



Welcome to Past Participate CIC

Hello and welcome to our Past Participate CIC newsletter, particular welcome to recent subscribers- we hope you find the contents interesting.

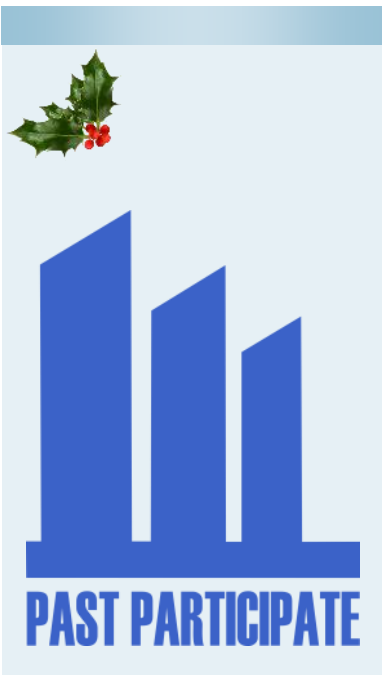
Past Participate have had a brilliant year, albeit a bit hot in the summer. We spent three weeks excavating at Tenants Hill in June and are very excited by our discoveries. For those of you who don't know the Tenants Hill landscape is covered in both upstanding, and below ground archaeology. Within a few hundred metres of each other there is a stone circle (Kingston Russell Stone Circle), a long barrow (Grey Mare and her Colts), round barrows, field systems and much more. We have now found another long barrow to add to this amazing list! Turn the page to learn more.

Later in the summer Anne and Andrew took the Marston Magna Heritage Group on a tour of Cadbury Castle, South Cadbury, where everyone appeared to have a good time. Isn't it amazing that you can visit a familiar place but still learn more! Did anyone visit the pub for lunch after the trip? A long time ago they used to have a small display of artefacts and we would love to know if they are still there.

The team have also working with local people to excavate test pits in villages around the fringe of the Quantock Hills. This is a superb way for everyone to get a chance to be involved in archaeological excavation and has been funded by the National Heritage Lottery Fund through the Quantock Hills Landscape Partnership Scheme.

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Tenants Hill Excavations

We set out this summer to investigate a slight mound that our field and aerial surveys had previously identified. We were interested in the date of this mound and its relationship a prehistoric field system and droveway. The size and form of the mound suggested two possibilities regarding its form and function: a pillow mound (used for medieval rabbit farming) or a Neolithic long barrow.

We opened two trenches and immediately began to identify the archaeology. The central mound was flanked by two concentric ditches,

the outer one of which was 4.84m wide and 1.86m deep. The mound itself was very slight but appeared to be retained by a kerb of compacted flint, which was cut by shallow pits or hollows along its eastern side. We found significant amounts of worked flint, that on first assessment appears to date to the Neolithic. The soils are too acidic to preserve bone but we did find burnt daub and some earlier prehistoric pottery.

If you wish to know more about Tenants Hill please look on our website and download previous newsletters.

"This was an enthralling experience for me - I was delighted to have the opportunity to take part in some 'real' archaeology and to learn so much"



Feedback Welcome

If you have any questions or queries resulting from this newsletter do get in touch.

A Long Barrow on Tenants Hill ?

Although lots more work is needed we feel confident that the mound is prehistoric and most likely to be a long barrow. Double ditches around a long barrow are unusual but multiple phases of activity are not unheard of. We fully intend to go back and excavate further next year and are currently focused on funding applications so that we can do a thorough job to fully understand this monument.

Volunteers were integral to this research. They worked hard in hot weather to remove turf, trowel back some delicate, complex layers and excavate the large external ditch. They also conducted a detailed topographic (mapping) survey on the mound, using the GPS. This has allowed us to visualise the mound at cm-level accuracy.



Conducting the topographic survey



The Past Participate team in front of the façade of Grey Mare and her Colts long barrow

Long Barrows and Chambered Tombs

Although the terms are somewhat interchangeable, these funerary monuments, dating to the earlier Neolithic period (5000-6000 years ago), are primarily differentiated by the materials used in their construction. Chambered tombs were built in areas where large stones were available to create the walls and capping of the passages and chambers where the dead people were buried. These megalithic structures were then buried beneath elongated mounds of earth or cobbles. Some monuments were also enhanced by a façade of large stones (orthostats), which framed the entrance to the chamber and defined the edge of a forecourt. Eventually, these monuments were closed off, often with additional large stones blocking the entrance. A good example can be seen at the Grey Mare and her Colts, which is a short walk from Tenants Hill.

Long barrows are elongated mounds of earth, which are often flanked by a quarry ditch on either side. Excavation has demonstrated that they generally covered timber mortuary buildings, which had usually gone out of use and had been partially demolished before the mound was created.



Aerial view of the Grey Mare and her Colts with its façade facing the camera

Prof Tim Darvill on Long Barrows

Professor Tim Darvill is a friend of Past Participate and an experienced excavator of long barrows. In these two short videos he describes two examples of long barrows in the Coltswoods.

Once he has finished striding across the landscape the graphics are very helpful to visualising the long barrows during use.

Windmill Tump Long Barrow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDc1SUNDZFE>

Nympsfield Long Barrow

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vThtpKccQj8>



You can read more text about long barrows by Prof Darvill here:

<https://www.digitaldigging.net/author/tim-darvill/page/2/>

The impact of digging village test pits

Professor Carena Lewis (University of Lincoln and Time Team) has used community test pits in currently occupied rural settlements to learn about the black death. By digging 100s of test pits with local people she has identified evidence for the effects of the black death in the archaeological record, and the real impact that it had on people and populations.

Here is a videoed lecture she gave during lockdown that tells you much more about Pandemics, Pits and Potsherds!

<https://youtu.be/Rt5qZmzua-o>



Digging Village Test Pits



Test pits are the key hole surgery of the archaeological world. We not only use them to make assessments before larger excavations, but they are also extremely important in allowing us to gain insights into places that would be otherwise inaccessible.

We have been using them to investigate villages around the Quantock Hills in Somerset. Working with the Quantock Landscape Partnership Scheme, we are hoping to enhance current understandings of the medieval and post-medieval village development of Bicknoller, Crowcombe, and Nether Stowey. We have already excavated at Bicknoller,

where we found medieval pottery, which matches the earliest parts of the church in date. We also found a nice example of an early 19th century merchant navy button.

At Crowcombe we have potentially identified two foci of early activity in the village, which might indicate the village started as two distinct settlements, before merging later.



C19th Button found at Bicknoller

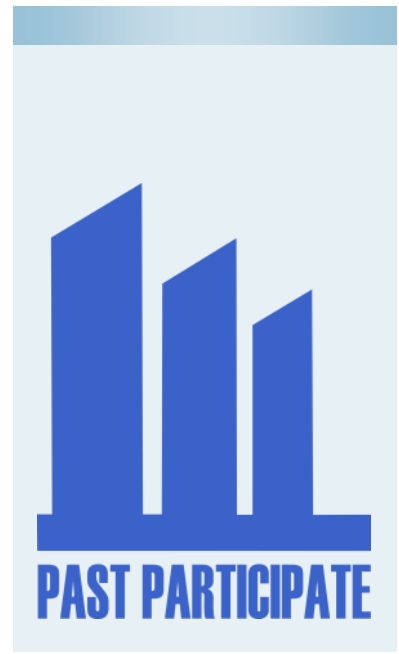


Finds from Test Pit 10 at Bicknoller, where the oldest piece of pottery from the village was found

Test Pit Videos

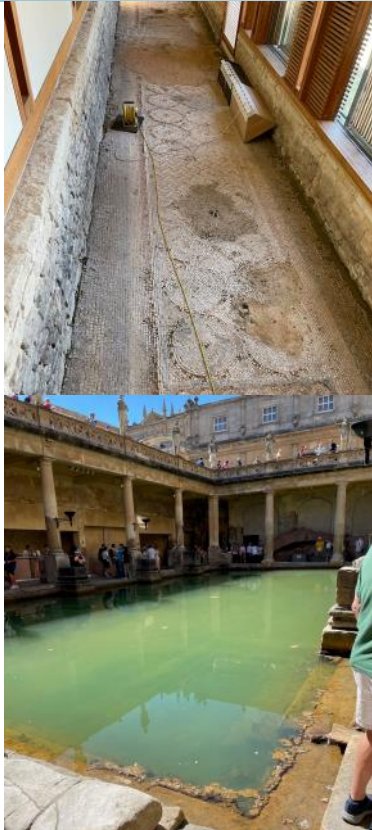
We have produced a series of short videos for those who are taking part in the test pitting projects. These can be viewed at

https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLW_V32KiRPmxyw7o7OoezFe01Bq9fPFJe



“It was interesting to learn about the poor houses, which once stood adjacent to church house (where we were digging). We weren't able to attend the second day but I'm sure it was filled with more fascinating stuff!”





Anne's excursion to visit the Romans!

Over the summer, Anne visited two Roman archaeological sites in close succession: Chedworth Roman Villa, near Cheltenham which is managed by the National Trust; and the Romans Baths in Bath. These sites are well worth visits if you are passing or nearby. The weather was glorious for which was appreciated at Chedworth which is largely outdoors. Chedworth is a Roman villa complex that has some of the surviving remains of the baths, and some great mosaics. The Roman Baths at Bath has a museum, new to Anne since she last visited around 2002! It is very informative although busy (it is worth booking tickets in advance) and the audio tour was worthwhile. It's now possible to taste the waters just before you leave, although you have to make sure you spot the tap just near where you drop the audio-tour handset off!

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