RK 309

Local Archaeological Group

With the Summer Break now over and fields being ploughed, the group is preparing for another season of investigating the land around Barlestone for evidence of Mans' past activities, whether it be the site of a building, industrial activity or remains of agricultural techniques.

In recent years we have been successful in finding such evidence, specifically, the site of a Roman building in Osbaston; a Tile Kiln in Newbold Verdon and the remains of field systems, in the form of Ridge and Furrow, in all the parishes in our area.

During last winter the area around the Roman site in Osbaston was systematically "field-walked" and the extent of the scatter of building material and pottery defined. Several types of pottery were found, some made locally, others from potteries in Warwickshire, Derbyshire and one type identified was from France. The building material found consisted of Roofing Tiles; "Box-Tiles", which were built into flues to carry hot air through the walls of buildings; the Roman "Central-Heating"; and Tessarea; the small square pieces of stone or tile used to make the floor mosaics which were fashion-able in large houses of the Roman Empire. This evidence suggests a "Villa" or farmhouse. Based on the pottery types, this building dates from the second or third century A.D.

The other new site found last season, also at Osbaston, was from a much earlier period. In one field we picked up many flint tools and waste flakes of flint; the residue of flint tool manufacture. The tools were either "Scrapers", used in the preparation of animal skins, or blades for cutting meat. From the shape of these flints (which does vary during the prehistoric period), the site could be put into the early Bronze Age (2000-1400 B.C.). In a field to the south of this site flint "nodules" were found. These are lumps of natural flint. They have not been found anywhere else in this area so this could be where the people obtained their raw materials.

In Newbold Verdon Roman pottery is still being picked up in various parts of the parish, indicating a wide occupation of the area during the Roman period.

In Barlestone, while a modern building site was being prepared, a considerable amount of pottery was picked up; datings ranging over 800 years of history.

Apart from investigating the ancient past of our area, the group is involved in researching the more recent past, i.e. the 18th, 19th and the early 20th. centuries: more specifically, from the time just prior to the final enclosure of the fields. Some aspects of this work are - Photographing existing buildings prior to demolition or alteration; documentary research, both locally and at "Leicester Records Office"; the recording of "folk memories" and copying photo-graphs of local events and properties etc.

We would be pleased to be allowed to copy any old photographs, maps or documents relating to Barlestone, Newbold Verdon, Osbaston or Cadeby. We hope to exhibit the collection sometime in the future.

If you have anything which you think would be of interest, or would like to know more about the group and its activities, perhaps with a view to joining in, please contact - Mick Harding, on Desford 3926, or Dave James, on Market Bosworth 290671.