



### Archaeology Update

Since the autumn 2013 Newsletter many aspects of the dig became clearer, and new questions arisen. On site one, nearest the church, we added a fourth Roman building to the three already identified, although it is so far only visible as a short run of large foundation stones underneath building two. More work is required in the 2014 season to explore this new structure. We have also been re-interpreting previous ideas, as archaeologists do. Building one we now think is an aisled building, a very common Roman method for constructing barns, and more work in the coming season should confirm or disprove this suggestion.

On site two, the shrine site, the latter part of the year was spent clearing and recording the large prehistoric pit under the Roman shrine wall. This was delicate work, especially as there was a human skeleton at the bottom. A team of forensic archaeologists led by Professor John Hunter kindly spent three days carefully cleaning, identifying and lifting the extremely fragile bones. Their expertise was absolutely necessary as some bones could not be lifted without crumbling away, even when consolidated, so identification in the field was critical. What emerged was a partial skeleton of a large adult man, whose remains were very disturbed, with some parts missing altogether.



**Forensic team at work L-R:  
Barrie Simpson, Dr Cecily Cropper,  
Prof John Hunter**



**Parts of skeleton L-R:  
Rib, skull, humerus, radius, jaw and  
vertebrae with femur top right**

There were no grave goods, though in the pit fill were a polished flint Neolithic axe discovered early 2013 and an antler pick. These suggest the skeleton dates to around 5,000 years ago. The remains will be studied by researchers at Bradford University.

In the long trench, site three, across two ditches revealed by David Sabin's 2012 geophysics survey, we finally reached the bottom of the 7m wide ditch, at 3.4m (about 12 feet) below the surface. Andrew Baxter advised on shoring required for this depth, enabling us to see the lowest 1.5m of the ditch were rapidly filled in in the pre-Roman period with large stones tipped in from the east – the side on which the bank would have stood. These stones probably represent the demolished bank, and were originally quarried from the ditch. Though the course of the bank can be traced as a rise in the field very little remained in situ, but the soil under it produced a number of fine flint flakes; with more recovered from a small area at the east end than the whole of the rest of the excavations to date.

These finds, with others, await processing in the next few months. The filled-in ditch still left a wide gully across the field which gradually silted up with layers of clay, stones and silt through the late iron-age, Roman and later periods. The narrower 1m deep parallel ditch had also been filled in by the Roman period, but it is difficult to see how both ditches could have been open at the same time, as the narrow ditch would have impeded access to the back of the rampart.

### Website

The Heritage Group website is growing in popularity, attracting between 600 and 1,000 unique visits a month. Documents are added every week as well as news about the group and from further afield. The site is proving a useful resource for those in the UK and abroad, with archaeology and Warmington being the most common topics people are looking for; family historians also make good use of the site.

A consistently popular part of the site is the research on deserted medieval villages - we will add to this shortly with information about the 1980s excavation at Burton Dassett Southend, regarded by historians as one of the most significant in the country.

Following Andrew Baxter's very successful presentation on the Edgell Light Railway, a summary of this talk can also be found online. If anyone would like to help with inputting information to the site, or has some local research they would like added please contact [harrietnewman@outlook.com](mailto:harrietnewman@outlook.com) or Liz Newman on 01295 690641. The site can be found at [www.warmingtonheritage.com](http://www.warmingtonheritage.com)

Which came first? How does the massive bank and ditch feature relate to Nadbury Camp just along the ridge? What was it for? And is it coincidence the Roman shrine with its very early coin hoard is within 20m of the bank? We hope to answer some of these questions through new investigations in the 2014 season, finds' analysis and records of work already undertaken. Many thanks to all who helped on the excavation and finds processing on site, we hope to see you all again this season for more discoveries.