

On The Ranch

We've finally finished excavating the dyer at Tithe mead for this season, with just a few loose ends to tie up next week. It appears that this building, like the other building (TMEX 13/15), has been heavily re-modelled/ adapted on at least three separate occasions (phases 1-3).

TITHE MEAD EXCAVATION 2017 'GRAIN' DRYER

PRE-RUBBLE REMOVAL



POST-RUBBLE REMOVAL

THANK YOU ONCE AGAIN TO :-
James, Margaret & Richard Yandle

For their support and patience Members of Tintinhull Local History Group, Martock Local History Group & all the Ssarganistas (new recruits and veterans) Particularly those who've been involved with the drawings this year, they look fantastic.

The wide dispersal of heat-affected hamstone dispersed amongst the overlying rubble and the re-use of it in the (re)construction of the outer walls (see pics below) suggest an episode of major adaptation, possibly the final phase. The evidence to support this can be seen by looking at the fire damaged (red) hamstone lining the interior of the south west end of the central flue. The same material can be seen re-used in the outer walls of the structure and a rubble fill of the outer east wall.

The lias slab you can see below is from our excavation from last year where it appeared to have been re-used.



Once again our expectations were challenged as there is almost no remaining evidence of what materials were being dried in the building, the chambers were completely cleaned out with very little material remaining in the flue. The only obvious material was the deposit of horse bones in the north east corner! Overall, the artefacts this year have been very few, approximately less than 5% compared to last year's excavation. More questions! We also had a visit from Neil with his drone, an interesting juxtaposition of technology ancient & modern. Have we come that far?!



What we do have this year are a whole series of bulk environmental soil samples. Our programme of post-ex work this winter will be processing these, together with samples taken from previous excavations. Processing the samples (usually approx. 10 litres of soil per sample) starts with washing the sample in the flotation tank, separating any materials that float, including carbonised materials from the residue (materials that don't float), drying both flots & residue then sorting the residue whilst sending the flots to a friendly specialist. We will be doing the post-ex flotation and a small bit of finds processing on Thursday from 10 – 4pm each week through-out the autumn/winter. This will commence from the third Thursday in October (19/10/17).

We have also nearly completed our test pit at Park. Last weekend we finally got the cut of the ditch and defined the bottom of it. The ditch currently measures over 3m wide and 1.65m deep; when taking into account its length at approx. 80m, it's really quite a large feature that once would have stood out in the landscape. We've the last bit of cleaning back to complete and the recording then we'll have finished here for the season as well.



TR1 Bottom of ditch with burrow



TR1 Interior bank N/E

We aim to return next year once we've put together a revised research plan, knowing what we now know about size and scale, and once the data collected so far are put together and written up. None of this would be possible without the free access granted us by Steve and Rose for which we are extremely grateful. Thanks also to all the usual suspects.

The mention of scale brings me onto scale of a different kind: whilst working at Park recently our membership secretary Peter Wright came a bit too close to nature, red in tooth and claw. Whilst reaching under a tarpaulin, stored in our wood shelter, Peter thought he knocked over a shovel whilst trying to retrieve his waterproofs. He though little more of it until got home. Once at home, feeling the area becoming somewhat painful had another look...Peter had been bitten by an adder! After medical advice and some rest, it appeared no lasting damage was done. Peter's all right as well!



We'll be out at Penselwood to complete the mag survey in Charles Buckler's field this month. I understand that we've a team of volunteers all ready to make themselves available. We'll report back with the results upon completion.

We will also see the welcome return of the Tintinhull Local History Group and the SANHS Long Sutton TP Group to complete post-ex work on their projects.

Unfortunately we've had to put Holbrook on hold until further notice, with thanks to Caroline & Gary for agreeing to keeping an eye on the site and keeping us up to date on availability.

Arrangements regarding the test pits at Sandford Orcas will be agreed at the next committee meeting, as will our availability for the work at Combe St. Nicholas.

So enjoy the autumn colours and don't piss off the reptiles!

Nigel H