



NEWSLETTER

MAY 2020

Letter from the Editor

Hello and welcome to this month's news!

WEAG's research and excavation committee met via Zoom last week, the decision was taken to cancel all digging related activities for the remainder of the year. This is in line with activities at Copped Hall which is closed down and all work has ceased.

So this leads me to announce a new section in WEAG news – **'Archaeology at Home'**. What have you been up to during 'lockdown'? Have you been getting on with jobs in the garden? I know WEAG's loss is my garden and allotment's gain. The 'finds' in my garden are particularly thin on the ground unless you count 'BB' pellets, little plastic soldiers and the odd bit of Lego. So what have you found in your garden? We would love to see what you have found and calling on members to help identify items. Read **'Archaeology at Home'** below to see some of our members finds – note that David Monk has pretty much everything, including the kitchen sink!

Festival of Archaeology 2020 – July & October

For your information, the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) has decided to make some changes to the 2020 CBA Festival of Archaeology and it will now be taking place in two parts with a series of digital events in July and on the ground events in October. Further information is attached.

Articles

Did you enjoy Claire Hooper and Lee Joyce's article on parish lock-ups last month? Would you have a short piece or photos of a visit to an archaeological site to share with others? If so we'd love to hear from you. Please get in touch via lexie.lyons@icloud.com.

WEAG Subs

Some members' subs are overdue – please arrange payment or contact us on weagmembership@outlook.com if you wish to remain a member but at present are unable to pay.

So that's it from me this month. Take care and please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Profile on a WEAG Member

Would you like to be 'our profile on a member'? If so email me on lexie.lyons@icloud.com and I'll forward you the questions.

Stay In Touch

weag.org.uk

[Facebook.com/westessexarchaeological](https://www.facebook.com/westessexarchaeological)

[Twitter.com/WEAGarchaeology](https://twitter.com/WEAGarchaeology)

[Instagram.com/weag_archaeology](https://www.instagram.com/weag_archaeology)

Anything you'd like to contribute to the WEAG Newsletter or if you have any comments on the new format, please email lexie.lyons@icloud.com

ARCHAEOLOGY AT HOME

David Monk

"I know that it's been a few years since I last brought my trowel and famous Irish long handled shovel to bear at a WEAG dig. This year, as I became semi-retired, was going to change all that. It was all planned! I was gearing myself up for the Spring Dig. But here we are in covid-19 lockdown and all I can offer you for the newsletter is evidence that I have not entirely forgotten my vocation as an archaeologist.

A couple of years ago I started to help my daughter and son-in-law to tidy up their garden in Witham. As you can see I had an assistant, my grandson Oscar. Our first excavation was a mysterious and large object which turned out to be an old butler's sink. This is now serving as a planter. But it was only the beginning. The area behind the green fencing was designated as a new dog-proof play area for the grandchildren which led to last year's finds.

The house was built in the mid-1950s. The garden backs on to a street of older terraced housing leading to the church. I suspect that prior to the building of the house in the '50s that the garden was an old field or piece of waste land. Judging from the finds, it was an ideal spot to dump bottles, broken crockery and bury an old bike because this is what a random excavation revealed. Whether any of this was deposited when the adjoining houses were built at an earlier date is open to conjecture.

Sadly my son-in-law (who is currently building ventilators at Ford's Dagenham plant instead of diesel engines for cars) refused to allow me to dig any deeper. But what this random piece of excavating shows is that there could be all sorts of wonders buried underground in our gardens and perhaps it is a fruitful way for an archaeologist to spend lockdown digging a test pit or two. Make sure you have permission from partners or other interested parties before you do! Hopefully next year we'll be together again in a legitimate WEAG trench. In the meantime stay safe and keep well."



John Hoskin

Would anyone know what animal the bone is from?



Vicky Hoskin

Vicky found these in her garden and below is **Lee Joyce's** identification.

"The three earliest pieces of pottery are the medieval orange sandy ware, the transitional Harlow ware & the Post-Medieval Red Earthenware ware. All are probably incredibly local to you it is likely that they are made from clay gathered on the Common, were made by potters from Potter St or the immediate area, sold at the bush fair on Latton Common & then used discarded & re-discovered at the site of your house."



Detail of the Altham Estate Map of 1616 (south), by permission of the British Library.

"The rest of the material is typical of domestic occupation sites of the 19th and 20th century or of the open farm land close by them. All would have been mass produced and unlike the earlier material which was produced very locally and is very geographically specific, the later material could equally likely turn up in a back garden in Liverpool as one in Harlow."

A diagram showing a collection of pottery fragments and other objects on a dark surface. Blue lines connect various items to their respective identification labels:

- Refined white Earthenware 19th -20th C
- White Earthenware Tile 20th C
- Refined white Earthenware with blue transfer print 19th -20th C
- Safety Glass 19th-20th C
- Oyster shell
- Medieval Orange Sandy Wares 13th -15th C
- Post-medieval Red Earthenware 17th -19th C
- Iron Nails 19th -20th C
- Transitional Harlow ware 16th C

'YES MOM, KEEPING SAFE I'M WORKING FROM HOME' submitted by Odette Nelson



Do you have something that can be included in the newsletter? I'm looking for poems, a story or reminiscence, drawing, joke, crossword, mystery object with an historic or archaeological theme – if so, please send to lexie.lyons@icloud.com. Thank you.

WEAG CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Lecture Program

Lectures are in the committee room at Woodford County High School, High Road, Woodford Green, IG8 9LA at 7:15pm unless otherwise stated.

Non-members are welcome to attend Lectures. A voluntary contribution of £2 would be appreciated from guests.

Monday 14 September 2020 @ 19:15

The Rudge Lecture

'Highams in Walthamstow'. *Speaker: Georgina Green.*

Monday 12 October 2020 @ 19:15

'Medieval Church Wall Paintings in Essex'. *Speakers: Lee Joyce & Claire Hooper.*

Monday 11 November 2020 @ 19:15

'Bricks in Essex'. *Speaker: Anne Padfield.* Anne is a local historian and English Heritage guide at Hill Hall.

Monday 7 December 2020 @ 19:15

Social (book sales and refreshments) and roundup of member activities.

Monday 11 January 2021 @ 19:15

'Non-Invasive Archaeology'. *Speaker: Melinda Barham.*

Monday 8 February 2021 @ 19:15

Details to be confirmed

Monday 8 March 2021 @ 19:15

AGM and 'Progress in the last 12 months at Bankside Rose'. *Speaker: Harvey Sheldon, Birkbeck College, WEAG President.*

Monday 12 April 2021 @ 19:15

'Historic Cultural Landscapes in South West Essex'. *Speaker: Tricia Moxey.*

Monday 10 May 2021 @ 19:15

The Rudge Lecture – 'to be announced'.

Speaker: Mike "Mr Stonehenge" Parker Pearson.

THE UK'S BIGGEST CELEBRATION OF ARCHAEOLOGY

NEW DATES

11-19 JULY
DIGITAL EVENTS

24 OCTOBER-1 NOVEMBER
ON THE GROUND EVENTS

THEME:
CLIMATE AND
ENVIRONMENT

CBA
FESTIVAL OF
ARCHAEOLOGY
2020



festival.archaeologyuk.org



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