Welcome to Issue 4 of Digging Deeper. This year marks an important anniversary in Leicester’s archaeology; 80 years ago, in 1939, an archaeologist called Kathleen Kenyon completed the first excavation of Roman Leicester. This was an important point in the city’s archaeology. Before this, over the previous 250 years, antiquaries were making chance discoveries of Roman artefacts, mosaics and other bits of Roman buildings, but these finds were often poorly recorded and not well understood.

Kenyon’s excavations between 1936-39 were the first real archaeological investigation within the historic town. You can find out more about Kathleen Kenyon and the Jewry Wall excavations on page 3.

With this in mind, we thought we’d theme this issue on new archaeological discoveries, some made by our own club (page 5), some made by researchers at the University of Leicester (page 4), and others made by archaeologists around the world.

2018 was a great year for new archaeological discoveries and you can read more about the best finds made around the world on page 6. The really hot summer last year was also really good for finding new archaeological sites in Britain, you can find out more about why this was on page 10.

Looking ahead (page 11), we will be finding out about the Terracotta Army in March before heading outside in April to look at Angry Architecture at Rushton Triangular Lodge, before carrying out a building survey of the parish church at Burton Overy in May.

In June we have two excavation opportunities, one at Oakham Castle, the other at Bradgate Park, then it is the Festival of Archaeology in July. This year, the festival in Leicestershire and Rutland will be running for the whole month with lots of exciting events across the two counties. Elsewhere, the national Festival runs from 13-28 July. Find out more at https://festival.archaeologyuk.org/

by Mathew Morris

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CONTACT US:
The Leicestershire Young Archaeologists’ Club is part of the Council for British Archaeology’s nationwide Young Archaeologists’ Club (YAC). We provide opportunities for 8-16 year olds to get their hands mucky doing real archaeology.
The Club has been running since 1996. We are ever-growing, always welcoming new members to take part and providing young adults with opportunities to volunteer as branch assistants.
If you would like to find out more about the Club, or have a question for us, please contact the team:
W. leicestershireyac.wordpress.com
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YAC DUKE OF EDINBURGH

by April Mackay

One of our Club members, April, has started her Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) award. Here, she tells us what she has been doing.

Hello. I’m April and I’ve been going to YAC since I was about nine. I’m thirteen now and I’m doing my Duke of Edinburgh award. You have to complete four sections to get the award: skills, physical, volunteering and an overnight expedition. For my physical section I’m doing walking. I go to scouts so for my volunteering section I’m helping out at another scout troop’s beavers. I’m doing archaeology for my skills section and I will do my expedition in June. I’ve been keeping a log of archaeological things each week for my teacher.

Because I started doing this on weeks where there was no YAC, I described what we did at the Bradgate Park excavation and researched into Hallaton. In October my family stayed in the Lake District so we visited Castle Crag, on top of an old slate mine and Rydal Mount, where there was a Norse camp mound. I also went to Kenilworth Castle and Ilam Hall.

My aim with this is to find out more about archaeology. I’m interested in this because I would like to be an archaeologist.

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH AWARD
https://www.dofe.org/
KATHLEEN KENYON AND THE JEURY WALL

by Mathew Morris

Kathleen Kenyon (1906-78) was a gifted archaeologist and pioneer of excavation methodology. Always happiest when digging up the past, she strongly believed in training students and making archaeology accessible to everyone. Despite her faults, she did not suffer fools easily and sometimes becoming undone by her own overconfidence and unwillingness to delegate; she is widely recognised as one of the greatest archaeologists of the 20th century. In 1973 she was made a Dame of the British Empire in recognition of her contribution to archaeology. Kathleen Kenyon died in 1978.

Archaeologist excavate next to the Jewry Wall in 1936. We’ve been playing around with some colourisation software to digitally recolour the photo. You can have a go too at colorize-it.com.

As more of the site was uncovered, however, Kathleen struggled to understand some of its more unusual features, particularly the odd arrangement of the buildings and big discrepancies in floor levels. Still believing it was the forum, she concluded these were due to ground subsidence making parts of the site unusable. Even when a large Roman bath house was found at the centre of the site, Kathleen continued to believe it was the forum, which was only converted into a bath house in the late Roman period.

Today we know this not to be true. Archaeologists found the real forum beneath what is now Jubilee Square in the 1960s and it is now accepted that the Jewry Wall was always part of a public bath. This does not diminish Kathleen’s contribution to Leicester’s story, however. Whilst she was quick to make up her mind, and slow to change it, given the evidence available at the time her interpretation was not unreasonable, and her report was a pioneering attempt to date the main phases of the site using pottery. It is only because of her meticulous excavation and recording that archaeologists can re-evaluate her finds as new discoveries come to light.

In 1936, aged 30, Kathleen was appointed director of excavations at the Jewry Wall in Leicester. She had only been an archaeologist for 6 years but already had an impressive resume in British, African and Middle Eastern archaeology – including work on the Great Zimbabwe in southern Africa, the biblical site of Samaria in Palestine and the Roman city of Verulamium (St Albans) in England.

The antiquity of the chunk of masonry known as the Jewry Wall, one of the largest surviving pieces of Roman architecture in Britain, had long been known about but no one knew what its purpose was. Theories included part of the town wall and gate, a temple of the Roman god Janus, part of the town’s forum or a Roman bath house.

By 1936 the city council had purchased the factory next to the wall and planned on demolishing the existing buildings to build a public bath. Plans were drawn up to excavate the site first, funded by local societies and later by the city council. This made it one of the first ‘rescue’ digs in the country, 60 years before the government began to issue guidance on archaeology and construction.

Kathleen Kenyon came to be known as the ‘Mistress of Stratigraphy’ because of her role in pioneering stratigraphic excavation techniques that are still used today (see Issue 3). This was one of her greatest contributions to archaeology and she continued to perfect her technique throughout the 4 seasons of excavation at Leicester (each summer between 1936 and 1939).

Kathleen quickly proved that the Jewry Wall was part of a large basilica and concluded that it was the Roman town’s forum (civic centre). The significance of the discovery meant that the city council scrapped its plans for a public bath and laid out the ruins as a public monument.

In 1936, the city council had purchased plans for a bath house and thought she was digging the Roman town’s forum. This was one of Kathleen’s biggest regrets. She was overconfident and unwilling to delegate which sometimes led to her undoing. She was a pioneer of excavation and sparked a new generation of archaeologists. Kathleen’s contribution was not only recognised in Britain but made her a Dame of the British Empire.

Kathleen Kenyon excavating at the Jewry Wall in the 1930s.
Leicester is famous for Thomas Cook (the travel agent), underdog sporting success, Walkers Crisps, Richard III (the king under the car park), the biggest Diwali celebrations outside India, and Kasabian; but walking through Leicester today it is often difficult to appreciate that we are treading on 2,000 years of history, that beneath the city’s streets are the remains of Ratae Corieltavorum, the civitas capital of the people known to the romans as the Corieltavi. Now, a new book by the University of Leicester explores what life was like in the city over 1,600 years ago.

Caroline Lawrence, author of the popular Roman Mysteries series of historical novels for children, has described the book as ‘truly inspirational’.

Copies can be purchased from shop@le for £8.95: [https://shop.le.ac.uk/product-catalogue/books-and-gifts/leicester-leicestershire/roman-leicester](https://shop.le.ac.uk/product-catalogue/books-and-gifts/leicester-leicestershire/roman-leicester)

Here is one of the narrative pieces from the book, telling the story of a stolen cloak, from a lead curse tablet found in a Roman house, today beneath the John Lewis car park.

**THE STOLEN CLOAK**

by Giacomo Savani

It’s a small, light sheet of lead, with little letters scribbled all over it. A list of names. There is one of my names too, at the very front: ‘daeo maglo’, to the god Maglus. Servandus, Marcus’ slave, gave it to me. His cloak has been stolen and it’s hard to get the justice of men if you are a slave. So he seeks divine revenge, instead. My revenge.

He will be disappointed, though. I don’t like him. He’s proud and disdainful, even in his prayers. He’s the personal slave of a rich man, lives in a fancy house and thinks of himself as someone of importance because he owns a slave himself. He beats the poor boy over the slightest thing, especially when he has been beaten by his master. He doesn’t deserve my help.

Besides, I know very little about these people Servandus is accusing of having stolen his cloak. All slaves working in the same house, with their foreign gods they have carried along from far away. One of them, Senedo, has the same name as a boy I knew, a long time ago, but that’s all he shares with him. When Felicianus arrived here, he made offers to the local deities, to be sure not to upset anybody. When the new moon comes, Cunovendus, sixteenth on the list, pours milk for the gods of the river, and I get to drink some of it too. None of them has ever talked to me, though.

Yet, there is someone I know. A little girl, Nigella. She was born in a land where the earth is dry and hot, beyond the ocean and the narrow sea. And yet, she has learnt of me. I wonder who told her about my place.

She comes at night sometimes, a shadow among the shadows. She has big black eyes and curly hair, her skin the colour of burned iron. She talks to me in a foreign language, whispering like water. She tells me about the bright light of the south and the strange beasts that live in her motherland. Water-dragons and horses with long necks, birds that cannot fly and vast, large-eared creatures with a skin that is harder than stone.

She tells me about the food, too. About the way her grandmother used to bake flat bread in shallow dishes early in the morning and the smell of bonfires and roasted meat in the mild summer evenings.

Once, Nigella told me about the night she was taken away. About the long journey packed in a cart with men and women and children, about the sweetish stench of the slave markets. About the man who bought her, the way he looked at her, like he was looking at a piece of carved wood. The words the slave trader said: ‘She is warranted healthy and not liable to run away.’

Nigella is always cold here and she asks me to free the sun from the clouds, to make the rain stop. I tell her that I cannot, that I’m just a small god. Sun and rain do not listen to me. But a cloak, I say, that I can find for you.
Bosworth Links Test-pit Results

by Mathew Morris

Over the past two years, we have helped a project called Bosworth Links, in the town of Market Bosworth in west Leicestershire (see Issue 2 for more background information).

This year we excavated a test-pit (No. 44 of 53) on the Parish Field, a public park on the east side of the town. Previously, a test-pit on the north side of the field found evidence of previously unknown medieval and post-medieval activity, including part of a gravelled yard surface and some large stones which may once have been a wall. These could relate to a farmstead which once stood nearby but was demolished sometime in the 18th century to make way for the park surrounding Bosworth Hall.

A geophysical survey identified a mysterious linear feature running east to west across the middle of the field parallel with the roads to the north and the south. In 2017, a metal detectorist also found a flattened musket ball and a Commonwealth silver penny (1649-1660) in this feature, and last year we were tasked with digging a test-pit close to where these discoveries were made to find out more. Read the report below to discover out what we found.

We excavated our test-pit on grass on the eastern side of the Parish Field. Altogether, we dug down 50cm in five layers but ran out of time before we reached the natural ground level.

The top 30cm of ground (the topsoil) in the area had been dug over in the past, and modern and old material was all mixed up together. As we got deeper, however, below 30cm (the subsoil) we only found medieval material which is really exciting!

In all, we found 374 individual finds. In the topsoil we found 3 sherds of mottled ware pottery (c.1680-1780), a single sherd of late medieval pottery (c.1475-1550), 27 sherds of High Medieval pottery (c.1250-1400), 5 sherds of early medieval pottery (c.1100-1250) and a single sherd of Roman white ware (AD c.43-410). Others finds included 18 pieces of modern brick rubble, 3 pieces of clay tobacco pipe, 3 iron nails and 31 pieces of modern bottle glass, mostly from a single broken Budweiser bottle found embedded in the turf. We also found 4 coins in the turf (right). These were all probably dropped by people using the park.

The subsoil only produced medieval pottery, and a small quantity of iron slag and clinker which may be a sign that metalworking was taking place nearby. Pottery included 31 sherds of High Medieval pottery (c.1250-1450) and 21 sherds of early medieval (c.1100-1250).

This was one of the largest assemblages of medieval pottery found in the town during the project and is a very good indication that people were living nearby in the 12th to 14th centuries.

We also found out that the mysterious linear feature in the geophysical survey was probably the remains of a hedge bank which once dividing the field in half. If so, the large quantity of medieval pottery found in our test-pit and the absence of large quantities of post-medieval pottery would suggest it was a medieval feature.

Maps dating back to the mid-19th century show the Parish Field was once part of Bosworth Park. However, a survey of the manor of Bosworth in 1592 suggests that this area was occupied by a farmstead belonging to the Parsonage, under the tenancy of a Thomas Whitehead in the late 16th century. On evidence from our test-pit and two others in the Parish Field, this farmstead would have been on Park Street to the north and probably dates back to the 12th century.

Above: The coins found in our test-pit. From l-r: a 1911 George V penny, an Elizabeth II halfpenny, a 1997 fifty pence and a 2001 twenty pence.

Above: Some of the medieval pottery found in our test-pit.

Watch our YACs in action

The Project has produced another really great short film about the dig. Our test-pit features in the film at 1:24 minutes. Watch it here:

https://vimeo.com/291487987
1. The world’s oldest known drawing

The earliest evidence of a drawing made by humans has been found in Blombos Cave in the southern Cape in South Africa. The drawing, which consists of three red lines cross-hatched with six separate lines, was intentionally drawn on a smooth silcrete flake about 73,000 years ago. This predates previous drawing from Africa, Europe and Southeast Asia by at least 30,000 years. Find out more.

2. World’s ‘Oldest Intact Shipwreck’ found in Black Sea

A Greek merchant ship dating back more than 2,400 years has been found off the Bulgarian coast in the Black Sea. Find out more.

3. New Nasca lines found in Peru

Thanks to the latest advances in space archaeology and aerial drone surveys, archaeologists have discovered 50 new examples of Nasca and Paracas lines in Peru. Some of the discovered lines date from the Nasca culture, however, many ancient lines and geoglyphs are believed to date from between 500 BCE to 200 CE and provide crucial insight into the Paracas and Topara culture. Find out more.

4. Researchers discover gilded mummy mask

Researchers at the University of Tübingen have discovered a gilded mask on the mummy of a priest in Saqqara, Egypt. It is from the Saite-Persian period (664-404 BCE). The tomb complex where the Tübingen researchers have been working is made up of several shaft tombs, some of them more than thirty meters deep. Over the top of one of the main shafts, the archaeologists found the remains of a rectangular building made of mud brick and irregular limestone blocks; it appears to have been a mummification workshop. Find out more.

5. Painted tomb discovered in Cumae (Italy): A banquet frozen in time

Archaeologists have discovered a series of vaulted burial chambers made of tuff, a volcanic stone in the ancient city of Cumae, located 25 km west of Naples on the Tyrrenian Sea. Find out more.

Left: The ship was surveyed and digitally mapped by two remote underwater vehicles. Credit: Black Sea Map/EEF Expeditions.
6. Archaeologists discover bread that predates agriculture by 4,000 years

At an archaeological site in north-eastern Jordan, researchers have discovered the charred remains of a flatbread baked by hunter-gatherers 14,400 years ago. Find out more.

One of the stone structures of the Shubayqa 1 site. The fireplace, where the bread was found, is in the middle. Credit: Photo: Alexis Pantos.

7. Earthquake reveals remains of temple inside Aztec Pyramid

A 7.1 magnitude earthquake has led to the discovery of an ancient shrine dedicated to the rain god Tlāloc beneath the pyramid of Teopanzolco in Cuernavac, Mexico.

The discovery was made when researchers of the Institute of Anthropology and History (INAH) carried out radar surveys to assess the pyramid’s damage and found a 6 by 4-metre temple within the pyramid. Find out more.

INAH specialists discover remains of a temple inside the Teopanzolco pyramid, in Morelos. Photo: Melitón Tapia, INAH

8. Roman decapitated and crushed by block of stone while fleeing eruption of Mount Vesuvius in Pompeii

Archaeologists made the discovery at the Pompeii archaeological park at the crossroads of Vicolo delle Nozze d’Argento and the recently unearthed Vicolo dei Balconi, which extends towards Via di Nola. Initial studies suggest that the individual survived the first eruptive phase of the volcano, and subsequently sought salvation along the alley now covered in a thick layer of lapilli. In the ensuing pyroclastic eruptions, the victim’s thorax was crushed by a large block of stone that was violently thrown by the volcanic cloud. Find out more.

Above: The skeleton found at Pompeii. Image Credit: Parco Archeologico di Pompei.

9. Rare German U-boat found in Skagerrak

The Sea War Museum Jutland in Thyborøn, Denmark announced the discovery of the German U-boat U-3523, which was sunk by depth bombs in Skagerrak by a British B24 Liberator aircraft on 6 May, 1945. Find out more.

Image Credit: seawarmuseum.

10. Cuneiform tablets from Bassetki reveal location of ancient royal city of Mardaman

Translations of Assyrian writings found by archaeologists from the University of Tübingen have yielded a secret lost to history: The place where the clay tablets were found – Bassetki, in Autonomous Region of Kurdistan in Iraq – appears to be the ancient royal city of Mardaman. Find out more.

The Bassetki tell – Image Credit: Matthias Lang/ Benjamin Glissmann, University of Tübingen.

This article was originally published by Heritage Daily (14 December 2018). https://www.heritagedaily.com/2018/12/top-10-archaeological-discoveries-of-2018/122316
FUnny ideas about diEt and heAlth with the TudorS and Stuarts

by Rachel Small

In December, Rachel Small, the Environmental Officer for University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS), gave us a fascinating session on how the Tudors and Stuarts (15th-16th century) created a healthy diet. Here she explains her research in more detail.

Humors

In Ancient Greece, a doctor called Hippocrates formed the idea that the body was controlled by four liquids called humors. These were blood, phlegm, black bile and yellow bile. Later Galen, a Roman doctor, expanded on this, linking the humors to the four elements (air, water, earth and fire), qualities (hot, cold, dry and wet), seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter) and ages (childhood, adolescence, adulthood and old age). Most people used humoral theory to explain the workings of the body until the 1800s.

Health

To be in perfect health humors had to be balanced. Illness was caused by an imbalance. There were six factors which affected them, and these were: the air that you breathed, the amount of exercise and sleep that you got, what you ate, how often you went to the toilet, and your emotions. Doctors thought that diet was the most important factor and the easiest to control.

Temperament

Everyone had a natural tendency to have too much of one humor. This determined your temperament which was linked to your appearance and personality (see table below).

Diet

It was believed that plants and animals had their own humoral makeup. Foods were categorised based on their taste: sour and bitter foods were cold and dry; sweet and savoury foods were hot and wet; spicy foods were hot and dry; watery foods were cold and wet; and, mild tasting foods were balanced. For example, sour lemons were cold and dry causing melancholy.

The characteristics of each food were listed in health manuals such as Butt’s ‘Diets Dry dinner’ (1599) and Moffett’s ‘Health’s improvement’ (1655).

To be healthy you had to balance your humors by eating the opposite to your temperament (see table opposite) or balanced foods such as chicken and bread. It was advised to avoid foods that worsened the humor in excess or to correct these foods before eating.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperament</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Appearance</th>
<th>Personality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanguine</td>
<td>Excess of blood, hot and wet</td>
<td>Oval face and rosy cheeks</td>
<td>Chatty, positive, creative, generous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlegm</td>
<td>Excess of phlegm, cold and wet</td>
<td>Round face and pale skin</td>
<td>Quiet, easy-going, sleepy, kind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melancholic</td>
<td>Excess of black bile, cold and dry</td>
<td>Square face and pale skin</td>
<td>Serious, organised, deep thinker, focused on the negatives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choleric</td>
<td>Excess of yellow bile, hot and dry</td>
<td>Sharp angular face and red cheeks</td>
<td>Bossy, leader, ambitious, prone to anger</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cooking

Foods could be balanced by the addition of herbs and spices. For example, black pepper would heat whilst vinegar would cool. Also, by how the food was cooked, boiling added moisture whilst roasting and frying dried food. You could also eat the best produce. For example, young meat was seen as more balanced than older meat which was drier and tougher.

Illness

If you were very unwell, for example you had a fever, and therefore had an extreme imbalance of humors you might have to take additional action. The excess humors had to be removed by for example, making yourself sick, smelling strong salts or having your blood let by a surgeon.

My research

My research considers ‘to what extent did the Tudors and Stuarts actually follow a healthy diet?’ To answer this question, I am focusing on the diet of the Grey family who lived at Bradgate House, Leicestershire. Lady Jane Grey was famous for being the ‘Nine Day Queen of England’. I have found out what the family ate from studying the animal bones and plant remains from the archaeological excavations and the household account book which lists some of the foods bought. I am comparing this to dietary advice in Tudor and Stuart health manuals to see if the Greys were following the recommendations given by doctors on what was best to eat. I shall also consider other factors that were important such as price, taste and religion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Temperament</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Good foods to eat</th>
<th>Foods to avoid/correct</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sanguine</td>
<td>Excess of blood, hot and wet</td>
<td>Cold and/or dry foods such as lemons, beans, pears</td>
<td>Hot and/or wet foods such as turkey, pigeon, pork</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phlegm</td>
<td>Excess of phlegm, cold and wet</td>
<td>Hot and/or dry foods like onions, rice, almonds</td>
<td>Cold and/or wet foods like eels, peas, cheese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melancholic</td>
<td>Excess of black bile, cold and dry</td>
<td>Hot and/or wet foods such as oysters, lamb, apples</td>
<td>Cold and/or dry foods such as rabbit, beef, strawberries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choleric</td>
<td>Excess of yellow bile, hot and dry</td>
<td>Cold and/or wet foods like salmon, melons, cherries</td>
<td>Hot and/or dry foods like lobster, artichokes, walnuts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Left: A Surgeon Letting Blood from a Woman’s Arm, an Oil Painting from the 1700s.

Below: The ruins of Bradgate House.
Cropmarks

by Claire Brown

During the really hot, dry summer last year hundreds of new archaeological sites were discovered as cropmarks. YAC leader Claire explores this phenomenon in more detail.

What is a cropmark?

Cropmarks are created when buried features either enhance or reduce the growth of plants: deeper, moister soil found in ditches provides very good growing conditions for crops which grown higher over the ditch than elsewhere, while stony soil that you might find over a wall or rubble results in poorer growth (diagram top right).

In the image below the deeper, moister soil found in the ditch left behind by a roundhouse and its boundary ditch shows up in the field as lines in the crops that are darker than usual as they are better nourished and grow higher. In contrast the rectangular marks are where there are the remains of buried walls under the soil that prevent the crops putting good roots down so they don’t grow as well and appear from above lighter than the surrounding crops:

The best time to see crop marks is during extreme drought conditions, from the air using aerial photography. Last summer (2018) was very dry and many sites not previously discovered became visible for the first time such as ancient farms, settlements and Neolithic cursus monuments.

A prehistoric ceremonial landscape near Eynsham in Oxfordshire. This site was previously known about but not in so much detail and new features such as pits were seen for the first time in 2018.

This was a previously unknown Roman farm at Burton in Devon.

Bronze Age burial mound (the concentric rings) and prehistoric pit alignment (the small faint blobby marks in the field above the rings and travelling diagonally l-r).

But some cropmarks are not as old as others...☺

FIND OUT MORE

https://historicengland.org.uk/research/methods/airborne-remote-sensing/formation-of-cropmarks/
The Terracotta Army
What is the Terracotta Army, how and why was it made, and who was it made for? These are the questions we will be trying to answer during this session, as well as building our own clay army.

Venue: University of Leicester

Angry Architecture!
The curious Rushton lodge is not all it seems – join us to explore what buildings can show us about politics, religion and rebellion as we look at who built this unusual building and why.

Venue: Rushton Triangular Lodge

Burton Overy Church Survey
One of the most important buildings in a village is its parish church. During this session we will visit St Andrew’s Church in Burton Overy. We will be surveying the building to try and work out its history.

Venue: Burton Overy

Oakham Castle Dig
We will return to take part in the 2nd community excavation at Oakham Castle. Last year we helped archaeologists make some exciting new discoveries (see Issue 3) and we hoped to do the same again.

Venue: Oakham Castle

Bradgate Park Dig
We will return to take part in the annual excavations at Bradgate Park for a final time. This is the last year of the project and it is planned that there will be more investigation of Lady Jane Grey’s home.

Venue: Bradgate Park

Roman Family Fun Day
A day of Roman-themed craft activities and a chance to build Roman Leicester in Minecraft.

Venue: LCB Depot, Leicester

For other great days out, visit https://www.yac-uk.org/places-to-go and remember your YAC Pass can get you great special offers and discounts.

CONTACT US
Don’t forget, we always like to hear from you. If you have any questions or suggestions, or want to know more about archaeology in Leicestershire, please get in touch with us at Leicestershire YAC on LeicestershireYAC@gmail.com
In October 2018, New Walk Museum reopened the doors of its Egyptian display with two brand new galleries that bring the fascinating stories of ancient Egypt to life. The family-friendly exhibit focuses on life in ancient Egypt, starting from the earliest evidence of human activity through to the Byzantine period in the first millennium AD.

Exhibits include children's toys – including a doll's tiny shirt from early Christian Egypt – jewellery, pottery and stone tools. Items of clothing also feature, including a colourful knitted Coptic sock dating from around AD 300.

Three Egyptian amulets recovered from excavations in Leicester are also on display, as well as a 4,000 year-old wooden model boat that illustrates the importance of the River Nile to the ancient Egyptians. Visitors can see four 5,000 year-old siltstone palettes that men and women used for mixing cosmetics.

The second gallery displays the four mummified bodies of Bes-en-mut, Ta-Bes, Pe-iuy and Pa-nesit-tawy, together with objects that would have typically been placed in ancient Egyptian tombs. Interpretation panels with photographs and x-rays shed light on how bodies were mummified.

Ancient Egyptians at New Walk Museum

by Mireya Gonzalez Rodriguez

In this gallery you can find two linen fragments from the Book of the Dead and a colourfully-painted 'shabti box' which would have originally contained around 400 figurines known as 'shabtis'.

Stories of how the objects came to Leicester in the late 1800s and early 1900s are told in the new galleries. Visitors can learn that Leicester was given hundreds of items from British excavations in Egypt, with the mummies and coffins of Bes-en-mut and Ta-Bes bequeathed to the city by John Mason Cook, son of local travel pioneer Thomas Cook.

Remember, admission to the museum, and to the new galleries, is free of charge.


Eye of Horus (wedjat) amulet

Late Period, 664–332 BC. Egypt, Tanis (San el-Hagar), Cemetery of Tel Snailin. Museum of Fine Arts Boston.

A faience amulet with bright blue-green glaze in the shape of the Eye of Horus (wedjat), an ancient Egyptian symbol of protection, royal power, and good health. The wedjat-eye was considered a potent symbol of protection and was one of the most frequently used forms for ancient Egyptian amulets, in particular for amulets placed upon mummies to protect the dead in the afterlife.

To make your own Ancient Egyptian amulet, you will need:

- 1 quantity of salt dough (see below)
- Acrylic paint (gold, red, blue and black)
- Varnish (optional)
- String or cord

Instructions:

Look at some examples of Egyptian amulets. Popular designs are scarab beetles, ankh and wedjat-eyes.

Shape the salt dough to make your amulet. Make a hole in the top. Carefully transfer to a baking sheet and bake at 70°C for about 2 hours.

When the amulets are cool paint them in bright colours. Leave to dry. To finish, paint on a coat of varnish (optional). Thread on to string to wear.

Salt dough:

- 3 cups of plain flour
- 1 ½ cups of fine salt
- 1 cup of cold water
- 2 tbsp of vegetable oil

Mix together the flour, salt, water and oil until you get a smooth dough (you may need to add a bit more flour or water).
A long time ago, the god Osiris came to Egypt to rule as king. He brought the Egyptian people new laws and taught them how to farm well and live peacefully in their villages. Osiris was a wise and powerful king and was loved and respected by his people. Unfortunately, his brother Seth, was jealous of his brother’s power in Egypt, and began to form a plan to kill Osiris and seize his throne.

Late one night, Seth tiptoed into Osiris’s bedroom. Careful to not wake up Osiris, or his queen, the goddess Isis, Seth measured Osiris’s body from head to toe and from side to side. The next morning, Seth took the measurements to a carpenter who made a beautiful wooden chest decorated with bright paint and sheets of gold.

The following night, Seth threw a huge party, and invited Osiris as the guest of honour. The night was spent feasting, singing, dancing and playing games. For the final game, Seth brought out the huge wooden chest. He announced that the first person to fit perfectly into the chest would be allowed to keep it.

One by one, each of Seth’s friends climbed into the chest, but unsurprisingly no one was able to fit into the chest, which was made perfectly for Osiris. Finally, Seth and his friends convinced Osiris to try his luck with the chest. Osiris stepped into the chest and lay down. The chest fit him perfectly, just as Seth had planned. As Osiris lay down, Seth slammed the lid down and sealed it shut. Then Seth and his friends took the chest down to the Nile River and dumped it in, knowing that Osiris would never be able to survive.

When Isis heard the news of her husband’s death she was extremely upset. She rushed to the riverbank and, after days of searching, finally found the wooden chest. Isis opened it and removed the dead body of her beloved Osiris. Crying, Isis hid Osiris’ body in the river reeds. She didn’t want Seth to find Osiris’s corpse before she could perform the proper rituals that would allow him to pass into the Afterlife.

Late that night, Seth returned to the Nile to make sure Osiris’s body had washed away. The chest was nowhere to be found, but after searching the riverbank he found the body of his late brother. In a furious rage, Seth cut Osiris’s body into fourteen pieces. To make sure that the body was never found again, he hurled the pieces all over Egypt.

The next morning, Isis returned to the river with her sister, Nepthys and her friends, to perform the necessary rituals, only to find Osiris’s body gone! Not defeated, Isis transformed into a huge bird and flew high over Egypt. Using her sharp vision, she was able to find all the pieces of the body to put Osiris back together. With the help of Nepthys, Thoth, and Anubis, Isis performed a great act of magic.

Very carefully, they began to sew Osiris’s body back together. They worked together night after night until the body was whole once again, then they wrapped it head to toe in strips of linen, creating a mummy.

On the night of the full moon, Isis used powerful magic to bring her husband back to life. Osiris embraced Isis, and thanked her sister and her friends. He told them he would not be able to stay in the world of the living. Having died; he explained, he needed to travel to the world of the dead, where he would become the king of the Afterlife.

Before he left, Osiris told Isis not to worry. He told her that she would soon give birth to a son, Horus, who would defeat Seth and become a great protector of the Egyptian people. By taking back the throne from Seth, Horus would restore order and peace to the Universe.

When Horus was born, he was hidden away and kept safe from his evil uncle Seth. When he became of age, Horus finally confronted Seth, and they violently fought. During the fight Horus’ left eye was poking out, but magically came to life. Later on, the Wadjet, or eye of Horus became a powerful symbol to promote healing (make your own on Page 12). Although Horus emerged victorious, there was still a question of who legally had the power to sit on the throne.

Seth believed that as Osiris’ brother, he was the rightful ruler, but Horus argued that he should be proclaimed king, since he was Osiris’ legitimate heir. Ultimately, it was decided that Horus would rule on earth as King. Seth was banished forever, and peace returned to Egypt.

Images from Eureka!: Ancient Egypt, a 4Learning production.
FOOD FOR THE AFTERLIFE

This wooden model of brewers and butchers was found in the tomb of a wealthy official named Sebekhetepi. The model and another representing a granary were placed there to make sure that Sebekhetepi would be supplied with food and drink in the afterlife.

The model shows two food production processes: making beer and butchery. Men and women are distinguished by the colour of their skin—the men are brown, the women yellow. The different processes are not straightforward to identify, look at the list below and see if you can identify the different activities:

- an oven with a rounded top to part-bake the dough
- a woman leaning forward to grind grain into flour
- a man carrying jars of water on a pole across his shoulders
- a dead cow
- a man with a knife who will cut up the cow
- a jar of beer with a black lid
- a woman mixing dough and water in a jar with white foam on top

Model showing brewing, baking and butchery. From the tomb of Sebekhetepi at Beni Hasan, Egypt Middle Kingdom, 2125-1795 BC. British Museum.

Egypt’s fertile soil and abundant wildlife encouraged population growth, and in time producing enough food to support the people became the main responsibility of its rulers. This was not a straightforward matter: a successful harvest depended on the height of the Nile flood, which could vary dramatically from year to year. In a good year, the harvests were big enough to feed everyone and even leave some foodstuffs for export, but a bad year could mean famine and starvation. The main food crops were wheat and barley, which provided bread and beer, the Egyptian dietary basics.

Bread and beer

Most people made their own bread and beer, but palaces and temples had large kitchens to cater for the entire household. Flour was made by grinding the grain between two stones; it was then mixed into dough with water and leavening and shaped into loaves. The loaves were either left in the sun or in warm moulds to rise, then baked in a clay oven. There were many different kinds of bread, and dates or honey were sometimes added to make sweet cakes.

Beer was made from the same raw materials, by adding bits of partly-baked dough to vats of water and leaving it to ferment. When the beer was ready, it was strained into jars. Although there was plenty of fresh water to drink, most people—children included—seem to have preferred beer, which in fact contained very little alcohol. Wealthy Egyptians could also enjoy wine made from grapes, which were trodden, then squeezed in a cloth to extract the juice. Just like modern wine bottles, jars of wine were labelled to say where the wine was grown, whose vineyard it came from and when it was made.

The Egyptian diet

Grapes and other fruit, such as dates, figs and pomegranates, were enjoyed as part of a healthy diet that also included plenty of vegetables. Salad vegetables included lettuces, cucumbers and spring onions, while peas, beans and lentils were dried for storage, then cooked in stews flavoured with leeks and onions. Herbs like mint, thyme and oregano were used to add flavour, along with spices such as cumin, coriander and aniseed. Dried fruits, almonds and sesame seeds were also eaten, and sesame and olive oils were used in cooking. Other common foods included eggs and dairy products such as milk, yoghurt and cheese.
Animals and poultry were raised for food, but only the wealthy could afford to eat meat regularly. Rich Egyptians enjoyed beef, lamb, goat, venison and pork, along with ducks, geese and quail. Ordinary people relied on a vegetarian diet supplemented by what they could catch themselves. Rabbits, hares, wild birds and plentiful fish provided important protein. Larger households made sure of having fresh fish all year round by keeping them in garden pools.

**The kitchen**

Except in large households, where there were male cooks and bakers, cooking was the responsibility of women and girls. Part of their task was to prepare packed lunches for the men and boys to take to work or school. The kitchen was usually an open yard at the back of the house with a wood-fired oven, a grindstone and pots for storage. Food was served on trays or baskets; there were no plates, and people ate with their fingers. When they ate together, the family sat around the food and helped themselves, but at large parties, servants brought food and drink to the guests.

**Eat like an Egyptian**

Although no recipes from Ancient Egypt are known for certain, we have a fair idea of how the Ancient Egyptians prepared their food thanks to dioramas and other objects left in tombs. Laborers ate two meals a day: a morning meal of bread, beer and often onions, and a heartier dinner with boiled vegetables, meat and more bread and beer. Nobles ate well, with vegetables, meat and grains at every meal, plus wine and dairy products like butter and cheese. Priests and royalty ate even better. Tombs detail meals of honey-roasted wild gazelle, spit-roasted ducks, pomegranates and a berry-like fruit called jujubes with honey cakes for dessert. To top it all off, servant girls would circulate with jugs of wine to refill empty glasses: the perfect end to an Egyptian banquet.

Why not bake like an Egyptian and have a go?

**ANCIENT EGYPTIAN BREAD**

- 300ml of finger-warm water
- 25g of fresh yeast
- 500g spelt flour
- ½ tsp of salt

In a large bowl, mix yeast and finger-warm water together. Gradually blend in the flour mixed with salt. Knead it until the dough is smooth, adding flour until it does not stick to the bowl.

Preheat the oven to 220 °C. Cover in cloth and put in a warm room. When the dough has doubled in size, after approximately 40 minutes, knead it on a floured surface for 2 minutes. Cut the dough into 8 pieces and flatten them to the thickness of a finger. Bake in the middle of the oven for 8-10 minutes. A bubble of air will rise in the middle of the bread. Eat when cool.

Supposedly, one of the oldest known recipes in the world was written on an ancient ostracon (a sherd of broken pottery reused by scribes to write on) in Egypt around 1600 BC. No-one knows for certain if this ‘date candy’ recipe is a genuine Ancient Egyptian recipe or a clever forgery, but it sounds too delicious not to try!

**ANCIENT EGYPTIAN DATE CANDY**

- 200g fresh dates
- 1 tsp cold water
- 10-15 walnut halves
- ¼ tsp cinnamon
- Small jar of running honey
- 75g ground almonds

Chop the dates finely (use seedless, or make sure to remove the stones first) and put them into a bowl. Add the water and mix in the chopped walnuts and the cinnamon. Shape the mixture into small balls with your hands. Dip the balls in honey (you might want to warm it first so the honey coating won’t be quite so thick) then roll the balls in the ground almonds.

Chill them in the fridge for half an hour before serving.

Copy of a scene showing food preparation from the Tomb of Nakht, Sheikh Abd el-Qurna, Thebes, Upper Egypt. New Kingdom, 1410-1370 BC. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
The Ancient Egyptian gods Thoth and Horus anoint the Pharaoh. Thoth, the ibis-headed god on the left represents wisdom, whilst the pharaoh was thought to be the living embodiment of Horus, the hawk-headed god on the right. This drawing is based on a carving from the Temple of Horus and Sobek, Kom Ombo, Upper Egypt.