

BURTON DASSETT: Recent Archaeological Discoveries

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Twelve years ago, just inside Fenny Compton parish, large quantities of second to fourth century Romano-British potsherds were found in a field. More pottery was found just a short distance away in Burton Dassett close to a small stream. The local landowner welcomed the suggestion of further investigation; a generous act that led to the founding of Feldon Archaeological Society.

Excavation commenced close to where a quantity of dressed building stone lay at the field margin and quickly revealed a very large foundation wall of local undressed stone, over one metre wide. Some fourteen metres of foundation were exposed before attention was turned to the interior of what was obviously a very large building. This had had three successive clay floors. In addition, very large stone lined post holes nearly one metre deep and one metre wide were discovered three metres from the wall and a similar distance apart, designed to take huge supporting timbers. Much Roman tile was found together with some window glass from what was evidently a large aisled building. Finds indicated mixed agricultural and domestic use extending over several centuries, deduced from the ceramic, bone, glass and somewhat limited coin finds made here. The full dimensions of the building were not established before the site was backfilled. A report was published (Eames 2005) on behalf of the Society detailing finds.

Warwickshire County Archaeology Department made equipment available allowing a resistivity survey to be carried out. This complemented the earlier extensive field walking and metal detecting surveys. A new excavation was undertaken ten metres to the west of the aisled building. This revealed an unusual cellar-like construct with carefully lined walls of dressed stone and a tightly cobbled floor, with a surround of puddled clay giving the impression that this structure had been designed to be water tight. That this was so was evidenced by the fact that the structure filled with rain water after every heavy shower, necessitating the Society purchasing a bilge pump; something which in later years has proved to a very useful item.