

Drawing on relevant primary and secondary data and sources relating to archaeology, develop a publication and dissemination strategy for a case study

Introduction

Between July 2019 and October 2020 University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) undertook two periods of excavation work at Burnmill Road in Market Harborough, Leicestershire (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 9). This work was performed in advance of the construction of a new residential development by BDW Trading Ltd on previously undeveloped fields (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 9). The project was badly affected by poor weather conditions and the outbreak of Covid-19, but much of the excavation area was fully investigated as planned, with only a portion of the lower potential 'contingency' areas going unexplored (Clapton & Kipling, 2021; Score, 2020). The excavations showed that the site had predominantly been an area of agricultural focus from around the middle of the Iron Age through to the end of the Roman period, with associated settlements likely situated just beyond the limits of development area (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 220, 222). The results of the excavation were able to provide notable insight into changes in rural settlement forms from the Iron Age into the Roman period, along with illustrating the transition of land usage in the later Roman phase from a focus on livestock rearing for food towards livestock usage for wool production (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 221).

Project aims as originally planned

As the original publication and dissemination aims for the project, detailed in the WSI (Score, 2017), were drawn up prior any archaeological information being known about the site, they simply follow the standard ULAS template for such work. As such the strategy proposes that as a baseline ULAS will look to publish a summary of the results of the project in a suitable journal (Score, 2017, p. 6), which in most cases for sites in Leicestershire would be *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*. In addition to this ULAS would also add a record of the site to the Online Access to the Index of Archaeological Investigations (OASIS) project and submit the site archive including the site report to the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) grey literature archive (Score, 2017, p. 6).

Should the results of the excavation prove to be significant then a commitment is made to produce a full-length article for publication in an appropriate journal (Score, 2017, p. 6). If the site is only of local significance this would again be in *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*, but publication in a wider range of journals would be explored if the work is of regional or national significance.

Updated aims for the project

In light of the results of the excavations it is proposed that the publication and dissemination strategy for this project be updated to make use of its more significant aspects in order to engage with the local community to a greater degree. The original aims will also be honoured with a commitment to the publication of a full-length article in the local archaeological journal, together with the OASIS and ADS uploads, but as part of a move to expand ULAS's public engagement approach a number of other avenues for dissemination will now also be trialled as part of this project's publication strategy.

Further details of this strategy are outlined later in this document, but the primary aim of this updated approach is to explore options for fostering improved relationships between the local community, the incoming residents of the residential development, the developers, and ULAS. Previous expansive approaches to the publication and dissemination of archaeological results by ULAS have been concentrated primarily on those of national significance, but in partnership with the developers, BDW Trading Ltd, this strategy will attempt to demonstrate the value of smaller-scale engagement initiatives in conjunction with commercial archaeology work.

ULAS is aware that the focus on selecting research objectives solely with the goal of contributing to region and period specific research agendas ends up creating an insular audience for the outcomes of the work, namely academics and other archaeologists. The lack of publicly accessible information produced using this approach however does little to engender either public interest in archaeology or in the value of developer-led archaeology (Orange & Perring, 2018, p. 135). It is ULAS's intent in the future to work on the philosophy that good public archaeology makes use of these objectives to also shape the narrative of the site in ways that facilitate sharing its story with audiences beyond the archaeological community (Grima, 2018, p. 83). With the difficulties commercial archaeological work has engaging with local communities during the excavation phases due to issues such as supervisory budgets, health and safety issues, and confidentiality agreements with developers (Orange & Perring, 2018, p. 135-6), a greater focus must instead be applied to the post publication phase and the

opportunities that having a fully formed narrative provides. It is hoped that this strategy will utilise this greater focus to illustrate how work done after the completion of the excavation can help in knitting together old and new parts of the community through the provision of a shared interest and connection to their local area, as well as promoting community engagement with other archaeological work in the future.

Summary of the excavation results

Preliminary work had suggested archaeological remains dating from the Middle Iron Age into the Roman period were likely to be found on the site. and this proved to be an accurate assessment (Brown, 2017). The recovered data suggested that activity on the site had likely begun in the Middle Iron Age and continuing right through until the later 4th century, before ceasing until later medieval ploughing took place (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 9).

The evidence for Iron Age activity suggested that the site had largely been part of an area utilised for agricultural activity, with various livestock enclosures and ditch systems recorded across the site (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 222). The settlement associated with this activity is thought to have been located just beyond the limits of the excavation to the north (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 9). There was little Iron Age occupation evidence from the site itself, however possible evidence for two roundhouses was found in the eastern portion of the site, though these had both suffered truncation by later Roman activity (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 214).

The subsequent period of Roman activity was represented by a series of eastwards moves across the site (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 151). A 'clothesline' boundary was established, possibly as a division between activities/occupation, with a blank area left open between it and an earlier ditch system, potentially for the movement of livestock (Clapton & Kipling, 2021. p. 222-223). Throughout the Roman period there was an increase in clear delineations between areas of the site, with ditches and gullies used to create numerous small enclosures (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 223). Due to the absence of occupation evidence in these areas, these are believed to have been primarily used for livestock management (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 223).

The later Roman activity was confined to the south-eastern portion of the site, and it has here that the limited occupation evidence was found (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 223). This consisted of pitting, ditches, and gullies from which domestic refuse was recovered (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 223). The

distribution and nature of the finds suggested that there was a late Roman settlement located to the east of these features just outside of the excavation area (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 223).

The two most notable finds groups from the site were the ten inhumation burials, and the worked bone tools. The burials were distributed widely across the site, with Iron Age and Roman individuals represented, with a range of ages present as well as burial approaches employed (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 219). The worked bone tools are believed to have been related to the later Roman shift into wool production on the site and consist of a selection of spindles, bobbins, and gouges made from sheep bones (Rogers & Johnson, 2021, p. 158-9).

Significance of the results in the broader research context

The continuation of activity from the Iron Age into the Roman period was a notable finding from the site as this stands in contrast to many other sites in the 'Ridgeway' area of the county which were typically abandoned by the 2nd century (Browning, 2020). The site was even more unusual for this occupation activity then continuing right through into the 4th century (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 224). This time span of activity allowed for a clear pattern of evidence to be observed for changes in the location of the settlement foci over time, with this continuation of occupation also proving useful for highlighting the changing forms of enclosure features over time, marked by the clear transition from the curvilinear features of the Iron Age into the 'ladder' like enclosures seen later in the Roman period (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 224; Taylor, 2024).

Of the more significant finds from the site were the ten inhumation burials recovered from both partially silted ditches and intentional grave pits (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 218). Further disarticulated remains were also recovered from a number of other contexts so it is possible that additional burials that had been disturbed or truncated may have also been present on the site previously (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 219). These remains represented individuals of all age distinctions and were interred in a range of positions (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 219). A majority of the skeletons returned C14 dates of early 2nd century to mid 3rd century, though two of them likely dated to the Late Iron Age (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 219). Some of the patterning in the burials suggested that at least for a short period there may have been a significance to the location chosen for their burial on the site (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 219). Although burials are not an unusual occurrence in rural Roman settlements in the region, they are not normally numerous on individual sites, and this fact along with the placement of these burials offers further insight into burial practice

in relation to rural settlements and the potential significance of these choices (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 219-220; Taylor, 2024). The discovery of the Late Iron Age burials is more unusual as these are a rarity in the East Midlands, and there may be significance to the continuation in burials on the site from the Iron Age into the Roman period (Willis, 2024).

The primary evidence for activity on the site throughout its usage was livestock production, and the quantity of faunal remains suggests that this had been a consistent endeavour during both the Iron Age and Roman periods (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 221). The most interesting aspect of this however is the evidence for an apparent shift in the focus of this production. In keeping with other similar sites in the region there was an increase in the proportions of cattle present following the transition into the Roman period (Johnson, 2021, p. 188, 200), but during the later portion of the Roman occupation there appears to have been a further shift from the primary activity being cattle rearing for food towards sheep rearing for the production of wool (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 201). This is represented by both the faunal remains and the appearance of worked bone artefacts associated with textile manufacture within the finds assemblage (Clapton & Kipling, 2021, p. 201; Rogers & Johnson, 2021, p. 158-9). Work on Roman textile production has been limited in the East Midlands, so this activity represents a potential key resource for future research (Taylor, 2024).

Intended audiences and the proposed methods of reaching them

As previously mentioned, the intention of this publication and dissemination strategy is to focus on two key audiences, the traditional archaeological and academic community, and the local community in the areas surrounding the excavation site.

The archaeological and academic audience

For the traditional archaeological and academic audience, the level of significance of the site has been determined to be primarily that of local significance, so journal publication will be restricted to a full-length article in an upcoming edition of *Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society*. This article is already in preparation and will be submitted in due course, with the intention of this being part of the 2025 volume. Alongside this there will also be completion of uploads related to the OASIS project, regional HER, followed by the uploading of the report and all site data to the ADS database to allow reference and access to this data for any interested parties in the future. This work is due to be completed imminently.

The local community

For the other target audience, the local community, a fresh strategy was prepared with reference to the ClfA (2024) '*Toolkit for Public Engagement*', the Neighbourhood Planning (2024) toolkit for community engagement, and the NPC (2024) '*Theory of change in ten steps*' guidance, along with reference to the Orange *et al.* (2020) '*Public Engagement in Development-led Archaeology*' survey data. It was devised in order to achieve the best approach for both enhancing ULAS's public engagement methods, and one that could easily be tailored to the specifics of individual sites in the future.

The strategy will look to address engagement with four specific groups within the local community: the residents of the area surrounding the site; the future residents of the residential development currently underway on the site; the schoolchildren at the local school; and the local heritage group.

The local residents and schoolchildren

The strategy for engaging with the local residents is paired with that of engaging with the local schoolchildren. This will consist of two separately tailored versions of a presentation and finds handling session which will both take place at the Robert Smyth Academy, a local school situated less than 500m from the excavation site. The presentation for the local residents will be an evening event which will primarily consist of an hour-long lecture provided by the site director Dr Roger Kipling, and will be followed by a Q & A session and a finds handling session. As the primary material from the site has now been deposited with Leicestershire Museums this handling material will be mix of unstratified material retained from the site alongside similar artefacts to those recovered from the excavations but drawn from ULAS's handling collection. An invite will also be extended to local media to attend this event. An abridged version of this presentation will then be presented to the local schoolchildren during the school day, and will be given by Graham Murray, a recent recipient of the Council of British Archaeology Award for Public Engagement 2024 for his part in a project working with school groups at Chester House in Northamptonshire in the summer of 2024. With it known that children engage best with task-based activities and hands on learning (Lavin, 1997, p. 228-230) this event will have a greater focus on the handling session and will also include additional archaeological engagement activities not related to the Burnmill Road excavations, in order the further foster interest in archaeology among the student body. Both of these presentations are due to take place prior to the end of the school year in July 2025, but are subject to the scheduling determinations of the school, with exact dates not yet finalised.

The future inhabitants of the residential development

A key aspect of the strategy for engaging with the incoming residents of the development will be the partnership with BDW Trading Ltd. It is hoped that this partnership will provide benefits for both parties and set out a template for how future engagement strategies can be approached in other commercial archaeology projects, in particular those for further residential developments. For BDW Trading LTD, the hope is that this portion of the strategy will assist in both attracting residents to the development and demonstrating their commitment to building community into their development projects. While for ULAS this will ideally provide a good test case for an expanded approach to the dissemination of the results of our work through a more lasting engagement with the archaeological sites we work on, as well as increasing the societal value of the results of this work.

This portion of the strategy is a two-pronged approach aimed at giving the future residents of the development an accessible narrative of the site for them to engage with. The first of these is likely to be a shorter-term solution but will provide a more detailed overview of the story of the site. This will take the form of a short pamphlet produced by ULAS which will provide details of both the excavation process undertaken on the site, giving residents broad insights into what goes into work of this kind, and as well as detailing the narrative of the site as derived from this work. ULAS has produced pamphlets similar to this for large sites it has worked on in the past (e.g. Fig. 1) but not for a residential development such as this. BDW Trading Ltd will include a copy of this pamphlet in with the welcome packs left for each new resident of the development, as well as providing copies in the show home for potential buyers to take away with them. These pamphlets are due to begin printing in March 2025, with the design process currently being finalised. These will then be delivered to BDW Trading Ltd by April 2025 and be held by them until such time as the show home on the site is ready to accept visitors and the welcome packs are being prepared.



No fittings from the church survived except for the bronze arm from a crucifix (below) and a stone basin (left) which was either a holy water stoup, or a piscina, used for the priest's ablutions or to clean vessels used during mass.



Just over 1340 burials were recovered from St Peter's churchyard, one of the largest excavations of a medieval parish cemetery in Britain. It is likely that the bulk of the burials were shrouded, without coffins. Among the earlier ones (c.12th century) were a dozen 'charcoal' burials where the body was placed on a layer of charcoal. Some early church writers suggest that charcoal was used to mark burials. Another early practice was the use of stones to line the grave and to place around and over the body, to support a simple plank cover.



Ash burials were also found, mainly within the church. A layer of ash was placed in the base of the coffin, beneath the body. This tradition may date to the 14th century and could symbolise humility and penitence.

The corner of a mass grave was uncovered, containing at least 21 burials. There were no marks suggestive of injury on the bodies and it is likely that they died of an epidemic disease. Analysis is still continuing and we hope to determine the cause of death. The charnel house contained a jumbled mass of human bone, probably collected as earlier graves were disturbed by later burials and also during building work to the church.

The Anglo-Saxon Period (AD 450–850)



Pre-dating the church was this Anglo-Saxon building with sunken floor and a series of stake-holes in the base. Of the same date was this copper alloy brooch (below).



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Archaeological Services

Vaughan Way Excavations Highcross Leicester Development



A large area of the Roman and medieval town of Leicester was investigated by University of Leicester Archaeological Services between 2003 and 2006.

Excavations at Vaughan Way found the 'lost' church of St Peter and its cemetery.

This work was funded by Hammerson UK Properties.

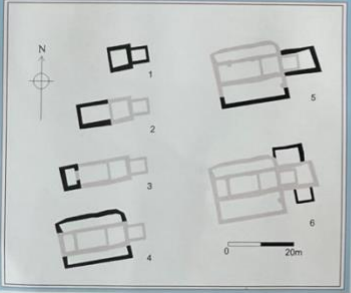
University of Leicester

The Lost Church of St. Peter

The site of St. Margaret's Baths on Vaughan Way was excavated in 2004–5, revealing the medieval graveyard and church of St. Peter. This was one of the four 'lost' churches of Leicester and, after it was dismantled in 1573, its stone and timber was re-used to build the nearby Free Grammar School. Most of the plan of the church was revealed. This probably



began as a two-celled building (1). The nave was later extended (2) and by the late twelfth century, a western bell tower had been added (3), within which was found a large bell-casting pit. Aisles were added (4), the chancel extended (5), and a small, sunken-floored charnel house built (6).



The excavations also revealed medieval buildings to the north-east of the cemetery. The 'hall' had stone walls almost 1m thick, which could have supported a second storey. Next to this was an undercroft, a large semi-basement which may also have supported a second storey. Its owners would have been important members of the medieval parish.

Outside the cemetery, a late medieval clay-walled building was excavated. The 'kitchen' area (top right) had two hearths and a stone-lined drain and sump.



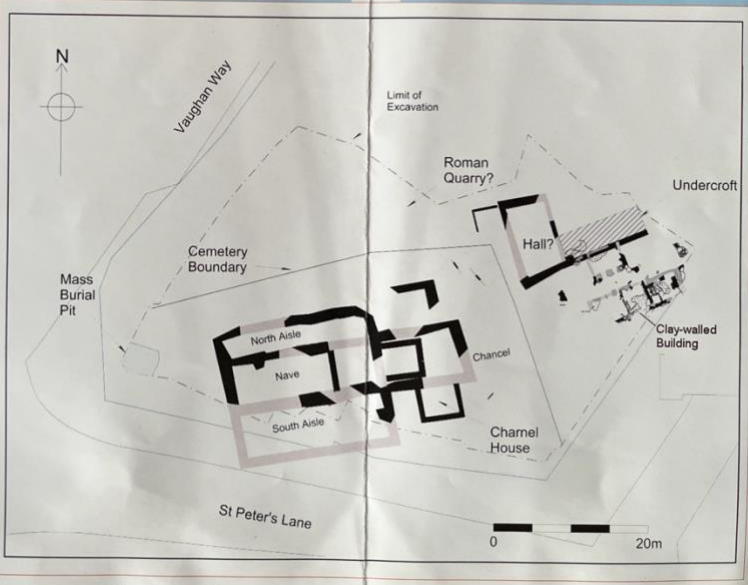


Figure 1. Example of prior pamphlet produced by ULAS (ULAS, 2006)

The second feature of this portion of the strategy will be the longer-term engagement tool. This will entail the erection of an information board by BDW Trading Ltd within the designated 'green area' of the development. This will again be designed by ULAS and will focus primarily on providing a long-lasting and accessible narrative of the site that all future residents and visitors will be able to consult. This information board is being designed in parallel with the pamphlet and is due for delivery to the client at the same time. Its erection will likely not occur until close to the end of the development process as the 'green area' will only be installed after the residential buildings are completed, as such the timescale for this is currently unknown.

The local heritage group

The final audience of the publication and dissemination strategy, the local heritage group, will take a similar approach to that of the local community and schoolchildren. However, as this group, The Market Harborough Historical Society, is well acquainted with many facets of the archaeology process having hosted a number of lectures by ULAS staff previously, this presentation will provide a more in-depth analysis of the work undertaken during the excavation. It will look to provide greater details related to both the significance of the results from the site and how they fit into the wider narratives of the immediate area and the East Midlands as a whole. This lecture will be given by Dr Roger Kipling the site director, and is due to take place by the end of June 2025, providing there are no scheduling issues.

Proposals to measure impact/effectiveness of the strategy once implemented

ULAS are very keen for this strategy to be a success and so will take a variety of approaches to assessing the effectiveness of each of the publication and dissemination methods.

Assessment of effectiveness of the publication of the journal article is limited in some respects and may be hard to judge for a number of years, and as such will be treated as a separate entity when assessing the overall impact of the strategy. However, the most useful measures of this will be citations of the article in future publications, and downloads of the article once it is made available to the general public, which will occur a year after the volume is released to paying members of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society (LAHS, 2025). Dr Roger Kipling also has an ORCID profile (ORCID, 2025) on which he will list references to the article through which engagement will also be tracked.

For the presentations and handling sessions to take place at Robert Smyth Academy the primary feedback mechanism will be the collection of oral feedback on the day of the presentations. Audience attendance for the public evening presentation will also be used as a measure of the level of interest in such events in the future, as well as guiding future planning related to the publicity of these events. Additional ULAS staff members may be encouraging to attend the events in order to gather as wide a range of opinions as possible on their success, with a feedback session then taking place with ULAS management in the following days. Following discussion with the school hierarchy the students who attend that event will be given a short informal assignment in which they will provide further thoughts on what they took away from the sessions, with ULAS then being invited back to the school and given a chance to look over these and note any specific feedback included in the submissions.

The impact of the pamphlets in the welcome packs and the information board will be assessed via a short survey which BDW Trading Ltd have agreed to distribute in conjunction with ULAS at a point around six months after the last property of the development is occupied. This survey will be designed to gain an understanding of both the effectiveness of the information provided at helping the residents feel connected to their new neighbourhood, as well as their thoughts on improving the effectiveness of such a strategy when it is used in the future on other developments.

	Pillar 1: Planned activities	Pillar 2: Project outputs	Pillar 3: Outcomes
Context 1: People and individual participants	Community excavation opportunity – archaeology skills training	50 individual participants took part	A wider variety of people have been involved in heritage. Dig participants have learnt new heritage skills.
Context 2: Place or community	Open day with site tours	150 people visited the site for a tour	Visitors to site have learnt about the heritage of the village and feel a greater connection to the place.
	Finds display at local museum	75 people went on to visit the local museum to see the finds	Those visiting are more likely to visit another archaeological site or heritage attractions.
Context 3: Archaeology or heritage	Archaeological investigation	Archaeological report	Heritage has been better explained and the site can be managed more effectively.
	Archaeological archive	Accessible, ordered and stable archive	Finds are with the local museum and the accessible archive provides reusable data which can be incorporated into future research.

Figure 2. Example of a completed Theory of Change matrix from the ClfA Toolkit for Public Engagement (ClfA, 2024)

The initial assessment of the overall impact of the strategy will be undertaken through the assembly of a 'Theory of change' matrix similar to that featured in the ClfA (2024) *Toolkit for Public Engagement* (Fig. 2). This will gather all the information acquired from the various feedback methods into an organised form for evaluation by site director Dr Roger Kipling and project manager Vicki Score. From here discussion will be held between those who participated in the strategy and the full ULAS management team to assess the approach more broadly and to formulate a plan for the future refinement of the strategy. This plan will then be presented in the next all-hands company staff meeting, where further feedback will be sought, and from here an appropriate site will be selected for the next phase of the trial.

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