Drayton II Roman villa (SP 817 918)  
Richard Pollard

A fourth season of excavations was undertaken on this site, SMR ref.SP89.SW.Q, by the Leicestershire County Council Employment Training Scheme and students of the School of Archaeological Studies of the University of Leicester, under the direction of Jon Coward and Ian Hind for the former, and Nick Cooper for the latter. Project Management was provided by Richard Pollard for the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit. Work concentrated on the central range of rooms of what is now interpreted as a winged corridor villa, linking Trenches 17 and 18 and embracing 12 (Pollard, 1991).

The number of rooms with hypocaust systems has increased to seven, including channelled systems in both west and east wings and in an eastern extension to the room in Trench 18 excavated in 1990. The pillar system of providing under floor heating was used in at least one room of the central range, which appears to have been fronted by a corridor paved with a plain tessellated pavement.

In the northern extension comprising a two-room unit, first exposed in 1990, a wealth of detail was recovered in the northern most, heated, room. The use of layers of painted plaster, *opus signinum*, and vertically-placed wall tile to provide insulation and protection for the ironstone walls was recorded. The room was floored with tiles set in *opus signinum*, and drainage was provided by a lead pipe which emptied into the hypocaust of the southern room. The mosaic in the latter room was lifted by Leicestershire Museums’ Conservation Section as its condition was deteriorating following exposure and vandalism in 1990.

A fifth season will be undertaken in 1992, when it is hoped to complete the recovery of the plan of the building thus far exposed, and search for other features within the field. It is clear that the site is preserved to a remarkable degree despite the shallow ploughsoil and piecemeal stone robbing. The building measures at least 32m east-west and 24m north-south, which may be compared with figures of 51m by 23m for the major building at Great Weldon, seven miles (11 km) to the south-east (Smith *et al* 1988-9), also of winged corridor plan. The main building materials are ironstone for the walls and ceramic tile for the roofs. Swithland slate and Collyweston limestone roofing slabs have also been recovered. An architectural context for the oolitic limestone column base found in 1978 (Cooper *et al* 1989, Fig.6) has yet to be discovered.

Finds and records with Leicestershire Museums (A90.1988).
Excavations on Causeway Lane, Leicester (SK 584 048)  
Aileen Connor

An excavation was carried out by Leicestershire Archaeological Unit between March and September 1991 in advance of the construction of a new office block for the Inland Revenue on the corner of Causeway Lane and East Bond Street. The site lies within the north-east quarter of the area enclosed by the Roman and medieval town walls on geological deposits of alluvial sand and gravel above Mercia Mudstone. The project was managed by Richard Buckley, directed by Aileen Connor, and funded by the Inland Revenue. Finds and records are with Leicestershire Museums (A1.1991).

Previous excavation work on Causeway Lane in 1980, (Buckley 1979-80) at the extreme west end of the development area (area 4, illus.1), produced evidence of extensive medieval pit activity, mainly of the 12th to 13th centuries. Chance finds from the vicinity include two mosaic pavements and a late Roman coin hoard from the corner of Causeway Lane and East Bond Street, whilst it was believed that the crossroads of two Roman streets lay within the area of the proposed development. In order to assess the impact of the development on archaeological levels, a small scale evaluation was carried out in January 1991, which showed that although parts of the site were likely to be severely truncated by 19th century cellars, and 18th century gravel extraction pits, well stratified, Roman deposits of a metre and more were also likely to be encountered. Following negotiations with the Inland Revenue, a time limit of six months was set for the excavation of 0.45 acres of a potentially deeply stratified site.

The north-east quarter of Leicester is shown as orchards and gardens on early maps, only coming under development in the mid 19th century. The area on which excavation took place (illus. 1) is shown as a row of terraced houses with long rear gardens in the mid 19th century, followed by a variety of hospitals and dispensaries which amalgamated to become the Bond Street Maternity Hospital in the early years of this century. In addition, Countess Street ran approximately east-west across the site from East Bond Street. After the demolition of the buildings, and the removal of Countess Street in the early 1970s, the recently demolished Unemployment Benefit Office was erected, and the remainder of the site used for car parking.

Following the removal of overburden by machine, cellarage of 19th and 20th century date was found to be far less extensive than initial estimates based on documentation and evaluation had suggested, and those areas unaffected by gravel quarrying remained essentially undisturbed. All the surviving archaeological deposits
1. Causeway Lane excavation: site location plan
were either Roman or medieval in date, no deposits have been dated to the intervening centuries, although a number of artefacts found in later contexts can be dated to this period.

2. Causeway Lane excavation: early Roman features

Evidence for occupation as early as the mid first century has been found on the site. This was in the form of narrow gullies bounded by rows of stakeholes found on the west area of the site, and a deep curving ditch on the east end of the site. These features may represent stock enclosures or field boundaries, although both included elements indicative of a structural function.

These features were succeeded by a very large, deep ditch on a north-south alignment at the extreme west of the site. This ditch was in use until the early second century AD. It was kept clear for a number of years but then rapidly silted up and was used for rubbish disposal. Whilst it was still in use, the area to the east seems to have been under cultivation, in addition a single cremation was deposited, but, unlike the Shires excavations, there was no evidence for early Roman timber structures. Given this evidence it has been suggested that the ditch represents a very early boundary to the Roman town. If this theory is correct then most of the area of the site may have been outside the official town boundaries in the early Roman period. Clearly demonstrating a shifting town boundary, this new evidence potentially provides an insight into the changing fortunes and economy of Roman Leicester.
During the early second century the ditch no longer held its earlier significance; it was used as a convenient repository for rubbish and left to silt up. At about this time there is evidence that a street pattern may have been surveyed and laid out. This new plan was on a slightly different orientation to the earlier ditch, and appears to have existed as a skeleton marked by ditches for a short while. At about the same time a metalled street was constructed on a north-south orientation.

The area was only developed after the earlier ditches had silted up, this process seems to have been quite rapid since the stone buildings were erected over the ditches in the mid second century AD. Evidence for two such buildings was recorded on the site. One was certainly a strip building, with internal stone and timber partitions. The shortest side of the building fronted onto the north-south street, there is also some evidence to suggest that the long side of the structure may have had its frontage on an east-west aligned street. Although no floors were found, and standing masonry had largely been taken to use elsewhere during the medieval period, large amounts of wallplaster found as backfill for third century gravel pits to the north, may well have been stripped from this building.

At the westernmost end of the site evidence for back yard areas was found in the form of successive resurfacings of gravel, small hearths, including one amphora-lined hearth and several wells and pits, likely to provide valuable environmental and dating evidence for the period. These successive resurfacings and makeups form a body of stratigraphy more than a metre deep. It is relatively unusual to find undisturbed Roman stratification surviving in urban centres, so this is of particular importance to our understanding of the town’s development during the early Roman period. In addition, evidence for two post built structures was recorded. The earlier of the two
was somewhat insubstantial and probably represents an outbuilding, the latter is difficult to date, although it is likely to have been built during the third century AD. This later structure was somewhat more substantial, having deep, granite set posts. It was also closely associated with a well constructed gravel surface covered by fairly large amounts of demolition material. It is suspected that the edge of a substantial structure was clipped by the excavation, the remainder of which is still preserved in the ground, and will be undisturbed by the current development by the Inland Revenue.

There are indications that during the later third and early fourth centuries the area may have been abandoned as a residential area, pits of this date cut through earlier Roman stuctures in the south, and in the north there was evidence of quarrying on a commercial scale. These pits are very interesting, both for their contribution to what we know about the gravel extraction industry during the Roman period, and for the material disposed within them. It is unlikely, for example, that the large amounts of decorated wall plaster found would have survived so well had it not been used as infill for the gravel extraction pits. Valuable environmental evidence for the period has also been retrieved from these pits, as has an extremely important assemblage of late third century pottery. More importantly all this material can be dated very closely, since it represents rapid backfilling over a short period of time.

The very fact that abandonment of buildings occurred at this time suggests some form of contraction in the Roman town, though it may be that gravel extraction was economically more profitable, and therefore, buildings, residential or otherwise, were seen as expendable.
The post-Roman levels (illus. 4)

As is common in Leicester a hiatus occurs between the latest Roman and the earliest medieval evidence. The excavations on Causeway Lane, may, however, contribute to our understanding of the reasons for this. Many areas of the site showed evidence of a late Roman or early post-Roman horticultural soil similar in deposition to the post-medieval garden soil already well known in Leicester. This type of soil horizon suggests clearance and cultivation of a type which would be likely to be very destructive to archaeological horizons. Further analysis may reveal a succession of such deposits.

Evidence for archaeological deposits of medieval date was mainly in the form of deep pits and wells. These can be seen to form two sets of distinct alignments, one which respects Causeway Lane, and a second which respects East Bond street. Interestingly the second also respects the orientation of the Roman stone building, and the first closely follows the orientation of the early Roman ditch. It is also apparent that at least one timber building of the medieval period existed on the site, and this utilised Roman foundations in its construction. Intercutting of medieval pits was minimal and sherds of pottery were large, unabraded, and many rim and base fragments were retrieved, thus, the quality of the medieval pottery is excellent and will help to enhance the quality of information from the Shires excavations.

The pits which were excavated were often very deep, varying between about two and four metres. Two main shapes were noted: circular and rectangular; work is being undertaken to identify whether this shape variation has anything to do with date or function. Preliminary results suggest that the rectangular pits may in fact be slightly earlier, although all the pits would seem to belong generally to the early medieval period complementing the evidence from the Shires where a greater proportion of later features were found.

The function of these pits is divided between water supply and rubbish disposal though many of the pits were initially dug in order to find water, later being given over to the disposal of rubbish and cess. Those pits which were not used as wells for their primary function seem to have been used as latrines or cess pits. A small number of pits on the east end of the site contained an unusual lime rich deposit, which may have been derived commercially. Analysis has not yet been undertaken, but it is hoped that it will provide an answer to this question.

A number of later medieval and early post-medieval pits were also excavated. Further analysis may throw light on the transition between the two periods.

The excavations at Causeway Lane produced vast quantities of material in the form of artefacts, environmental samples, written and drawn records. The next two years will be spent analysing and interpreting that information which has the potential, when used in conjunction with the Shires, to improve greatly our understanding of many aspects of town life throughout the Roman and medieval periods.

The author would like to thank D. Mackie for producing the illustrations.

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Excavations at 33 to 47 High Street, Leicester (SK587 0457)  
John Lucas

From November 1991 to January 1992 excavations were carried out in the basements of numbers 33 to 47 High Street, Leicester by Leicestershire Archaeological Unit, under the direction of Julian Hagar. The area was due for redevelopment by Amicable Investments Limited, who both funded, and together with the Leicester City Council, donated the finds to Leicestershire Museums (A112.1991). A total area of 74 sq. m. was investigated, but as the area was almost totally covered by Victorian cellars up to 3m deep, very little of the archaeology survived. The investigations were limited to a maximum of 1.2m below the basement floors, the anticipated depth of disturbance of the projected development. The importance of the site is that it lies within the historic core of the town, 100m west of the East Gate. In the medieval period it lay on the north side of the Swines Market and part of the site was occupied by the Lord's Place, the town house of the Earls of Huntingdon. In the Roman period the site lay 20m north of the main east-west axis street, the Fosse Way.

Evidence of possible late Iron Age or early Roman ditches was revealed together with traces of timber structures dated to around the third quarter of the first century AD. Several second century pits were also located together with a series of cobbled yards dated to the early third century. Further pits were identified, the latest of Roman date being third century, whilst the medieval pits dated to the 12th and 13th centuries.

The material from these excavations is being analysed. A Neolithic stone axe was recovered from a late second century context and the beakless skull of an eagle was found in a second century pit. Ian Baxter has provisionally described the skull as being cf Aquila sp., a golden eagle, and has suggested it may have been a captive specimen.

An excavation in Castle Gardens, Leicester (SK5823 0423)  
Richard Buckley and Julian Hagar

Between January and March 1991, a small excavation was carried out in Castle Gardens by Leicestershire Archaeological Unit under the direction of Richard Buckley and Julian Hagar, in advance of the third and final phase of reconstruction work on the boundary wall of Castle House. Watching briefs on phases II and III of this work in 1984 (Liddle 1986) had confirmed the importance of the site, and evidence relating to the Roman town and the medieval castle defences was anticipated. The excavation, which was restricted to an examination of those archaeological levels to be destroyed, measured 11m by 3m and the work was funded by the Department of Property, Leicestershire County Council.

The Roman levels were heavily disturbed by later activity and survived over an area measuring just 1.3m by 7.1m. Evidence for the early Roman town consisted of a sequence of beam slots and associated post holes dated to the late first to early second century which may relate to successive rebuilds of a timber building over a comparatively short space of time. Later Roman activity consisted of make-up levels, a hearth and a number of surfaces possibly associated with structures lying outside the confines of the excavation. One such building is suggested by a robber trench orientated east-west, observed in 1984, some 15m to the east of this excavation.

The Roman levels were cut by a 9m long section of the southern edge of the castle bailey ditch which, for safety reasons, could only be excavated to a depth of 3m. The ditch has been observed and partially excavated on a number of occasions, giving an approximate alignment, but a complete section has only been observed in the
excavations of 1939 and 1949 in the garden of Newarke Houses Museum, when it was found to be c.10.6m wide and 5.0m deep (Clarke 1952, 25). Against the inner side of the ditch would be a rampart or bank, formed of the material obtained from the digging of the ditch (Fox 1942-3,137), although this has never been detected on the ground. One fill of the ditch was particularly noteworthy as it consisted of a substantial layer of sandstone masonry rubble, and Roman tile fragments. This material almost certainly derived from a structure as many of the stone blocks were dressed and had mortar adhering to them. A similar layer of rubble was recorded in the excavations across the ditch in Newarke Houses Garden in 1939, and this was taken as evidence of a stone wall having been added to the bank, and later thrown down into the ditch when the castle was slighted following the rebellion of 1173 (Fox 1942-3,137).

The post medieval levels on the site were represented by a robbed wall, two drainage gullies and one small 18th century pit. The whole site was covered by 18th and 19th century garden soils. Finds and records with Leicestershire Museums (A6.1991).

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Market Harborough, St. Mary’s Road (SP 735 872) Richard Pollard

The proposal to construct a new shopping precinct and market between St. Mary’s Road, Northampton Road and Springfield Street, a site straddling the River Welland, provided the opportunity to examine a fragment of the historic core of Market Harborough. Finds of Roman and medieval material around the Peacock Hotel in the 1950s suggested the presence of archaeological levels, and an evaluation was undertaken in the summer of 1991 to establish whether this was, in fact, so.

Trial trenches south of the river demonstrated this area to be of no archaeological interest. Roman material is known from the south-west part of the town, which did not spread south of the Welland until the eighteenth century, but none was found on the Cattle Market and only a handful of sherds in the vicinity of the Peacock Hotel to the north.

Market Harborough is thought to have been a planned town created in the early 12th century. The demonstration of the existence of medieval levels in the yard of the Peacock led to more extensive excavation in September 1991, which revealed complex archaeological stratigraphy dating from the 12th/13th century to the present. A north-south ditch, backfilled between the 13th and 14th centuries, may represent an original plot layout in this, the south-east part of the planned town, which was then replaced by plots and structures on a new north west-south east alignment. The area appears to have been utilised more intensively during this period with evidence for flood management, structural activity, metal working and possibly tanning or butchery. Structural activity, pit-digging, and a metalled surface, comprise the late medieval features, overlain by a 16th century garden soil. The area continued to require extensive drainage works in the post-medieval period. It is possible that structural remains encountered in the west part of the yard are of a building marked on a late
18th century map, the earliest extant map of Market Harborough, prepared by Samuel Turner in 1776 and completed around 1804 by Rowland Rouse.

Evidence of prehistoric activity comprised a number of flint tools and waste flakes found as a residual element in 12th century+ levels. The earliest deposits on the site were alluvial, deposited prior to the medieval occupation. It is possible that prehistoric horizons are sealed by unexcavated alluvial layers, but equally conceivable that the lithic material was imported incidentally by human agency or alluvial activity.

The excavations were funded by the developer, Slateplace Ltd., and site access was granted by the developer and by Harborough District Council. Direction was by Luke Fagan and Lynden Cooper for the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit. Finds and records with Leics. Museums (A44.1991). It is intended to publish a full report, hopefully in TLAHS, in due course.

Medbourne, Mill Hill (SP 789, 934, SP 788 932) Richard Pollard

Evaluation of pasture fields continued over the winters of 1990-1 and 1991-2, following two previous seasons in the late 1980s. Attention was focussed on the western part of the Roman small town as defined by field walking over peripheral arable fields in the 1980s. Transects of 2m^2 trenches were dug across two fields off Slawston Road, known as The Seeds and Back Field. These provided a north-south swathe across the hill top, straddling the line of the Roman Gartree Road as projected from its course visible as an earthwork in Slawston parish to the west (see the 1897 one-inch Ordnance Survey map, sheet 170).

The two fields proved to be more productive in terms of archaeological strata and earth-fast features than Millfield to the east. The distribution of features and of artefacts has yet to be plotted, but it is not expected that trenches 40m and sometimes 120m apart would provide a comprehensive picture of the spatial zoning of the settlement. However, the trenches should provide information on ploughsoil depths and, in general terms, on areas where archaeological strata are most likely to be encountered and where they are most vulnerable. Back Field provided the project with its first surface built feature, a second century AD furnace base, and also its first inhabitants, an infant burial probably of Roman date and two female inhumations of late Roman or Saxon date. The lower halves only of the adults were exposed, and no grave goods were encountered. They both died in their twenties, and were a little over five feet high. Earth-fast features including gullies and post holes were encountered in both fields, with substantial quantities of pottery but little in the way of building materials. Lithic material includes a barbed and tanged arrowhead of Bronze Age date and a polished stone axe of the Neolithic period.

An area excavation was undertaken to examine the Gartree Road at the point where the 1891 six inch Ordnance Survey map (sheet XLVI N.E., surveyed in 1884-5) depicts it entering Back Field from the west. A cobbled surface was encountered, along with a curvilinear ditch associated with a buried soil. Further work in 1992 is proposed in order to amplify the nature of these features, whose date and function remain to be ascertained.

Excavation was directed by Jon Coward and Ian Hind for the Leicestershire County Council Employment Training Scheme, and the project was managed by Richard Pollard for the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit. Finds and records with Leics Museums. (A124.1987, The Seeds; A125.1987, Back Field).
The excavation of a Romano-British farmstead at Normanton-le-Heath (SK 391 137)

Between June and September 1991, the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit carried out extensive excavations on the site of a Romano-British settlement at Normanton-le-Heath in north-west Leicestershire. This work was financed by British Coal, Opencast Executive in advance of proposed opencast extraction. There are no aerial photographs showing cropmarks for the site and the decision to excavate was based upon the results of fieldwalking and preliminary trial trenching during a one month evaluation phase in June 1991.

A total area of 3713 square metres was examined, revealing enclosure ditches, droveways, the post holes of a timber building and a possible pottery kiln.

The activity on the site has been tentatively divided into three phases. Phase 1 is represented by a ditch 80m long which ran across the site from east to west and formed the northern boundary of an adjoining rectangular enclosure measuring 45m by 15m. It is likely that these ditches were maintained from at least the early second century AD until the late second to early third century AD. Substantial recutting had taken place on several occasions.

The function of these features is unclear but it is possible that the east-west ditch formed the southern boundary of a large enclosure occupying the area now covered by woodland. In view of the lack of evidence for occupation in the areas examined, the focus of the early settlement could have been in this area. Deliberate infilling of these ditches appears to have taken place during the late second to early third century AD. Phase 2, was represented by a track or droveway, a kiln and a rectangular structure. These were succeeded by a group of enclosures which were in turn abandoned during the late third to mid fourth century AD. In comparison to the phase 1 enclosures which were recut on several occasions, the phase 3 boundaries appear to have been shortlived with little evidence of substantial recutting. The kiln consisted of a stokepit and oven with a short flue. Evidence of an oven lining in the form of fired clay fragments was recovered from the fill. There was, however, no evidence of kiln furniture such as firebars or a pedestal. A large quantity of pottery comprising almost entirely sandy oxidised/greyware was found.

The high acid content of the soil meant that very little bone survived on the site - when it had, it was generally very fragile. Most of the pottery was also in poor condition, and very few metal objects or coins were recovered.

Although it is known that small Romano-British rural settlements were widespread in the area, little work has been carried out on these sites in the past. The excavation at Normanton-le-Heath has, therefore, provided a significant addition to the archaeological knowledge of Leicestershire.

Finds and records with Leicestershire Museums (A38.1991).
Archaeological excavations along the Anglian Water pipeline at Tixover (SK 97 01)

Matthew Beamish

The routing of Anglian Water’s relief pipeline in its first phase from Wing to Duddington during the spring of 1991 necessitated the investigation of known cropmark sites prior to pipe laying. This work was undertaken between March and June by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit, who were fully financed and assisted where necessary by Anglian Water in their work.

 Provision of a watching brief during the cutting of the pipe trench was also made possible, as a direct result of which further archaeological sites have come to light.

The excavations concentrated on three sites. The first (A14.1991) consisted of two sets of ‘double ditches’ some 150m apart lying on high ground to the west of the Welland. One set abutted an accompanying enclosure ditch. The excavation has demonstrated that these substantial features date from the Late Iron Age, perhaps to the last two centuries B.C. Each set would have formed an impressive and perhaps defensible boundary with deep rock cut ditches and probably a bank consisting of the excavated material between them. It is argued that that the two sets of ditches are not contemporary with one another and are separated by a time lapse reflecting change in the socio-political system.

The enclosure abutting one of the sets of ditches occupies a partial spur in a relatively defensible position. It was clearly settled, perhaps by a family grouping. Excavated from the ditch infillings was a material assemblage including few of the items in the way of finer pottery and metalwork that have been found on contemporary wealthier sites to the south and east. The ditch that surrounded the settlement has given us information relating to the subsistence patterns of the time – the animals kept and slaughtered, the crops grown – and our knowledge of local environmental conditions in the later prehistoric period will be enhanced.

The double ditches probably belonged to systems of territorial division that were extensive in both space and time. This project has significantly increased our knowledge of them.

The second site investigated comprised a ring ditch (A27.1991) situated to the east of the Iron Age site and on the lower lying gravels of the Welland. It belongs to an earlier period and it is thought that it was in use during the early part of the second millenium B.C., and belongs to the Early Bronze Age. The ditch is all that survives of what was once a burial mound or round barrow.

Archaeological investigation revealed two phases of use; in the first a continuous ditch was excavated around a primary burial in a shallow pit, of which only the very lowest levels survived; in the second the ditch was comprehensively re-excavated, after it had all but totally filled in. At this stage a pottery vessel was placed between the terminals of the new ditch. This deposition probably accompanied other funerary rites, of which no archaeological evidence survived. It is thought that the cemetery, of which this barrow was but one element, also may have had a symbolic role in territorial definition.

The third site (A29.1991) comprised large pits dating to the 12th Century A.D. and some other extensive ground workings. Their function is not fully understood, but they perhaps served as quarries for the limestone and underlying ironstone into which they were cut. In the vicinity of these pits is a known crop-marked pit alignment. Two square pits and two circular pits were also located that possibly relate to the cropmark.
NOTES

Castle Donington, Castle Hill (SK 448 275)  
James Meek

A watching brief was carried out on the land fronting Castle Hill and Hillside, Castle Donington during the machine excavation of engineer’s trial holes in advance of the construction of a new Roman Catholic church. No archaeological deposits were observed.

Claybrooke Magna (SP 481 886)  
Richard Pollard

High Cross Farm lies some 800m east of the Roman small town of Venonis, which lay at the junction of the Fosse Way and Watling Street. A Roman site, possibly a villa, lies immediately south-west of the farmyard (SMR ref.48NE.AA), with good vistas to south and east. A watching brief was undertaken in August 1991 occasioned by the construction of two buildings in the farmyard. No archaeological deposits were recorded, and the only finds comprised 19th and 20th century material. The areas examined were very restricted however, and it was recommended that any further work on the farm should be monitored.

The watching brief was conducted by Richard Pollard for the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit, funded by the developer, Twiggs (Wholesale) Ltd. The archive is held by Leics. Museums (A63.1991).

A salvage excavation at Edith Weston (SK 922 056)  
John Lucas

In September 1991 human bones were uncovered on the shore of Rutland Water at the Rutland Sailing Club, just to the west of Edith Weston. Subsequently a small salvage excavation was carried out by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit and the finds were deposited with the Leicestershire Museums (A64. 1991). Two adult inhumations were identified, both on an east-west orientation. They were of Roman origin and had a probable second century date.

A small area around these burials was examined and a scatter of Roman pottery together with a few small features was identified. Sufficient evidence was collected to suggest these were more than just isolated burials and there is a strong possibility that a settlement existed in the immediate vicinity.

Excavations at Hall Close, Empingham (SK 947 083)  
Matthew Beamish

In December 1991 and January 1992, archaeological excavations were undertaken adjacent to the standing earthwork site of Hall Close, Empingham, in advance of the bypassing and replacing of a high pressure water main. The excavations were carried out by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit. The work was financed by Anglian Water Services Ltd.

In an initial three week period the excavations evaluated the areas threatened by the development; consequently, and with the full cooperation of the developers, further work was undertaken to investigate and record a sample of the deposits prior to destruction.

In summary, within the development area, several phases of activity could be identified; these included fishpond earthwork construction in the medieval period,
followed by bank protection measures in the post-medieval period.

In parts of the site the large scale groundworks known to have taken place in the 1970s were identified within the archaeological record. As a consequence of this activity a large part of the threatened area was demonstrated to have been protected rather than destroyed by that activity.

The archaeological work undertaken apart from identifying activities hitherto unknown, has also identified where archaeological deposits have the potential of surviving. Finds and records with Leics. Museums (A131.1991).

A watching brief at Grove Farm, Enderby (SP 553 997) Matthew Beamish

A watching brief was undertaken at Grove Farm, Enderby in September and October of 1991 during the excavation of a balancing lake. The development area lay some 300m to the south and 100m to the west of the Iron Age farmstead sites excavated in 1983 and 1990 respectively (see above pp.1-82).

Following topsoil stripping, a short stretch of the Fosse Way was identified where anticipated, in the extreme east of the development area. No other archaeological deposits were observed.

A watching brief was also undertaken during the diversion of a brook in a field to the west of the B4114 to the north of the roundabout adjacent to the Iron Age sites. Although a section through the field was observed, no archaeological features were revealed.

An archaeological evaluation in Ryhall Road, Great Casterton (TF 001 091) John Lucas

In August 1991 a short evaluation was carried out to investigate the survival of archaeological deposits in anticipation of a small housing development in Healey’s Yard, Great Casterton. It was carried out by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit and was directed by Matthew Beamish. It was financed by Mr Gary Healey, who donated the finds to the Leicestershire Museums (A67.1991). The site lay in the north-east quarter of the Roman town, immediately to the west of the surviving defensive earthwork. Three small boxes were excavated in an area that lay just to the south of the projected town wall. A total area of 7 sq.m. was examined. Archaeological levels were destroyed by a modern disturbance in one box but in the other two they survived as cut features, cutting the natural Jurassic calcereous limestone at a depth of 0.6m below the modern ground level. Two courses of a wall, constructed using limestone and sandstone blocks, were discovered. Of probable Roman date, it was orientated west-north-west to east-south-east. A possible construction trench was identified to the north of it. Part of a circular feature, resembling a pit, was also located. This was also of probable Roman date.

Leicester, Leicester Castle (SK 5825 0414) Richard Buckley

In July 1991, Leicestershire Archaeological Unit carried out a small scale evaluation on the northern slope of the castle motte in advance of the erection of eight supporting posts for a timber staircase. Two test pits, measuring 0.5m square, were excavated to a depth of 0.85m through topsoil and red clay. The clay contained 18th century clay
An archaeological evaluation in Free Lane, Leicester. (SK 5875 0454) John Lucas

In March 1991 an archaeological evaluation was carried out on a site at the junction of Free Lane and Lower Free Lane, Leicester, by Leicestershire Archaeological Unit, under the direction of John Lucas, assisted by David Mackie and Martin Shore. The site was in an area of known Roman extra-mural activity, and the investigation was necessitated by the proposals for a new shopping centre, the Leicester Gates and was funded by the developers, the Leicester Partnership, who donated the finds to Leicestershire Museums (A200.1991).

Seven areas were investigated, but no archaeological levels were found in areas I to IV (illus. 5) Two adult Roman inhumations were found in area V. Both were dated to the third century and were orientated south-west to north-east. The presence of nails suggested one of the individuals was buried in a coffin and was wearing hobnail boots. In area VI a field ditch of either Roman or medieval date was identified. It was orientated east-west. In area VII two intercutting 12th century pits were located. The emptied burial vaults of the 19th century Congregational chapel, which formerly occupied the site, were located.

The Roman burials probably relate to the Roman cemetery found 30 metres to the west under Boots in the 1920s. Thus they form part of a cemetery that lay outside the western defences of the Roman town. The medieval pits possibly relate to suburban activities centred on either the Gallowtree Gate or Humberstone Gate street frontages, whereas the field ditch, together with the lack of archaeological levels in areas I to IV, suggest that much of the area lies within the historic fields surrounding the town.
**Archaeology in Leicestershire and Rutland 1991**

**Leicester, 42 Silver Street (SK 5858 0451)**

David Mackie

Leicestershire Archaeological Unit carried out a small scale evaluation in July 1991 to assess the survival of archaeological deposits to be affected by undepinning work on the foundations of a timber framed range at the rear of 42 Silver Street. The work was funded by Leicester City Council. Archaeological levels were only found to have survived in the northern part of the building 0.2m below the existing concrete floor. Any archaeological deposits along the east wall had been destroyed to the base of the existing footings, probably when the wall was underpinned with brick in the 19th century. In contrast the original west wall granite masonry foundations survive. A dark sandy loam was cut by, and appeared to run under the wall. Dating of material from this layer suggests the wall is no earlier than the late 16th century to early 17th century. Three wall foundations were revealed running across the range, sealed by the present concrete floor and may represent partition walls. Finds and records with Leicestershire Museums (A43 1991).

**A watching brief at Play Close, Melton Mowbray (SK 747 186)**

Jeannette Wells

A watching brief was carried out during the construction of an 85m long pipeline across Play Close, Melton Mowbray in September and October 1991. No significant archaeological deposits were recorded, and it was clear that the site examined in 1989 on the edge of Play Close (TLAHS, 64, pp 83-87) continued no further to the west. The work was funded by Severn-Trent Water plc.

**Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake: Shipley Hill (SK 6238 1330)**

Matthew Beamish

An archaeological evaluation was carried out at Shipley Hill in advance of the planned quarrying of a borrow pit for Syston’s northern bypass which is currently under construction. The site lies in the parish of Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake, north of Syston, adjacent to the junction of the A46 Syston bypass and the B6607 (Fosse Way). The work was carried out by the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit between October and November 1991.

The evaluation of the site showed a number of important and nationally significant deposits to be present within parts of the threatened area. These deposits included a cremation cemetery dating from the Early Bronze Age (c. 1800 BC), and evidence of extensive settlement in the Iron Age (c. 600BC - 43 AD).

Most importantly, the prehistoric burials were shown to be associated with a buried soil that had been protected from the plough by a series of colluvia. This prehistoric soil has the potential for answering many questions related to the environmental conditions and possibly economic and subsistence patterns of the early second millenium B.C.

In light of the projected costings providing for the full excavation and recording of these deposits the developers chose radically to compromise the development plans, leaving intact the areas in which such archaeological deposits were recognised and recorded. Finds and records with Leics. Museums (A99.1991).
A watching brief between Wing and Duddington  
(SK 97 02, SK 98 01)  

Elaine Jones

In the summer of 1991, Anglian Water installed a pipeline from Duddington in Northamptonshire westwards to Wing in eastern Leicestershire. The Leicestershire Archaeological Unit conducted a watching brief along this 30m wide transect some 6 miles (10 km) long across south-eastern Rutland.

There was no evidence of settlement on the clay and limestone uplands of South Luffenham Heath and Morcott parish. This contrasted with the south and east facing hill slopes overlooking the Welland and Chater valleys where occupation and settlement sites were found.

In Tixover parish, on the eastern slope of the Welland valley, were found a flint scatter of Neolithic/Bronze Age activity near the excavated ring ditch lying on an ancient gravel terrace; a pit containing some Saxon pottery along with shallow linear gullies; quantities of iron slag and medieval quarry pits. Further west up the hill-slope a Romano-British settlement site was indicated by pottery and some building fragments. An Iron Age rectangular enclosure lay on the hill-top prominence a mile from the Welland river as it bends northwards at Duddington and flows on to Stamford. This site was excavated in advance of the pipeline (see above p.00). A second Romano-British settlement site was found at South Luffenham on a south facing hill slope overlooking a tributary of the river Chater. Finds and records with Leics. Museums (A14.1991,A27-29.1991,A41-42.1991).

REPORTS OF FIELDWORK  

Peter Liddle

Bringhurst (SP 84 91)  
Preliminary fieldwork by the Great Easton Fieldwork Group has produced four sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery and several flint implements. The field will be properly walked in 1992.

Bringhurst (SP 83 91)  
Fieldwork by the Great Easton Fieldwork Group has three sherds of Anglo-Saxon pottery, a possible small concentration of Roman sherds and several flint scrapers and a well-worked flint knife which had been burnt.

Coalville (SK 42 11)  
Paul Saunders reports a concentration of c.20 sherds of Roman pottery, mostly grey ware, associated with a stone scatter.

Enderby (SP 54 99)  
LMAST (Leics Museums Archaeological Survey Team) have found a scatter of Prehistoric (Late Bronze Age/Iron Age) pottery. In the same area was a flint scatter, including scrapers, cores, flakes and a leaf-shaped arrowhead.

Great Easton (SP 86 93)  
Great Easton Fieldwork Group have found the eastern limits of the Roman site
reported in *TLAHS* 63, 118. Flint finds include a flint axe fragment, scraper, cores and a burnt edge-retouched knife, and together with finds from adjacent fields indicate Mesolithic (?) and Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age activity, including a cremation burial.

**Hoby with Rotherby (SK 68 14)**
LMAST have found a closely grouped scatter of Roman pottery and one or two probable Iron Age sherds.

**Hoby with Rotherby (SK 67 14)**
LMAST have found a scatter of Prehistoric (Late Bronze Age/Early Iron Age) pottery. In the same area a flint scatter was found consisting of scrapers, retouched pieces, flakes and cores.

**Hungarton (c. SK 68 08)**
Carl Dawson reports the discovery of a Roman settlement site indicated by a pottery scatter, c.40 coins of 2nd to 4th century AD, a brooch and a ring. From the same site came two Anglo-Saxon Swastika brooches, a cruciform brooch and an iron knife, all probably from one female burial of 6th century date.

**Kegworth (SK 49 28)**
Christine Lewis has found a scatter of Roman and Early Saxon pottery close to the River Soar.

**Lockington (SK 48 29)**
LMAST have found a flint scatter including nine scrapers, a piercer, cores, blade-cores, blades, blade-like flakes and an end-scraper suggesting a multi-period Prehistoric site.

**Lockington (SK 48 29)**
LMAST have re-walked the well-known Roman villa and adjacent Iron Age occupation site and produced Roman and Iron Age pottery scatters. North of the villa a tight scatter of scrapers, retouched flakes, blade cores, blades, blade-like flakes etc. was recorded.

**Lockington (SK 48 30)**
LMAST have found a dense scatter of Iron Age, and some Roman, pottery associated with burnt cobbles. This corresponds to a very faint possible rectangular enclosure visible on an RAF vertical photograph.

**Lockington (SK 47 29)**
LMAST have found a scatter of Roman pottery. The area roughly corresponds with a crop-mark enclosure.
Lockington (SK 47 30)
LMAST have found a small but tight scatter of Roman pottery.

Lockington (SK 47 29)
LMAST have recovered a small number of unweathered Anglo-Saxon sherds in a small field. This may well be an occupation site.

Lowesby (SK 72 07)
Carl Dawson has found Roman pottery, coins and a disc brooch. Three Anglo-Saxon brooch fragments were found some distance apart.

Lubbesthorpe (SK 54 01)
LMAST have found a concentration of brick fragments, some vitrified, which seem likely to represent a brick kiln. It is close to the site of a mansion house of the Earls of Huntingdon in the 16th/17th centuries and may be related to its construction, as at Bradgate House where the kilns are also close by.

Melton Mowbray - Sysonby (SK 73 18)
During a watching brief on pipeline construction the Melton Fieldworkers located Roman, Saxon, Saxo-Norman and medieval pottery at the riverside at Sysonby. Other finds on the site included flint cores and flakes, a Saxon copper hooked tag and a medieval cloth seal. The base of an ironstone wall was also located.

Mountsorrel (SK 56 14)
LMAST have found a concentration of cores, scrapers, retouched flakes, flakes, blades and a sherd of prehistoric pottery.

Rearsby (SK 65 13)
LMAST have found a large concentration of flint flakes, blades, cores, blade cores, scrapers, retouched flakes, knives etc. indicating multi-period prehistoric activity.

Rearsby (SK 65 14)
LMAST have found a concentration of scrapers, cores, a barbed and tanged arrowhead and a fabricator in the vicinity of a ring ditch recorded from the air.

Rearsby (SK 66 14)
LMAST have found a few sherds of prehistoric, probably Iron Age, pottery. Further work is needed to confirm if this is an occupation site.

Seagrave (SK 62 16)
The Leicestershire County Council Employment Training Team have produced a scatter of prehistoric, probably Iron Age, pottery. Close by was a flint scatter including an arrowhead, cores, scrapers and flakes.

Stanton-Under-Bardon (SK 46 10)
LMAST have found a hand axe of Mousterian type.
Thorpe Langton (SP 74 92)
Field survey by Paul Bowman has located a dense concentration of Roman pottery which indicates the presence of a Roman site with origins in the late Iron Age and with occupation continuing into the 4th century. A second small, but tight, pottery scatter was located 200 metres away, with the finds biased towards the early-mid Roman period. Both ‘sites’ lie on the valley floor of the south-flowing tributary of the River Welland, known until the 16th century as the Lipping. The Langton Hundred survey (see *TLAHS* 64, 103) has now recovered some six Roman sites (including a ‘villa type’ settlement) along the Lipping valley.

Wanlip (SK 51 10)
Birstall Fieldworkers have found a flint scatter comprising scrapers, cores, blade cores, blades etc. Full analysis of finds is not yet complete.

Whissendine (SK 81 12)
Ian Fraser reports the discovery of a substantial Roman villa site producing much pottery, *tesserae*, tile (roof & box flue), and several coins, brooches and other metal objects. Several discrete buildings were apparent.

Whitwell (SK 92 08)
Trevor Young reports the discovery of a scatter of Roman coins, a disc brooch and pottery suggesting an occupation site.
ANNUAL REPORTS

Report of the Leicestershire Archaeological Unit 1991

1991 again saw a significant expansion of the Unit’s activities with thirty nine archaeological projects being undertaken during the year. Of these, nine (23.1%) were excavations, eleven (28.3%) evaluations, seven (19.4%) watching briefs and twelve (30.7%) post-exavolution projects. Seventy five temporary contract staff were employed during the year on different projects in addition to many volunteers and student placements.

The largest single project was the excavation at Causeway Lane, Leicester. Following an evaluation in January a full excavation was undertaken between April and September funded by the Inland Revenue in advance of their new office development. This was the largest area excavated in Leicester since the Jewry Wall Roman Bath excavations by Dame Kathleen Kenyon in 1936 and had to be carried out within a very tight time schedule. Despite this the work was completed on target and the results are discussed above (pp. 173-178). Following the success of the Shires excavation in 1988-9 viewing areas and a display cabin were provided and two open days laid on. The site attracted over 7,500 visitors including 60 school parties in the six months when it was open. Following the excavation a rigorous post-exavolution assessment phase has been undertaken before full analysis and report writing can begin. Monitored by English Heritage, this follows their new guidelines for the management of archaeological projects and is one of the first to follow this procedure.

Other excavations following evaluations have taken place at Market Harborough (p.180-181) and Normanton-le-Heath (p. 182) while excavations in advance of pipeline laying were undertaken at Tixover (pp. 183) and Empingham (p. 184-5). A new boundary scheme at Leicester Castle also necessitated an excavation (p. 179). All the above projects were funded by the developers. The excavation at Drayton Roman Villa (p. 172-173) continued for a fourth season and again served as a training excavation for the School of Archaeological Studies at Leicester University and the County Council’s Employment Training scheme. A salvage excavation was also undertaken of Roman burials revealed on the foreshore of Rutland Water at Edith Weston (pp. 184).

Evaluations in advance of planning decisions are forming an increasingly large part of the Unit’s work. In addition to these mentioned above evaluations were undertaken in advance of development at Leicester Gates, Silver Street, Leicester Castle and High Street, Leicester; Shipley Hill, Ratcliffe-on-the-Wreake, Great Casterton and Normanton-le-Heath. Redesign of the development to protect the archaeology resulted at Shipley Hill, Great Casterton and High Street, Leicester whereas no further work was required at Leicester Gates, Leicester Castle and Silver Street. Further work at Normanton-le-Heath will depend on the results of a planning enquiry. The test pitting survey by the Employment Training scheme has continued at Mill Hill, Medbourne (pp. 181) while watching briefs were undertaken at Tixover, Enderby, Melton, Lowesby, Claybrooke Magna and Castle Donington (above p. 184-188).

Progress has been made on eleven excavation reports during the year. In addition to those published in this journal the report on the mill dam at Castle Donington has been published in the Archaeological Journal Vol.147 (1990). Although the post-exavolution costs of current projects are increasingly being met by the developers there is still a considerable backlog to catch up on. Inroads are beginning to be made however and it
is hoped that some of these excavation reports will reach publication in the not too distant future.

The presentation of archaeological work to a wider public has for a long time been a major priority for the Unit. The appointment of a Display Assistant during the year has been a step towards improving our output in this field. Julie Wigmore initially worked as display officer attached to the Causeway Lane project but since September has been involved in other display and presentation projects. This has included the continuation of the Unit Newsletter, started during the Causeway Lane project, and displays for Melton, Market Harborough and Jewry Wall Museum. Continuing the theme of presenting archaeology to a larger public, Terry Pearce has continued his work with the visually impaired.

1991 has therefore seen an increase in archaeological work for the Unit for the fifth year running. Although most of the work is developer led and is inevitably affected by the recession, some fieldwork was in progress for over eleven and a half months of the year, two weeks in December being the only gap. It is hoped that this trend will continue.

Jean E Mellor
Senior Field Archaeologist


The Survey Team has continued to be engaged in a wide variety of tasks. Planning advisory work and routine compilation of the Sites and Monuments Record have consumed much time and the Team were heavily involved in the re-display of Jewry Wall Museum, which re-opened in April 1991. Fred Hartley has also been engaged in work on the displays for Snibston Discovery Park.

Policy Planning Guidance No. 16 has given archaeology an increased weight in the planning process. This has led to increased negotiation with developers by Anne Graf and an increase in the number of surveys commissioned by developers to enable them to prepare archaeological schemes. The latter has involved Peter Liddle, Richard Knox and Samantha Middleton, the Graduate Trainee in the Archaeology Section, in a great deal of fieldwork. Surveys have been undertaken at Lockington (a large area of potential minerals extraction), Husbands Bosworth (a potential gravel pit extraction), Mountsorrel and Stanton-under-Bardon (both hard-stone quarry extensions), and Rearsby and along the M1 (both road schemes). A small amount of work has also been done to follow up the 1990 Brooksby, Survey.

‘Bringing The Past To Life 1991’ was highly successful with over 2,300 visitors. Events included craft demonstrations, displays of archaeological techniques, historical re-enactment groups, tours, early music, videos and rare breeds of animals. Over a hundred volunteers helped to run the day, mostly members of the Archaeological Fieldwork Group which continues to flourish. New groups at Oadby & Wigston, Birstall and Enderby have begun to operate, joining the active groups at Great Easton, Ibstock, The Langtons, Lutterworth, Market Harborough, Melton, Rutland and Wymeswold. Other groups continue to exist.

A start has been made by Susan Ripper, who is on a 6 month contract, in re-drawing all the archaeological record maps of the Sites and Monuments Record and producing a new set of planning constraint maps for development control use. This has been 50% funded by the Department of Planning and Transportation of Leicestershire County Council.

Peter Liddle
Archaeological Survey Officer