

# EXCAVATION AT APPLEBY MAGNA- GETTING CHILDREN INVOLVED IN ARCHAEOLOGY!!

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The Sir John Moore Foundation run a programme during the summer which allows children from the age of eight to get involved with an archaeological dig on site. I had the pleasure of attending and helping out on the dig for the day. It was truly fantastic to see young children getting involved in an area of study which I enjoy so much. There was in all three small trenches which were dug out in accordance to the finding of a wall in the summer past.

From local maps, we understood that there was some kind of building located in this area marked by a large dark area. In digging in the trench located next to that of the wall. I found that from about one metre below the surface there was a large amount of charcoal discovered along with a large number of nails. Bricks were also uncovered scattered from about one metre below the surface point. As I dug further down and extended out the trench I found a number of other items. From the remains of glass bottles to sherds of pottery thought to be that of the late Victorian period of the 1850's. The children involved were completely engaged throughout the day, and it was great to see how excited and competitive they become upon excavating new items. Not only were they excavating but also learning how to mark out areas, measure the trench, clean finds, photograph finds and record finds in the correct way.

The initial finds from the excavation helped me build a picture of what I thought the dark area found on the initial maps may have been. The large amount of burnt wood discovered is certainly evidence for the possible destruction of the site itself. There were a number of sherds of pottery found with dark black smudges on which one could not remove when cleaning. Furthermore there was a large amount of glass bottles found. If, as I predict, a fire destroyed the settlement that stood in this area it is highly unlikely that the temperature of the fire would have been strong enough in order to melt the glass; as glass is only burnt at temperatures starting from as high as five hundred degrees depending on the glass type. The pressure would have caused glass and pottery to break, which would coincide with what was found in the trenches. I would argue that there was certainly some form of building in this area. Possibly with a brick/stone foundation with a wooden structure predicted from the evidence found in the excavation. It may have been that this site was then used as storage or some kind of out building or workshop. Further excavations will reveal more and hopefully reinforce the initial findings.

All in all, for me the most important element of the dig, without a shadow of a doubt, was getting young children involved in the world of archaeology. Archaeology is a career that I aspire to be in once I complete my degree and maintaining an interest in this area is essential. The programme runs every year with a number of dates. All the volunteers are dedicated to helping the children understand the history and the archaeology of the area, providing them with a range of skills which would be beneficial not just in this are but many areas of their future. I am not exaggerating when I say that the children loved the entire day. Some of the children enjoy it so much that they have attended not just the current year but years previous to this. The unfortunate point is the area in which the dig is situated is owned by the local school and therefore once the summer is over the trenches have to be covered over until the following year.

The whole day was fantastic, more community archaeology excavations have cropped up in the recent years, and maintaining a growing interest in this area of work is essential. All be it a great way to get out doors and bring families together for a fantastic fun filled day!



*Just a few of the children s finds of the day*

Fantastic finds in Appleby Magna!