

On The Ranch

Hey Ho, lets go... hot from the committee/planning meeting this week - our summer/autumn schedule

Park After much consideration we've finally worked out why the 'ditch' we excavated in TR1 was so confusing and contrary to our geophysics. On re-measuring the location of TR1 we realised that the trench didn't correspond to the geophysics because it was placed in the wrong grid! However we've now located the ditch we were looking for 20m (one grid) to the west.

Although this has cost us a lot of time, the situation has been salvaged. TR 1, though not over the ditch, is actually within the interior of the feature. So we have a marvellous profile of the gravel bank into which the feature has been cut and an insight into the paleo-environmental conditions when the gravel and sands were initially laid (deposited). Matt Law has expressed great interest in the gravel and sand deposits and is currently trying to persuade a PhD student to take it on. So, a sliver of a silver lining there. Philosophically speaking 'sh*t happens'!

TR2 is behaving as expected and corresponds to both aerial photos and the geophysics. As you can see from the images below, it's a big 'un for sure, current estimates put the ditch at 4.5m wide and we've excavated down to approx 70-80 cm. Finds, though sparse so far, include fragmented bone, worked flint and occasional charcoal flecks. Below is the ditch we were looking for.

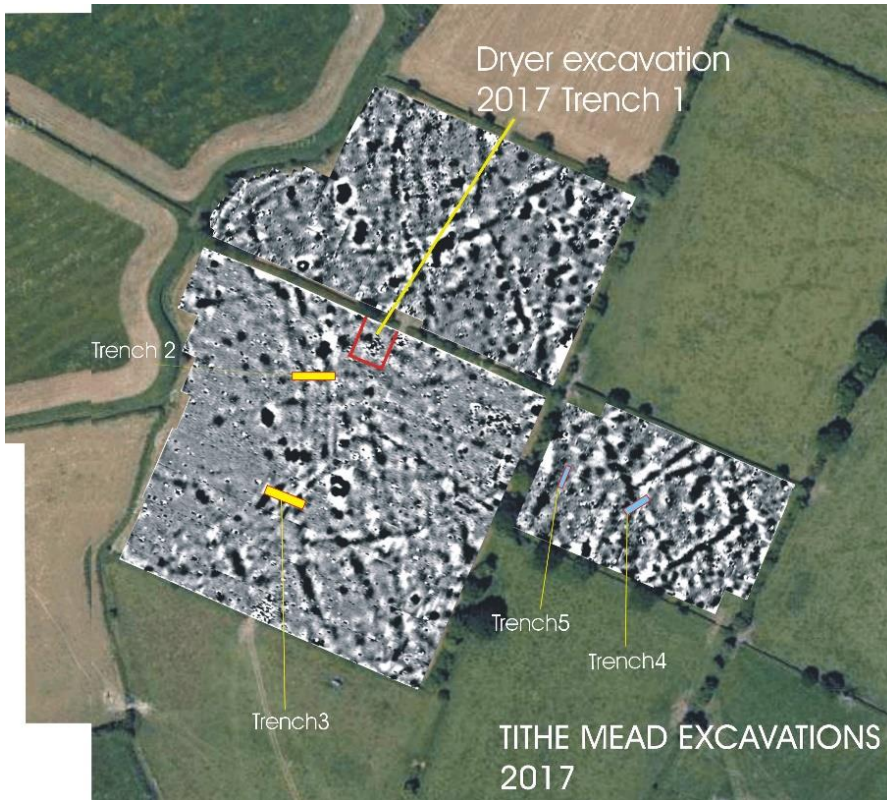


Left: the ditch with N/E bank.

Given the size of the ditch and the relative scale of the feature we've revised our project design for the site. We will carry on with TR2 and complete this excavation. However, given the restrictions and limitations of excavating a trench 1m wide and 5-6m long we will not excavate TR3 (taking in the west corner of the feature) this way. We have decided that, with permission of Steve (land owner), we will excavate a wider area over the corner. Basically we need to see more of the feature so our TR3 is likely to be 5m x 5m or some such. To achieve this we've postponed TR3 until firstly we've re-negotiated with Steve, then subject to Steve's agreement we will return to Park at the end of the year.

Tithe Mead This year's season at Tithe Mead will be starting on Tuesday 20th June and will run initially to 22nd June (3 days). We will then be doing a full week from 26th June – 2nd July. After this we will revert to Tuesdays & Thursdays plus one day at each weekend until the end of July (excepting the weekend of our work at Monatcute).

This season we intend to focus mainly on the remains of the dryer initially excavated in 2014. We are now looking for any remaining evidence of the dryer floor and hopefully remnants of the materials which were being dried there.



We are also going to look at the previous river course (TR2 & TR3) and then, time and space permitting, we intend to move to the field east of Tithe Mead to look at the rectilinear feature in the middle of the field (TR4) and to try and pick up the long linear running N/w to S/E across the field. Does it carry on into the field immediately East and if not then why not! The materials recovered from the ditch (previously excavated in 2015) suggest it was active in the Roman period.

We also plan to do further geophysics in the area, but this will be subject to time and labour constraints.

So to recap – if you are interested in attending this

years excavations at Tithe Mead, no experience necessary, then you should contact me at harveytron@hotmail.com. I will then email you the H & S and health declaration form which MUST be returned to me filled in. You will then be issued with a parking pass.



There is no deadline for returning the forms and you can come and join us at any point. We do not require you to book days but an indication of when you want to attend will be helpful in the planning. We look forward to seeing you and please answer any emails relating to this as promptly as possible.

Our other projects at Wincanton and at Penselwood have now been rescheduled so **Wincanton**, where we have a small amount of 'resi' to complete, followed by targeted test pits, will take place this autumn when the current crop has been harvested. Thanks Steve, Tanya, Caroline and Gary for help in re-negotiating this.

Penselwood also will now be concluded in late August/early September

subject to Charles's (land owner) agreement and the field being available. This will mean quite a substantial magnetometry survey to complete the assessment of the whole field, leading to the possibility of targeted tets pits on the rectilinear anomaly (see below) in the quieter previously ploughed area of the field.

Well that's as much as can say for this month. Thanks to the editor for holding back publication and we'll hopefully see some of you at Tithe Mead. H & S form with medical declaration below. It can be downloaded from this page. Any queries relating to Tithe Mead 2017 then please contact me.

It is no exaggeration to say that Health and Safety can make the difference between life and death so please take note of the instructions and advice below. It is in *your own* interests. Most activities can have unforeseen dangers and you may need time to acclimatise to physical labour. Excavations can be dangerous places. With people often working closely together using tools they may not be familiar with, there is the potential for accidents. In order to make you aware of some of the hazards we have produced this short list of things **to do** and things **to avoid**. Three essential points:

1. **Familiarise** yourself with the site - you are responsible for *your own* safety, so take time to look at the site and try to identify potential problem areas.
2. **Be aware** of what and who is around - you are responsible for *the safety of others*. By sensible actions you can avoid harm or injury to others.
3. **Tell** the excavation director/supervisor of any problem, no matter how small.

Activity/ Hazard	Potential Consequences	Avoidance tactics
Mattocking/ Using a pick	Skull fracture Serious wounds Stone in an eye Back strain Blisters Death, Amputation	Don't raise mattock above shoulder height <i>Wear boots</i> Be aware of others around you; those not using mattock or pick should keep clear <i>Work at a sensible pace</i> Wear gloves
Shovelling/ Using a spade	Back/muscle strain Being hit Blisters	<i>Work at a sensible pace</i> Be aware of others around you Wear gloves
Trowelling	Cuts and Grazes Knee damage Blisters	Wear gloves <i>Use kneelers</i>
Bucketing	Back strain Other injuries	Do not overfill your bucket. <i>Bend your knees when lifting</i> Do not lift it above head height
Barrowing	Back strain Other injuries	Do not overfill barrows and lift from knees <i>Establish barrow runs that are kept clear</i>
Soil heaps	Collapse in trench Slipping while on unloading run	Heaps must not creep towards the trench <i>Take extra care as heap gets higher</i>
Weather	Sunburn Heat exhaustion	Wear hat, loose clothes and sun block <i>Work at a sensible pace and drink water regularly</i>
Obstacles	Tripping/falling	Familiarise yourself with site. Never leave tools where others can trip on them, or objects on the sides of trenches
Work in hot weather	Sunburn Heat exhaustion	Keep neck covered <i>Wear hat and loose clothes</i> Work at sensible pace <i>Keep supply of water to hand</i>

Nigel Harvey