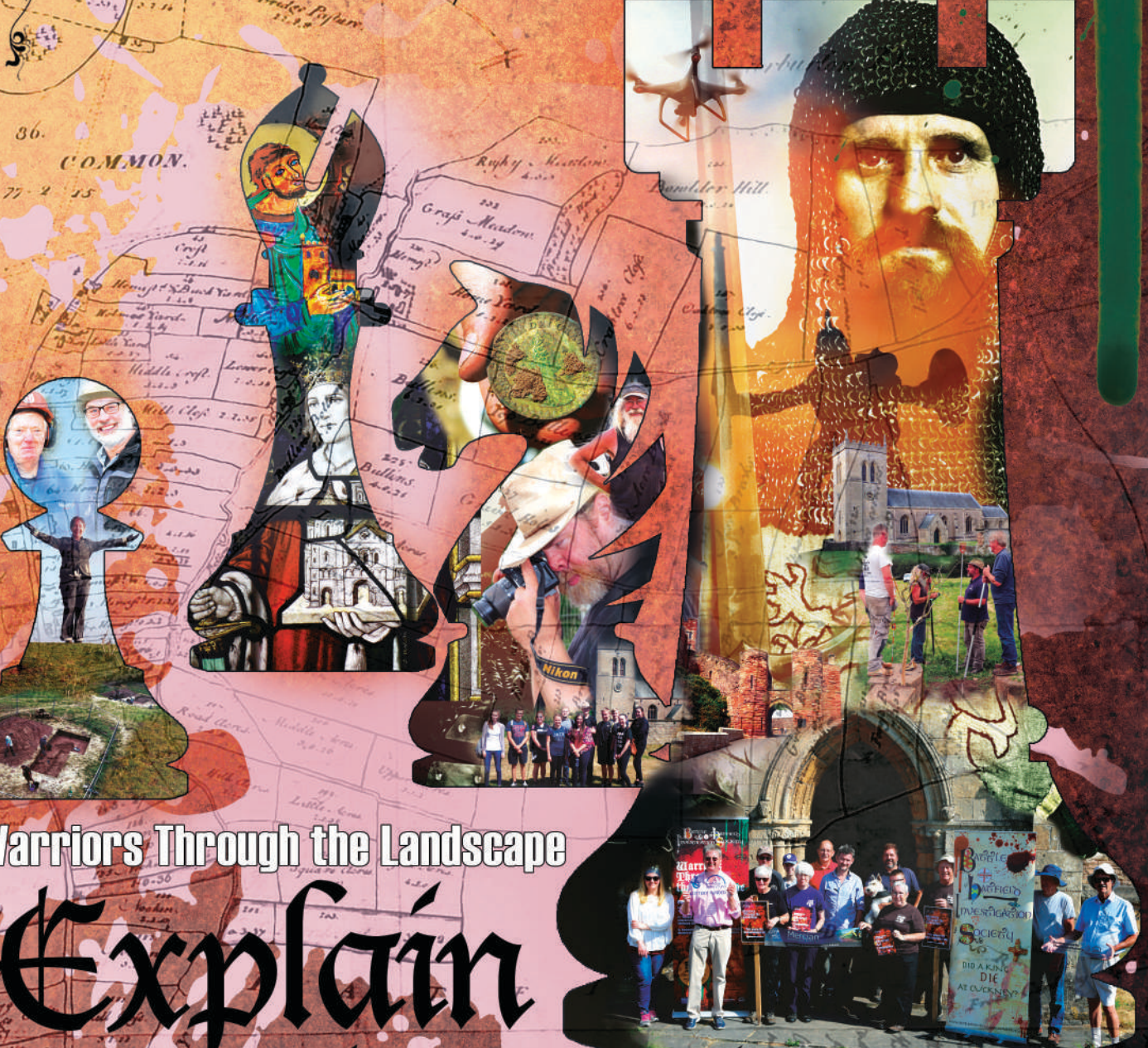


BATTLE of BATHFIELD  
INVESTIGATION SOCIETY



# Warriors Through the Landscape

# Explain the Terrain

A search for the adulterine castle ♦ Uncovering Cuckney water meadows ♦ Explaining Cuckney in the wider local landscape

Utilising...LIDAR and aerial photography



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Heritage Lottery Fund



**Mercian**  
Archaeological Services CIC





# Contents

4-5	A Reminder About the Origins and Objectives of the Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society
6	Without Whom
7	POW Camps ..A Brief Word
8-13	Project Purpose ... Looking for Warriors Through The Landscape
14	The Fourth Duke of Portland and Estate Management
15-21	Cuckney Water Meadow System
22-27	Cuckney Water Meadow Gallery
28-33	Cuckney Castle – Existing Information and Comparatives
34-35	A Supporters Perspective
36-43	In Search of Cuckney Castle
44-47	Drone Zone #1 - View of Both Excavated Trenches
48-51	Children's Participation Review and the Art Competition
52	A Teacher's View
53-57	Children and Adults Evaluation Survey .. Results and Thoughts
58-69	Finds under the Microscope
70-71	The Significance of the 2018 Excavation Findings for the Battle of Hatfield
72-73	Drone Zone #2 - View of Hatfield Area
74-79	Participation Portfolio
80-81	Conclusion and Next Steps
82-83	Drone Zone #3 - View of St. Mary's Church, Cuckney
84	BOHIS - Sources & Suggested Reading
85	The Last Word
86-87	Humphry Repton's fantastically detailed 1797 map ..



BATTLE OF HATFIELD  
INVESTIGATION SOCIETY



# Without Whom Thanks Go To...

To MERCIAN (Andy, Sean and David) for their interest beyond the call of duty, their sustained level of interest and for their constant presence at our meetings over the past 6 years ... at no cost .. how many other companies would offer this ?

To the HLF for £54,000 of funding and for the practical support of Debbie Seaborn.

To the Village Hall Committee for their operational endeavours and good natured support (well .. what else is allowing us to rack up a bill of over £2,000 before getting the payment in one late 'chunk' ?)

To our 'team of detectives' , Peter Bridon, Bob Howlett and Steve Mitchell – always ready to question the status quo and brim full of operational enthusiasm. Bob's ex water board credentials, free safety fencing - carried by his 'Leo's Dad' plated van, coupled with an infectious enthusiasm generously topped by piratical laughter ensure that he is a key player at these events. Well done Bob.

To Morven Harrison and Steve Horne for turning up nearly every day, although a number of ladies associated with MERCIAN (such as Carole Mathews) also provided similar sterling support.

To Roy Harris-Lock and his wife Ann for their mobile canteen and for freely catering for the multitude at our 'thank you' barbecue of 29th September 2018.

To Robin Orr for his fascinating and fun Drone manoeuvres plus his kindly smile.

To Mike Condon (again) for his excellent desk top publishing skills, artistic flair, devastatingly combined with quick, hard work (!), without which, our results would be denuded of their presentational 'chops' and be all the worse for it !

To the Warsop Metal Detecting Society, Brian Booth, Lee Constance and a group of about 6 other (mainly lady) detectorists who cheerfully supported for 10 full working days in full sun hat mode.

To the 162 enthusiastic pupils and the teachers of Cuckney, Meden and Outwood Post 16 (6th Form College) .. yes, that's just over 50% of our total attendance figures !

To all those involved in providing great material for the POW Camps ('sister' book), especially Robert Ilett, Mrs. June Ibbotson, Astrid and Chris Hansen).

To Jennie Johnson for her tireless efforts and Worksop Library 'Inspire'(d) co-ordination – always spreading the word.

To all the others not mentioned specifically above .. some of whom came day after (hot) day from c. 9am to 5:30pm for the love of it, such as Christine O'Donovan and Colin Glover.

You know who you are and your worth. Sometimes it's enough !

# POW Camps A Brief Word...

By Paul Jameson

Although we have already produced and partially distributed the POW Camps books we thought it appropriate to acknowledge and signpost the presence of that strand of our project in this, our 'other' (General) Community book.

We have had some great feedback regarding both the contents and production quality of our POW book. I hope Meden's History Teacher, Thomas Bentley, won't mind me quoting him as saying it is an, "excellent book".

This was due to both the quality and variety of contributors (Robert Ilett, Mrs June Ibbotson, plus Astrid and Chris Hansen amongst others.)

It was not an easy book to compile due to having to search very hard for extra quality information (beyond that offered by Robert Ilett) and the lack of information provided from the Workshops by other members of the public.

Poignantly, Astrid also had to brave the loss of her husband John (to brain cancer in July 2018) and Chris lost his brother.

I'd like to leave you with a lovely bittersweet picture provided by Astrid of John with his 'alter ego' !





# Project Purpose... Looking For Warriors Through The Landscape

By Paul Jameson

If a floating vessel were to embody archaeology then it might be in the form of a punt, because it can be quite temperamental and difficult to steer and whether it performs also depends upon the skill of the crew. This “shallow ship” is prone to all the elements, including luck, politics and the (scorching) weather of Summer 2018. Yet the oarsmen (in this case, our archaeological team, MERCIAN – in the form of Andy Gaunt, Sean Crossley and David Budge) helped steer the best course for success.

This is our 2nd HLF project, having already undertaken work in November 2015.

As part of those 2015 tasks was the utilisation of Ground Penetrating Radar (“GPR”), to pinpoint the whereabouts of possibly Saxon (Battle of Hatfield related 632AD)

reinterments carried out at St. Mary's in 1950/1, then there was always a greater likelihood of success associated with that former project, as in our 2018 project, there are no markers flagged for investigation and no guarantee of results.

Additionally, there was naturally a greater weight of expectation this time, as the HLF award elements were £15,600 (of £16,100) in 2015 whereas this time we received £54,000 of HLF monies (plus additional Match funding of £4,000 from a company called SOLARCENTURY) for topographical studies that included an invasive (digging) search for Cuckney Castle. Both awards exclude the generous (extra days) Match funding elements donated by Mercian CIC (our archaeology providers on both occasions) that now well exceed the initial £5,000 of value.



Welcome help from Warsop Metal Detecting Society members

## THE EXPECTED OUTCOMES

### THAT PEOPLE WILL HAVE LEARNT ABOUT HERITAGE

Our outcomes were to be crystallised via a “Coalition of Enthusiasms” from a compelling mix of discovery, interpretation, discussion, dissemination and documentation.

We believed that a balanced mix of people would enjoy an eclectic and fun mix of subjects.

Our audience represented a wide variety of age ranges and life experiences and the subjects offered were a good mix of classroom workshops and archaeologically focussed activities plus an Art competition and Family Tree experience.

We hoped that some people would remain “on a journey” with us having enjoyed our HLF project in Nov 15, yet thought it desirable to recognise the need to also gain a new project audience.

This presented fresh but welcome challenges to bring different skills and points of view into the project, which we believed would strengthen it.

Our overall concept was to help explain the area and link to other projects work to help complete a Nottinghamshire, “historical jigsaw”.

We concentrated on the inter-relationship between warring humanity and nature via our overarching title, “Warriors Through the Landscape” realised with the help of local people, historical societies and local schools.

Specifically, we promised to perform Topography on the areas adjacent to the River Poulter (around St. Mary's, Cuckney).

We also committed to continue our quest to locate Cuckney Castle by excavating 2 trial trenches over 10 (which became 15) working days.

All of this was aided by the generous efforts of Warsop Metal Detecting Society who provided about 8 members during the original 12 days of invasive work.

Also to engage in academic research and advertise for people's Norton & Carburton POW Camp experiences plus experience and learn from 2 lectures by Robert Ilett & hold POW Camps interactive workshops.

We had wished to do POW Camp related “Ground Truthing” (examining the clues at the camps after initial LIDAR analysis) but this was originally declined by the Welbeck Estates Company Ltd (“Welbeck”), hence we were initially restricted to academic research. However, whilst the project was still operational, we contacted Welbeck again to see if they might reconsider in any way.

Happily they agreed to let us “Ground Truth” (visit & examine) Carburton Camp for 2 days in September 2018. All of our POW information is celebrated in a separate POW Camp publication thus is not part of this ‘Explain The Terrain’ Community book.

We also initiated an Art Competition involving either, “Cuckney Long Ago – Re-imagining the landscape” or “Norton / Carburton POW Camp” or “Reconstructing Cuckney Castle”. We designated 3 categories of entrants, Cuckney School, Meden School and Adults (including the Outwood Post 16 Sixth Form College). Unfortunately only Cuckney School entered in numbers, with the Meden School not submitting any entries and the adults only a few – despite £50 Amazon vouchers being offered as prizes for winners & runners up in each category. The art was judged, appropriately, by former art teacher, Trevor Crook - to whom we extend a big thank you.



Supporters at our “Kick Off Meeting” on 23rd March 2018 at Cuckney Village Hall where we first announced our successful HLF bid (entered on 22nd December 18)



Exclusively for schools there was also, “This Is my Family Tree” / (“Communitree”), the idea and main delivery being courtesy of our Vice Chair, Jennie Johnson.

We promised to document and celebrate the events by producing 300 participant Community “Explain The Terrain” books (i.e. this book) plus 300 Norton & Carburton POW camp books for future reference and enjoyment (now 350 books for each). Copies will be freely distributed to some local libraries and also be posted as pdf documents to both The BOHIS and Mercian websites (with access freely available for 5 years).

Finally, about 5 weeks prior to starting our events proper on the 15th May 2018, we distributed a professionally printed timetable of events and then held a “Kick Off” Saturday on 12th May in order to fully explain our agenda

and hopefully excite our prospective audience. In order to best engage, each item (for example, Sean Crossley’s “Digging Cuckney Castle – What to Expect on An Excavation”) had it’s own time slot.

For the “Kick Off” Saturday, we also adopted a “Pick n Mix” theme in order to encourage people to attend events that most excited them and to feel free to disregard portions not seen as interesting.

Otherwise faced with “all or nothing” some may have chosen nothing, which would have been a pity.

Excluding BOHIS & MERCIAN personnel, a very respectable 26 people attended the “Kick Off” Saturday and most braved the whole day experience.



Our “Kick Off Saturday” front cover of the flyer which we hand delivered to 3 villages about 5 weeks prior to the 12th May

## The Main Purpose of “Explain The Terrain”

We decided that, “Explain The Terrain” was a catchy (sub title) way of reminding ourselves and everyone else that we wished to explain the Topography relating to Cuckney water meadows (created, starting in 1849) , Cuckney castle and via LIDAR (and Robin Orr’s drone) to obtain an even broader landscape review.

Whilst we have been focussed upon the Battle of Hatfield we have realised that there was a wider historical canvas that needed explaining and documenting for future generations.

The overall purposes of the Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society (“BOHIS”) were twofold.

Firstly, to explain and document the area in which we live for future generations so that they could appreciate and nurture the area’s future development.

Secondly, to help create links to other projects to provide a coherent explanation of the history of Nottinghamshire, our “historical jigsaw”.

Whilst investigating whether the area hosted skeletons from a 7th Century battle in November 2015 (with HLF funding), we discovered where reinterments lay but also widened the scope of local historical understanding with research of St. Mary’s church, Cuckney and a non invasive search for evidence of Cuckney Castle. In our desire to fully explain the castle via excavation, this was a logical extension of that work.

We also utilised LIDAR and Topographical studies to better understand the fascinating landscape around Cuckney and synergistically realised that this might help the understanding of how the terrain could have influenced the Battle of Hatfield.

We worked very hard to gain further written permission from the Welbeck Estates Company Ltd. in order to utilise their land to help explain Cuckney Castle and to allow Topographical studies to explain the landscape. We received written permission in July 2017 for studies until the end of 2020, although permission can be withdrawn at any time at the Estates’ discretion.

## Our Community Purpose – an Audience Umbrella

We wished to unite adults specifically in local Communities (Norton, Holbeck, Cuckney & Carburton) , 3 Local Schools (Meden, Cuckney & the 6th form college, “Outwood Post 16 Centre” Worksop, 12 local history groups that we have already been involved with (e.g. Hunter Archaeological Society), patrons of 5 key libraries (Worksop, Mansfield ,Warsop,Retford & Edwinstowe), and the responsible Warsop Metal Detecting Society - in a common quest to explain and relive this history.

In choosing our project themes we strove to be, “demand led”.

In November 2016, 85 Community members chose our bid subjects and 136 schoolchildren from the 3 schools signed up to participate, which gave us a fantastic mix of all ages from 5 to 18.

This gave us a total ‘budgeted’ audience of 221.

## Reaching Out To The Schools

Regular dialogue with Cuckney and Meden Schools resulted in the promised re-engagement of 118 of their pupils , plus supporting letters from teachers, Diane Armstrong and Thomas Bentley.

We gained additional promised engagement of 18 pupils from 6th Form College, ‘Outwood Post 16 Centre’ from Worksop.

## Heritage Focus

To some, Nottinghamshire may seem a little deficient in history.

Our outcomes concept was to help explain a small area of it well and to help join up understanding with other projects (such as Thynghowe (Viking meeting place)) and King John’s Palace at Kings Clipstone.

All to help complete a Nottinghamshire “historical jigsaw”.

Whilst eternal mysteries can be deeply satisfying we feel that solutions are better, even though in seeking a resolution you risk disappointment.

We concentrated upon the inter-relationship between warring humanity and nature via,

“Warriors Through the Landscape”.

How did conflict help shape the landscape ?

How much did the landscape influence conflict ?

Those warriors may have related to a skirmish around Cuckney Castle (1135-53) (although we are compelled to believe otherwise through research) , the early medieval, Battle of Hatfield” (632AD) , German Prisoners at Norton and Carburton Camps or something entirely unexpected.

Certainly “Cuchenai” is mentioned in the Domesday book (1086) and is classed as, “quite large” (source Wikipedia).

There were 28 households.

There were 10 villagers, 5 smallholders, 3 freemen, 1 priest, 1 church and a mill.

Our project focused upon:

Interpreting the local landscape utilising LIDAR (in the Cuckney and Warsop areas) ,Topographical studies to understand possible village settlement and history in the area immediately adjacent to St. Mary’s church, Cuckney.

Discovering Cuckney Castle – Trial Trenching for 10 days + 2 Working Saturdays

Whilst St. Mary’s church was not designated as part of our project, Cuckney Castle was. Both may be closely linked.

As the church was studied as part of our last HLF project, we had a good understanding of this possible relationship.



## Our Clearly Defined Castle Objective

*“Does the Earthwork near to the A60 represent part of the Long Lost Cuckney Castle ?”*

### Overview

Cuckney Castle was non invasively studied as part of our last HLF project, utilising topographical techniques and tools (such as Total stations) to build up a compelling 3-D picture of the land that the castle may have been upon.

It revealed a semi- circular base in the field next to the church, which may have been part of the outer bailey.

It has been presumed that St. Mary’s (being definitely Norman) was founded (and then gifted to the Abbey) around the same time (c. 1153) as the adulterine castle was dismantled.

We had previously postulated that some of the stone used in the construction of St. Mary’s may have been re-used from the slighted (adulterine castle).

Yet in discussing his gifting of St. Mary’s in co-founding Welbeck Abbey in 1153, Thomas says, “Moreover, so far as belongs to me, the church of St. Mary’s, Cuckney”.

Additionally and compellingly, Professor David Stocker’s “Anglo Saxon Corpus” also identifies an Anglo Saxon or very early Norman stone in the tower at St. Mary’s, which helps corroborate De Cuckney’s assertion that he merely inherited the church.

Of course, this clarity has huge positive ramifications for the Battle of Hatfield debate because this almost certainly proves that the skeletons uncovered in 1950/1 CANNOT be a consequence of a military engagement during the anarchy period.

We believe this suggests that the (acknowledged Norman) Church must have been built after 1066 (possibly on the site of a Saxon one acknowledged in the Domesday book in 1086). An original Saxon church may account for the mysterious original dedication to St. Michael (not St. Mary).

In Nov. 15, the GPR also discovered an irregular mound near to the A60 that could have been a burial site or possibly part of Cuckney castle keep.

## Castle - Proposed Strategy / Methodology

We intended (and carried out) excavation of 2 trenches (hand dug by community volunteers under the supervision of professional archaeologists, with 100% sieving). We agreed a Contingency amount for environmental sampling, pottery/finds analysis, metal x-ray, museum submission, processing, reporting etc.

Retford Museum (via Curator Sam Glasswell) confirmed in writing that they would be happy to store and display finds relating to the project.

Mercian (our Archaeology provider) did not believe that excavation with machinery was responsible on a site of national significance, especially as earthworks would be targeted where the archaeology was likely to be centimetres below the surface.

As this was to be a research excavation, (not a commercial excavation on a development site), it was recommended that it was done by hand and then be 100% sieved. Further, machine digging would not have allowed for community involvement & hand digging with 100% sieving would also maximise the chance of finding Saxon evidence which machining would almost certainly miss.

The trenches looked to establish if the ‘mound’ was part of the castle, and for any Saxon evidence in the area.

(Bottom) Trench 1 targeted the anomalies detected by the RSK GPR.

(Top) Trench 2 investigated possible anomalies from magnetic survey and earthwork bank.

The Trenches were planned as likely to be 10m x 2m although with flexibility.

We were originally scheduled to perform 10 days of trial trenching plus 2 Match Funded “Castle Working Saturdays”. As one of the opinions from our Evaluation Survey (from Nov 15) was that the working week precluded some from taking part, BOHIS feel that they have learnt and acted upon that feedback, fully supported by MERCIAN.

## Castle related Appendix – Pre HLF Bid of Dec 17 – Questions about our then proposed Castle related strategy from URSILLA SPENCE (NOTTS C.C. Archaeology Leader)

### Q1/ Firstly, what will prove that this mound is a motte? Can you explain the archaeological evidence which you are seeking by excavating?

Our objective is “Does the Earthwork near to the A60 represent part of the Long Lost Cuckney Castle ?”

Archaeological excavation will help to demonstrate if the mound is purely natural, or whether it has been altered by human activity.

It is possible the mound was created by modern or Victorian activity, or perhaps was utilised as part of a temporary medieval castle in the anarchy period.

Topographic survey has raised questions relating to the current area scheduled as a castle (we are not convinced that the designated motte area (at the far west end of the church yard) is correct).

It has been mooted that the mound to the west of the churchyard could have formed part of the castle.

One reason for this is the question of why the land is the same height immediately west after the “moat” (in the abutting field ) ?

Therefore the “moat” could be a much later “ha-ha”, bisecting the motte, part of which is in the churchyard, part in the field.

Geophysical Survey (GPR, Magnetometer) and topographic survey, has suggested a number of features we would like to examine which may relate to this occupation.

The excavation will be undertaken to ascertain the date and possible function of an earthwork on the top of the mound, and anomalies detected in geophysical survey.

If these are shown through excavation (finds discovered in archaeological contexts) to date from the medieval period (particularly the mid 12th century), then it seems highly likely it was part of alterations to the mound at that time.

If the excavation produces such evidence this may then enable a better understanding of the castle and enable the scheduling to be extended to protect the site.

If the site is shown to not have had any such occupation, its inclusion as part of the castle can be ignored.

### Q2/ Secondly, what dating evidence will demonstrate that this is an early medieval monument?

Finds and objects of this age are not common, so what will it take to prove it is Saxon date rather than of another period?

Although early Medieval finds are not common, we have been encouraged by findings from the GPR carried out by RSK Stats in Nov. 2015, hence are working upon a recommendation.

As part of the HLF lauded MERCIAN Integrated Archeological Survey, (Gaunt and Crossley) RSK expertly identified 2 areas of interest in the mound – a shown in Fig. 8 (sheet 2 of 2 – immediately prior to Appendix A).

During the last project Mercian discovered Saxon-era pottery in the vicinity of the mound during non-invasive fieldwork.

It may not be the case that the mound dates to the early medieval period, but it is highly possible that controlled excavation will find more Saxon pottery sherds which will help in understanding more about early medieval occupation in the area.

This is a chance to undertake research with the community.

The purpose of the appointed archaeology team will be then to utilise their expertise to date any finds.



St. Mary’s, Cuckney - 25/07/2016 - Diocesan Archaeologists (Dr. Chris Brooke and Dr. Mike Hawkes) in consultation with Nottinghamshire County Council Archaeology leader , Ursilla Spence



# The Fourth Duke of Portland and Estate Management

By Jennie Johnson

As early as 1819, the idea of converting waste lands to useful purposes by the creation of water -meadows had first occurred to the Duke of Portland. At that date the farm of Clipstone Park, seven miles from Welbeck, was economically almost valueless; its 148 acres were bringing in a rental of no more than £346 a year.

The Duke conceived the possibility of tapping the River Maun at a high level and fertilising his waste lands between Mansfield and Ollerton with the water of the stream, impregnated as it was with sewage of the former town.

Investigations proved the practicability of the plan, and the work was undertaken under the expert guidance of Mr Tebbett, his estate manager. The land which it was proposed to convert into meadows consisted of two wildly divergent types – dry rough hill-sides and the swamps of the intervening valley.

Each presented its own troublesome problems. The draining of the marsh was in itself a difficult and arduous undertaking, but the hill-sides were not more easily dealt with. Gorse and heather had to be destroyed; hillocks had to be flattened out, since an even slope must be secured. Special care had to be taken to preserve the good soil which was found on the high levels; and when, on the water being first introduced, it was found to run away into rabbit holes, these had to be dug out.

Eventually the whole scheme proved a great success, beyond the Duke's highest expectation. Not only did the water-meadows provide excellent pasture for sheep and cattle, but they produced a great quantity of excellent manure for other lands, enriching five times as large an area as their own.

In order to counteract the seasonal irregularity in the water supply, the Duke constructed a large reservoir of 70 acres above Mansfield, which not only irrigated the meadows in dry seasons of the year but was incidentally of assistance to the mills of Mansfield. The Duke's ambitious undertaking had, up to the year 1837, cost a little under £40,000; on the other hand, it was calculated that the annual value of the water-meadows was £3,660. The rough forest land remaining as it was all round the area which had been reclaimed, the vivid contrast between the tangle of heath, fern, and gorse on the slopes and the swamp with its rushes, snipe and wild duck, where nature yet remained untamed, on the one hand, and on the other the vivid green of the gently sloping water meadows, with the grazing animals upon them, was an eloquent testimony to the vision, the energy, and enterprise of the Duke of Portland.

An enthusiastic contemporary of the Duke praised the Duke and Mr Tebbett on their execution of the water-meadows comparing their good selves with those of a Bridgewater and a Brindley. While the developments at Clipstone constituted the Duke's principal title to fame as an agricultural improver in Nottinghamshire.

Courtesy of A.S. Turberville – A History of Welbeck Abbey & its Owners, Vol.2



# Cuckney Water Meadow System

By MERCIAN Archaeological Services CIC

A topographic survey of earthworks in the fields on the northern bank of the River Poulter, north of Cuckney Church (SK 56473 71578), was undertaken by community volunteers under supervision from Mercian Archaeological Services CIC in June 2018. This community archaeology project trained members of the public in surveying techniques, and was the first detailed measured survey of this section of water meadows to be undertaken.

The area surveyed formed part of a catchwork water meadows constructed between 1849 and 1850 for the Fourth Duke of Portland (Hillman & Cook 2016, p88). The system is very well preserved, consisting of a number of sections along the length of the system in the fields recorded. A large 'flood-dyke' carried water to the system from the pond at Cuckney Old Forge Dam to the West. The flood-dyke fed a system of 'carriers' and 'panes' (areas of grass to be flooded) before returning water to the canalised river Poulter to the south. The Cuckney water meadow system represents a relatively unusual example due to the steepness of the slopes involved (Hillman and Cook 2016 p88).

The system at Cuckney was one of a number of systems stretching along the Rivers of Sherwood Forest constructed by the Fourth Duke. "As early as 1819- the idea of converting waste lands to useful purposes by the creation of water -meadows had first occurred to the Duke of Portland"... (Courtesy of A.S. Turberville – A History of Welbeck Abbey & its Owners, Vol.2).

The scale of the works required to construct a water meadow system is captured further on in Turbervilles account of the works by the Duke at Clipstone on the River Maun to the south east of Cuckney; "The land which it was proposed to convert into meadows consisted of two widely divergent types – dry rough hill-sides and the swamps of the intervening valley. Each presented its own troublesome problems. The draining of the marsh was in itself a difficult and arduous undertaking, but the hillsides were not more easily dealt with. Gorse and heather had to be destroyed; hillocks had to be flattened out, since an even slope must be secured. Special care had to be taken to preserve the good soil which was found on the high levels; and when, on the water being first introduced, it was found to run away into rabbit holes, these had to be dug out. Eventually the whole scheme proved a great success, beyond the Duke's highest expectation. Not only did the water-meadows provide excellent pasture for sheep and cattle, but they produced a great quantity of excellent manure for other lands, enriching five times as large an area as their own".

The Dukes water meadows were expensive to create, but gave a return of over 8% percent on the investment annually. "The Duke's ambitious undertaking had, up to the year 1837, cost a little under £40,000; on the other hand, it was calculated that the annual value of the water-meadows was £3,660". It is therefore very easy to understand the Duke's motives for constructing water meadows systems and for bringing marginal land into profit.

Although the account in Turbervilles entry refers to the River Maun, it is clear the impact the works had on the landscape, and his description gives a vivid impression of how the Cuckney water meadows would have looked in their heyday and the stark contrast a lush swathe of green would have had against the surrounding forest landscape; "The rough forest land remaining as it was all round the area which had been reclaimed, the vivid contrast between the tangle of heath, fern, and gorse on the slopes and the swamp with its rushes, snipe and wild duck, where nature yet remained untamed, on the one hand, and on the other the vivid green of the gently sloping water meadows, with the grazing animals upon them, was an eloquent testimony to the vision, the energy, and enterprise of the Duke of Portland." (Courtesy of A.S. Turberville – A History of Welbeck Abbey & its Owners, Vol.2).

The project was designed to record and interpret the water meadows system at Cuckney. It utilised a number of surveying techniques using a combination of Differential survey-grade Geographic Positioning Systems (GPS) and Electronic Distance measuring Total Stations.

A Differential survey-grade GPS uses satellites to triangulate its locations. This combined with a correction signal received from remote base stations, allows measurements to be recorded on site to accuracy levels of under 3cm. These readings are recorded by the GPS as Ordnance Survey grid references. The GPS allows static points to be recorded around the site, and the archaeological features including sluice channels and stone work were recorded in this method to give accurate locations. Control Points recorded at 1cm accuracy in three dimensions were located around the field to be used to set up Total Stations (see below). The GPS also allows points to be recorded 'on the fly', where the GPS records points every 0.25m as it is carried by the operator, and this technique formed part of a 3D recording of the site as a whole.





A total Station (right) being used to map the outline of stone sluice gates (being held by volunteer to left of photos in distance).

A Total Station is an Electronic Distance Measuring (EDM) device combined with a theodolite. The machine measures distance as well as angles to calculate the location of a target. In this instance a community volunteer holds a prism mounted on a staff. The Total Station is then aimed at the prism by the user looking through a viewing lens and targeting on the prism using cross-hairs in the lens.

The Total Station operator then sends an infra-red light beam at the prism and the machine uses the reflection from the prism to calculate the distance to it. This is done by counting the number of waves in the light beam as it travels to and from the target. The infra-red beam has a known wave-length and frequency. The number of waves recorded allows the distance to be calculated by the machine. The Total Station is set up by the user and triangulated using points recorded by the GPS. Once set up the Total Station uses horizontal and vertical angle measurements to calculate the location of the prism using Trigonometry.

The prism is mounted on a pole or staff. Measurements and increments on the staff allow the height of the prism to be set and recorded. The prism height is entered into the Total Station, and it removes this value from its readings to give the actual location of the feature being recorded in three dimensions. The readings were recorded in Ordnance Survey co-ordinates and stored on the Total Station.

The survey used a standard Total Station; where the prism is positioned over a target and the user manually targets the Total Station on the prism before taking a reading. It also utilised a Robotic Total Station. The Robotic Total Station automatically targets on a 360 degree prism held by the user on a staff, and follows this target. Readings are automatically recorded as the prism is moved, and in this way a large number of readings can be recorded 'on the fly' enabling thousands of three dimensional points to be recorded across the site.



Robin using a Differential GPS to record the outline of a stone sluice gate in three dimensions.



Recording individual sluice stones with Total station. Kevin is holding a prism, which reflects the infra-red beam back to the total Station. In this photograph the prism is being held 0.4m above the point on the edge of the stone being recorded. The pole is segmented into 0.1m sections. The Total station is set to record with the pole prism height at 0.4m and removes this value in its calculations, to give the actual 3D location of the edge of the stone

The survey consisted of both objective and subjective survey. An objective survey of the entire field was undertaken with community volunteers walking transects at 1m intervals using a combination of GPS and robotic Total Station. This kind of survey method is known as 'objective' survey as it records points in a methodological way with no interpretative input from the user. The points are recorded on a grid to give even coverage of the site.

A 'subjective' survey of archaeological features was also undertaken. This included recording former water carriers and panes with Total Stations and GPS, along with surviving stone blocks which together formed a complex sluice gate system. In this method the survey is 'subjective' because the surveyor chooses what to record.

The sluice gate stones were recorded individually with Total Stations and were further recorded in three dimensions using photogrammetric survey. A photogrammetric survey consists of photographic an object or feature many times from many different angles. Computer software combines these photographs and an accurate three dimensional model is created.

The flood-dyke channel which fed the system via a series of inlet valves was also recorded where accessible and a number of large iron and wooden sluice gates were also recorded which survive along its length.



Above: Photogrammetric survey of the sluice gates.

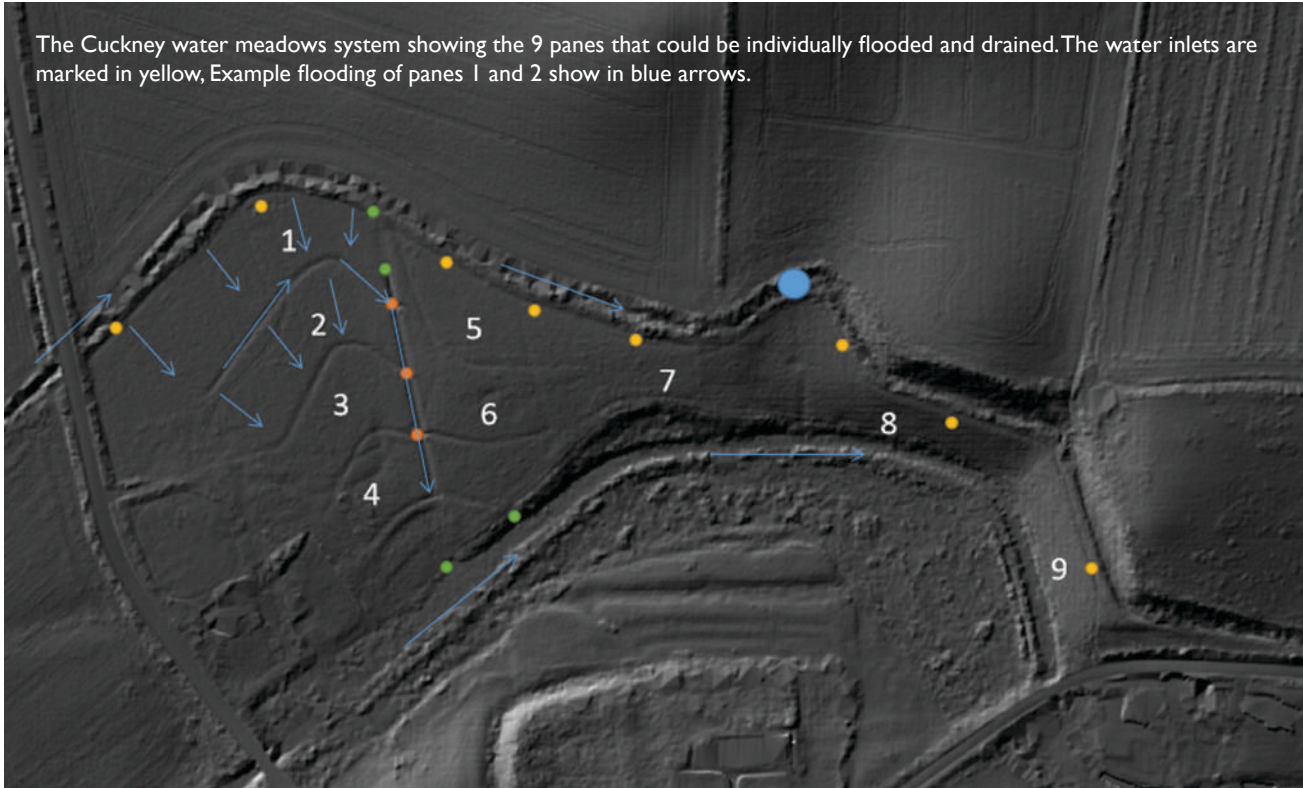
Below: Large Iron and timber sluice gate dividing sections of the flood dyke. This gate was closed down stream of the first section of the water meadows system. Water could then build up behind the gate to allow the system to flood the planes.







LiDAR survey data results showing the water meadows system to the north of the canalised River Poulter



The Cuckney water meadows system showing the 9 panes that could be individually flooded and drained. The water inlets are marked in yellow, Example flooding of panes 1 and 2 show in blue arrows.

The system at Cuckney took water from the pond at Old Forge Dam upstream to the west. The Dam pre-existed the water meadows system which utilised the water by carrying it into the flood-dyke channel via an aqueduct constructed over the River Poulter which ran around the pond on the northern side. The pond was also used to drive a water mill. The water was carried in a flood-dyke channel which followed the contour level from the height of the water in Forge Dam. Following this contour as the River Poulter continued its journey to the south allowed a head of water to be transferred to the water meadow system. The water meadow system generated a difference of 5 metres in height from the point where water fed into the system, to the point where it drained into the River to the south of the main sluice gate channel. The water meadow system in the fields surveyed was divided into 9 panes. Each pane could be individual flooded and drained utilising ditches (carriers) and sluices, and was fed by inlet valves and pipes at various points along the system. The pictures show various elements along the system. In order to flood panes 1-7 the sluice large iron and timber sluice gate (east) marked with a blue circle had to be closed to allow water to build in the flood-dyke to the west.

Water was then passed onto the northern panes via inlet valves and pipes marked green and yellow on the map above.



Large Iron and timber sluice gate dividing sections of the flood dyke. This gate was closed down stream of the first section of the water meadows system. Water could then build up behind the gate to allow the system to flood the panes.

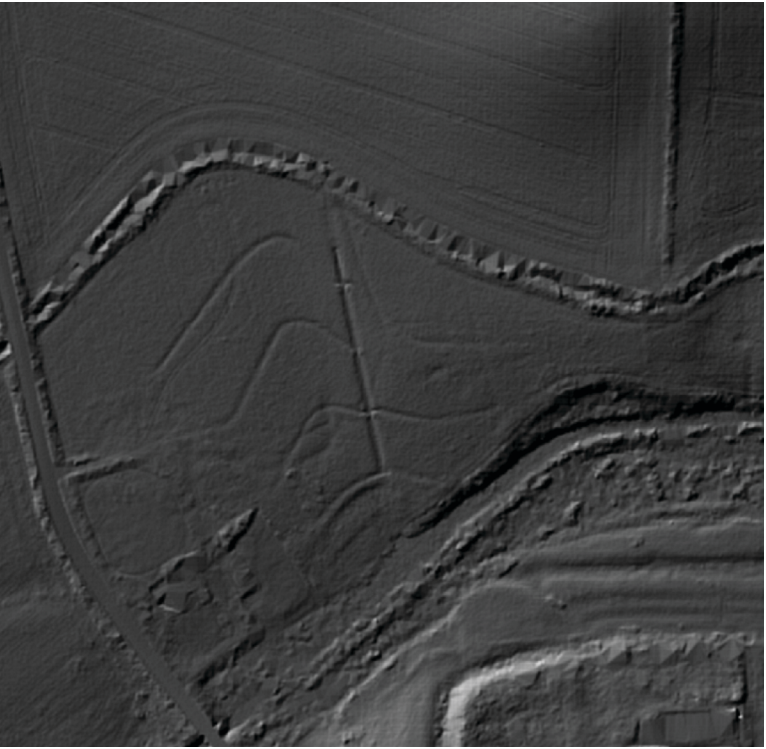


Water inlet from carrier channel

A LiDAR (light detection and ranging) survey undertaken by Bluesky in April 2018. The survey covered an area from Whitwell Woods in the north to Church Warsop in south, and from Creswell in the west to Carburton in the east. The survey was undertaken at 0.25m resolution. Subsequent analysis of LiDAR data was undertaken by Mercian as part of the project, and the area of the catchwork water meadow produced great results.

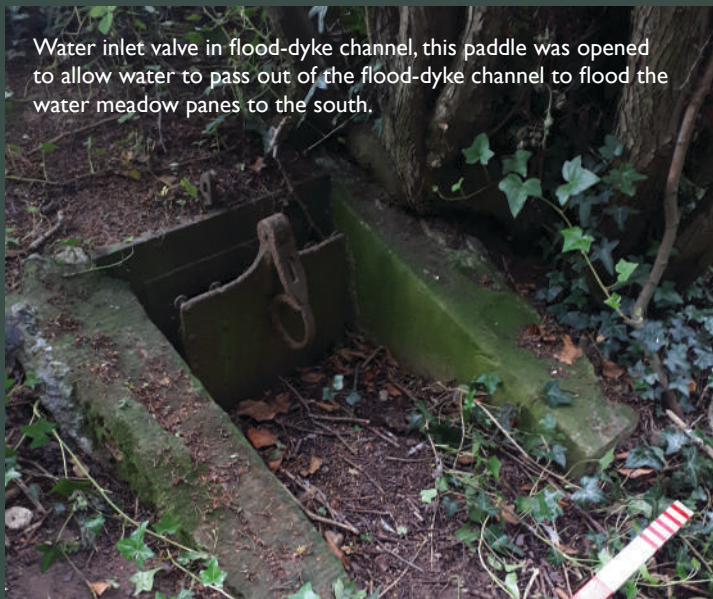
By combining the results of the LiDAR and topographic survey of the site a 3D model of the catchment water meadow has allowed detailed understanding of its form and function to be understood. Detailed three dimensional photogrammetry has recorded the level of preservation of the stone sluices at the present day.

Ground-truthing and prospection of the wider water meadow system has helped to discover iron water management features and pipe work, and has also show that the water meadows were an addition to an already existing system of ponds and leets powering a series of mills along the length of the Poulter between Langwith and Carburton.



LiDAR survey data results showing the water meadows system to the north of the canalised River Poulter



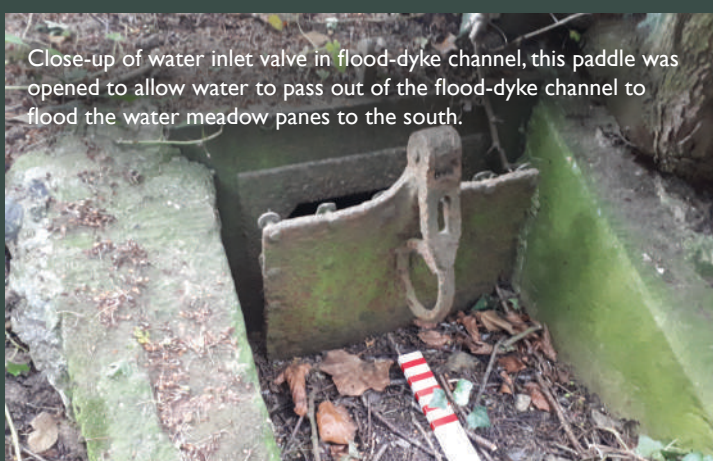


Water inlet valve in flood-dyke channel, this paddle was opened to allow water to pass out of the flood-dyke channel to flood the water meadow panes to the south.

Water could also enter the stone water channel via an inlet valve marked in green and pass through a long buried pipe, emerging through the stone inlet below.



Water entered the stone sluice channel via an underground pipe from the flood-dyke channel at this point.



Close-up of water inlet valve in flood-dyke channel, this paddle was opened to allow water to pass out of the flood-dyke channel to flood the water meadow panes to the south.



Main stone sluice channel



Water inlet valve for main sluice through here into a buried pipe before emerging to the south in the main stone channel.



Stone Sluice gates

Each pane would then be flooded and could be drained via the ditches (carriers) to the south end of each pane, or allowed to over-top the ditches (carriers) to flood the pane below. The picture above shows water movement using blue arrows to show panes 1 and 2 being flooded. This was controlled via the stone sluices marked in orange on the map. The ditches (carriers) for separating the panes are shaped to follow the contours of the field to allow water to drain.

Water from the sluice gate cascade which drained and flooded panes 1-6 was then returned to the River Poulter by a series of underground pipes at the southern end of the system marked in green on the map.

Panes 7, 8, and 9 were flooded directly from the flood-dyke channel via stone inlets and water drained directional into the river. This section was only one pane deep throughout due to the very steep nature of the panes.

This work can now be tied in with previous works on the system as discussed by Jonathan Hillman and Hadrian Cook in these Transactions (2016), and alongside previous surveys of the Carburton water meadows system to the east (Gaunt 2010a; 2010b).

The water meadow system at Cuckney was in use for over 100 years with the system finally falling out of use in the 1960s. Although a considerable amount of effort and expense undoubtedly was spent on its creation, the system more than likely paid for itself many times over, and represents an important part of the Cuckney and wider Sherwood Forest landscape development over time.

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Gaunt, A. 2010b. A level 1 archaeological survey of Carburton water meadows system. Carburton, Nottinghamshire. NCA-012. Archaeological report.

Hillman, J and Cook, H. 2016. By floating and watering such land as lieth capable thereof: recovering meadow irrigation in Nottinghamshire. Transactions of the Thoroton Society.



# Cuckney Water Meadow Gallery













# Cuckney Castle

## Existing Information and Comparatives

By Paul Jameson

As a major element of our largely HLF funded, “Warriors..” project, BOHIS and MERCIAN (archaeologists) chose to invasively examine part of the (non scheduled) area known as “Cuckney Castle”, abutting and intricately linked to St. Mary’s Church, Cuckney.

In the long hot summer of 2018, Trench 2 was dug on the possible “motte” (mound) and another at the bottom of the mound (Trench 1) in order to help reveal evidence of the Castle and about village settlement.

As agreed with County Archaeologist, Ursilla Spence and the HLF, the detailed objectives have already been discussed in the ‘Project Purpose’ section.

It is hard to separate discussion on Cuckney Castle from that about St. Mary’s church.

As a prelude to MERCIAN’s major review of the Castle, it is useful to step back and frame a ‘modern’ debate with a look at the Scheduled Monument information for Cuckney Castle (1953, revised 1992).

It is also possible to compare and contrast that data with other sources, namely, “Medieval Castles in Nottinghamshire” (Sarah Speight 1994), plus 2 studies on Adulterine (unlicensed) forts, namely, “Robert De Waudari’s Adulterine Castle, Luton” (Abrams J & Shotliff D) (1959) and “An Adulterine Castle on Faringdon Clump”, Berkshire (Leeds E.T.) 1935/6.

Additionally, Colvin’s book, “The White Canon’s In England” (1951), Stenton’s, “The First Century of English

Feudalism 1066 – 1166” (1932), Thoroton’s, “The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire” and “White’s Directory” (1853) all help enrich our understanding.

St. Mary’s origins are also questioned by Everson and Stocker, “Corpus of Anglo Saxon Stone Sculpture – Vol 12, Nottinghamshire”.

This could add significance to the dating that Thomas De Cuckney himself seems to suggest for the church (ie. pre 1135), with major ramifications for the dating of 200 skeletons discovered in 3 or 4 mass burial pits in 1950/1, as that has to signify that the pits cannot result from a “skirmish” or indeed a much larger conflict in the anarchy period. Further, as no engagements are documented in the vicinity in the Civil War period (1642 – 51), then this lays greater weight to the possibility that the skeletons are evidence that the Battle of Hatfield (632 AD) was fought around Cuckney and does not belong to a “separate” Hatfield near Doncaster.

The latter was somewhat lazily attributed by Antiquarian (amateur) historian, Abraham De La Pryme (1671 – 1704) (and then quietly rejected in favour of Cuckney), but ironically, again, more on a whim than by the introduction of any hard counter evidence. He merely visited Mansfield and became aware of “another” Hatfield (involving Cuckney).

Further irony is supplied as both the Hatfield near Doncaster and Bassetlaw around Cuckney are part of the very same region of Hatfield.

### The “Castle” ... In Pursuit of Flexible Thinking

Although intuitively nonsensical, there is sometimes a need to look wider in order to gain focus on something specific. That is, to consider points regarded as fripperies, which may give insight into crucial areas.

It is worth reflecting on what is meant by the very term, “Castle” as there are many more possibilities than might assail the normal hazy imagination.

Any interpretation may need to go beyond such narrow thinking to encompass non motte & bailey structures and the fact that many castles were wooden or part wooden structures, plus other facets. In Nottinghamshire, this “wooden” thinking would exclude the main non Adulterine (‘licensed’) castles of Nottingham and Newark, but even other major licensed forts such as Laxton might have included some elements of wood, for example, wooden palisades for the inner or outer bailey instead of stone.

Speight also questions the generally held assumption that the “castle” only appeared in England as a consequence of the Norman Conquest. She clarifies that, “a handful of excavations, combined with documentary evidence, now suggests that Anglo-Saxon thegns had privately defended residences, although they were not as strongly fortified as the Norman version ... the skill of their (Saxon) craftsmen can most clearly be seen in the gatehouse of Exeter castle, a Norman structure with Anglo-Saxon windows.”

The De Waudari paper also contrasts the De Waudari castle with a licensed one built by Fawkes De Breaute in the centre of Luton in 1221, as that “appears to represent a re-fortification of a pre-existing late Saxon / Domesday manorial centre.”

Speight also says that, “far too much use is still made of antiquarian reports written before the great revolution in the subject in the 1960’s” and this needs reflection, given Cuckney Castle’s original 1953 scheduling.

One of her other principles is that, “Another fatal mistake is to try to consider the castles of any county in isolation.”

Having personally visited Laxton Castle (Nottinghamshire) in February 2019 as a practical consequence of ‘looking wider’, it is clear that it had a major planned (licensed) presence yet only 2 large blocks of stone could be identified.

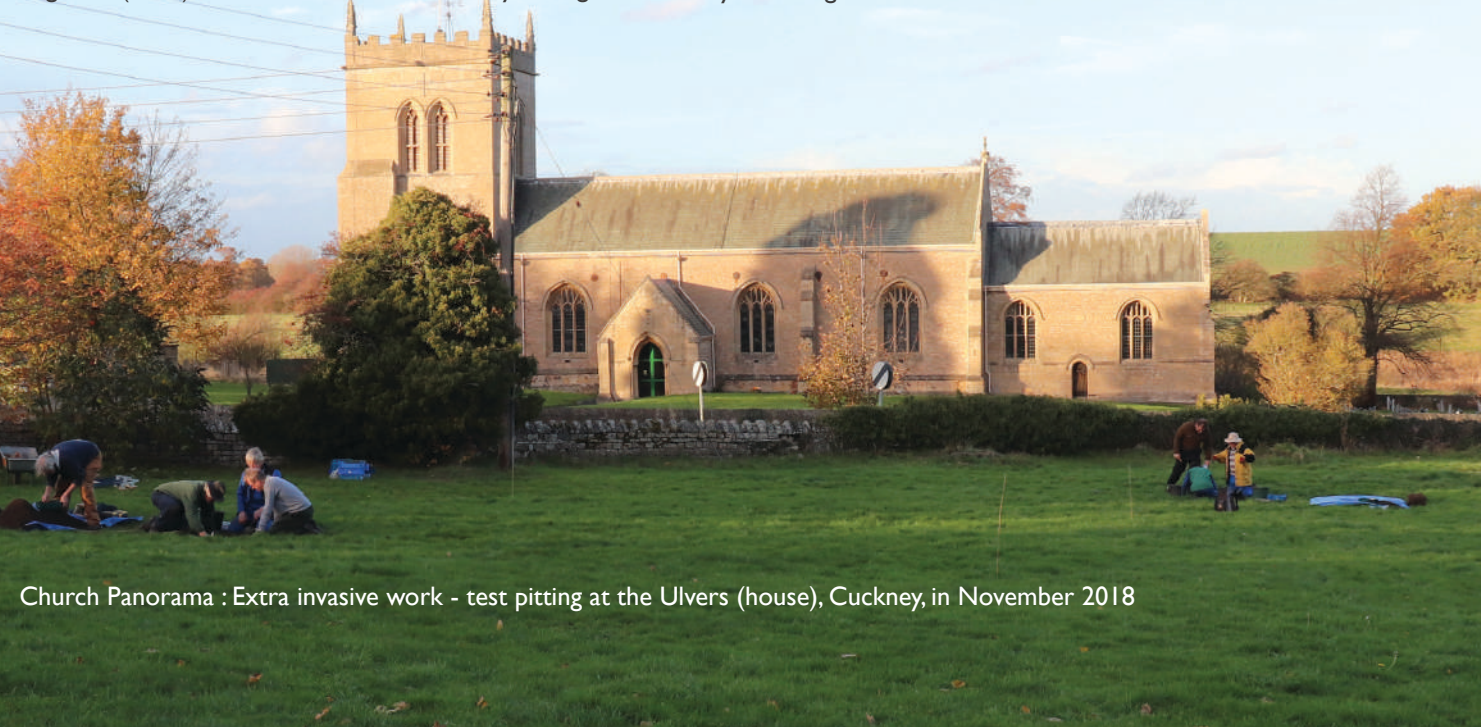
These may well be all that remained of the structure after years of looting materials for dwellings that possibly began soon after the castle was defunct in c.1287, although it did exist as a Manor House for about 400 years afterwards.

Additionally, many adulterine castles were slighted (destroyed).

At the Treaty of Winchester (1153), Stephen recognised Henry of Anjou as heir to the throne and it was agreed that all adulterine castles would be destroyed (per Higham & Barker 1992). However, it acknowledges that only ‘many’ of them were demolished.

The De Waudari paper also says that at the Adulterine fort at Luton, “No internal features associated with the use or occupation of the castle nor any traces of an internal or external palisade were identified” and in discussing the bailey ditch, “This almost complete absence of evidence for human occupation is surprising and may suggest that this part of the bailey ditch lay at some distance from the main focus of habitation within the castle”.

Hence, with regard to Cuckney Castle, what price the finding of stone or other less permanent building materials in such adulterine castles or evidence of military or other occupation?



Church Panorama : Extra invasive work - test pitting at the Ulvers (house), Cuckney, in November 2018



Laxton Castle (Feb 19) - a few remaining stones were all that Jennie Johnson and I could find



Wikipedia says that Cuckney Castle, “was a motte and bailey fortress founded by Thomas De Cuckney. It was slighted after the anarchy, in the reign of King Stephen”.

However, there is no evidence to support this assertion.

A motte is a mound of earth created to provide the highest and most defensible point of the castle.

“It was easy to dig a ditch and throw the upcast into a mound sufficiently solid to bear an encircling stockade”. (Stenton P199).

“The motte was (generally) surmounted by a fortified 2 or 3 storey house, surrounded by a timber palisade” (Salter 2000).

An inner bailey is a lower (possibly shelf like) structure nearest to the motte, whilst the outer bailey represents an area further away.

The baileys could have been enclosed by wood or stone and sometimes the baileys were separated from each other by large wide ditches (usually unfilled with water), such as Laxton.



Laxton Castle (Feb 19) - Large ditch possibly separating the inner and outer bailey

Although constructed largely using stone it is clear that Saffron Walden castle is unlike the usual, licensed castles with which we are largely familiar.

Very few adulterine forts were of stone construction or perhaps contained any stone at all. One prime, lasting exception, is Saffron Walden castle but it is clear from photographs that it was not created in times of stability and as such was, “thrown together” to serve an immediate need (it is no beauty).

As Stenton says, “A highly developed castle ... like Cainhoe in Bedfordshire ... could not have been raised under the conditions which were inevitable in a time of feudal anarchy.”

During the anarchy period (1135 – 54), Stephen (of Blois) fought the Empress Mathilda (aka Maud) for control of England. The ensuing lawlessness meant that “robber barons” such as Thomas De Cuckney (a possible adherent of Maud) were allowed to do as they wished. Revill (P47) says that, “it is true that Thomas de Cuckney

was throughout a supporter of the Empress and her son Henry”, although he offers no empirical evidence in support of his assertion. Other sources tend to avoid the matter of his loyalties altogether.

Such unlicensed forts were often essentially loot storage facilities and manned by perhaps 20 soldiers.

“Such castles were deeply resented by sections of the population, as this extract from the Anglo Saxon Chronicle for the year 1137 illustrates.

‘And they filled the whole land with these castles. They sorely burdened the unhappy people of the country with forced labour on these castles. And when these castles were made, they filled them with devils and wicked men’ (Austin 1928, as quoted from the De Waudari paper (1959)).

There is little evidence for “Castle Guard” numbers.

Stanley Revill says, “The garrison of a castle the size of Cuckney must have been very small ... The king’s great castle at Bedford, when held against the Justiciar, Hubert de Burgh, on behalf of the powerful mercenary, Fawkes De Breaute” at Bedford (in 1224) surrendered with a garrison of about 80 men” ( Revill P47/8 / timeref.com).

Additionally, after the anarchy, in the reign of Henry the 2nd (who lived 1133 to 1189), “At Dover castle, nine baronies, one of them being the Constable’s great honour of Haughley, were combined to supply a force of more than 170 knights” (and a similar story follows that). This shows that each Baron is on average only supplying about 20 soldiers and there is no reason to believe that Thomas De Cuckney was likely to have greater numbers for his Castle guard.

Speight (P67) suggests that Cuckney castle may not have started or even been an adulterine fort because, “the social status of the lords of Cuckney was sufficiently high for us to expect them to have a permanent castle ‘caput’ “ (i.e. head or top).

She attributes this to Thomas of Cuckney’s father, Richard being, “a favoured Fleming follower of Henry I”. Further, Thoroton’s Nottinghamshire (P372) says that, “Thomas was nourished in the kings court”.

Counterbalanced against this, Thoroton also says that Thomas, “made for himself a castle in the said land of ‘Cukeney’ “, (almost certainly from the Foundation History of Welbeck Abbey), suggesting that it was new and unlicensed.

It may also be highly significant that Thomas only inherited, “2 carucats of land in Cukeney” (all that his father Richard had been granted), but that it was inherited by Richard from Hugh Fitz-Baldric who once had, “the principal part of Cuckney” (ie. major part). Thoroton (P371) says that Hugh possessed 4 carucates but that “principal part” will certainly not represent the whole of Cuckney.

The definition of a ‘carucate’ does differ but may be around 100 acres (sizes.com).

Certainly by 1087 (because the land was granted to him by William The Conqueror), Roger De Busli was also in possession of what appears to be 2 carucates of land.

If Thomas and the heirs of Roger De Busli (or new grantees) possessed 4 carucates in total around 1135, given that White’s directory (1853) said that Cuckney has, “600 souls and 1095 acres of land” (ie. possibly 11 carucates), then it is probable that Speight’s assertion that the family of Thomas were the ‘lords of Cuckney’ is an exaggeration.

Therefore Thomas may only have had a legitimate right to about 20% of Cuckney lands prior to the anarchy. This may have prevented him or his family from having enough latitude to build a licensed pre-anarchy castle.

“It is highly significant that the castles which determined the general course of the war .. were castles which are known to have been in existence before the troubles began”. (Stenton P201)

## Cuckney Castle

The scheduling (list entry 1010909) now comes under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979 but was originally scheduled on 28/4/1953 with the most recent amendment being 23/10/1992.

The scheduling information contradicts itself in saying that, “Cuckney motte and bailey castle is a reasonably well preserved example of an adulterine fort ...” before going on to say, “.. the castle may therefore have been an adulterine fort”.

Stenton (P199) appears to clarify in saying, “The Foundation History of Welbeck Abbey, for instance, recites that Thomas of Cuckney, the founder of that house, was brought up at the court of Henry I, and after his father’s death held his land, ‘until the old war, and then he made for himself a castle in the aforesaid land of Cuckney’.

This suggests that Cuckney Castle was an adulterine fort and appears to be a solid information source, being taken from the Foundation History of Welbeck Abbey.

The monument information continues, “The perimeter wall of the graveyard occupies the inner edge of a 10m wide ditch that encircles the west side of the motte and encloses the inner bailey on the north side. Originally, it would also have enclosed the south side of the bailey but has been filled in to the south of the church so that, on this side, only the area south of the motte remains open. The remainder will survive as a buried feature ..”.

In November 2015, Andy Gaunt, Director of Mercian (our archaeology provider) failed to produce Magnetometer corroboration that part of the motte was surviving as a buried feature on the South side.

There is a question as to whether the ditch (just beyond the church boundary wall) is 10m wide at all points and a feeling that this “ditch” (possibly also cutting the motte in two on the Western side at St. Mary’s), might be nothing more than a, “ha ha”, a cut through in more recent times to prevent livestock from leaving the field.

The impression via visitation, is that the motte on the west side (in the field adjoining the church) was once joined to the western portion of St. Mary’s, especially as both parts are the same height).

However, that doesn’t explain why the continuing “ha ha” would be necessary on the North side (yet at first examination it seems no less a structure), because the North West perimeter of the Church ground is much higher there (approx. 2m) and steep in nature, making it unnecessary for a ha ‘ha ha’ (cutting) to prevent animal wanderings. Unless of course, around 1,000 years of burials has raised the land to such a degree.

The scheduling also notes an outer bailey on the North West side (“a 40m wide ribbon of open ground .. partially encircled by a double bank and ditch which lies roughly parallel with the River Poulter and is approximately 15m wide). which might be concurred with. There seems to be the line of an outer bailey ditch that can be followed from the abutting field to predict that it might have bisected almost the whole of the western side of the church yard at St. Mary’s from the church itself.

This would lend credence to the suspicion (generated by other sources) that St. Mary’s co – existed with the adulterine fort. If the magnetometry (from 2015) is correct, then this would indicate that St. Mary’s was possibly just external to the castle structure. However, this would be contradicted if the ‘ditch’ (extending Easterly after the North Central area, just beyond the perimeter wall) was not a ‘ha ha’.

The best corroboration that St. Mary’s and the Castle co-existed, comes from Thomas De Cuckney himself. In addressing Roger, Archbishop of York, this indicates that his formal charter must post date October 1154, in whose Diocese Cuckney was then situated (now Southwell), However, the origins of the grant were in 1153 (Colvin P65/66).

Thomas discusses what he is granting to the newly founded abbey and his choice of words and comparison seem compelling.

“Moreover, so far as belongs to me, the church of St. Mary of Cuckney ... and the church of St. Helen of Etwall, and the church of Whitton, which are founded in my fee”.

This clearly contrasts the founding of two other churches by De Cuckney with his mere inheritance of St. Mary’s, which he is also gifting. This is strongly suggestive of St. Mary’s existence prior to the Castle and is also a direct quote from De Cuckney so it has not endured the, “filter of misinterpretation” that a lot of information may endure.



The Domesday book (1086) records a church at Cuckney (possibly with a priest called Azo that may have serviced several churches) and Speight says that, “although the present structure contains no features so early, the general site continuity that we would expect for a parochial church makes it most unlikely that the Domesday church lay elsewhere.”

Additionally, after Speight’s article (1994), Everson & Stocker (2017) discovered a possible gable cross at St. Mary’s where the cross form would perhaps indicate an Eleventh or Twelfth century date. This could mean that the (definitely) Norman church was built after 1086 but before 1135 on possibly an approximate footprint of the old Saxon one and that the gable cross might be a re-used artefact from the previous church.

This might also explain why Cuckney church was originally supposedly dedicated to St. Michael (patron saint of warriors).

This requires urgent further investigation.

Genuki.org.uk says, “Older records give the church as dedicated to Saint Michael, but this is clearly incorrect.” However, it does not explain why it must be in error.

It would seem more logical to change the name when replacing the Saxon (St. Michael’s) church with the new Norman (St. Mary’s church) instead of the Norman church enduring a name change.

Additionally, St. Michael also partly serves as the Patron Saint of Warriors.

“Saint Michael the Archangel serves as the patron saint of sick people who are suffering from any type of illness. He is also a patron saint of people who work in dangerous conditions such as military personnel ..” (Wikipedia)

It is therefore possible that the Saxon church may have been founded and named in remembrance of the site being an Anglo Saxon battle burial site. Speculation that the original church occupied the same site but that the Norman one was rebuilt on a slightly different footprint, may account for the mass burial pits presently extending 9.84 feet externally, but when considering the addition of the arcade in the 1500’s, then possibly some 17 feet externally at the time the Norman church was originally constructed.

Therefore the original (possibly) Saxon church may have occupied land 17 feet further north than the original Norman one and the burial pits could have been totally internal to that structure.

Whilst the ‘original’ church would probably have not existed in 632AD, (and the finds from 2018 do not date back that far to support that either), it is feasible to speculate that the original church was constructed on ground to venerate the dead from the battle, although the knowledge of the location of the burial pits in advance of constructing that church may be a leap too far.

Speight makes a further 3 points in attempting to date the “church-castle relationship”.

Firstly that the, “vast bulk of castles used during the civil war were structures that had existed for the previous 50 years or more”.

Secondly, “there is the fact that the social status of the lords of Cuckney were sufficiently high for us to expect them to have a permanent castle caput.

Together, these 2 points lead her to say, “the evidence at Cuckney (for castle dating) .. is insufficient to judge between an immediate post-Conquest and a mid 12th century date for the castle”. However, counterbalancing a possibly earlier date for the Castle is a possibly earlier date for (an original – ie. Non-Norman) church as discussed.

Thirdly, “there is the problem of the bodies excavated beneath Cuckney church”.

Although Speight says, “Hence it seems probable that a church stood on the site in the late 11th century and the castle has been added to it ..” she then fails to make the point that in such a case, (the 200 or so bodies found under and outside the church in 1950/1) must antedate the Castle & any deaths occurring from its 12th Century occupation.

Instead she says, “Theories abound that the bodies were either the victims of an Anarchy battle, or alternatively of the battle of Heathfield ..”

The work of Colvin (1951) and the revelation that Thomas De Cuckney was seemingly clearly admitting that he had inherited St. Mary’s (“moreover so far as belongs to me”), could additionally have led her to reasonably exclude that the bodies were “the victims of an anarchy battle”. Instead, she leaves it as an unanswered question.

Further, Speight says of the bodies that may relate to the Battle of Hatfield, “Accounts that mention the finds vary even in the basic details with the number of bodies comprising either fifty or 200 souls”.

She quotes 2 sources for this assertion, one being the Maurice Barley article, “Cuckney Church and Castle” (1951), yet his article is not contradictory. It only mentions numbers of bodies on one occasion, “but the interesting discovery was also made of a large number of burials – possibly as many as two hundred – which must antedate the building of the church” (P26).

The mention of 40 to 50 bodies (found in the week preceding Saturday 16th December 1950, as reported in various newspapers) was merely the first set of bodies found. This indicates that her other source, “Churches in Nottinghamshire :A Visitors Guide”, (Notts County Council Leisure Services Leaflet), must have been misleading or possibly incorrect.

Further, the HLF funded work of BOHIS and MERCIAN in November 2015 (to which Speight’s article of 1994 could not of course be privy) discovered possibly 6 reburial (reinterment) sites, (at least 3 of which were suggested by local elderly villagers before the results of the November 2015 GPR analysis).

Those corroborated by local testimony were, Central Eastern, just north and in line with the West Tower and thirdly, South side (in line with the West Tower).

This probably indicates finds in small batches which were then reburied in their own (new) pits in preference to re-opening existing reinterment sites, which would seem to be the common sense option. Local testimony also revealed the church was underpinned in 2 stages (always leaving half open for services).

There is no evidence as to when, or even if, Cuckney Castle was slighted. It could also be argued that there is precious little evidence of its construction. Yet as Speight says, “In 1153 Thomas of Cuckney granted the church of St. Mary to the Premonstratensians at Welbeck. (this was not the formal Charter, which was 1154).

This is taken to mean that the castle also passed out of Thomas’s hands .. (however) .. there was no necessity for him to vacate the adjacent castle. Thus unless there is strong documentary evidence for the slighting of the castle by either Stephen or Henry II, the grant of the church to Welbeck does not mean the end of the castle’s life”.

However, in still debating whether it was an adulterine castle, Speight has clearly not referred to Stenton (P199) who (as previously mentioned) says that Thomas operated differently, “until the old war, and then he made for himself a castle in the aforesaid land of Cuckney”.

## Summary – The Difficulty That Has Been Found Generally in Drawing Conclusions from Scant Evidence

Perhaps pertinently for any ‘Cuckney Castle invasive findings’, the De Waudari paper says, “More recent work to the west of the development area ... also led to the discovery of a substantial ditch which produced a small quantity of 12 – 13th century pottery. Again, it was concluded that this ditch formed part of the De Waudari castle, although a note of caution was sounded about the dangers of drawing over ambitious conclusions from relatively slight archaeological evidence” (Coles 2005).

In “An Adulterine Castle on Faringdon Clump, Berkshire” (By E.T. Leeds December 1935) (Antiquaries Journal, London 1936), the finds were only “fragments of medieval pottery .. at a depth of 3 to 4 feet”.

Unlike Cuckney however, we know that military action took place there, as the fort erected by Robert of Gloucester (an adherent of Maud), was stormed by Stephen’s army in 1145.

Skeletons were discovered in a trench during initial work. They lay at a depth of about 3.5 feet, “without any traces of regular burial, in great disorder, in one case the body lying immediately on top of another.”

In contrast, the some 200 skeletons found at Cuckney in 1950/1 in 3 or 4 mass burial pits were all three tiered and ordered so that all had their feet pointing to the east.

E.T. Leeds explained that the trench and skeletons were not necessarily connected with the 1145 castle and that further evidence was required. In this regard, several further trenches were dug and “sherds of medieval culinary ware were extracted” but continues that the “dating of medieval pottery is notoriously obscure.”

He observes that, “even as late as the middle of the 13th century, glazed wares are not to be expected as a general constituent of the pottery from a medieval site.” However, a variety of coarse ware (including pieces of large (possibly cooking) pots was discovered).

Yet, despite the importance of the capture of Faringdon (as recognised by Stenton), the 1st Faringdon study of July 1935, although severely time limited, did not reveal any military related items.

A 2nd study in 1936 incorporated new excavation trenches but again the results were disappointing, although an iron key and several nails were found, but not considered to date from the middle of the 12th century.

In summary, the De Waudari and Faringdon Clump reports serve to show how difficult it is to unearth evidence that can definitely be attributed to ‘a castle’.

Yet, given the temporary nature of these unlicensed forts and the probability that little or no military action ensued at many of them, then that tends to support an expected lack of evidence.

Having explained some general Castle thinking and the information pertaining to Cuckney Castle (and it’s possible relationship to St. Mary’s), it will be very interesting to read MERCIAN’s Cuckney Castle 2018 findings.





# A Supporters Perspective

## How Local History Came to Life

By Nick Mason

I got involved with BOHIS and the archaeological work being undertaken by Mercian Archaeology at Cuckney nearly four years ago now and I have enjoyed myself immensely. For me it has been a personal journey of discovery, Cuckney is not some far away place of monumental archaeological interest like the pyramids of Giza or a site of the ancient civilisations of Greece or Rome, it is a local village and as such it is relevant and interesting for anyone interested in local history and the landscape we live in.

Last summer, June 2018, I was involved with the surveying of the old water management system in the fields behind the village church. Evidence of the sluices and channels were clearly visible on the ground. On the right side of the photographs below you can clearly see the ground rising, this is the Castle site.



Over the course of these investigations many volunteers and supporters were involved and they come with many and varied skills and perform a variety of roles from clearing the undergrowth to setting up a field kitchen to feed us all.

I and the other volunteers spent several days both digging and sieving through the spoil heap looking for finds. I didn't actually find anything of interest but it has to be done because one of the things I've learned is that the small finds are just as important in building a picture and the dating of what was there at various times in history.

Another area that deserves mention is one that can easily be overlooked as we come and go on the various field days is the time and effort required to make this all happen. It would be easy to underestimate all the hard work and effort put in by Paul and the other members of BOHIS who raise both awareness and funding while working hard to procure Heritage Lottery funding without which this project would not happen. As well as dealing with the Lottery funding applications permissions must be granted by both Welbeck Estates, the Church and any other landowner.

Working alongside BOHIS is Mercian Archaeology who oversee and manage the field work, surveying, geophysics, digging, finds processing and community education.

An important part of this project is to provide educational opportunities and workshops to local schools and on many occasions whilst in the field we have been visited by groups of children. For some it would have just been an interesting school trip but if only one or two go away with an enduring interest in history then it will have been a success, they may even go on to study history or archaeology at University.

Being around archaeologists I have picked up several new habits. For example, I can no longer simply walk past a mole hill. I have a poke around in it to see if the mole has unearthed anything of interest. I even know what to do if it has. I look at rock and stone differently, always on lookout for evidence of tool marks. With churches and other old buildings I look for masons marks and evidence of even older stonework being reused.

However, I think the biggest change is how I view the landscape I'm in. I now look through different eyes and can spot medieval ridge and furrow. I look at the shape of the landscape and the boundaries of fields, roads and buildings. What used to be lumps and bumps have become possible earthworks and it all makes for a far more interesting experience when out and about. I even understand some of it thanks to what I've learned and what I've read since my involvement in hands-on archaeological work.





# In Search of Cuckney Castle

By MERCIAN Archaeological Services CIC

A brief summary of the archaeological works undertaken at Cuckney Castle, to provide understanding of how the archaeological excavations, geophysics and surveying have contributed to our knowledge and understanding of this important monument.

Today the popular view of a medieval castle is of a massive stone monument looming over the town and/or countryside:

*“These castles impinge upon our view of the past, as well as upon our view of our contemporary surroundings, for one simple reason: they were built of stone, whose durable quality provide something to look at centuries later, even if extensively ruined.” Higham, 2003 p105.*

Of course many medieval castles were not built in stone or only had limited masonry. As Higham (2003 p105) states:

*“Our landscape also contains large numbers of Castle sites represented only by earthworks on which there are no buildings surviving above ground at all. They take many forms, a common one being the motte and bailey in which a large mound of earth and/or rock dominates a defended courtyard. These earthworks carried the same mixture of defensive and residential structures that are found in stone castles, with an important difference: they were built of timber, clay-clad timber, cob, wattle and daub, shingles and thatch.”*

Coulson points out that these earth and timber castles would perish quickly due to “rot, wind, and erosion”; excavation at Hen Domen has uncovered frequent repairs and alterations (1994 p78). Coulson goes on to comment that: “Only the large foundation-posts found at Abinger and at South Mimms (see Fig. 2.1), speculatively attributed to the anarchy, would be difficult to reinstate” (1994 p78). Higham (2003) goes on to comment that due to the extensive decay of these materials above ground, evidence of materials used, and construction techniques can only be retrieved through painstaking excavation.

Higham (2003 p117) states that timber castles do appear to have contained “buildings of similar form and function” as their stone counterparts which basically leads him to the view that timber castles should not be viewed as a different type “but rather as a variation on a theme.” 2003 p118.

Cuckney castle is described in the academic literature and Scheduling description as a Motte and Bailey castle, and currently the best guess is that it would be like those of wooden construction described by Higham. It is thought to be an adulterine Motte and Bailey Castle. Historic England define a Motte and Bailey Castle as a:

*“Medieval Fortification introduced into Britain by the Normans. They comprised a large conical mound of earth or rubble, the Motte, surrounded by a palisade and stone or timber tower. In the majority of examples an embanked enclosure containing additional buildings, the Bailey, adjoined the Motte. Motte castles and Motte and Bailey castles acted as garrison forts during offensive military operations, as strong holds, and, in many cases, an aristocratic residents and centres of local or royal administrations.”*

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010909>

Date website accessed 20.03.2019

Cuckney castle is claimed to have been built in the period known as the anarchy during the reign of King Stephen (1135 to 1154AD) at the end of the Norman Dynasty. During this period there was a power struggle between the daughter of Henry 1st, Empress Matilda, and her cousin, Stephen, King of England and Duke of Normandy. The breakdown of Royal authority resulted in many landowners constructing their own fortifications for security, local control and prestige.

Charles Coulson (1994, p67) in his opening statement comments: “The study of castles in the reign and wars of King Stephen has been bedevilled by a tendency to treat all fortifications of a period as a single category.” Coulson goes on to comment that if castles of the period are considered as falling within one of three structural classifications then the problems of the above approach are made apparent.

The first classification, in which the majority of castles fall within, Coulson (1994) terms as “regularly founded” occur soon after the Norman Conquest and were in use as residences or as administrative bases and may have been “defensively refurbished”.

The second classification are castles that developed during the nineteen years of the Anarchy of the twelfth century, through tenurial and economic stimulus or modernised by means not to do with civil strife but other growth factors and “seignorial ambition” (that is the landowner’s ambition for increased status etc).

The third classification of castle are those “built in direct furtherance of usurpation” by landowners seeking to enforce their lordship over a territory, without permission from the King. This group of new castles also included siegeworks and campaign works, which Coulson states were “intentionally ephemeral”.

Another factor to consider when studying castles of this period is that timber castles vary greatly in quality and permanence. Different phases of reconstruction can be very different in character from each other (Higham 2003). This is particularly true of Hen Domen, Montgomeryshire, though this castle was established early in the Norman period not the reign of King Stephen. It is the most extensively excavated wooden motte and bailey in Britain.

Cuckney castle falls within the third classification and is referred to as an adulterine castle because it was built without the permission of the King in the chaos of the civil war, by Thomas de Cuckney. De Cuckney supported King Stephen despite apparently not seeking a licence to build his castle at Cuckney.

It seems reasonable to assume Cuckney castle was intrinsically an earthwork and timber castle, being located close to the Forest of Sherwood it seems fair to assume there would have been a good supply of timber for construction.

Cuckney is mentioned in the Domesday book of 1086AD. Before the Norman Conquest land in Cuckney was held by Alric, Wulfsi and Swein. By 1086 the land of Swein was in the hands of Hugh son of Baldric, while that of Alric and Wulfsi was owned by Roger of Busli. The settlement was quite large, and the part of the holding belonging to Hugh son of Baldric was recorded as having ‘a priest and church’. This is may suggest a Saxon church on the site at this time. Physical evidence also supports this view, in the form of the fragment of a Saxo-Norman gable cross or free standing grave stone embedded into the south external wall of the 12th century tower. Thomas De Cuckney is reputed to have rebuilt the church in the 1150s whereby Creighton described the church as enclosed within the bailey;

*“The parish church of St Mary, Cuckney (Nottinghamshire) stands entirely within a rectangular outer bailey associated with a low Motte built on marshy ground within a bend of the river Poulter”. Creighton also highlights the fact that the presence of a church within the Bailey may have held military advantages; “with a stone tower acting as a strong point in an earth and timber fortification.” Further, in acknowledgment that many late Saxon churches brought recognition of secular status and ecclesiastical authority for the lord, Renn (1993) coined the phrase “towers of display” (Creighton 2016, p124).*

Creighton goes on to say (2016 p124):

*“Here we have an unusual scenario in that the foundation date of a minor role Motte and Bailey is well-established: the cartulary of Welbeck identifies Thomas de Cuckney as the builder of the new castle during the ‘old war’ of 1139 – 45 (Stenton 1932:199). Underpinning work beneath the church has revealed a large mass burial, comprising c. 200 male individuals, packed haphazardly into a minimum of three trenches that clearly antedated the church (Barley 1951). It’s twelfth-century reconstruction may well be an act of seignorial penance: de Cuckney was the founder of the Premonstratensian house of Welbeck, whose foundation charter of c. 1153-4 includes St Mary’s at Cuckney as a gift, and*

*records the remarkable dedication, ‘for my soul and the souls of my father and my mother, but also for all those whom I have unjustly plundered’ (Colvin 1951: 64-6). Here the present church may well therefore actually post-date a short lived anarchy period Castle.”*

However, in contrast Historic England state:

*“The monument includes the motte, outer bailey and part of the inner Bailey of the 12th century Motte and Bailey Castle at Cuckney. Originally, the inner Bailey extended further east into the area now occupied by the parish church of St Mary and the churchyard to the south...”*

<https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1010909>

Date website accessed 20.03.2019

Historic England describes St Mary’s church as a later addition, having determined the inner bailey as extending to include the area where the church sits. Creighton in contrast believes the church to be contemporary with the motte and bailey and locates the current church in the outer bailey. This indicates that there is a lack of clarity amongst historians on what the earthworks at Cuckney represent. St Mary’s parish church of Cuckney has been subject to much speculation following the discovery of bodies in the 1950s during stabilisation works. Historically it has been taken that Maurice Barley’s account (1951) of the discovery of 200 bodies under the church was evidence of victims of a skirmish or from a small engagement during the anarchy. The fact that the church is reputed to have been built by De Cuckney in penitence would make this conclusion plausible (Creighton 2016, p124).

This suggestion conveniently links the motte and bailey with those burials, providing a preferred date for the bodies, according to historic England (Gaunt & Crossley 2016, p15).

The first of these bodies were discovered in December 1950 but no analysis of the bones took place before they were reinterred in St Mary’s cemetery. No official record exists marking the location of the reinterred remains.

In the 1970s Stanley Revill proposed a theory that the burials found at St Mary’s may actually date from the Battle of Hatfield 633 AD between King Edwin of Northumbria and King Pender of Mercia, in alliance with Cadwallon of Gwynedd (Revill 1975), based on his reassessment of the evidence for burials, alongside place name evidence. Revill was not the first historian to hold the view that the Battle of Hatfield was fought near Cuckney. In 1890 Stapleton in his “History of the Lordship of King’s Clipstone or Clipstone in Sherwood Nottinghamshire” speculated that St Edwin’s Chapel in Clipstone parish (approximately 7 miles from Cuckney) was likely to be named after the aforesaid King Edwin following the Battle of Hatfield (Gaunt & Crossley 2016, p15), although there is no agreed date for its construction.

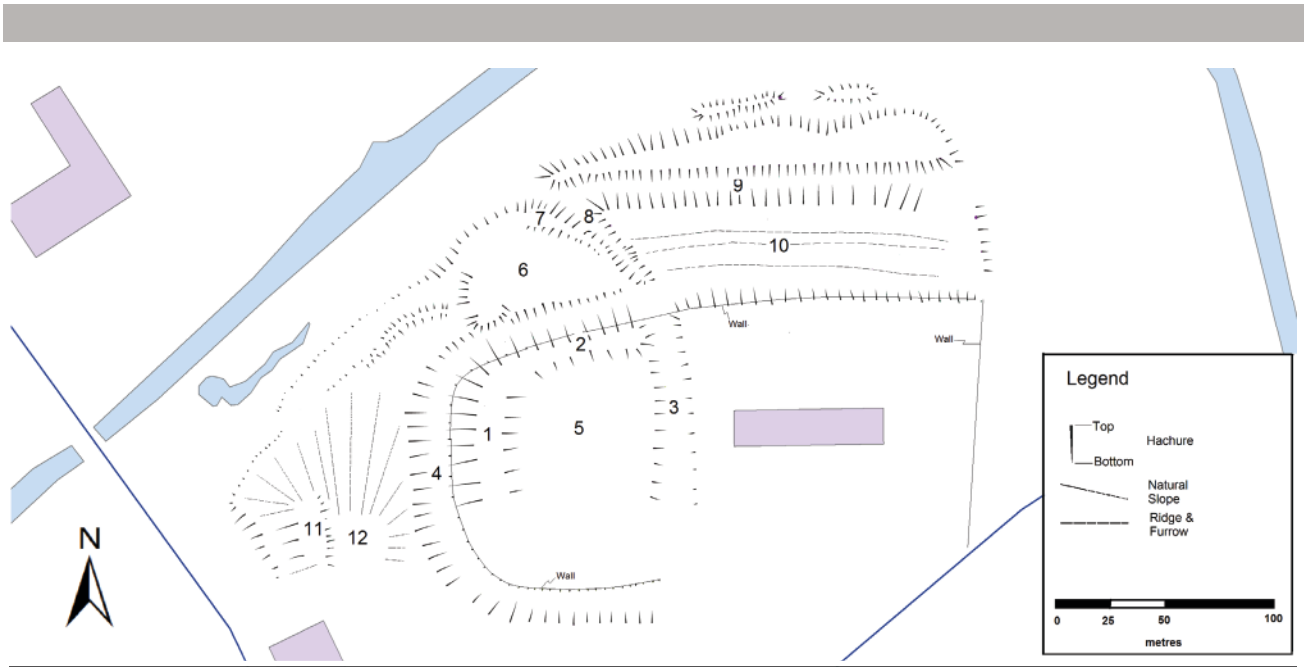


The Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society have championed the belief that the bodies found at St Mary's Parish Church of Cuckney were in fact the fallen from the Battle of Hatfield in 633. The subsequent Sainthood (Canonisation) of King Edwin of Northumbria, who lost his life in the battle, does not exclude the possibility of a Saxon church being built on the site of a venerated war grave.

An integrated archaeological survey of Cuckney churchyard, castle and surroundings was undertaken by Mercian Archaeological Services CIC in 2015. The

purpose of the survey was to locate the possible burial pits discovered in 1950-51 and the possible reinterment pit/s, as well as to further interpret the site, earthworks and landscape which included Cuckney motte and bailey adulterine castle.

During the survey a slight bank (feature 11), reproduced below (Gaunt & Crossley 2016, Fig 22 p105), was recorded on the promontory to the west of where the currently identified Motte is recorded within Cuckney churchyard.



Hachure plan of earthworks, Cuckney Churchyard and Castle, 2016



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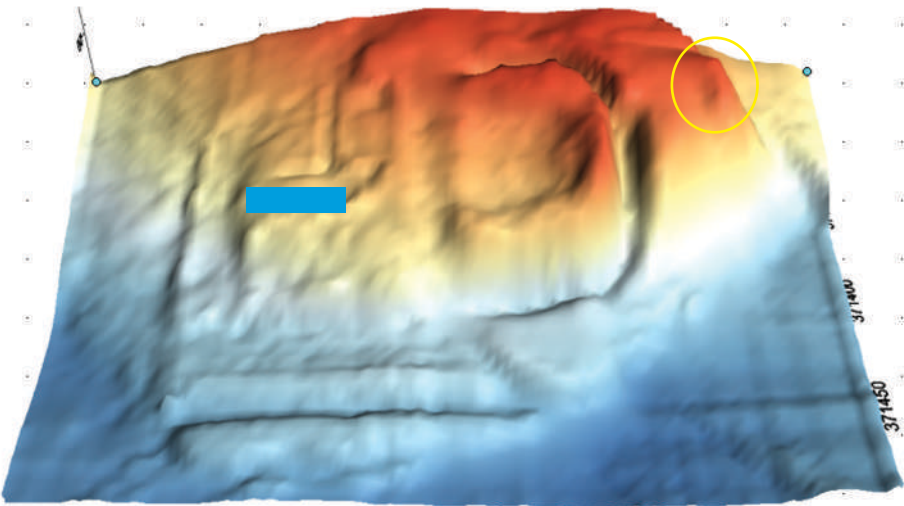
Hachure plan showing bank on promontory to west of Cuckney churchyard.

The summit of this promontory is the same height as the remains of the presumed Motte (see 3d model on next page). It would appear to be highly unlikely that such a high natural feature would not have been incorporated into the fortifications and resulted in the hypothesis that Cuckney castle may have extended further than the current scheduling by Historic England.

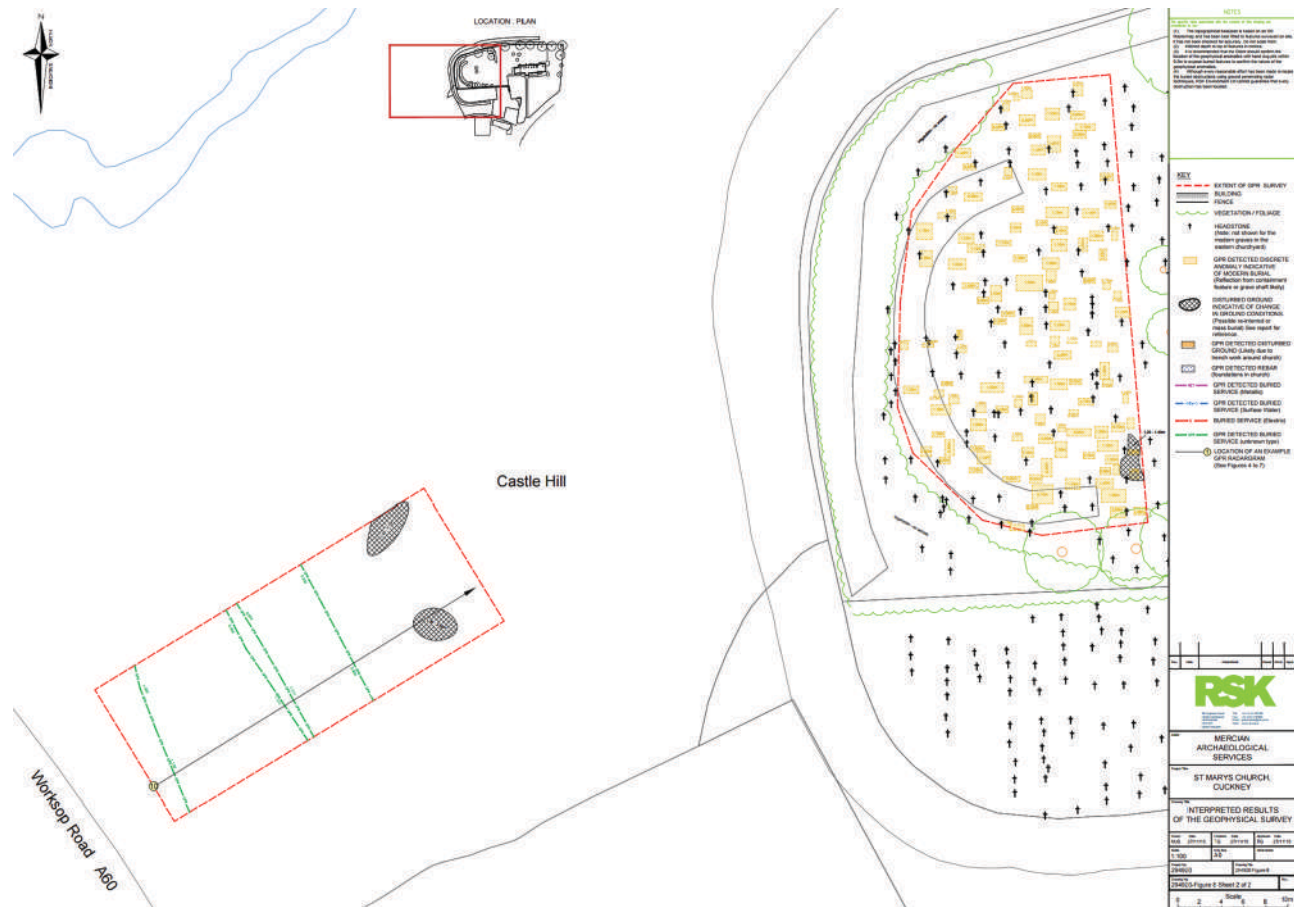
The promontory is truncated by a ha-ha to the east which then wraps round the western end of the current churchyard. This ha-ha presumably dates from the extension of the burial ground to the west, presumably constructed in the eighteenth century or nineteenth century, though it appears to have been interpreted as the bailey and 'moat' of a motte and bailey castle. It is presented as such on the Ordnance Survey 6 inches to 1 mile map of 1884.

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The results of the survey also identified an anomaly through the use of Ground Penetrating Radar (RSK 2015, table 2, fig 8)



3d model of Cuckney motte and bailey castle including churchyard looking south with bank on promontory circled in yellow (church to west shown in blue).



Anomaly identified on promontory to west of churchyard.

This integrated archaeological survey, published in 2016 (Gaunt & Crossley), led to further archaeological investigation at the site seeking to address questions about spatial relationships, date and the contemporary nature of the earthworks recorded. As recommended by Higham (2003), the only way to understand the structure and material used is through excavation.





Photograph of Trench 2 looking South-East, showing bank identified in previous survey to right of picture.

The excavation, undertaken by volunteers under the direction of Mercian Archaeological Services CIC in 2018 involved two trenches. The first one was located at the bottom of the promontory to the west of the supposed motte close to the river Poulter following a late Saxon pottery find during the fieldwork in 2015. This trench produced relatively late Saxon pottery as well as pottery between the 17th and 21st century. A sequence of cultivation soils was shown to be of 20th century, late 17th -early 18th century and the lowest in the sequence contained exclusively late Saxon and Norman period pottery. This provided evidence of Late Saxon settlement in Cuckney.

The second trench was sited over the earthwork bank identified in the survey. (Main photo)

This bank may have been modified in the second world war by the military, specifically the Sherwood Foresters Regiment, as spent blank shells from 1943 were excavated along with fragments of barbed wire and a cap badge from the Sherwood Foresters Regiment. (See photo opposite)

The soil covering the earthwork bank, cut by military defences, appears to have taken several centuries to form and had not been unduly disturbed, presumably because the land was used for pasture.



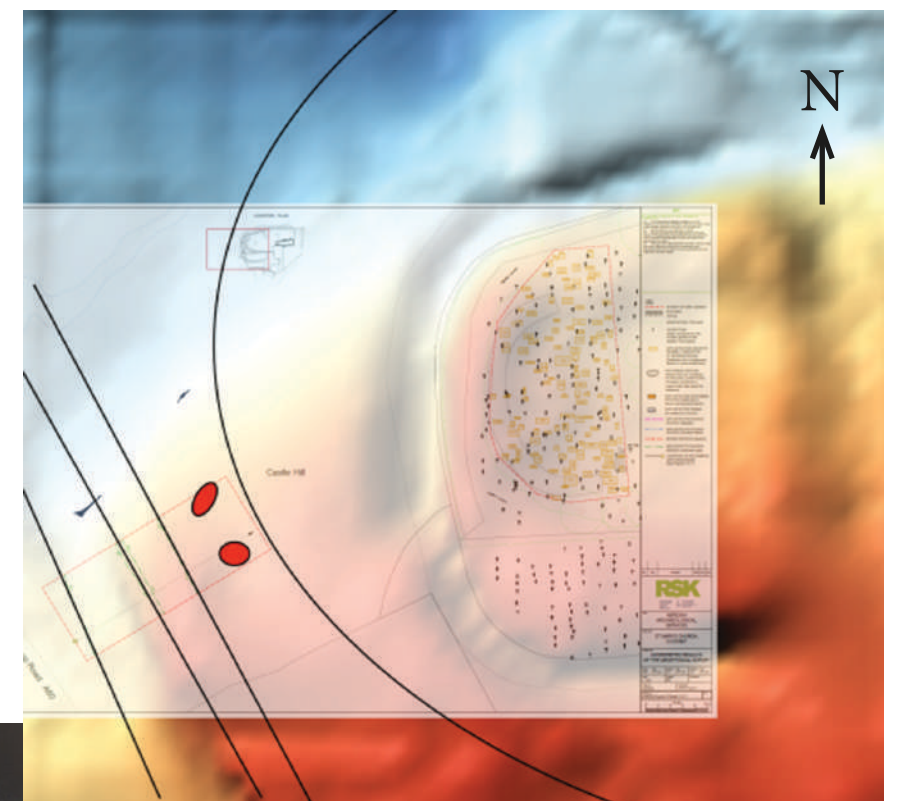
Photograph showing depth of excavated ditch on promontory to west of churchyard

Of the finds recovered from the soil in this area, perhaps the most interesting was a French Gunspall flint for a musket.

These finds provided physical evidence for the Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society archaeological project "Warriors Through the Landscape," which postulated this was an area of military significance through the ages.

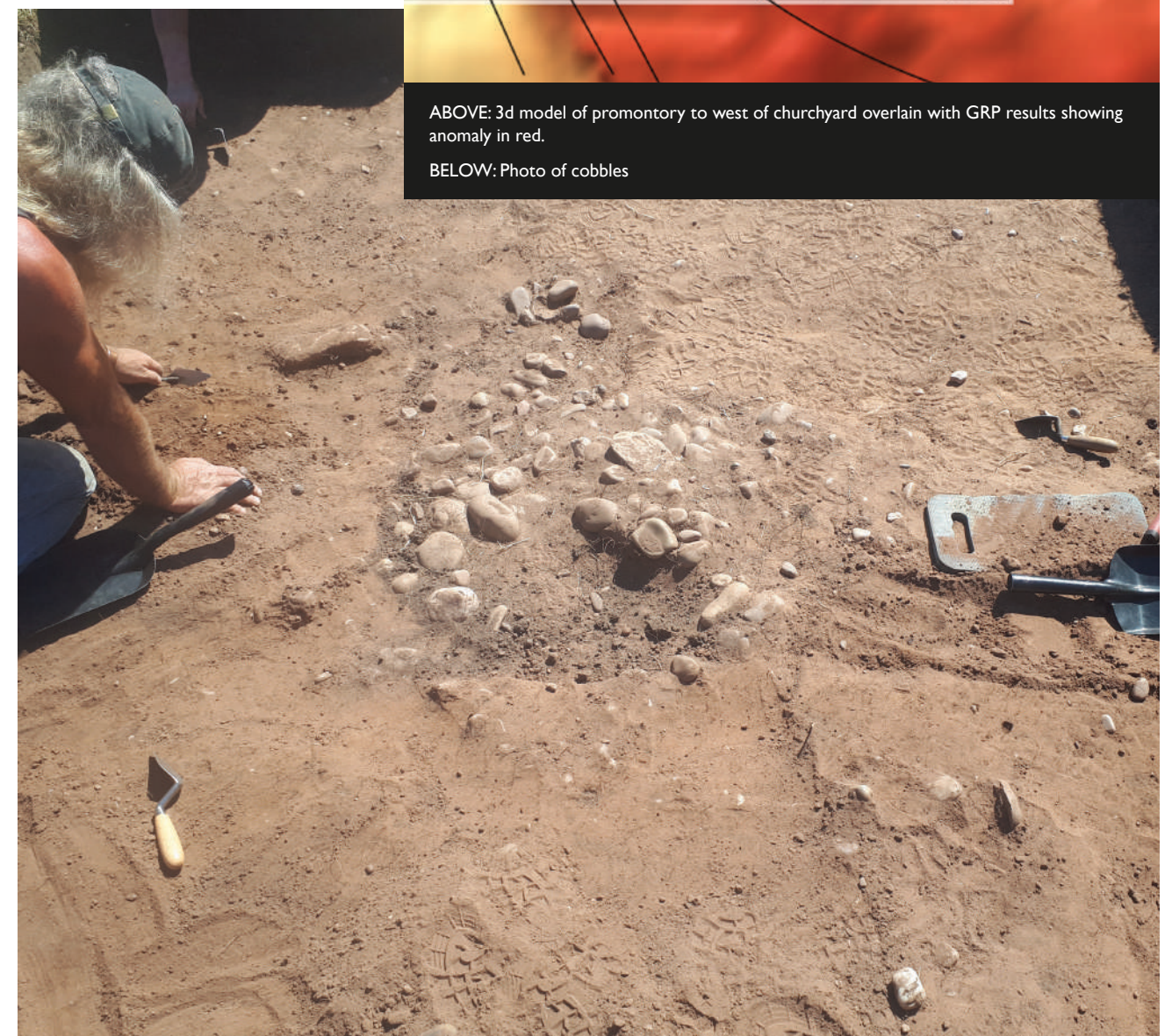
The anomaly found through Ground Penetrating Radar during in the survey in 2015 was found to be a deposit of rounded quartzite cobbles; see figure opposite.

There was no direct dating evidence for these pebbles except for some small fragments of medieval and possibly roman pottery. These cobbles could possibly have been a hard standing surface for a post or merely a discarded dump. See photo below.



ABOVE: 3d model of promontory to west of churchyard overlain with GRP results showing anomaly in red.

BELOW: Photo of cobbles





The deposit of cobbles was located over the fills of a ditch associated with the 'slight' bank identified in the survey. It is of note that both the ditch and the bank proved more substantial than 'slight' earthwork bank had initially appeared in the topographic survey. The upper fill of the ditch contained a sherd of pottery that might be of early, middle or late Saxon date. This sherd of pottery, though only an individual find, could be a key piece of evidence that occupation in Cuckney was as early as the 7th Century. This would be contemporary with the Battle of Hatfield of 633 AD.

The various fills of the ditch contained relatively large quantities of pot boiler stones likely to be Roman or earlier in date, which are not in situ rather were of secondary deposition. Neolithic or Bronze age flint flakes were also found in later layers of both trenches.

The bank and the soil upon which the bank was constructed contained a number of large 'fresh' (not been rounded in ploughing) sherds of pottery which suggest they may be contemporary with the bank formation. The pottery can be dated between the 10th and 13th centuries, with most of the wares overlapping around the middle of the twelfth century. This suggests there was activity on the site of up to the early/mid-twelfth century presumably at the time the bank was constructed (and excavation of the ditch). However evidence for human activity ceases (in trench two) thereafter until the 17th century.

It may be possible to suggest that the creation of an associated ditch and bank with pottery from the early to mid-twelfth century and the lack of finds after this date could be explained by the construction of a fortification or castle on the site and access to it being limited, resulting in reduced activity in the surrounding area which may have continued for many centuries dependent on farming and agricultural use.

If this is the case then the location of the 'castle' at Cuckney, and previous interpretations of the earthworks there and their relationship to the castle may need to be reconsidered.

George Sanderson's map of Twenty Miles Around Mansfield, from 1835, does not depict earthworks of the Castle or make any reference to its presence. Of course this is not proof that no earthworks were present. Sanderson does not depict the castle at Laxton; so castles known to exist were not included in his survey. What his map does show is the churchyard occupying a roughly square plot surrounding the church. At some point between the 1835 Sanderson map and the 1884 Ordnance Survey map, the church yard was extended southwards to take in all land up to Norton Lane, further eastwards, and more substantially to the west. This westward expansion was surrounded and defined by the cutting of a ha-ha which is particularly prominent on the western and southern sides. The ha-ha separates the mound interpreted as a 'motte' from the promontory to the west, as previously stated. The mound may a naturally deposited feature of red sand, and spoil from rabbit burrows along the western side of this feature were devoid of artefacts when examined by David Budge (Gaunt and Crossley

2016, p138). It is also possible that earth from the ha-ha was thrown-up internally into the churchyard, forming earthworks which have subsequently been interpreted as parts of the bailey.

However, without excavation to prove otherwise it is also equally possible that the ha-ha was cut into a pre-existing ditch of a pre-existing castle. But without further invasive archaeological works this would be impossible to ascertain. Earthworks to the north including the ditch scheduled as forming the outer bailey of the castle may in fact be the remains of a mill-leet or channel cutting across the former meander of the river, and not part of the 'castle' at all.

The difficulty in ascribing these features to a possible adulterine castle is that the features may not be contemporary. It is therefore worthy of consideration, that the earthworks scheduled as a motte and bailey castle at Cuckney may in fact be features dating from many different phases, many of which could be Victorian in origin.

The bank and ditch as excavated in this project may represent the fortification of the promontory to the west of the present churchyard in the mid-12th century, in which case there may not have been a classic motte and bailey castle at Cuckney, and the discussions relating to the relationship between the church and castle and their supposed importance to the dating of any burials under the church may be based on a false premise as to the location of the castle. Academics may have spent time discussing relationships based on an original misidentification. This should certainly be considered until excavation can determine the facts and demonstrates the importance of archaeological research even of sites previously assumed to be understood, even when they are formally scheduled as a specific feature.

An example of where there can be problems would be the discrepancy between Creighton and Historic England as to whether St Mary's Church is within the inner or outer Bailey. If the ditch running north-south between the motte and the church is a feature surviving from the 12th century then the church can be identified as being positioned in the outer bailey, if not then perhaps the inner bailey. However if this feature is simply the former boundary of the churchyard on the western edge, and the earthworks to the west of them are the product of an expansion of the churchyard in the Victorian era, then neither proposition is proven.

Only further archaeological excavation around the area of the scheduled monument could help to determine if these earthworks are part of a castle or whether they can be explained by more recent activity.

Another challenge with identifying Cuckney as an adulterine castle is that we only know of a castle at Cuckney through the register of Welbeck Abbey, quoted by Thoroton This does not give any details of where the castle was, or even the type of castle it was. However the term castle was used loosely to incorporate various unofficial fortifications.

Creighton clearly perceives Cuckney as an adulterine motte and bailey castle and not some other form of fortification, as he says in his introduction to his work, "the classic definition of a castle as the fortified residence of a Lord is used flexibly, although late medieval tower houses, fortified manors and artillery fortifications are generally excluded," Creighton 2016 p8)

The site may have been subject to academics attempting to 'shoehorn' the earthworks into motte and bailey typology. It is possible that the fortifications at Cuckney may have been more in keeping with a fortified manor house or a very modest motte and bailey. Certainly, our recent survey and geophysical survey work has demonstrated that the accepted identification of the feature in the west of the churchyard as a deliberately constructed Motte is unlikely: this feature seems to be part of a natural promontory that has been cut off by the ha-ha around the churchyard, and may, in its present form, date no earlier than the 19th century. The bank and ditch discovered in trench 2, to the west of the churchyard, could have been part of a defensive enclosure thrown up around the medieval manor house, or constructed as the boundary of a temporary castle or fortification. The fact that the ditch was not huge in size may be accounted for by the castle being an Anarchy period foundation, designed to be a nuisance and to fend off casual raids, rather than to withstand sieges and armies.

On the other hand, if all of the surviving earthworks, including the ha-ha, in and around the churchyard are contemporary and are associated with an adulterine motte and bailey castle, as described by Historic England and the academic castles experts who have written on Cuckney, then Cuckney castle would be an unusually large and significant fortification. Our survey and excavation work suggests that this was not the case and reveals the exciting possibility that Cuckney castle is likely to have been much closer to Coulson's 'ephemeral' Anarchy period fortifications, than the massive and substantial rectangular fortification claimed by the Scheduling.

One final point to make, Finding Cuckney Castle as part of the Heritage Lottery Fund supported Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society "Warriors through the Landscape" would not have been possible without the determination of the committee members of BOHIS and the many volunteers who took part in the excavations. For their efforts they were offered training in archaeological techniques of excavation and recording and endless motivational speeches from some of the supervisors. As one volunteer commented in response to these motivational speeches; "It is as if the Norman Barons have returned!"



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# Drone Zone #1 - View of Both Excavated Trenches

(Picture courtesy of Robin Orr)





# Drone Zone #1 - View of Both Excavated Trenches

(Picture courtesy of Robin Orr)





# Children's Participation Review and the Art Competition

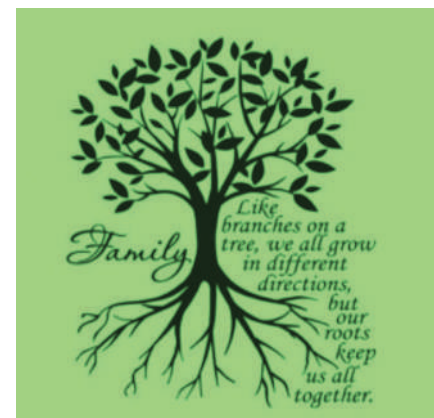
By Jennie Johnson

My inspiration and preparations for the onsite visits from our three schools, Cuckney, Meden and Outwood Post 16 Centre.

These were my thoughts of ways to encourage a child's interest in history.

To make history relatable by sharing your own family history with fun memories of the people and places in your childhood and encourage your family to talk about their favourite memories to you. Discuss people and events that have made a difference in the world, and often you find that these people are not unlike your own family. Try picking a moment in history and go with your family to a library to find books and old photographs to look at. Another fun idea is to go to a history museum, so you can see how things used to be and learn how things have changed over time. Ask your family to take you to an ancient church. Most people forget that is a brilliant way of time travelling history.

My idea for the younger children at Cuckney School was a 'Family Tree' or as we called it a "Communitree" i.e. a large tree decorated with leaves with the names of parents, grandparents even great grandparents. Making leaves (with a template) and applying them to the tree, starting with the present family at the top, parents lower down, grandparents and great grandparents on the trunk of the tree. This idea of a more illustrated family tree works well and starting with the present and going back in time is the correct way of beginning proper research into your family history.



We provided the older children from Meden a pre-prepared A4 10-page booklet entitled "All about me" The format was scrapbook and gave the children loads of space to stick photos and ephemera and write and illustrate their own family history. We firmly suggested that they start thinking about the task sooner rather than later. All the adults present agreed that when the time came for you to ask the older members of your family, sadly they may not still be around to recount their stories.



A passing thought - what about writing a time travelling story?  
This is an excerpt from my story;

## Eric and Oscar

(aka King Edwin and his son Prince Osfrith)

"Hm" said Dad. Oh no! I thought what now. "Oscar will you stop looking at your phone, put it in your pocket and today we will do something useful together" "Err, what Dad?" "Dads and lads." "Well what's that then?" I asked. "How about a battle re-enactment?" I went quiet, I had visions of dressing up clothes, tents, mud and camp fires, no, no this is not me! We were just passing the church and Dad steered me in that direction

"It's time for me to tell you a story, Oscar" I put on my interested face and switched off my brain.

"Long, long ago in a time they called the 'Dark Ages' there was a King called Edwin..." I felt a sudden chill and the wind swirled around me.

"Dad I don't have time to listen to stupid, boring stories, can't you just leave me alone?" A horrible nightmare feeling was rising in me, turning everything around to darkness, I felt heavy as if I couldn't move. Someone was calling my name, Osfrith, Osfrith...

Penda ran towards the approaching soldiers and sought out their leader "The rumours are true then, Cadwallon, Edwin is advancing from the north" "How many day's march until we meet?" said Cadwallon "And is that evil dog Lord Godbold in his company?"

Penda shook his head "My man has calculated three days hence, but Edwin will take to the high ground and hope to surprise us."

"Ah yes, but he does not know that we march together" said Cadwallon.

"Osfrith, you sleep like the dead, wake up my son" said Edwin. Sleep and dreams were holding me so tightly; no, I cannot wake but Father was insistent. "I will not ask thee again, my Prince, we must make ready now"

I pulled myself up by the cross Paulinus, the preacher from Rome, had given to Father when he was made a Christian. He always wore it around his neck. "You mean we will make the Battle today" I asked. "It is difficult to say, my son, our spies have not returned to me" Edwin began to move away. "Father, never have I seen greater among men than you, a noble warrior in the far front of the battle" "So, love me, my dear son, and follow me"

"Father, kings are to be feared not loved". We laughed together and walked back to the cover of the trees.

So, the battle lines were drawn, and we were waiting on a densely wooded hill and I could hear the rhythm of many a hundred men as they marched below us. Father, the King, had made a stirring battle speech and the men had made ready with close shield walls. I looked at my sword, so precious; the blacksmith had taken hours to craft it in a red-hot fire, twisting the iron rods together and then hammering it to shape; I wondered how much blood there would be on it by the end of the day?

Our men were falling all around me and as the enemy advanced it became a killing ground. But we held firm, covering our heads with our shields as our archers delivered a rain of arrows into the front ranks of the enemy. We threw rocks, spears, axes anything to break their resolve; there was pushing, yelling and blood so much blood it became a field of hell. There was nowhere for us to go, just slowly, slowly down the hill towards the river, we could not know it would stop our retreat. I saw my father fall and a great cry went up from the enemy. I could not get to him, that bold heart, had it stopped beating? I stepped over the bodies and detritus of war to hold his hand.



There is no glory of war when you have lost that most dear to you. As I kissed his face and held him in my arms reddened with his gore I felt a sharp pain and I heard the wind roaring and the ground Shaking.

Someone was calling my name, Oscar, Oscar...

It was Dad, I opened my eyes and looked at his familiar face.

Drawings by Trevor Crook



We sat on the grass outside the Village Hall and I read the story to them, I found it quite atmospheric and at the back of my mind I was thinking “yes this battle could have happened exactly here where we are sitting on this lovely warm day”.

We talked about Saxon battles and of the young soldiers. For most of the C7th they were engaged in power struggles against anyone who got in their way. Several children asked where they came from? - what is now the North Sea side of Germany. They were very superstitious and believed in lucky charms. They hoped that rhymes, potions, stones and jewels would protect them from evil spirits and illness. We thought about Anglo-Saxon graves and of what they tell us about their way of life? A Saxon child's grave, in Essex, contained the bones of a dog perhaps it was a pet dog. We liked this idea. Men's graves included knives and spears, which told of their hunting skills, battles and farming. Women's graves had tools used for sewing and weaving and sometimes jewels. The children were very clever and decided for themselves that as nothing written down has survived from those times, we could gather clues from the everyday things they used and the artefacts they left behind all these things gave us an insight into their lives.

## The Great Art Competition

The BOHIS team all agreed that an “Art Competition” for children and adults would be a cracking idea. It would give all age groups a reason to ponder and illustrate our area through time.

We named it: BOHIS “Warriors through the Landscape” Great Art Competition.

The categories were divided into two groups Cuckney School, Meden School or children living in North Notts. or Derbyshire which fitted the age criteria 5-15). Adults and Outwood Post 16 Centre, Worksop with a prize of a £50 amazon voucher for the winner and runner-up of each categories.

We gave them lots of ideas – Design your own family's medieval shield or a stained-glass window. Using the Angle-Saxon Runic alphabet write a secret message to a friend.

A drawing, a painting or photograph representing a place in Cuckney, the Church, river landscape, the Greendale Oak public house or views of the village. Adopt an art style Impressionist, Pointillist, Surreal- Modern Comic Book style, Manga or an image from a computer game.

We advertised with a very eye-catching poster and leaflet drops in Cuckney, Norton, Carburton and local libraries in Worksop, Mansfield, Warsop, Retford, the local mobile library and the participating schools, Cuckney, Meden, and Outwood Post 16.

We had wonderful response from Cuckney School and almost every child entered the competition

The ‘Terms and Conditions’ were on our new Website [www.battleofhatfieldsociety.co.uk](http://www.battleofhatfieldsociety.co.uk)



## The Winners



Left: Trevor Crook, our art competition judge, presenting Ruth Templeton, winner of the adult class with her Amazon Voucher prize

Below: Ruth's magnificent picture of King Edwin



Right: Head Teacher, Lisa Crossland with the two winners from Cuckney School, (Phoebe Mount, 1st. and left Matilda Hewitt, 2nd)



## Summary

Looking back – these school visits proved very successful and the children and young adults asked intelligent questions and were very focused when listening and digesting everything we talked about on the days they visited. We had 117 happy children from Cuckney School, not all on the same day! A serious and knowledgeable group of 32 from Meden. The 13 young adults from Outwood Post 16, Worksop who came for the digging days and were so interested and involved with the process that two of the students were considering archaeology as an option for a future career.



# A Teacher's View

## Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society; Cuckney Castle Dig

By Philippa Rough (Teacher at Outwood Post 16)

A unique opportunity to witness an archaeological dig was recently offered to the students at Post 16.

11 students and 2 staff members set off on a very warm July day to visit the archaeological site in Cuckney village, thought to be the site of Cuckney Castle, built during a period of chaos known as the Anarchy, circa 1135.

There are many references to Hatfield around the Cuckney area and local historians wondered if the battle of Hatfield referred to Cuckney rather than the Hatfield in Doncaster, as previously thought, and they have set about trying to find evidence to support this.

In 1951, the National Coal Board was undertaking maintenance work under the church of St Mary's in Cuckney and came across a large number of bones, best described as a mass burial, for which there were no records. These bones were then reinterred in the churchyard. This find has led to the Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society requesting permission to examine the bones to discover if they are from the Saxon era, which is an ongoing process.

In the meantime, Mercian Archaeology, working with the Battle of Hatfield Investigation Society, have been involved in locating the possible site of Cuckney Castle, proving Saxon settlement with some promising results.

After being filled in on the history of Cuckney and the Saxon era by Sean, the students were able to witness the dig and talk to the archaeologists on site, Dave and Andy. Andy was overseeing the dig and Dave was the 'finds' expert.

Some of the finds included Saxon pottery, a French musket flint from the Napoleonic era, a coin from George III's reign (which was a forgery) and a cap badge from the regiment of the Sherwood Foresters dating back to 1943.

It was hot, dusty and painstaking work, but 2 of the students on the visit who wanted to go on to study archaeology still did by the end of the day!



## Children and Adults Evaluation Survey Results and Thoughts

By Paul Jameson

As part of our HLF brief, we were asked to "think back" to the events of our HLF funded, "Warriors .." project in 2018 and then to ask questions via surveys to see whether people had enjoyed their experiences (or not!).

This has been split into separate Children and Adult Survey result analyses, followed finally by the project attendance figures, that happily show us 36.4% over the estimated figures we had supplied to the HLF as part of our bid in December 2017.

### Children's Evaluation Survey What We Wanted To Happen

We wanted the children to enjoy a condensed version of as many of the themes that encompassed the adult experience. The only addition for the children was the Family Tree "Communitree" and the only subjects enjoyed by the adults but not undertaken by the Children, were the direct on site participation in the digging of trenches, the sifting of the soil, finds tray depositions etcetera.

We asked how many children were likely to take part (and those statistics were presented in our HLF bid of December 2017). We got an overall 'budgeted' (ie. promised) number of 137.

The only learning difference was that the children had to enjoy a more "potted" version of events, necessitated by a single days experience for each under teacher supervision.

We thought we presented a good mix of subjects, contrasted between indoor (Village Hall) and outdoor (outside, on site) and between interactive (ie. Family Tree, Art Competition, POW camps, On Site activities) versus more formal classroom learning (eg. How to become an archaeologist).

The events were also designed to appeal (perhaps with an expectation of some differing enthusiasms) to all age

ranges covering the 3 schools (Cuckney (5 to 12), Meden 12 – 16 and the 6th Formers of Outwood Post 16 (16 – 18).

The Art Competition was organised into separate categories for Cuckney & Meden Schools, with the 6th formers of Outwood Post 16 being part of the adult category – with £50 Amazon vouchers for Winners & Runners Up in each category – allowing 6 prizes to be won!

It also catered for differences in ability caused by age and thus aided fairer awards, which we thought was important.

### Children's Events

1/ Getting The most Out of Archaeology – including How to Become an Archaeologist

2/ POW Camps – what we've learnt so far – interactive workshop

3/ Family Tree "Communitree"

4/ On Site Activities ... Meet the archaeologists - The Search for Cuckney Castle / "Explain The Terrain" - Findings from Topographical Analysis of Fields Either Side of The River Poulter

5/ Explain the Art Competition



## What Actually Happened ?

### 1/ Attendances were better than Expected

In terms of children's attendances, we can see that 25 more attended (18% extra) but this does not provide the complete picture, as this was largely due to the Cuckney school offset being higher than the combined deficit of Meden and Outwood Post 16. The largest reason for any deficits was that Meden originally said that 50 would attend whereas only 32 did, possibly caused by an absence of 15 or 16 year olds.

### 2/ Overall Average Score Per Child Was Very Good

107 children of the 162 (72%) completed Evaluation surveys award markings, which asked them to score us from 1 (bad) to 10 (excellent). Therefore the maximum score we could have obtained was 10 from each person multiplied by the 107 participants (ie. 1070 points), whereas we actually achieved 827 points (an average score of 7.7 out of 10).

Of those 827 points gained, 21 students awarded a 9 and 35 students a 10.

This means that 65% of the 107 voters gave us either 9 or 10 (out of ten).

A further 23% of the 107 voters gave us either 7 or 8.

Overall therefore, 88% of the 107 children gave us a score between 7 and 10, which we think is worthy !

However, 12% gave us a mark of 2 to 6 (the large majority of those being a score of 5 or 6). There were only 7 children out of 107 (6.5%) that gave a mark in the 2 to 4 range and this was largely due to them not enjoying History at school and therefore not being enervated by an historical visit.

### 3/ Subject Rankings

Survey partakers were asked to Rank both Enjoyment and Educational Value (with a 1 for each category representing Best and a 5 for Worst). Each rank (1 to 5) could only be used once for each category – presenting a best to worse picture for each educational element.

It was then easy to multiply these scores together for each Educational element (with the lowest ranking multiplied score being the best).

For example, if "On site activities .." scored a 2 for Enjoyment and a 3 for Educational value, then that would attract a (multiplied) score of 6.

The lowest (and therefore best score) for ALL participants was 183 for, "On site activities", very closely followed by, "Getting The Most Out Of Archaeology".

Overall, the worst performance was the "Explain The Art Competition", very closely followed by "Family Tree" 'Communitree'.

However, for Cuckney school (younger ages 5 to 11) the Art Competition came 2nd out of 5, only losing out to, "On site activities .." by one point !

Indeed, many comments were presented showing how the Art Competition excited Cuckney school children and about 50 took part by submitting paintings and drawings. We believe that their pictures were undertaken at school under teacher supervision.

In contrast no children from either Meden or Outwood Post 16 submitted an Art entry and only a very few adults did too. This meant that only 4 out of the 6 voucher prizes were required.

### 4/ Boys and Girls Participation Ratio

The children's survey participants were split in the ratio of 39% boys to 61% girls but there was no discernible difference in enthusiasm levels. This was very good news as it displayed that the subjects each had the ability to appeal to both sexes (as planned).



Students From Outwood Post 16 (6th Form College, Worksop) outside St. Mary's Church, Cuckney



Review .. What Worked Well ?

The number of children attending was 18% above the 'budgeted' level and the overall mark was 7.7 out of 10 plus there were many favourable comments from children and teachers regarding the project.

Whilst there were some differences in opinion between schools, most noticeably in the perception of the Art Competition, generally there were consistent levels of positivity from each school, leading to the feeling that the 5 educational subjects were largely broad enough in scope to appeal to the age ranges 5 to 18. Additionally, there was a 1 size fits all children Evaluation Survey of 12 questions.

Only a very few children said that they did not wish to take part in any future activities.

Review .. What Didn't Work As Well .. What Might We Do Differently Next Time ?

Firstly, especially the teacher at Cuckney School thought that there was a long gap between Summer 2018 and the distribution and then completion of the Evaluation surveys (due back on 29th March 2019). This was confirmed by some children's surveys when asked what could have been better. Some said that they couldn't remember what had occurred.

We agree that in future an aspiration would be to make the evaluation survey the first milestone after the completion of project works to help correct this issue. Note that this was much less of an issue for Meden and Outwood Post 16 students but even here it would enhance memory and objectivity positively.

Secondly, some students were unhappy that they did not get to be 'hands on' with the archaeology itself (which took place at the 2 excavated trenches during their visits). Whilst we have some sympathy for this, it is logistically difficult to assimilate large numbers of children and supervise them all, when there are dangerous implements such as spades and trowels in use and where a trench is 5 to 6 feet in depth. Whilst Liability Insurance checks were part of the standard HLF brief prior to the grant award, this would have been of little comfort to a parent whose child had been injured on site. Unfortunately, this leads to a more sanitised environment than some children would reasonably hope for or expect; yet it is difficult to foresee how this might easily be overcome without the process being devalued as a result.

Adults Evaluation Survey What We Wanted To Happen

We wished that most or all of the 149 adults that participated would take part in the survey as it would provide a more confident set of results, but only 51 provided their email addresses and of those, only 20 completed the on line set of 47 SurveyMonkey questions.

What Actually Happened ?

Only 13% of the 149 adults therefore took part in the survey which was disappointing, although we had put prior procedures in place to gather their email addresses as they came on site and also remedially followed up afterwards to try to obtain more.

1/ Attendances were better than Expected

Only 91 were 'budgeted' to take part but 149 did so, meaning adult attendances were 63% higher than expected

2/ Overall Average Score Per Adult Was Very Good

An average score of 88% was achieved (thus an average score of 8.8 out of ten, which was slightly higher than the children. However, the children's average of 7.7 was based upon 107 children respondents, which means that it is statistically more reliable than the adults average.

The adults completing the survey may have represented a skewing towards an enthusiasm for such projects and a slightly inflated score might have been the consequence.

3/ Subject Learning Experiences & Enjoyment – Castle ONLY

As the castle represented a large proportion of the HLF funding, it was key to discover how the activities were perceived by the adults, many of whom came to many of the Castle invasive days which ended up as about 20 working days, when considering the extra test trenching and the 2 'Working Saturdays'.

71% said that their experiences were 'consistently enjoyable, inspiring and creative throughout' with a further 18% saying 'mainly enjoyable ..'.

4/ Subject Learning Experiences & Enjoyment – Water meadows / Topography ONLY

Although only 9 adults participated in the 5 days of Water meadows, all of them gave the 'consistently enjoyable' top rating.

5/ Community Saturdays – 'Kick Off' day of 12th May & 'Final Presentation Day' of 29th September

53% said that their experiences were 'consistently enjoyable, inspiring and creative throughout' with a further 23% saying 'mainly enjoyable ..' and 12% as 'partly enjoyable'. The other 12% did not attend either of our Community Saturdays.

6/ Communication

A heartening 88% thought that we achieved 'Excellent Communication of Events and Timings' (but again please remember that this was based on a low number of adults respondents).

7/ Men and Women Participation Ratio

The adult survey participants were split in the ratio of 61% men to 39% women (the exact opposite of the children's ratio), but again, there was no discernible difference in enthusiasm levels.

Review .. What Worked Well ?

Team Spirit !

The enthusiasm levels were high and the return rate of people participating in both the Castle and Water meadows / Topography events was also very impressive, (with most staying for the whole day) and especially when factoring in the long hot summer of 2018. Complementing the excellent clarity of the LIDAR was the drone experience provided freely by Robin Orr, not forgetting the canteen facilities provided cheaply and daily by Roy Harris-Lock, who with his wife Ann, also volunteered to be the chefs at our Final Presentation Day barbeque.

Bob Howlett also gave major support in freely providing his fencing to secure our sites, together with his van, all on a daily basis.

Review .. What Didn't Work As Well .. What Might We Do Differently Next Time ?

There were only a few adult entrants to the Art Competition, despite advertising this element and reinforcing via Web, Facebook and hard copy leafleting and of course offering £50 prizes to the adult winner and runner up. We also gave a large degree of latitude, in allowing entrants a variety of subjects for their entries. Perhaps a different type of competition next time (such as a 'best article') might be considered, as not everyone is confident in their artistic skills, whereas more may feel comfortable with the written word.

One respondent thought that we could put more information on the website, with photos and pictures of positive news.

We would agree that we could try to garner more support by providing visually based updates almost on a daily basis to show the progress of the project, but that it is difficult when the reaction time is short and that only a couple of people are available to do this – who have permanent jobs as well. So enthusiasm needs to be tempered with realism.

However, we would disagree wholeheartedly with the assertion that the blog page of our web site was used mainly for advertising and as a lot of the earlier events had to be cancelled and rescheduled, there was a lot of negativity.

We do not believe that the timely and crucial provision of 'bad news' associated with re-scheduling caused by the LIDAR delay out of our control (even though we also factored in a 3 week buffer between LIDAR due end and our start dates) should be construed as 'negative'. This is because 'negative' relates to the displaying of an attitude towards something, not to be confused therefore with a negative feeling that may have been engendered by events (as explained) outside of our control.

Finally, we did respond, in the events of 2018 ("Warriors ..") to minor criticism in our last HLF event (Nov 2015) that we didn't provide any 'Working Saturdays' .. so we have remembered to implement 'Lessons Learnt' during these events as well, which we hope was appreciated.

Appendix – Children & Adults Attendances at our “Warriors Through The Landscape” events – May – Nov 2018

Attendances - DISCREET Statistics (Not including Repeat Attendances)	Actual	Budget	Difference + (-)	Achieved % as Proportion of Budget)
Schools				
Cuckney (5 to 11)	117	68	49	172.06%
Meden (11 to 14) (no 15 or 16 year olds took part)	32	50	(18)	64.00%
Outwood Post 16 (Sixth Formers) (17 and 18)	13	19	(6)	68.42%
Sub Total Schools	162	137	25	118.25%
Non Schools				
Community Voters (Nov 16) / Others	142	85	57	
Warsop Metal Detecting Society	6	6		
Other Detectorists	1	0		
Sub Total Non Schools	149	91	58	163.74%
Total Attendances	311	228	83	136.40%

Cuckney School - Age Breakdown of Attendees  
Class 1 - 28 year 1 and 2 children  
Class 2 - 27 year 2 and 3 children  
Class 3 - 30 year 3,4,5 children  
Class 4 - 32 year 5 and 6 children  
**Total 117 children**

Notes  
All schools were provided with a paper based 12 question Evaluation Survey, as it was not appropriate for BOHIS to seek to obtain an email address from each child (even if they had one) and then deal with them directly without supervision from a 3rd party (the teachers on behalf of their schools). Although this made the collation of so many paper based responses cumbersome and time consuming we felt that this was the correct operational manner.

In contrast, the Adult survey was 47 questions and this was able to be an exclusively Web based (Survey Monkey) experience.



# Finds Under the Microscope

By David Budge of MERCIAN Archaeological Services CIC

This chapter takes a look at some of the key finds from our recent excavations at Cuckney. I have to start with an apology as, despite the title I was given, you will only see two photographs taken looking down a microscope! I have had to try to resist the temptation to include loads of pictures of pottery, and have mostly selected finds that have particular individual interest, such as being the oldest, or having come from a long way away. I have also selected some relatively ordinary pieces that have stories to tell. It is worth bearing in mind though that the true value of all these artefacts lies in what they can tell us about what people were doing in Cuckney, and more widely in north Nottinghamshire, in the past. This information can only be revealed by considering the finds alongside the archaeological deposits they were found in. The information revealed by such study is of far more interest and value than what any single find on its own can reveal!

However, you will have to read the archaeological reports for that information, as this chapter is about the finds as objects in themselves.

Most of the finds come from the two trenches we excavated to the west of the churchyard, trench 1 at the bottom of the hill by the A60 and trench 2 on top of the hill overlooking the A60 with good views to the west along the valley of the River Poulter. I have also included several finds from the test pits we excavated to the south of the churchyard. Where present, the divisions on the scale bars are 0.5cm each. Unless otherwise noted, all photographs are by the writer and are © Mercian Archaeological Services CIC 2019.

So without further ado, let us begin.



Trench 1 operations

**1 - Coin. 3 shilling bank token of George III. Copper alloy with silver wash. Diameter 35mm (1 6/8"). Corroded; reverse in particular has sand incorporated into the corrosion products partially obscuring the detail. Dated 1811. Trench 2. Shown twice life size.**



People always seem to get excited by coin finds on archaeological excavations. Perhaps this is because they are a tangible link to the past and are easily recognised for what they were, which cannot always be said for small sherds of pottery! They also often have a picture and name of a monarch on the front, and can be closely dated. This was the case with the first find mentioned here. It came from trench 2, on top of the hill. At face value this is a silver coin from the reign of George III, who is depicted on the obverse in all his corpulent majesty, dressed as a Roman emperor complete with laurel wreath. Around the king's portrait is the legend 'Georgius III Dei Gratia Rex' (George III king by grace of God). The reverse legend states that the coin is a 'Bank / Token / 3 Shill.' and gives the date of minting as 1811.

Throughout much of second half of the 18th century there was a shortage of official coinage of lower denominations, and during the first years of the 19th century the Royal Mint mainly issued gold coins only. These were of too high value to be of use for everyday transactions or for payments of wages to workers. Various attempts were made to remedy the situation, and the Cuckney coin belongs to one of these. Between 1811 and 1816 the Bank of England issued silver 'bank tokens' in values of 3 shillings and 1s 6d (eighteen pence). A token coinage is one where the value of the metal used in the coin is less than the face value of the coin. Thus, if you melted down a 3 shilling token you would end up with less than 3 shillings worth of silver. Finally in 1816 the Royal Mint began issuing official silver token coinage, though this came in denominations of crowns (five shillings), half crowns (two shillings and six pence) and shillings, rather than the Bank of England's multiples of 9d.

In the early 19th century three shillings was not an insignificant amount of money. Around 1800 the rates of pay in the British army ranged from 1 shilling a day for a private in the infantry (2 shillings if the private was in the cavalry) up to 32 shillings and 10 pence for a colonel of the cavalry (only 22s 6d for an infantry colonel). In civilian life, one 19th century estimate suggested a labourer with an 'average' family may have had a weekly income of around 17s 6d (and expenses of rent, food and fuel of around 18s per week!). The three shilling value of this coin was therefore more than a day's pay for the average person.

When the Cuckney coin is examined more closely it becomes apparent that all is not as it seems. The coin shows a greenish colour through the silver. This is because it is a forgery, made of copper or copper alloy coated with a very thin wash of silver. The green colour is caused by copper corrosion products showing through where the silver has worn away. Under the microscope it is possible to see that this has occurred particularly on the higher points of the pattern. This wear almost certainly occurred while the coin was in circulation. The amount of copper alloy showing through, which would have appeared as quite noticeable copper highlights against the silver, seems to have reached the point where it would have been very hard to pass the coin off as genuine. The last owner of the coin may have unwarily received it in payment or as change without noticing that it was a forgery. In this scenario it is not hard to imagine their irritation when attempts to use this quite high value coin were rejected by a more observant shop keeper. A disgruntled toss could easily explain how it came to be 'lost' in this field in Cuckney, only to be found again in our excavations almost 200 years later!





0 10 20 30mm

**2 - Coin. Danish 5 øre. Copper alloy. Diameter 24.2mm. Burnt. Dated 1966. Test pit 3. Shown actual size.**

Continuing the theme of coins, this example was an unusual find from the test pits and a candidate for 'most exotic' (furthest travelled) find. The obverse of this coin has, rather than a portrait of the king, the king's monogram. This is FR for Frederik IX of Denmark. The obverse also has the date of minting, 1966. The reverse shows the value, 5 øre, with 'Danmark' above and ears of wheat below. Unlike the 3 shilling piece from trench 2, this coin was not high value in its day! The Danish currency is based on the Krone (crown), introduced in 1619. The currency was decimalised in 1874, with 100 øre to the krone. According to historical exchange rates, in 1966 you could have exchanged 1 Danish Krone for approximately £0.05 British pounds sterling. In contrast, 1 Danish krone will, in 2019, get you the princely sum of £0.12! Perhaps not surprisingly the smaller denomination øre coins have been demonetised, with 50 øre the only remaining Danish coin under 1 krone. What is this 5 øre doing at Cuckney? Perhaps it was dropped by a Danish visitor, or someone who had been on holiday or business to Denmark?



0 10mm

**3 - Knife fragment. Translucent brown flint, flaked. Broken. Current maximum length 13.4mm, maximum width 17.2mm, maximum thickness 5.5mm. Prehistoric: probably early Bronze Age. Trench 2. Shown twice life size.**

This piece is the oldest datable artefact found during the excavations. It is part of a knife, though unfortunately was broken in antiquity, leaving only the end for us to find. It was once part of a tool that flint specialists call a 'plano-convex knife'. The alternative name, 'slug knife', is rather more evocative: the complete tools often look rather like the slimy gastropod molluscs.

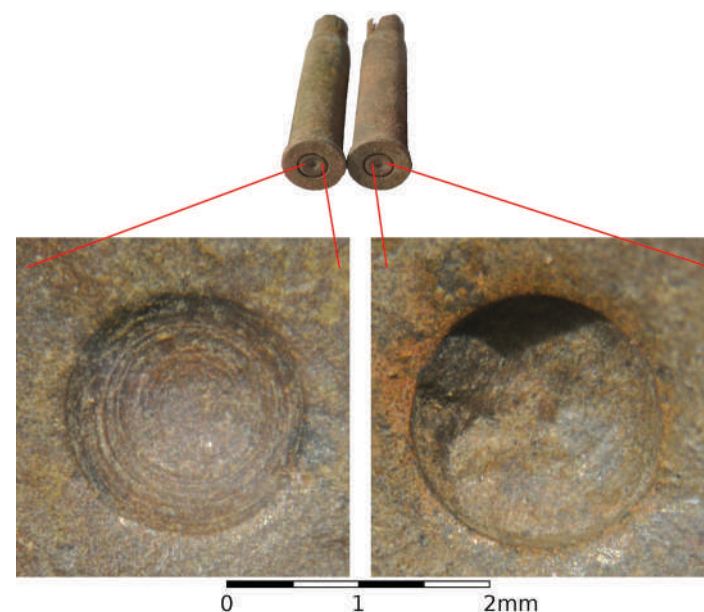
The flint knapper who made this tool first produced a flake by striking a piece of flint with a stone hammer, having to strike skilfully at a particular angle with a specific force. They then forced a series of small flakes off one side using pressure to shape the piece and to produce a durable and slightly serrated cutting edge. The scars of these small pressure flakes can be seen in the photograph. Plano-convex knives are a cut above the everyday flint knives in use during the prehistoric period; for some reason it was important to this knapper to make this specific tool type with its neat and regular shape as well as the functional cutting edges. This type of knife is particularly characteristic of the early Bronze Age, around 4,400 years ago.

Was this fancy knife made for everyday use, or was it intended, as some plano-convex knives are, to accompany a burial? At the moment it is not possible to say, and there was no evidence for either prehistoric burials or for prehistoric occupation found in the excavations. Rather than any of the above, it could just have been a casual loss by someone passing by.



0 10 20 30mm

**4a - Military cap badge. Pressed copper alloy. 42.1mm x 41.2mm. Crown bent; tip of one arm lost, hairline cracks between star and lower banner. Corroded, with sand stuck in the corrosion products in places. Circa mid 20th century. Trench 1. Shown actual size.**



0 1 2mm

**4b - A quantity of used cartridge cases. Copper alloy. Mark VII .303 calibre. Each maximum 56mm long, 13.4mm max diameter at base. Date stamped (19)'43'. Blanks. Vicinity of trench 2. Photomicrographs of firing pin impressions taken at 20x magnification. Actual diameter of firing pin impressions c.2.0mm**

There were interesting finds most likely relating military activity in the Second World War from both trenches.

The spent cartridge cases were found in and around trench 2 at the top of the hill. They are all .303 calibre, a standard British calibre that was used in a range of different weapons such as the Lee-Enfield rifle, the Vickers machine gun and the Bren gun. They have crimped tops, indicating that they were blanks. The headstamps state that they are mark VII .303 rounds, manufactured in 1943 by Crompton Parkinson Ltd of Guiseley, Yorkshire. Their find spots, on top of the hill where there are good views to the west and overlooking the A60 road, suggests that the military probably selected the top of the hill as a position for training during the Second World War. We can, however, go further than this.

When a cartridge is fired, the firing pin of the weapon leaves an impression in the base of the cartridge. Examination of these marks under a microscope can allow individual weapons to be recognised, as each firing pin is slightly different. This is certainly the case at Cuckney. The firing pin of one weapon had a neatly rounded end with a series of fine concentric grooves (left side of photograph). Another had a pin with a distinctive indentation on the side and an irregular lump at the tip (right hand side of the photograph). The marks on all the cartridges belong to these two pins. From this it is possible to determine that during practice, the position on top of the hill was occupied by only two firing men. They probably used the medieval bank as cover. Assuming that they were firing down on the road and the area to the west, the soldier using the rifle with the concentric grooves on its firing pin was on the left; the soldier with the irregular firing pin was to his right.

The cap badge was found at the bottom of the hill, in trench 1. The badge shows the device of a seated hart in the centre of a wreath, with a banner that reads 'Sherwood / Foresters' either side; the larger banner at the bottom reads 'Notts & Derby'. The regiment was formed in 1881 and the name was changed to Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment) in 1902. The regiment served in both World Wars, eventually being amalgamated with the Worcestershire regiment in 1970.

Given the evidence for military activity at the top of the hill around trench 2 in 1943 or later, it seems most likely that this cap badge was lost by a soldier during this activity. Some of the volunteers who worked on our archaeological excavations are ex-military; they suggested that the squaddie who lost the badge would have found himself in quite a bit of trouble when the loss was discovered, unless he managed to 'borrow' a replacement from one of his mates!





**5 - Gunflint. Slightly translucent pale yellow flint with common opaque white mottling. Knapped. 23.5mm x 18.2mm, maximum thickness 6.2mm. 18th - 19th century. Trench 2. Shown actual size.**

Continuing the military theme (though guns could also be used for sporting and hunting) is a gunflint from trench 2. Before the advent of the percussion cap in the 19th century guns were fired using a flint. The flint was held in an arm (the hammer) that, when the trigger was squeezed, struck the flint against a steel frizzen.

The impact of flint on steel created sparks that ignited priming powder in the pan; all being well the flame passed from the pan into the barrel where it ignited the propellant and forced the ammunition out of the barrel at high velocity (if this failed you were left with 'a flash in the pan'; not much good to anyone!). The flintlock mechanism came into widespread use from around the middle of the 17th century.

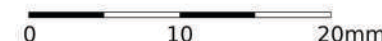
Gunflints were made by knapping (flaking using percussion) flint in much the same way that prehistoric flint tools had been made. Industries grew up in a number of countries, particularly England and France, to meet the need for the supply of vast quantities of gunflints demanded by the armed forces of these countries that reached a peak in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Due to the damage the edges sustained when they struck the frizzen gunflints had to be replaced frequently, sometimes after only a few shots, meaning that not only did the gunflint industries have to produce enough flints for each weapon, but also that they had to be produced in sufficient numbers to allow them to be regularly replaced.

Industries manufacturing gunflints were set up in chalk areas, where flint could be found, and they used the local flint resources. Many of the English gunflints tend to be black, sometimes with grey mottling. French gunflints were made in the area around Grand Pressigny. Here the flint is much paler in colour, typically amber to pale yellow, and frequently has distinctive opaque white mottling.

The gunflint from Cuckney is made in French style from French flint, which all in all indicates that it is French! What it is doing at Cuckney is not clear. Was there someone at Cuckney who had returned from the Napoleonic wars with a captured French weapon as a souvenir? Contemporary records hint that some English soldiers preferred French gunflints over English during the wars in the American colonies; could this account for the presence? There is perhaps an interesting story to be told if a local historian could discover any residents of Cuckney were in the British army during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. It is also tantalising that the 1811 coin and this gunflint were found in similar contexts in trench 2, though it is not possible to be sure that they are associated.



Trench 1 volunteers enjoy a welcome break



**6 - Glass fragment. Pale green glass. Beaker or goblet with optic blown diamond bosses. Surface decayed and lost prior to discovery. Late 16th - mid 17th century. Trench 1. Shown twice life size.**

This unassuming fragment of glass was an unexpected and surprising discovery amongst the mostly late 18th to 20th century glass from trench 1. It is part of a drinking glass, most likely a beaker but possibly a goblet, that was decorated with diamond shaped bosses.

The greenish colour of the glass is caused by impurities in the material used to make it. The glass blower who made it first blew a bubble of glass into a single part mould to form the diamond pattern. They then removed the bubble from the mould, reheated it and formed it into the drinking glass. The distortion caused during removal from the optic, reheating, and stretching and shaping of the glass caused the diamond bosses to lose definition and distort. Optic blown bosses are found on several different types of beaker and goblet, but beakers in forms similar to those pictured are commonest. The two complete examples shown here come from Cologne in Germany and are now in the Corning Museum of Glass. They have a slightly different form, particularly in the shape of the base, and are likely somewhat cruder than the Cuckney vessel was, and the bosses are less well defined than on the Cuckney glass. The Cuckney glass can be dated between the late 16th to mid 17th century; the majority of English finds of this type belong to the first half of the 17th century.

Perhaps the most intriguing part is that drinking glasses were not in common use at this period. They are usually only found on elite and urban sites. It is therefore unclear what it was doing at Cuckney, but it does seem to suggest that someone of quite high status was indulging in fashionable drinking at Cuckney in the first half of the 17th century.



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**7 - Clay tobacco pipe fragments. Moulded, fired, pipe clay. Bowl fragment 36.5mm tall. late 17th to early 18th century. Trench 1. Heel fragment with 'T B' stamp 11.9mm x 13.9mm; stamp 7mm diameter. 17th century. Trench 1. Shown actual size.**

A range of clay tobacco pipe fragments were found. Tobacco was introduced to England in the late 16th century. It became more widely available and cheaper during the 17th century. It was smoked in clay pipes made especially for the purpose. They can be dated by changes of shape, size and style (for instance, the capacity of the bowls increased significantly over the course of the 17th century as tobacco became cheaper and more readily available). I have chosen two nice examples both from trench 1.

The complete bowl is unmarked and dates to the very end of the 17th into the start of the 18th century. The stem and heel have broken off, leaving just the bowl intact. The other piece shows a maker's stamp on the underside of the heel. It is from a 17th century pipe. The maker's initials were 'T B'. There are no known makers with the initials TB in Nottinghamshire nor are any to be found in the published lists of Derbyshire and South Yorkshire pipe makers consulted thus far, so who this pipe was made by is currently a mystery. Research is ongoing, so watch this space!



## 8 - Group of mainly late Saxon pottery sherds. Wheel thrown earthenware.

Clockwise from top left:

- 1: Rim of jar, black shell tempered earthenware with brown surfaces, Lincoln, Trench 1.
- 2: Body sherd with square roller stamped decoration, fine white firing earthenware with external pale yellow lead glaze, Stamford, Lincolnshire, Trench 1.
- 3: Rim of jar, dark grey to black sandy earthenware. Torksey, Lincolnshire. Trench 1.
- 4: Rim of spout from spouted pitcher. Black sandy earthenware, Torksey, Lincolnshire. Test pit 2.
- 5: Base of jar or pitcher. Dark grey sandy earthenware, Torksey, Lincolnshire. Trench 1.
- 6: Body sherd of jar with horizontal roller stamping. Grey sandy earthenware. ?Lincolnshire or Nottinghamshire. Trench 1.
- 7: Shoulder of jar with horizontal square roller stamping. Black, shell tempered. earthenware, Lincoln. Trench 1. All circa late 9th to mid / late 11th century with the exception of no 2, probably 11th - early / mid 12th century. Actual size.



By far the bulk of the finds recovered in the excavations were pottery. Individually most of the sherds may not look very impressive, but the assemblage as a whole was the real treasure of the Cuckney excavations. The assemblage from trench 1 demonstrates that people were living and working in this part of Cuckney from the late 9th or 10th century until some time in the early to mid 12th century. It is not the individual finds that prove this, but the whole group of finds (the 'assemblage') together, along with the archaeological deposits that they were found in. The photograph shows one group of typical late Saxon sherds. Perhaps contrary to what one might expect, in late Saxon times pottery was traded over long distances, with most of the pottery of this period found even in this part of north west Nottinghamshire coming from Lincolnshire. It is not until the medieval period and the 12th century and later that pottery supplies tend to become more local and pottery stops routinely being traded over such a wide area.

We discovered most of the main Lincolnshire late Saxon pottery types, including pottery made with clay containing fossil shell from Lincoln itself (such as the two pieces on the left of the photograph); pottery made from clay containing quartz sand, such as the examples from Torksey on the right of the picture; and fine white firing pottery with a lead glaze from Stamford in south Lincolnshire. All the late Saxon pottery is fine, thin walled and well made, and was made using a potter's wheel. Pottery industries like

Torksey and Stamford were set up around the time of the Viking invasions of the mid / late 9th century by potters from the continent, who re-introduced the potter's wheel to England for the first time since the end of the Roman period.

Other than occasionally being glazed, the main decoration found on late Saxon pottery is roller stamping. This was made using a tool rather like a pastry wheel, but probably made from bone or wood. The designs most frequently cut into this wheel were squares or diamonds. In the late 9th century the decoration was usually applied to the outer edge of the rim and also the shoulder of jars. By the mid 10th century it was no longer applied to the rims, just the shoulder of jars. There are no examples of roller stamped rims at Cuckney, only roller stamped bodies, such as the examples in the picture. These suggest the bulk of late Saxon activity in this part of Cuckney may have started around or after the middle of the 10th century.

Spouted pitchers are a distinctive late Saxon and early Norman vessel type that was used for serving liquid. They were the precursors to jugs, which started being made in England around the middle of the 12th century. Spouted pitchers are like jars to which the potter added handles and a thrown spout (see below). The Torksey ware spout from test pit 2 is a nice diagnostic late Saxon piece of pottery. Torksey ceased producing pottery around the time of the Norman Conquest.

## 9 - Group of Norman pottery sherds. Earthenware. Left hand side, rim and body sherds of spouted pitcher, slightly burnt and abraded, and two unassociated body sherds with external lead glazes. Stamford, Lincolnshire. Pitcher late 11th - early 12th century. Trench 1.

Right hand side, rim and base of jar in sand and shell tempered earthenware. ?Nottinghamshire or Lincolnshire. Late 11th - 12th century. Trench 1. Actual size.



These pieces of pottery came from the same deposit as the late Saxon sherds shown above. However, they are not only larger, but also include multiple sherds from individual vessels. This indicates that they had not been in the soil for long before cultivation ceased, unlike the late Saxon sherds. They indicate that cultivation and disposal of waste in the vicinity of trench 1 stopped in the early to middle 12th century. Why was this? It is impossible to be certain. However, the documented construction of a castle at Cuckney during the Anarchy in the early to mid 12th century is compelling.

The spouted pitcher would have looked very similar to the complete Stamford ware spouted pitcher shown in the picture. This vessel was found at the Angel Inn in Oxford and is now in the British Museum. Stamford ware was good quality pottery that was traded over long distances from the place of manufacture in south Lincolnshire. The large pieces at Cuckney appear to have been burnt; they would originally have been glazed with a shiny yellow glaze like the Angel pitcher and the two Stamford sherds in the centre of the picture from Cuckney.



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0 10 20 30mm

**10 - Mould fragments. Fired clay with red body and grey, moulded, surfaces. Largest fragment c.35mm maximum length. Some iron concreted sand adhering to the surfaces Possibly 10th - mid 12th century. Trench 1. Shown actual size.**

If the pottery sherds looked unimpressive, the next fragments will probably look even less so! They are pieces of fired clay. They are fired to a red colour but have reduced to a blue grey at the surfaces. The surfaces are flat and smooth, with the fragment on the left having a sort of stepped profile to its face.

The way they were made, their shape, and the way these pieces have been fired suggests they are mould fragments for casting metal. A method of casting metal using wax originals was recorded by Theophilus Presbyter in his 'De diversis artibus' (on diverse arts) in the 12th century. A wax model of the desired object was first produced. Clay was built up around the model. The clay mould was then heated, firing the clay, melting the wax and leaving a void in the shape of the object to be cast. Molten metal was then poured into the mould. Once it had cooled the mould could be broken apart to get at the object.

These mould fragments were most likely used for casting copper alloy (bronze, brass and similar compositions) but are too fragmentary for the object or objects cast in them to be determined. Their earliest position in the stratigraphy indicates some at least date between the late 9th and early / mid 12th century. This appears to indicate that metal casting was taking place in Cuckney, at a time when copper alloy artefacts are fairly rare.

**11 - Quern fragment. Millstone grit with one face flattened, smoothed and subsequently(?) pecked. Burnt and smashed. Maximum surviving dimensions of grinding face 63.0mm x 61.4mm; piece maximum 44.2mm thick. Late 9th to mid 12th century; probably late Saxon. Trench 1. Shown approximately actual size.**



0 10 20 30mm

This fragment of millstone grit has one surface ground smooth. It was once part of a quern stone or millstone, used for grinding flour, malt or other substances. It was originally part of one of a pair of stones. Querns were operated by manually rotating or oscillating the top stone above a lower stone, with the material to be ground crushed between the faces of the two stones. This particular stone had seen quite a lot of use as the grinding surface is worn smooth. This may have reduced the efficiency of the stone; the chipping visible on the surface may represent an attempt to rectify this by roughening the surface.

Rotary querns have a long history as they were produced from the Iron Age onwards. However, their use dropped off in the medieval period. With the arrival of the Normans there were prohibitions against private ownership and use of querns. People were expected to take their corn to the local mill to have it ground; how else could the local lord ensure that the peasants were not trying to cheat him out of his 'share' of their produce?

Querns are durable artefacts that are unlikely to have been accidentally broken or lost. As they are large lumps of stone they were also not usually thrown away; they often had an 'afterlife' since they make convenient lumps of building stone. They are also sometimes found on archaeological sites having been re-used as hearth stones. The Cuckney quern has a sooted and burnt upper surface. This could indicate it was used as a hearth stone or an oven lining after it was no longer able to be used for grinding; alternatively it may have been deliberately burnt in order to make it easier to destroy.



0 10 20mm

**12 - Pottery sherd. Rim of jug. Earthenware with traces of splashed lead glaze. Maximum size 22.3mm x 17.9mm. Skegby, Nottinghamshire. Mid-late 12th century. Test pit 1. Actual size.**

The most exciting find from the test pitting was this tiny fragment of pottery. Like many of the other bits of pottery from the excavations it probably does not look like much to the non-specialist! It is part of a jug that was made in Skegby, Sutton in Ashfield, in the mid to late 12th century. The kiln that produced this pottery was discovered on a building site in Skegby in 2010 by Bob Howlett, who those of you who came to the excavations may have met. The main significance of this sherd lies not in what it tells us of Cuckney, but the additional information about the Skegby pottery industry it provides. When Bob found the kiln the products of Skegby had not been discovered on any other sites and so it was not certain whether the industry was a failed experiment or if it was producing commercially: if it was producing commercially I speculated that the products were most likely to have been marketed through Mansfield and should be the main type of mid - late 12th century pottery found around and in the area to the north of Mansfield. This has been hard to test due to a lack of archaeological excavations in this area, but as Mercian's research on the Skegby pottery industry has progressed Skegby products are starting to turn up on consumer sites. In the last few years I have noted Skegby products at King's Clipstone, on the Sherwood Archaeological Society's excavations at Moorhaigh Chapel (near Pleasley), and from excavations in Chesterfield, as well as on several sites in Skegby itself. With the discovery of this sherd at Cuckney a distribution plot of the finds is starting to form that indicates the Skegby pottery industry, while short lived, was producing pottery that was marketed over a wide area of west Nottinghamshire, possibly centred on markets at Mansfield.

Also exciting is that, small as it is, the shape of the rim of the Cuckney sherd is a previously unknown type. This particular form was not found at the kiln site (although it is similar to some of the kiln rims) or on any of the other excavations to date. It is a valuable addition to the corpus of shapes known to have been made by the Skegby potter, and reinforces the links between the pottery at Skegby and the pottery industry of Nottingham.

So even one tiny unimpressive looking fragment of pottery can be very important, not just to the site it was found on but potentially also to the much wider area!





**13 - Base of bartmann jug. Stoneware with salt glaze over iron wash. Cologne or Frechen. Late 16th century. Test pit 1. Shown actual size.**

More pottery! This piece came to Cuckney all the way from Germany while Queen Elizabeth I was on the throne. Before thick glass bottles began to be produced in the second half of the 17th century, German stoneware was the only durable liquid container available. The Germans discovered the secret of stoneware in medieval times. Stoneware is pottery that has been fired to such a high temperature that the molecules of clay melt and form an impermeable mass. Various centres in Germany dominated the export markets from late medieval times onwards. This sherd is from a bottle that was made at either Cologne or Frechen, at the time in the late 16th century when the products of these centres were taking over from the previously dominant manufacturers at Raeren. The main exported product of Frechen was a narrow necked jug that fulfilled the role of the later glass wine bottles. The stoneware bottles often had an applied face mask of a bearded man, which gives them the name 'bartmann'; this being bearded man in German. The earliest Bartmann jugs produced in Cologne are artistic and well made, with various renaissance devices, a smiling and happy looking bartmann and often bands of mottoes around the middle. The mottoes usually mention drinking and God. They are also sometimes dated at this period. With the move of production to Frechen and the onset of the 17th century the quality of manufacture declines and the bartmann becomes cruder and angrier; a typical 17th century bartmann has a scowl or growl with teeth bared and an angry expression! The neat foot on the Cuckney piece indicates it is one of the early examples, which would have looked very similar to the complete example from the British Museum shown here. It is most likely to date to the last few decades of the 16th century. Underneath the base can be seen the marks of the wire that was used to cut it off the wheel while the wheel head was still in motion.



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**14 - Hone (sharpening stone). Quartz mica schist. Rectangular in section, one end broken off. 93.4mm long, approximately 36.7mm x 25.7mm in section for most of length. Late Saxon to Medieval. Test pit 1. Shown actual size.**

Our final object of interest probably travelled the furthest, at least of all the more ancient finds, to get to Cuckney. It is part of a hone that was found in test pit 1. Hones are tools used for sharpening metal objects. The surfaces of this one indicate that it was used for sharpening blades, probably knives. There are traces of iron oxide staining on the wider faces that are likely to be from the knives sharpened on this stone. The main significance of the hone lies in the raw material from which it is made. The stone is a silvery grey quartz mica schist. The bands of sparkly silvery material that you might be able to make out in the picture are the mica. This stone is also known as Norwegian ragstone and comes from Eidsborg, near Telemark, in Norway. The superior quality of Norwegian ragstone was recognised from an early period and the stone was exported in large quantities for the manufacture of hones. The trade in the stone seems initially to have some linkage with the Vikings as Norwegian ragstone starts to appear on a large scale around the same time as the Vikings began spreading out, and Norwegian ragstone is found distributed across the whole of the Viking world. Due to its qualities though it outlasted the Vikings, continuing as the preferred choice for hones (despite English alternatives being available) throughout the medieval period. Production continued even beyond this; Norwegian ragstone was written about by 'economic geologists' in the 19th century and the last quarry in Eidsborg only closed in the second half of the 20th century.

In late Saxon and medieval times, before forks were invented, almost everyone carried their own knife on their belt. The knife was used for eating and may have been used for craft activities, and could of course also be used for fighting if necessary! Hones were essential to keep the knife sharp.

This hone was found in layers that also contained late Saxon and medieval pottery. Unfortunately though there was no archaeological evidence to help date it more closely. There is also nothing in the shape that can help date it more precisely; the rectangular section was the preferred shape for the larger hones throughout this period. As a result, it is not possible to date it more precisely than somewhere between the mid to late 9th century and the 15th century.



# The Significance of the 2018 Excavation Findings for the Battle of Hatfield

By David Budge



The Battle of Hatfield occurred in 633AD. There is surprisingly compelling evidence that the battle took place in the former Hatfield division of Bassetlaw District in Nottinghamshire, within which Cuckney is situated. Evidence for the battle takes the form of place names (see Gaunt 2018, 62-73 for discussion and further references) and also in the fact that a cult of the rarely venerated St Edwin can be traced a long way into the past in the local area, with the twelfth century church at Edwinstowe (Edwin's holy place) apparently orientated on the sunrise on St Edwin's feast day (Gaunt 2018 71-3).

Cuckney has been suggested as the place of burial for some of the dead from the battle (Revill 1975, 48) on the basis of a number of undated skeletons found during underpinning work at the church in 1951 (Barley 1951, 26); though the possibility that they may be the casualties of an early / mid 12th century Anarchy period skirmish has also been advanced (Barley 1951, 28-9). Both may be valid propositions (if the skeletons were genuinely all buried together in a mass grave as was suggested at the time - the excavation that revealed them was non-archaeological) as there were no finds to date the burials and no scientific dating of the bones was possible before they were disposed of by reburial in the churchyard. They were alleged to have been found in 'mass grave' trenches that extended under the north wall of the church (Barley 1951, 26).

The north wall of the church (an extension to the existing church footprint) was probably constructed around 1200AD when the north aisle and arcade was added: the arcade can be dated by the architecture and more particularly by the remains of the original painted decorative scheme (Budge 2018, 44). Should the burials indeed originate from a grave trench under the foundations they must be earlier than c.1200 AD. This does not exclude either the 7th century battle or the 12th century skirmish. Unfortunately, due to the way the bones were found and quickly disposed of, and the lack of archaeological and scientific examination, the bones cannot be taken as evidence for the, or any, battle. Unless some of the bones were to become available for scientific study and were to give 7th century dates (from multiple individuals), the burials must be discounted from

discussion of the Battle of Hatfield: their evidence is simply too 'opaque' to be relied upon.

Regarding the 2018 excavations and test pitting, the only evidence relating to battles and conflict were the Second World War activity in trench 2 and the French gunflint, which is perhaps likely to be Napoleonic in date, although its presence in Cuckney is unlikely to be related to the Napoleonic wars. No direct evidence was found for a battle or conflict of medieval or Saxon date, though it may be argued that the bank and ditch in trench 2 could relate to an Anarchy period fortification.

The lack of evidence for a Saxon battle is unsurprising. The location of very few Saxon battlefields have been discovered by archaeology and the small number of combatants involved in many Saxon period battles make it highly unlikely that it would be found by chance. Even if an archaeological trench had been excavated right in the middle of the battlefield or on top of the positions occupied by one of the protagonist's forces the very small areas under excavation would make the likelihood of finding any evidence (such as broken weaponry and equipment, shot arrowheads, hacked off limbs, etc) extremely slim.

The only likely way of finding the battle site would be by landscape scale metal detector survey with the precise position of all finds accurately recorded. Unfortunately Nottinghamshire has many active metal detector users; if archaeological evidence for the actual location of the battle had survived into modern times it is likely to have been destroyed without record in the last 40 or so years of intensive metal detector exploitation of Nottinghamshire's heritage. The diagnostic artefacts will have vanished mostly unrecorded into private collections or been sold off (sometimes through the black market), as we have been told that a potentially very important high status 7th century artefact, found in the area several decades ago (and that could have indicated a location for the battle) was. In conjunction with other evidence, such a find would have gone some way towards supporting the possibility of a Saxon period battle. This is sadly a great loss to both Nottinghamshire's heritage and to the Nation's early history.

Due to the small size of the investigations, the 2018 excavation did not find any evidence for the Battle of Hatfield, and the site of the battle is unlikely to be found except by accident, if it still exists on land that has not been accessible to metal detector users, such as under building developments.

However, all is not entirely bleak for the Battle of Hatfield investigations from the excavations. While it is very tenuous, and cannot prove a link to the battle, the recent work can suggest that St Mary's Church may have early origins. The strongest evidence for this is admittedly the record of a church and priest at Cuckney in the Domesday book of 1086 (Morris 1977 22.2). This church may have been on the site of the present church or may have been elsewhere in the settlement. The discovery during the recent excavations and surveys of late Saxon activity both to the west and to the east of the present church suggests that the church was located within a late Saxon settlement.

At present we do not know if this settlement was the only one, and was thus the late Saxon village of Cuckney, or whether Cuckney consisted of several dispersed settlement foci spread throughout the parish in the 10th and 11th century. However, the discovery that the present church is within an area of late Saxon settlement makes it more probable that St Mary's church is on the site of the Saxon church. The recent recognition of a fragment of Saxo-Norman carved stone in the wall of the 12th century church tower (Everson and Stocker 2015, 201) might, if correctly interpreted as a gable cross, suggest that the late Saxon church was a stone building.

The excavation also discovered a fragment of Roman brick. There were almost no other Roman finds. If the brick came from a Roman settlement at Cuckney we would have expected a lot of other Roman finds: Roman pottery for example is abundant on most types of Roman site. The brick has most likely been brought here from a Roman settlement elsewhere. This is not as strange as it may seem; both the early church in Saxon times and then the Norman elite following the Norman conquest sought out and re-used Roman building materials in their stone buildings. This has been seen as an attempt by these essentially new institutions to portray themselves to the English people as the natural successors of the Roman Empire, and to acquire legitimacy and kudos for themselves by appropriating the memory of Roman civilisation (Eaton, 2000). Roman brick and tile can still

be seen incorporated into the herringbone masonry of a number of early Norman churches in Nottinghamshire, such as St Peter's, Laneham, St Nicholas, Sturton le Steeple, and St John the Evangelist, Carlton in Lindrick. In all of these buildings the Roman material serves no obvious structural purpose and so it likely to be incorporated for symbolic reasons. It is most probable that the Roman brick at Cuckney was brought in for use in building works on either the Saxon or early Norman church at Cuckney.

Not every settlement had a church in the Saxon period. That Cuckney did would suggest that there was a specific reason for a church to exist here. It could be speculated that, if the skeletons were the dead from the Battle of Hatfield, then it might be the case that a chapel could have been established over the burial place and remained in existence until it became St Mary's church later in the Anglo Saxon or medieval period. To construct such an argument would, however, be tantamount to constructing a rickety tower of assumption on baseless foundations.

It would be more realistic to suggest that the only way it might be possible to prove a link between the Battle of Hatfield and Cuckney would be through scientific examination of the bones from the supposed mass graves under the church, re-interred in the church yard in the 1950s, if these were ever to become available for study (for example as a result of modern grave digging). Outside of such concrete evidence we can speculate all we like about links between the Battle of Hatfield and Cuckney, but it must be with the realisation that we have essentially advanced no further than the 17th century antiquarian Abraham de la Pryme, Rector of Hatfield in Doncaster. Regarding the location of the Battle of Hatfield, which he came to the conclusion was in Nottinghamshire, he recorded in his diary that "I could not prove what I proposed in the first four chapters" and that in the absence of proof there was "only ... conjecture and probability", which, he had to conclude "was enough where nothing else was to be had" (Revill 1975, 49).

In the village of Cuckney's case something has appeared since De la Pryme's time 'to be had'; something that could replace conjecture and probability, and the statement with which Stanley Revill closed his paper on the Battle of Hatfield remains just as valid now as it was in 1975: "If at some future date it should become possible to examine the bones under Cuckney church, a 7th century dating would be the strongest argument in favour of the case set out here" (Revill 1975, 48-9).

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# Drone Zone #2 - View of Hatfield Area

(Picture courtesy of Robin Orr)





# Participation Portfolio













# Conclusion and Next Steps

By Paul Jameson

Having read and digested the MERCIAN articles included, I feel that the Water meadows piece adds greatly to the very sparse existing documentation. If ever fully explained elsewhere, this information seems to have been lost in the sands of time. For a system only developed around 1850 and then abandoned in the 1960's it shows how shockingly poor the available information was until Andy Gaunt's recent appraisal.

I also enjoyed the way that MERCIAN brought the Water meadows into a sharper progressive focus with excellent use of supporting LIDAR, adding extra value to our understanding.

As for the Castle, Saxon pottery finds invite suggestion by MERCIAN that Cuckney (or possibly 'Cuchenai') could have been inhabited as early as the 7th Century and therefore be in the sphere of the Battle of Hatfield (632 or 633 AD). However, as the battle was not named after a place (rather the nebulous Hatfield i.e. Heath field or unattended land), I have my reservations.

Difficulties in definitively interpreting the findings are also discussed and no finds of a military nature in respect of the adulterine castle period (1135-54) were discovered. However, pottery dated to around, "the middle of the twelfth century" which suggests, "there was activity on the site up to the early / mid twelfth century" (Gaunt and Crossley – MERCIAN), may signify pottery used in every day activities by members of the castle guard, for example.

MERCIAN also feel that, on balance, they would rather subscribe to Coulson's 'ephemeral' fortification in preference to the large area suggested by the Scheduled Monument documentation.

Regarding specific finds, David Budge (MERCIAN's Finds expert), has documented many interesting items that mainly derive from the two test trenches but also from the extra test trenching performed at the 'Ulvers' (house, opposite the Village Hall) in November 2018. Our thanks go to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for allowing us to recycle project savings elsewhere in this flexible fashion.

Although one of the finds was a Danish coin, this was not

from an earlier period (such as 1066) but rather 1966 !

This led me to expect a follow up find of a Texaco token with Bobby Moore on the reverse being carried aloft, holding the Jules Rimet Trophy !

I would agree with David's comment that the late Saxon pottery sherds represent, "the real treasure of the Cuckney excavations" showing that "people were living and working in this part of Cuckney from the late 9th or 10th century until some time in the early to mid 12th century".

The latter date may represent a forcible removal of people from a former living space in order for Thomas De Cuckney to construct his castle.

Additionally, the group of Norman pottery sherds, "had not been in the soil for long before cultivation ceased" indicating "that cultivation and disposal of waste in the vicinity of trench 1 (i.e. Bottom trench) .. stopped in the early to middle 12th century" (Budge).

David finds this to be compelling evidence of the castle but reasonably stops short of attributing definitive proof.

His 'Significance of Finds' article highlights that no evidence that could possibly be attributed to the Battle of Hatfield was found during our excavations but also flags the wealth of other information that suggest that Cuckney's 200 dead from 1950/1 could represent some of the fallen from what must have been a considerable conflict. These include the veneration of Edwin in the Middle Ages at Edwinstowe and the alignment of their St. Mary's to the 12th October (which one source gives as the battle date, the other being the 14th). This was work done independently by MERCIAN and is freely available on their website for the curious historians amongst you.

Whilst contrary evidence is not definitive, I cannot support David's assertion that a 12th century date remains a running possibility for the dead from the mass burial pits. He says, "Should the burials indeed originate from a grave trench under the foundations they must be earlier than c.1200 AD. This does not exclude either the 7th century battle or the 12th century skirmish."



BOHIS host the 'Pilgrims and Prophets' visit and presentation at St. Mary's, Cuckney on Saturday 6th April 2019

As previously fully discussed in my Castle article, this is due to Colvin quoting Thomas De Cuckney, who heavily hinted in 1153 that he merely inherited St. Mary's, suggesting that the church pre-dates the anarchy. In corroboration, Barley comments that some of the church might date to the 1120's. The significance of course, would be that it would not allow the mass burial pits to pre date the church, if they were from the later anarchy period of 1135-54. Given the chaotic state during that c. 19 year period, it is also highly unlikely that St. Mary's, Cuckney was constructed during that span.

David also offers the following with which I can only partially agree.

"Unfortunately Nottinghamshire has many active metal detector users ....The diagnostic artefacts will have vanished mostly unrecorded into private collections or been sold off (sometimes through the black market), as we have been told that a potentially very important high status 7th century artefact, found in the area several decades ago (and that could have indicated a location for the battle) was. In conjunction with other evidence, such a find would have gone some way towards supporting the possibility of a Saxon period battle. This is sadly a great loss to both Nottinghamshire's heritage and to the Nation's early history."

Whilst we have been told of such a find, and I agree it is a great pity that this chance was lost, it was discovered by detectorists about 30 years ago just outside of the Welbeck domain. Having asked numerous times about Welbeck's attitude to metal detecting, I have been told by various people that many have been denied permission over a large number of years. Hence, I feel that we may actually have been afforded a good deal more protection than David suggests.

Overall then, we have not (yet) found 'the pot of gold' that might have represented definitive evidence of the castle or of a 7th century battle but the project has advanced our understanding of early Cuckney inhabitation and the castle.

## How dare we not have taken the opportunity to explore further ?

As discussed in my "Reminder about the origins .." piece, on the 11th April 2019, Jennie Johnson and I met Ursilla Spence (Notts. CC Archaeology Leader) and Emily Gillott to discuss the official way forward (if at all).

There was informal positive support for Preference 2 (bodies still in situ), but no support for Preference 1 (Central eastern reinterment pit). As the Diocese informally declined Preference 1 support in December 2017, then an expensive new Preference 1 bid utilising an Ecclesiastical lawyer to appeal our case could still be an (unlikely) option.

However, Preference 2 has the advantage of representing 'cleaner' sampling (as those remains are uncorrupted by the reinterment process endured by Preference 1, i.e. not possibly mixed together with unrelated bones).

Additionally, the burials in the vicinity of Preference 2 are about 150 years old and thus not subject to the 100 Years rule that is hampering Preference 1 (those burials starting in the early 1970's, if the reinterments from 1950/1 are excluded of course).

Post our 11th April meeting at Rufford Abbey, we have written to Ursilla Spence and requested that she officialises her support via dialogue with the other parties, namely the HLF, the Diocesan advisors, Historic England and the PCC at St. Mary's. If a consensus can be attained and operationalised within a sensible time frame, then I feel that would be the very best outcome.

From my perspective, that means definitely solving the mystery of the mass burials by the end of 2020.

If the remains were dated to the middle of the 7th century and dental analysis helped corroborate or narrow some or all of the regions potentially involved (ie. Northumbria, Gwynedd, Mercia, plus possibly the Orkneys and Armorica (now Brittany)), then a timely battlefield search may be a final and welcome logical step.



# Drone Zone #3 - View of St. Mary's Church Cuckney

(Picture courtesy of Robin Orr)





# BOHIS Sources and Suggested Reading

“Early Medieval Castles in Nottinghamshire” (1994) by Sarah Speight (The Nottinghamshire History Lecture, 1994)

“Robert De Waudari’s Adulterine Castle, Castle Street, Luton” (1959) by Abrams J. and Shotliff D. (Bedfordshire Archaeology Vol. 26 (2010))

“An Adulterine Castle on Faringdon Clump,Berkshire” (Dec. 1935 & the 1936 follow up study) by E.T. Leeds (Antiquaries Journal – London 1936)

“The Antiquities of Nottinghamshire” (1677) by Robert Thoroton (printed by Robert White for Henry Mortlock) (especially P371 – P382)

“The Place Names of Nottinghamshire” (1940) by The English Place Names Society (Vol. 17 - specifically P88 and P89)

“A History of Welbeck Abbey & its Owners,Vol.2” (1539 – 1879) by A.S.Turberville (published by Faber and Faber 1938-9)

“An Archaeological Study of St. Mary’s Church and Churchyard at Cuckney in Nottinghamshire” (March 2000) by Catherine Wells (unpublished thesis)

“Cuckney motte and bailey castle” (1953, revised 1992) (Scheduled Monument information – List Entry No. 1010909) by Historic England

“The First Century Of English Feudalism 1066 – 1166” (1932) by FM. Stenton, specifically “Castles and Castle-Guard” (P190 – P215) (published by Oxford at the Clarendon Press)

“Corpus of Anglo Saxon Stone Sculpture” (2016) by Everson and Stocker (Vol 12, Nottinghamshire, especially P201)

“The White Canons in England” (1951) (H.M. Colvin) (specifically the piece on Welbeck Abbey P63-70) (published by Oxford at the Clarendon Press)

“The Ancient Village of Cuckney” (1989) and “Ancient Bassetlaw” (1990) by Capt. Roy Peters (North Trent Publishing)

“Cuckney Church and Castle” (1951) by (Maurice Barley) (Thoroton Society article) (P26 – P29)

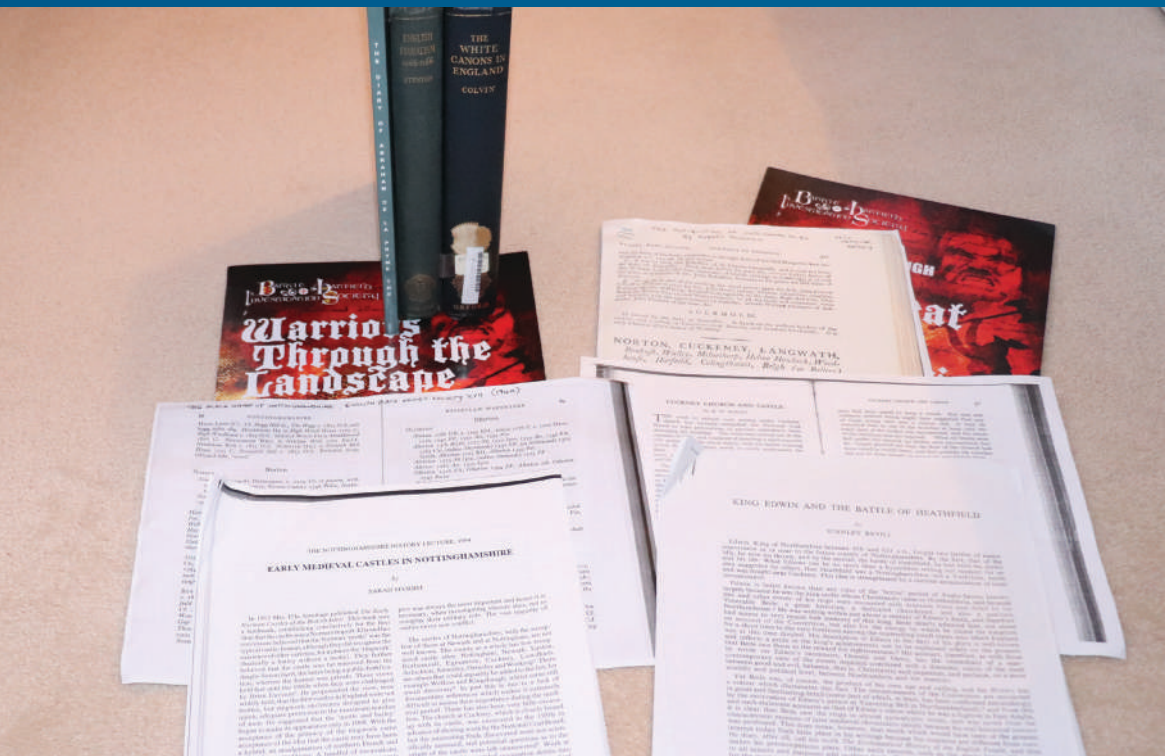
“The Diary of Abraham De La Pryme, The Yorkshire Antiquary” (by Abraham and Charles De La Pryme (1st published by the Surtees Society in 1870)

“Ecclesiastical History of the English People” (731 AD) by Bede (specifically Edwin before the Battle of Hatfield P117-39 and Edwin killed P140-142).

“The Earliest Life of Gregory The Great” (c. 680 to 715 AD) by an Anonymous Monk of Whitby (translated by Bertram Colgrave) (P95-105) (information regarding St.Edwin’s Chapel and the removal of Edwin’s bones to Whitby)

“King Edwin and the Battle of Heathfield” (1975) by Stanley Revill (Thoroton Society article)

Medieval Wall Paintings at the Church of St. Mary, Cuckney, Nottinghamshire. David Budge, Mercian Archeological Services CIC 2018.



## The Last Word

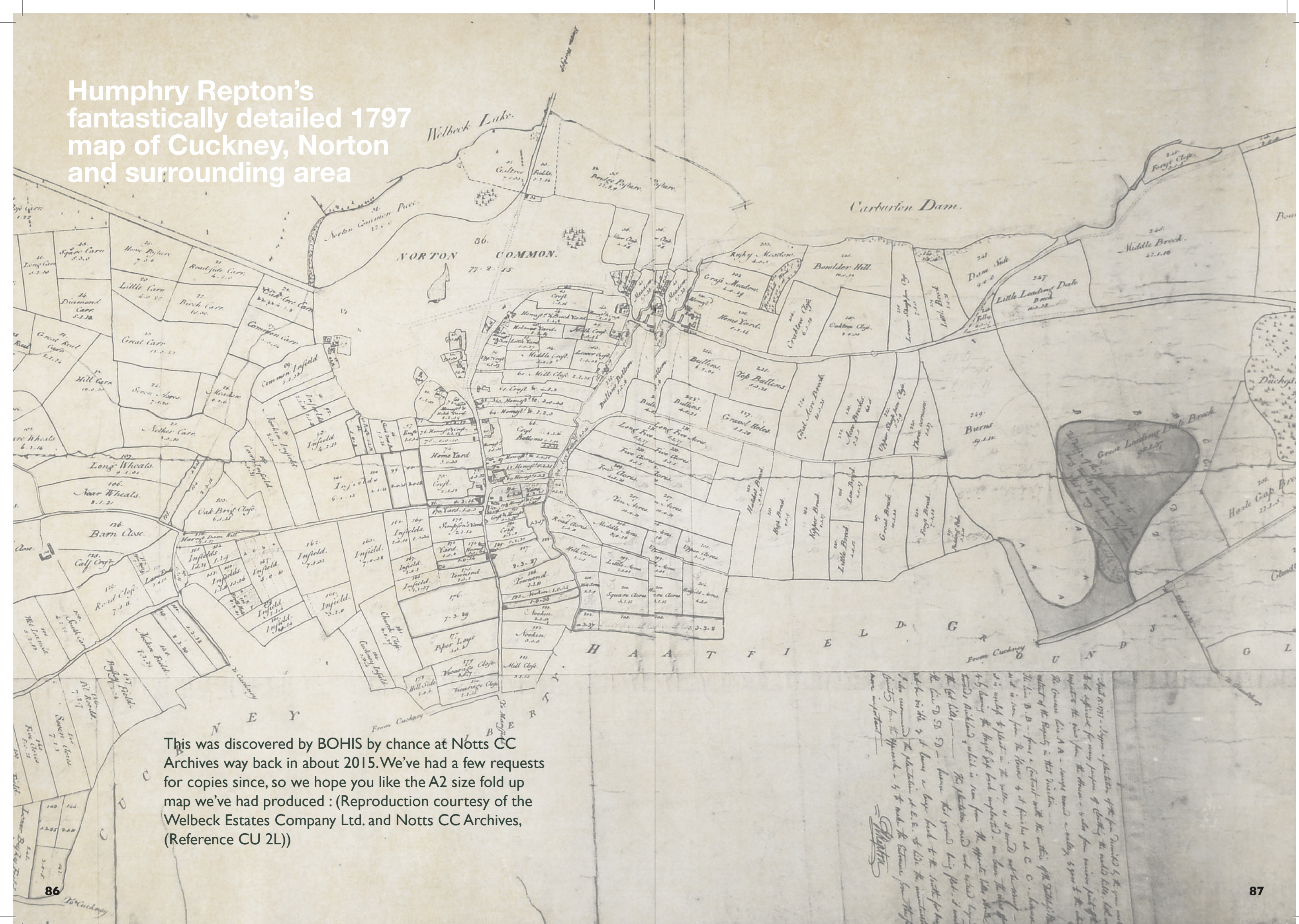
By Jennie Johnson

It seems fitting at the end of this wonderful community book to thank Chairman Paul Jameson for his hard work and dedication to our project. His attention to detail has been impeccable and he has always good-humouredly gone the extra mile for BOHIS and proved he had all the capabilities to handle this prestigious and important project for our Society.

Thank you



# Humphry Repton's fantastically detailed 1797 map of Cuckney, Norton and surrounding area



This was discovered by BOHIS by chance at Notts CC Archives way back in about 2015. We've had a few requests for copies since, so we hope you like the A2 size fold up map we've had produced : (Reproduction courtesy of the Welbeck Estates Company Ltd. and Notts CC Archives, (Reference CU 2L))



# BATTLE of HATFIELD INVESTIGATION SOCIETY



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