



Autumn Update

Work has continued over the summer to answer some of the questions being thrown up by this fascinating site. Our most recent long trench near the 'Shrine' site is definitely pre-Roman, probably iron age. We are not sure if three burials found in the ditch's top fill (two cremations and a possible baby inhumation) may indicate we will find more, as we have found three burials in two metres of ditch. However it may just mean the soft ditch fill was easier to dig than rock, which is close to the surface.

We continue to excavate the wider ditch at the west end, which seems to be between seven and eight metres wide, over a metre deep and still in Roman deposits. There is still a way to go, and as we get deeper the effort needed to get the soil out is greater! On the outer edge of the ditch are several features - a very nice post hole, and a stone-filled slot, both with Roman material in their fills. Unfortunately the narrowness of our trench means we can't put these in the wider context needed to interpret them.

In the 'shrine' trench (Site 2) the area opened this year to search for a possible ambulatory around the circular building has shown no evidence of one, despite several nice post holes turning up, with packing stones and padstones of re-used masonry and burnt stones. Unfortunately they don't make a pattern we can interpret as a structure.

We have begun to remove the stones at the north eastern end of the shrine wall to access the pit under the wall, and it has confirmed this part of the building was constructed with re-used masonry and burnt stones. It's clear this part of the wall was built starting from the west and working eastwards, judging by the slope of the large foundation stones. Last year a sherd from the Beaker pot was found in the wall's foundation trench confirming the build's direction. The builders would have disturbed the beaker pit as they worked their way round, unwittingly incorporating this sherd in their foundation trench, a little to the east of the beaker pit.

We recently returned to investigate the interior of building two on the first site, which had some sort of furnace or oven in one half of it. We have had to revise our previous thoughts of a timber-built building with padstones rather than sleeper walls, as we have found a continuous run of stones clearly representing a sleeper wall. It is very damaged with missing stones, as are the other walls, giving the misleading picture we had previously. There is also work required to confirm this two-room interpretation, as the north western half is still a little conjectural. We need to consider how the roof would have been supported as our trench does not extend far enough across the building's footprint to pick up evidence of aisles or central posts. Many thanks to all who have helped so far this season - plenty more to still to do!



The north eastern end of the shrine wall

Archaeology open day at the National Herb Centre

For the fourth year running the Heritage Group took part in the National Festival of British Archaeology and, with the help of good weather, pulled in record crowds. The talks by David Freke and Stephen Wass were excellent, the site tours of the excavation were full to over-flowing and the support of other local history and archaeology groups contributed to a wonderfully varied and informative exhibition.

As always an enormous thankyou to all those individuals who worked so hard to make it a success - it would not be possible to run such large scale, popular and free events without all their time and support. This event is a great way to show the local community what we, and other local societies, are doing.



Pictured: David gives one of many tours of the site.