



FULBOURN VILLAGE HISTORY SOCIETY

"To save Fulbourn's past for the future"

LOCAL HERITAGE INITIATIVE PROJECT:

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No
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Spring
2003

WALKING THE FIELDS OF FULBOURN

During November/December 2002 seven residents from Fulbourn have spent their Sunday mornings field walking with Cambridge Archaeology Field Group. We intended to gain some practical experience before organising our own field walking exercise in Spring 2003.

It proved a very rewarding and useful time. Many of our initial concerns were unfounded which perhaps may be best summed up as follows:

- It is NOT considered productive to field walk when the weather is wet! (The combination of mud and water do not help recognition of objects - and are not good for morale. Best conditions are harder ground after frost, whilst wearing warm clothing).
- You are NOT constantly bending down to collect items of interest. The favoured technique is to walk upright, slowly, keeping your attention ahead on no more than a metre either side of your path (or traverse).
- You do NOT have to cover every centimetre of ground in sight. You are restricted to only collecting from your particular section of the traverse (see above) and as far as possible to keeping a straight path. (Wandering off at an angle can skew data collection).
- You are NOT let onto the field without proper direction. The points of departure and points to aim towards are clearly marked out before the walking begins.
- You are NOT expected to identify artefacts on site, and very soon learn to distinguish the difference between ordinary stones and pottery shards, etc. (Examples of what to look for are available beforehand and consultation with experts is encouraged).
- You are NOT ridiculed if you collect finds that turn out to be modern rubbish, etc. Too much is better than too little (or nothing) since there is less likelihood of missing important evidence.
- It is NOT a real problem if artefacts are missed, since the scale used when plotting finds is very

generous, and precise accuracy is impossible. Moreover, in the future later disturbance of the topsoil by ploughing etc. may reveal further evidence.

- It is NOT a failure on your part if you see nothing of interest. Very often there is nothing of interest to find - which conversely is of considerable significance when determining settlement patterns.



Field-walking volunteers about to develop that sense of well being and satisfaction!

- You are NOT expected to provide expensive equipment. Warm waterproof clothing and footwear are advisable for your comfort. However, cheap triangular plasterer's trowels are adequate for prising pottery etc from the ground. (So far I have managed with a dandelion weeding tool, though I might buy a more robust and costly - ie about £12.00 - trowel which will, of course, last longer.
- You are NOT expected to return home without a feeling of great satisfaction in performing a task that contributes to an understanding of our local heritage.
- You are NOT expected to return home without a sense of well-being resulting from time spent in the fresh air and the pleasure of shared experiences whilst involved with an enthusiastic team of like-minded people.

For further information regarding Field Walking in Fulbourn please contact me, Glynis Arber, on 01223 570887

