roman cellar, was a large spread of crushed sandstone, probably dumped there by masons as debris from their stone dressing work. The wall was built in the 13th century.

More information is being collected during the construction work for the new Shires shopping centre and meanwhile the post excavation work on the Shires excavations has already commenced.

John Lucas and Richard Buckley

Bottesford 1 Excavation (SK821382) — an interim report

A small scale excavation was undertaken in advance of the construction of the Bottesford By-Pass on a crop-mark enclosure site discovered from the air by James Pickering in 1976, and plotted by Robert Hartley. The co-operation of the contractors and engineers is gratefully acknowledged.

The road line clipped one of the enclosures and two sides of the enclosure were, in fact, traced with a possible entrance. The high water-table made it impossible to excavate more than the top of the ditches, and the ditch section which was expected would be provided

by the excavation of the marginal drains was frustrated by the need to shutter the trench sides.

Nearly all finds from the site (which were all plotted) came from the ditch. They consisted of a group of Iron Age sherds of Middle Iron Age Ancaster-Breedon type, a small group of Roman sherds, and a group of hand-made Early Anglo-Saxon type. It seems most likely that the ditches were part of an Iron Age enclosure which partially silted in the Roman period but was not filled until the Early Saxon period.

Within the enclosure only a small area was examined and no buildings of any period were found. Many stake-holes, some forming fence-lines, were revealed. The major feature was an iron-working furnace. Stake-holes revealed the stand for the bellows and the furnace face while a run-off pit for slag was found next to it. The Ancient Monuments Laboratory took samples for archaeomagnetic dating but no result is yet known. A second slag-filled pit was also found close-by.

Whatever date the furnace may prove to be, it is clear that there was occupation on the site in both the Iron Age and Early Saxon periods, which fieldwalking may be able to clarify.

Peter Liddle

Bottesford By-Pass Site 2 (SK810380) — an interim report

Salvage excavations in April 1988 by D. Sawday of the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit and P. Liddle of the Survey Team, in advance of the Bottesford by-pass, revealed traces of late Iron Age occupation — represented by an eavesdrip gully and at least one associated post hole. The gully was cut by the foundation trench of a wall containing one sherd of Romano-British pottery dating from the 2nd to the 4th centuries. Other Romano-British features, spreads post holes or pits, contained pottery dating from the 1st to the 4th centuries. The finds are with Leicester Museums. (Accession No A70 1988, SMR 83NW AB.)

D. Sawday

Castle Donington (SK457301)

The watching brief at Hemington Fields, Castle Donington (*TLAHS*, 60, 80-1; *TLAHS*, 62, 74-6) during gravel extraction was continued by C.R. Salisbury. A large, north-south aligned channel, c40m wide, was observed at several locations in the quarry face. To the west of this channel two further timber structures have been revealed. The southernmost structure consisting of timber uprights and some wattling may be a fishweir, while to the north a more substantial structure of timber uprights and stones may be a dam. Part of a Saxon cross has been recovered from the area of the latter. Several more anchor stones similar to those found previously (*TLAHS*, 62) have been located in this channel. One of these still had 'withy' bands of willow adhering to it which might suggest that the stones were associated with fishing net weights rather than boat anchors or killicks (*contra TLAHS*, 62).

Patrick Clay and C.R. Salisbury

Trial Excavation at Saddlers Cottage, Medbourne (SP 798930)

Saddlers Cottage Garden is the site of a large, fourth century, mosaic dug out in the nineteenth century. Roman pottery and building materials, and early Saxon pottery, had been picked up from flower and seed beds in the garden, and the Museums Service thus felt justified in responding to an application for planning permission to build on part of the garden. The resulting excavation, of six boxes, demonstrated that it was unlikely that substantial stone buildings stood in the area under threat. A late Iron Age ditch was

recorded, and the robbed out wall of one structure lay on the edge of the garden. Stratified deposits have survived, again in earthfast features, which were filled in mostly in the fourth century. The area may have been the courtyard or farm yard of the 'villa'. Early Anglo-Saxon material was recovered but was not stratified.
Dr Richard Pollard

Two watching briefs in Leicester

In July 1988, at Jarvis Street, Leicester (SK 58140473), Charles Jones and Peter Dunham, for the archaeology unit, carried out some rescue work during the construction of a car inspection pit being built in a garage in a railway arch below what used to be the Great Central Railway Station. Roman levels were identified, together with what seemed to be a very rough medieval foundation. The finds and section drawing have been deposited at the Jewry Wall Museum.

In February 1988, a watching brief was carried out by the Archaeology Unit, prior to building work being carried out at the Friars Mill on Bath Lane, Leicester (SK 57980461). Within 20 metres of the canal several several two metre square boxes were excavated to determine the top of the surviving archaeological levels, so enabling the construction work to be carried out with minimal disturbance of the underlying archaeology. The finds and plans have been deposited at the Jewry Wall Museum.
John Lucas

Trial excavations at Cotesbach/Churchover (SP 524819)

Leicestershire Archaeological Unit carried out trial excavations in Spring 1987 in advance of phase 1 of the Rugby Quarry on land adjacent to the A5 in Cotesbach and Churchover parishes. Previous finds of early Saxon burials beneath the metalling of the road suggested the presence of an extensive inhumation cemetery alongside Watling Street. However, the trial excavations revealed no significant archaeological features. Further excavation and fieldwalking in advance of phases 2-4 is to be carried out by Warwickshire Museums. The work was financed by Steetley Construction Materials.
Richard Buckley

Oakham, Burley Road (SK 869096)

Further work was undertaken within the flint scatter located by the Rutland Field Research Group to the north-west of the area excavated in 1986 (Clay 1987). Fieldwalking by the group has revealed that the flint scatter continues to the east on the other side of Burley Road.

A phosphate survey was undertaken of a 20m wide transect across the flint scatter covering an area of c6,000 square metres. Thirteen metre square test pits were also excavated within this transect with the help of the Rutland Field Research Group. These revealed varying depths of plough disturbance with a colluvium deposit possibly present to the east. Features were located in four of these test pits, some of which may have been stake holes. Several flint blades and flakes were also recovered. The finds are deposited with Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Record Services Acc. No. A147.1988. This work was undertaken with the kind permission of Burley Estates.

Clay P., 1987, 'An Excavation at Burley Road, Oakham (SK867095)' in P. Liddle 'Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1986', *TLAHS*, 61, 1987, 87-90.
Patrick Clay

Narborough Road South, Enderby (SK 556995)

An evaluation of cropmarks within an area of proposed gravel working was undertaken. No archaeological deposits were located and the cropmarks had probably resulted from mushroom rings.

Patrick Clay

The Barkby Thorpe Survey — the first interim report

The survey is a joint enterprise between Leicestershire Museums and the Department of Archaeology, University of Leicester and is directed by Peter Liddle and Prof. Graeme Barker.

The principal aim of the survey is to train final year archaeology students in the principles and practice of Landscape archaeology and especially fieldwalking. Beyond this it is intended to be a contribution to the understanding of the development of the Leicestershire Landscape, as one of a series of local surveys including Medbourne, Lutterworth/Misterton, Wycomb and Chadwell, and the Langtons.

In the first season of work seven students were involved with fieldwalking being undertaken on Thursday afternoons. Fourteen fields were examined using the traverse and stint method with 10m spacing between traverses and 30m long stints. These were situated in two blocks in the extreme South-East of the parish and in the west of the parish. Only one Roman site was encountered (at SK 630087). The site also produced hand-made sherds which may be of Saxon or Prehistoric date. 3 other locations will require follow-up work to fully assess them. Two produced flint tools and a third Saxon pottery, all in small numbers, but may well prove to be occupation sites. Widespread 'manuring' scatters of Roman and Medieval date were noted.

It is hoped to complete the survey in about four years. Thanks are due to the land-owners and tenants, especially Mr Pochin, Mr Pick, Mr Mount and Mr Davies. Peter Liddle

Notes

A radio-carbon date for the Smeeton Westerby Beaker burial

A programme of C14 dates is being undertaken by the British Museum in an attempt to obtain a series of dates associated with Beaker pottery. Within this programme part of the human skeleton first located in association with a Wessex-Middle Rhine beaker at Smeeton Westerby in 1975 (Rutland 1976) was submitted for analysis. A date of 1490 ± 50 bc (BM 2521) was obtained which regrettably coincides with variations in the calibration curve so a relatively wide date range of 1875-1685 BC can be suggested. Dr Alex Gibson who helped instigate this programme commented that although this was a late date for this type of pottery the dates so far obtained indicated that the Wessex-Middle Rhine style covers a wide range of dates emphasising the difficulty in dating this type of pottery on typology alone.

Rutland, R.A., 1975, 'A Beaker burial at Smeeton Westerby 1975', *TLAHS*, 51, 46-8. Patrick Clay

Dendrochronological dating at Donington le Heath Manor House (SK 421126)

At Donington le Heath manor house, 15 samples were taken from structural timbers by Robert Howard of Nottingham University for dendrochronological dating. The aim of the



Fig. 1 Tankard Fragment

project was to determine the dates of three postulated building phases as reflected in the timber work. The timbers of the earliest phase, from two doorways in the first floor hall, and the remains of a third in a ground floor room, had an estimated felling date range of 1273-1308, with the likely felling date estimated to be *c.* 1288. The second and third phases, consisting of roof trusses in the first floor hall, were found to be contemporary, the presence of bark allowed a close felling date of *c.* 1618 to be determined. The work was funded by Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Records Service.

Richard Buckley

Leicester's French connection and beyond...

Excavations in 1988 within Leicester uncovered a residual sherd of German stoneware in the post-medieval layers of garden soil overlaying the medieval and Roman levels on the Little Lane site (SK 585046). The fragment (Fig.1) part of a Cologne type tankard, is decorated with an applied panel portrait and the legend 'FRANCISCVS REX FRANCI' — and refers to Francis I, King of France from 1515 to 1547 — a unique find in Great Britain according to David Gaimster of the British Museum, and dated to *c.* 2nd quarter of the 16th century.

This pottery is of particular local interest, not only because of the general dearth of imported stonewares in Leicester to date, but also because the excavation site is close to the medieval High Street or Swinesmarket, and the town house of the 3rd Earl of Huntingdon. The Earl provided temporary lodgings here at the 'Lord's Place' for the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, prisoner of Elizabeth I in 1569. Mary had been married briefly to Francis II grandson of Francis I. Some sources suggest also that the Earl of Huntingdon, an ardent Puritan, provided refuge in the Swinesmarket for Huguenots fleeing religious persecution in France. It is tempting to link this fragment of pottery with these historic events and personages — further research may indeed reveal that the Little Lane site lay at one time within the Lord's domain, it was certainly close to it — and perhaps we are looking at rubbish from the Huntingdon's table, rather than from one of the numerous taverns nearby!

The finds and records are with Leicestershire Museums (Accession No. A39 1988 15097).

Deborah Sawday, Leicestershire Archaeological Unit

Roman villa at Wycomb, North-East Leicestershire (SK 782256)

The villa site is situated against the northern boundary of Wycomb parish and about 500m south-south-west of the Roman urban settlement at Goadby Marwood. In about 1970, the owner of the field had grubbed out the remains of limestone 'walls', then standing to a height of about 2 feet and still finding it difficult to plough deeper than about 7 inches in certain parts of the field. A large quantity of these stones were discovered in the hedge to the west of the site and many blocks were found to show evidence of working.

The area had been examined initially in 1979 by the Trent Valley Group and subsequently by the Melton Group and had also been used as a training site for fieldwalkers. A preliminary, limited resistivity survey indicated the likely presence of wall foundations, particularly in the western part of the site. There was also a scatter of fairly large fragments of local limestone over a significant area of the field.

However, none of these surveys had been undertaken on a systematic basis and, with the continuing deterioration of the site through ploughing and the attention of metal detector enthusiasts, it was decided, in 1984, to carry out a detailed examination of the site before it was further damaged. The following survey was carried out by members of the Melton Group over a six week period early in 1985.

The method adopted was to establish an accurate 10m grid over an area of about 13,500m² in the vicinity of the suspected site and then perform a total recovery of visible brick, tile, slate, pottery sherds and other items in each square. The presence of stone, burnt or otherwise, was noted. The remainder of the field was examined by the stint and traverse method, as was a further field to the south-west.

THE FINDS

The major part of the material collected consisted of brick, tile and slate and it is possible that not all of it relates to the Roman period. The slates were all of Swithland Slate and included some whole examples of the familiar tear-drop shape. One held the remains of a large nail and around 10 other nails (up to 8cm in length) including one with a square-head were also recovered. It was not possible, however, to say with certainty, that these other examples were not derived from horse shoeing! Of the tile fragments, one was identified as part of the 'open ended' box type, normally used in Roman hypocaust systems.

Large quantities of *tesserae* were also recovered, mainly comprising white cubes varying in size from less than 1cm on each side to over 3cm. Occasional examples in red, yellow and blue were also found.

The survey of the main site produced, in all, 627 pottery sherds. There was great variety in size and type, ranging from fragments of *amphorae* weighing over 1kg each to small sherds of Samian ware.

Amongst the types were local greywares (1-4 century AD), black burnished ware, colour-coated ware (often patterned), local red ware (often in the form of a sandwich around an unoxidised grey centre) and gritty *mortaria*. The numerous rims, bases and handles merit further examination. Of interest were fragments of indented beakers and a flagon rim of Lower Nene Valley ware identified as part of a 4th century *floruit*¹.

Several sherds of Samian ware were also recovered including one showing rivet marks. In the north-west corner of the site, during the 1983 survey, a small sherd was found with the potter's mark KIDILIS[VE] (by Fidelis ii). This stamp is in a die used at Rheinzabern and is known from Chester and Malton in the late second or early third century².

Very small quantities of a coarse shelly ware were found in the grid area and to the south. These were often spongy when wet and crumbly when dry and have been identified

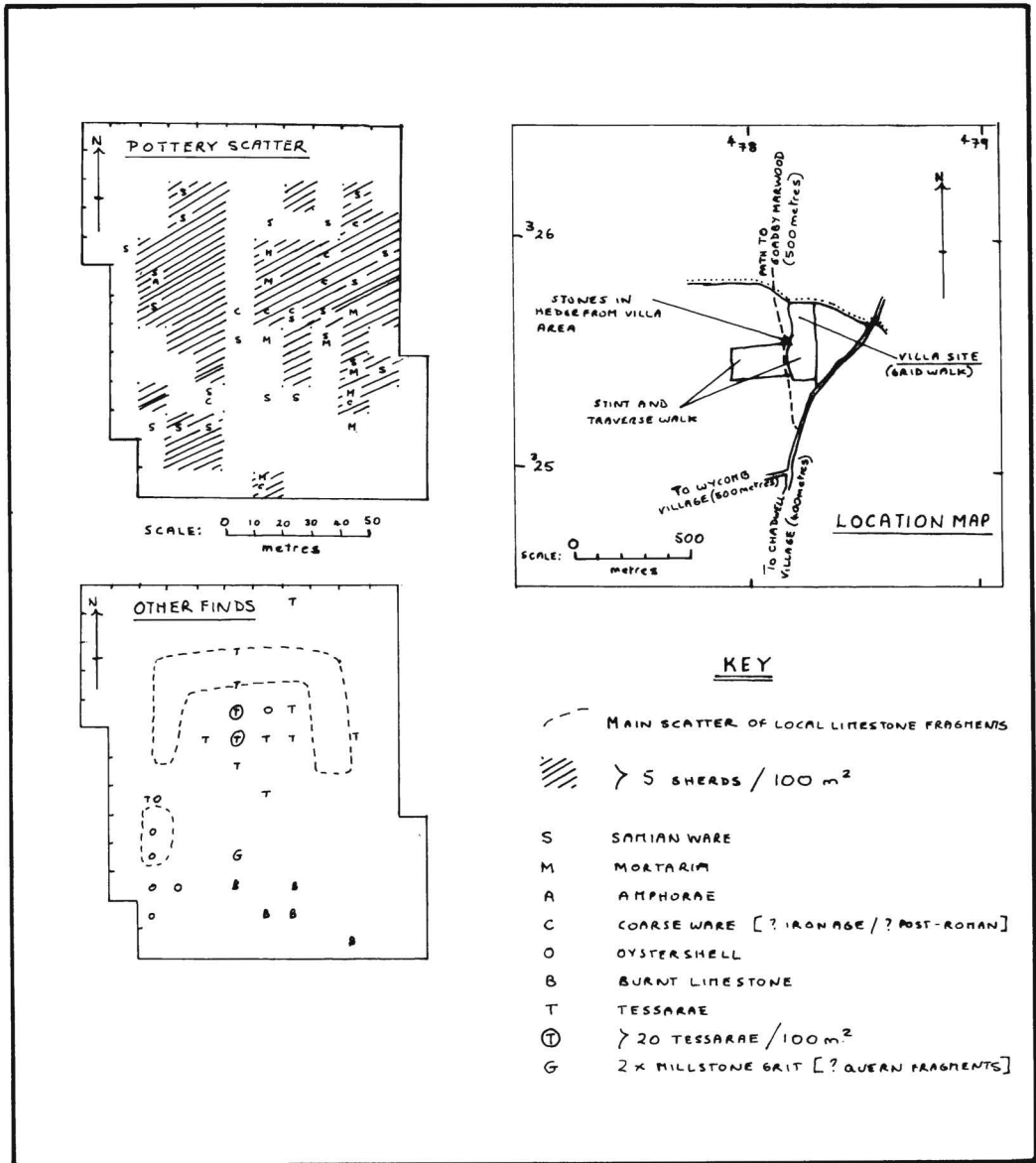


Fig. 2 Wycombe Field Survey — 1985

variously as of Iron Age, Roman or Saxon date.

Of other finds, the most notable were two coins, one a *sestertius* of Commodus (180-192) and the other, an *antoninus* of Gallienus (253-268). Worked flints, including arrowheads and scrapers, had been recorded by the Trent Valley Group and further examples were found in an area restricted to the north-west grid squares. Some bone fragments were also recovered as well as a very localised quantity of oyster shells.

DISTRIBUTION OF FINDS

The numbers and weights of the finds were recorded for each square and the distributions of the various categories are shown in Fig 2. The scatter of brick and slate was fairly general throughout the grid site and also extended down the field in the traverse survey area to the south, whilst the tile, pottery and *tesserae* scatter were more localized, the latter extremely so with two squares containing a total of 117 pieces between them and only six other squares containing more than one *tessera*. Little difference in distribution was found overall, whether the results were plotted by weight or quantity, and the most restricted of the significant distributions were for local stone, Samian sherds, oyster shell, *tesserae* and burnt stone. Bone fragments were distributed fairly regularly over the site, but were noticeably absent in the traversed area. The area of burnt stone was quite distinct from that of the local limestone.

The less detailed surveys of the rest of the villa field and the field to the south-west showed them to be almost devoid of Roman pottery sherds.

CONCLUSION

The proximity of the villa site to the suspected Roman town of Goadby Marwood has already been mentioned and place-name specialists, particularly Dr M. Gelling have dealt at length with place names in *wicham*³. At Domesday and, until recent times, the parish of Wycomb and Chadwell has been an outlier of the Goscote Hundred entirely surrounded by Framland. Thus, whilst the the finds described above may not be of great significance in themselves, it may be that they hold the key to the understanding of the landscape history of much of the Vale of Belvoir and further study of the whole of this parish may well be profitable.

Notes

1. The identifications given in this account were undertaken by the Leicester Museums and Art Gallery Identification Service.
2. Identification based on examination by R. Pollard, see: Ludowici, W., 1927, *Katalog V, Stampel, Namen und Bilden Romischer Topfer aus Meiner Ausgrabungen in Rheinabem, 1901-1914*. Munchen, 214a.
3. See for instance: Gelling, M., 1967, 'English place-names derived from the compound *wicham*', *Medieval Archaeology*, XI, 87-104. Reprinted in EPNS, 1975, 8-26; and Gelling, M., 1988, *Signposts to the past*, Phillimore, 68-74.

Jenny and Mike Allsop (Melton Fieldwalkers)

Leicestershire Archaeological Unit Annual Report 1988

The start of the excavation of two sites within the area of the Shires development on 1st March 1988 was understandably celebrated with some public ceremony. Representatives of all the interested parties were attended by an escort of Roman legionaries and senators and the event was covered by local press and radio and regional TV. This was the first major excavation to take place in the city since the late 1970s and probably the largest for 50 years. Negotiations had been taking place since the mid 1970s and the final package

that was put together involved funding in cash or kind as well as co-operation from the developers, HBMC, the County Council, the City Council and the Manpower Services Commission, to all of whom the Unit extends its thanks. During the twelve months of the excavations nearly 100 people were involved in the actual digging — contract workers, MSC personnel and volunteers — and this labour force was directed and co-ordinated to great effect by Richard Buckley and John Lucas, backed up magnificently by all the rest of the Unit staff. Archaeologically the operation was a complete success adding a tremendous amount of information to the story of the growth and development of the city which is slowly being built up from its initial foundation in the first century AD to the present day. An interim report on each of the two sites can be found *infra* pp. 105-6.

At the same time a considerable effort was made to ensure that the people of Leicester were involved in the recovery of the history of their city. An archaeological excavation can be a most incomprehensible sight to the uninitiated and so the viewing areas on each site were provided with information boards on which the progress of the excavations and some of the techniques being used were explained. This information was repeated in more detail on a series of leaflets which were produced throughout the year by courtesy of the *Leicester Mercury*. Supplementing the site information, a series of leaflets was produced throughout the year focussing on individual finds or groups of material. These 'Spotlights', presented the material in an informative and easily digestible form with attractive illustrations and proved extremely popular. From the beginning of May a display cabin was established on the site where more information was available and where some of the finds could be seen, while the casual passer-by could look in on each site through keyholes in the perimeter fencing. These keyholes — 'peepholes to the past' — caught the public imagination and proved to be one of the most popular features of the project. By the beginning of July 10,000 visitors had been recorded passing through the display cabin and by the end of the year visitors to the sites must have been well over 100,000 — it was impossible to count all those who watched progress from the viewing areas let alone those who glanced in through the peep-holes.

Besides the information available on site a constant flow of press releases was maintained. During the year there were six live radio broadcasts from the site (*Radio Leicester* and *Sound FM*) and four TV recordings were made for *Midlands Today* and *Central News*.

In September the display and information centre moved from the cabin into the old Co-op DIY centre where with much more space available the displays were expanded and a larger sales area was established. The increased space also made it possible for the public to see some of the post-excavation work in progress. Both of these facilities were maintained when the display and sales area moved again, in November, into a shop on High Street itself. Here sales from the shop increased still further and it was soon rivalling the Museum shop at New Walk Museum.

In addition to information boards and leaflets for visitors, guided tours were provided throughout the excavations for groups of visitors including a group of blind and partially sighted visitors and for school parties. Richard Buckley and John Lucas between them provided over 20 site tours for groups of students, teachers, evening classes and official visitors in addition to the regular guided tours. During the year over 4,000 school children of all ages visited the sites in 125 groups. During the summer a competition was organised in which children were invited to submit pictures or poems about various aspects of the past. The competition attracted 150 entries and the six winners were rewarded with a day on the site learning first hand what archaeological excavation involves.

Before the excavations finished, at the beginning of December, a selection of the finds was put on display at the Jewry Wall Museum and visitors were also able to see the first

version of a video recording the progress of the excavations.

Although the Shires excavation was undoubtedly the most high-profile and time consuming of the Unit's activities during 1988, progress was nevertheless maintained on other projects and in other areas.

The Medbourne project continued into March with further test pits in the area of the Roman small town at Medbourne itself. In January a display was mounted on the project in the new village hall (the old school) in Medbourne. Members of the Unit were in attendance during the opening day of the new hall and were gratified by the interest shown in the project. This was further manifested when Richard Pollard gave a talk on the progress of the project in the village hall in March. Later in the year further work was undertaken at Saddlers cottage in Medbourne in search of further evidence of what must be a major Roman building housing the mosaic discovered in the 19th century. During the summer the archaeology department at Leicester University held its field course for students at Drayton, evaluating the state of preservation of another Roman villa. The results of both of these pieces of work are summarised above, *infra* pp. 7-17. A two dimensional display on the archaeology of the Medbourne area was taken to the Blason Show and Richard Pollard, Peter Liddle and Bob Jarrett who manned the display were gratified by the interest shown in the project.

In March the Unit responded to the discovery of archaeological features during the construction of the Bottesford By-pass and a small team led by Richard Pollard and Deborah Sawday with Peter Liddle of the Survey Team sallied forth to carry out emergency recording.

Excavations at Breedon church which had begun in October 1987 and at Humberstone Farm were also completed in February 1988.

Richard Buckley also organised the sampling of the timbers at Donington-le-Heath manor house for dendrochronological dating. The results of this work, carried out by the Dendrochronology Unit at Nottingham University show that only the doorways belong to the original construction phase with a likely felling date for the timbers of c.1288 with the roof being a single later replacement c.1618.

Post-excavation work has continued on a number of projects throughout the year and the report on a number of small excavations on the west side of Leicester dealing mainly with the Iron Age settlement and the development of the early Roman town has been completed and publication is anticipated during 1989. Partly as a spin-off of this work Patrick Clay produced an account of *Leicester Before the Romans* which was published in August 1988. This booklet, aimed at a more popular level than the excavation reports, is beautifully illustrated by Sarah Geeves, and is selling well. On a different level Dr Richard Pollard is also to be congratulated on the publication this year of his thesis on the Roman Pottery of Kent.

One of the major difficulties faced by the Unit during the year has been the change-over in the Manpower Services Commission from Community Programme to Employment Training. The new rules and uncertainties surrounding the new scheme have meant that a considerable amount of time has been spent on devising a suitable programme and in negotiations over the organisation of the scheme and the provision of training. At the end of the year the Unit is one of the very few archaeological organisations in the country which is still trying to make use of the new scheme for the benefit of both the participants and archaeology; it still remains to be seen how this will work out.

During the year members of the Unit collaborated on a series of evening classes on Leicestershire Archaeology and a day school on the same theme. All staff contributed short talks on recent work for the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society's final

lecture of the season and took part in the Fieldwalkers training sessions at Jewry Wall Museum in September and staff also took part in the Archaeology Day at Jewry Wall in August, contributing to the lecture programme and presenting samples of Roman and medieval food in conjunction with displays of the appropriate pottery. Ten individual talks were given during the year to audiences ranging from Cosby Primary School to Oadby Rotary Club and History of Art students. Terry Pearce organised another of his coach tours, this time to Flag Fen and Peterborough. Displays on the work of the Unit were taken to the Annual Conference of the Institute of Field Archaeologists and to a conference on medieval mills at Bristol.

Patrick Clay was elected Treasurer of the Roman Finds Group and helped to organise meetings of the group at London and Leicester and also chaired the Leicester meeting. Dr Pollard helped to organise the AGM and spring reports meeting of CBA14 which was held at Leicester. He has continued to represent the Unit and the Museums Service on the Group 14 committee and at the CBA AGM in London.

The Senior Field Archaeologist was elected Secretary of Rescue, the British Archaeological Trust and continued as a member of the CBA Urban Research Committee.

There has been an undercurrent of steady progress on post-excavation projects during the year but the Shires excavation undoubtedly absorbed much of the time and energy of every member of the Unit and this effort was certainly repaid by the response of the public. Next year must be one of consolidation but without losing the public interest created during 1988.

J.E. Mellor, Senior Field Archaeologist

Report of the Leicestershire Museums Archaeological Survey Team for 1988

In many ways 1988 has been an interim year. Many projects have neared completion, but have managed to extend into 1989. Although the computerised index for the Sites and Monuments Record was substantially complete by the beginning of the year, progress on completion of the new paper record proved slow work, but 6½ of the districts are now completed. Bob Jarrett's funding from English Heritage has continued until the end of 1988 and he has made progress on the outer areas of the City of Leicester and has been involved in pilot studies for the Monuments Protection Plan.

The Medbourne Fieldwork Project has also continued this year with a small amount of fieldwalking in newly ploughed fields and some follow-up detailed work to resolve problems in interpretation.

Peter Liddle has, from October, been an Honorary Research Fellow in the University of Leicester Archaeology Department. His work has principally been on analysing and writing up the Medbourne data, but he has been working with Prof. Graeme Barker to offer a 'Landscape Archaeology' option to undergraduate students. The practical side of this is the Barkby Thorpe Survey (see the first interim report).

The 'Community Archaeology Scheme' has continued to provide useful information. There is interest in launching versions of the scheme in several other counties, including Derbyshire and Lincolnshire. There were seven meetings with speakers including Peter Liddle, Robert Young, Tom Williamson, Terry Pearson and Colin Hayfield, as well as the annual training session.

Planning Advisory work has again taken a large slice of the Team's work, especially that of Anne Graf. The main development has been obtaining developer funding for site evaluation usually before planning permission has been granted. This has been to assess the need for evaluating archaeological importance. Unwitting destruction of archaeological deposits can, therefore, be avoided.

The Team undertook for the first time a small-scale excavation on the line of the Bottesford By-Pass, uncovering evidence of Iron Age and Saxon activity, and co-operated with the Unit in a second, rescue excavation during road construction which revealed Iron Age and Roman occupation.

A highlight of the year was 'Bringing the Past to Life — A Day of Leicestershire Archaeology'. This event was held at Jewry Wall Museum, Vaughan College, St. Nicholas Church and the Shires excavation and attracted over 1,100 visitors to see craft and archaeological displays and taste food cooked to ancient recipes. This will be repeated in 1989 and may become an annual event.

A further volume in the reports series 'The Medieval Earthworks of Central Leicestershire', has been with the Design Unit since Christmas and should be published during 1989. The past year was a remarkably poor one for archaeological cropmarks, but our grant from RCHM(E) has proved useful for earthwork and soil mark recording during the unusually fine winter weather. There seems a fair chance that 1989 may prove a good year for summer cropmarks, but only time will tell.

Peter Liddle, Archaeological Survey Officer

Reports of Fieldwork 1988

ASFORDBY (SK701192-715191)

Melton Fieldwork Group have kept watching briefs on various development sites in the Melton area, including the construction of the Asfordby Bypass during which a sparse scatter of Medieval pottery sherds was recovered.

BARKBY THORPE (SK630087)

A Leicester University/Leicestershire Museums landscape archaeology project has examined a Roman site previously reported in *TLAHS*, 54, 79. Roman pottery and tile was recovered as well as handmade pottery of Prehistoric/Saxon date (A1.1989).

BOTTESFORD (SK821382)

The Survey Team located a Saxon pottery on the line of the Bottesford Bypass with other hand-made pottery in an adjacent field. A rescue excavation was undertaken (see Interim Report) (A68.1988).

BOTTESFORD (SK810380)

The Survey Team located a scatter of Roman pottery on the line of the Bottesford Bypass. A second small rescue excavation was undertaken (see Interim Report) (A70.1988).

BOTTESFORD (SK811383)

Mr Nakin has found 30 sherds of Roman pottery while digging a garden pond. It is unclear at present if this is part of the site above. (A71.1988)

BROUGHTON AND OLD DALBY (SK695262)

Jenny and Mike Allsop have recorded an Iron Age Hunsbury-type rotary quern kept in Nether Broughton church. A village scrapbook revealed that it was found in the adjacent vicarage garden in 1949.

BURTON LAZARS (SK773171)

Melton Fieldwork Group have been given eight sherds of Roman pottery found in Dog Lane Field by a local resident. The sherds, which include a small pot base, are the first recorded Roman finds from this village.

BURTON LAZARS (SK774185)

Jenny Allsop and the Burton Lazars Research Group have located the site of 'Mannemilne', mentioned in Roger de Mowbray's 12th century grant to 'the lepers of St Lazarus of Jerusalem' as the site of a mill in Burton. Mapping of the earthwork features is almost complete.

COALVILLE (SK408117)

Ibstock Local History Society have walked the Roman site reported in *TLAHS*, 59, 101 and have found a scatter of grey-ware pottery.

COTESBACH (SK527820)

Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have examined the topsoil heap from a sandpit and found flint flakes, cores, scrapers and other artefacts plus some sherds including grey-ware.

FOXTON (SP714916)

Anglo-Saxon brooches of cruciform and annular type and two beads have been found. Fieldwork by Paul Bowman produced a dense scatter of early Anglo-Saxon pottery including some decorated sherds. The decoration of one sherd comprising a double row of dots among the necklines closely parallels an urn from Thorpe Malsor, Northamptonshire. Clearly the site is or includes a cemetery.

FREEBY (BRENTINGBY) (SK782202)

Melton Fieldwork Group have re-walked a site reported in *TLAHS*, 61, 98. A concentration of Roman sherds, including grey-ware, colour-coated ware and Samian ware was recovered.

GREAT EASTON (cSK860933)

Great Easton Fieldwork Group have collected a relatively large group of Roman pottery, predominantly grey-ware and colour-coated ware. Full analysis has yet to be undertaken.

KIRBY MUXLOE (SK518033)

Arthur Huscroft has found Roman pottery scatters in adjacent fields close to the line of the Leicester-Mancetter Roman road. Grey-ware, mortaria, Samian ware, white-ware, colour-coated ware and black burnished ware were represented.

LOUGHBOROUGH (SK502179)

Hector MacDonald has found a Roman pottery scatter including grey-ware, Samian ware, colour-coated ware, *mortaria* and black burnished ware. He also found a coin of Marcus Aurelius.

LUTTERWORTH (SP538848)

The Lutterworth Group have found flakes and cores on a building site.

MELTON MOWBRAY (SK757174 & SK755174)

Melton Fieldwork Group have walked two neighbouring fields and recovered a large scatter

of Medieval pottery sherds and a more restricted scatter of Roman pottery.

MELTON MOWBRAY (SK747188)

Jenny Allsop (Melton Fieldwork Group) has mapped the eroded remains of part of a bank and ditch system and the associated mound. The work may suggest that these features are part of a small motte and bailey, perhaps guarding the southern entrance to the town of Melton.

MELTON MOWBRAY-SYSONBY (SK73801895)

Melton Fieldwork Group held a watching brief during a drainage scheme on the Asfordby Road golf course (Sysonsby DMV). A limited excavation revealed the corner foundations of a medieval house, the stratified material producing medieval pottery sherds dating from c.12th to c.15th centuries. Beneath the foundations, early medieval sherds (c.10th to 11th centuries) were recovered. During the watching brief a Bronze Age saddle quern and rubber (SMR 71 NW AU) and part of a Roman coffin, worked in Keuper Sandstone, (SMR 71 NW AV) were recovered. The Group has since completed a magnetometer survey around the location of the coffin and have received permission to excavate the remaining stone (indicated by the geophysical results) in the near future. Earthworks associated with a previously unrecorded windmill mound, associated with the DMV, have been mapped (SMR 71 NW AK). To the south, the remains of ? post-medieval garden features were recorded and post-medieval pottery sherds, including Staffordshire feathered slipware, and 18th century buttons were recovered.

MISTERTON (SP559844)

Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have recovered very large amounts of Mesolithic material including blade cores, flakes, blades, scrapers, Some Roman grey-ware was also found.

MISTERTON (SP583846)

Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have found scrapers and a broken plano-convex knife but were unable to complete the field because of sowing.

MISTERTON (SP552854)

Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have walked a field which has not been ploughed for over 40 years and found flint material but this has yet to be analysed in detail.

NEVILL HOLT (SK832938)

The Survey Team have re-examined the Roman site reported in *TLAHS*, 41, 98. 35 sherds of Roman pottery were recovered, apparently spanning the Roman period, 158 fragments of tile, from both roofs and heating systems, and three sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery (A5.1989)

NEVILL HOLT (SK826936)

The Survey Team have re-examined an area previously producing a small amount of Iron Age material. 50 sherds of pottery were recovered suggesting occupation from the Middle Iron Age into the 2nd century AD (A165.1988).

NEVILL HOLT (SK814939)

The Survey Team have found a small group of Roman pottery which may represent the edge of an occupation site mostly within the next field which is pasture. (A10.1989).

ROTHLEY (SK566137)

Roger Gibson has found a tight scatter of hand-made pottery probably of Late Bronze Age date. He has recovered substantial amounts of flint from surrounding fields.

SCALFORD (SK769247)

Melton Fieldwork Group have found a Roman pottery scatter including grey-ware and Samian ware. They also found an indecipherable Late Roman coin.

SEATON (SP904983)

Mr Brandon-Cox found the legs of a flexed inhumation burial while building a new garage. The Survey Team visited the site and noted two more cuts revealed in the section. One had a fragment of leg bone (apparently articulated) protruding. There were no associated finds, but an almost complete Saxon urn found almost in front of the house a number of years ago suggests a likely date (see *TLAHS*, 56, 120).

SKEFFINGTON (SK751016)

Carl Dawson has found a substantial pottery scatter including grey-ware, colour-coated wares, Samian ware and 'Northants White ware' suggesting occupation throughout the Roman period (and probably earlier). This is supported by metalwork finds including brooches, coins and other small finds.

TUR LANGTON (SP699943)

Paul Bowman has found a dense concentration of Early Anglo-Saxon pottery close to the Roman site reported in *TLAHS*, 61, 99. Late Iron Age (?) pottery was also recovered.

TUR LANGTON (SP707935)

Paul Bowman has found a scatter of Anglo-Saxon pottery sherds, including some which are decorated, and an annular loom weight. Other sherds may be Late Bronze Age.

TUR LANGTON (SP705938)

Paul Bowman has found a small scatter of Early Anglo-Saxon sherds. A possible fragment of an Early Bronze Age urn was also found.

ULLESTHORPE (SP11830)

Lutterworth Fieldwork Group have found flint material including scrapers (not yet fully analysed) and a Medieval copper alloy heraldic fitting.

WEST LANGTON (SP706925)

Fieldwalking by Paul Bowman has revealed a dense scatter of Anglo-Saxon pottery.

WEST LANGTON (SP720925)

A small quantity of Anglo-Saxon pottery was found by Paul Bowman.

WYMESWOLD (cSK617235)

Wymeswold Fieldwork Group have found a Roman pottery scatter, mainly grey-ware but including some colour-coated wares.