

# A DAY ON TWO SITES

June 29, 2012 cornelius Commercial Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Excavation, Survey Commercial archaeology, Construction, CRM, Earth, Egham, Egham Museum, gallery link=, GPS, GPS system, Keston, L - P : Archaeology, Mike, Physical infrastructure, Roman Tombs, Scheduled Ancient Monument of Keston Roman Tombs, skilled machine driver, Surrey, Tea, Trench

Hello I'm Cornelius, one of the partners at [L - P: Archaeology](#). I've been doing commercial archaeology for 25 years now, and I know that the following short story will be very familiar to a lot of you, but anyone who has never been involved in a trenching evaluation be warned- this rollercoaster ride of thrills, despair and elation is not for the faint hearted. Some images may contain brickearth.

As described in my earlier post, we are currently conducting a 5% sample evaluation below a car-park in Egham, Surrey. First thing this morning we broke the tarmac on a fresh new trench, full of possibilities. We started to machine away the modern overburden deposits below the surface, taking care to avoid the large water pipe we knew to be in the trench. As our very skilled machine driver was doing this I got a call from another site.

51 miles away to the south lies the lovely house of Brambletye in Keston. An extension is currently being built on the house, which involves digging some small but deep footings. As the house lies next to the Scheduled Ancient Monument of Keston Roman Tombs, even very small scale work needs to be watched closely, so I leave the trench in the capable hands of my colleague Mike and zoom off down the M25.

When I get to Brambletye the crew have a small 3-ton digger ready, and have soon dug the footing. There is absolutely nothing in it but natural clay, with not even a stray sherd of Roman pot in the topsoil. My disappointment is offset by a very fine cup of tea, and then back to Egham to look at the trench.

In my absence Mike has cleaned and recorded the trench beautifully. A single linear feature in the trench has been sectioned, and is clearly a wall footing of early 20th century origin- possibly the wall of the doctors surgery we were told about by the very helpful staff at Egham Museum, who were kind enough to show us their collection of old maps. There is no other archaeology visible

in the trench, so I survey it using a Smartrover GPS system and we fill it back in. I lock up the site and head home to write up the days results. Which are that I have driven about 150 miles, shifted a few hundred tons of earth and found nothing of archaeological interest whatsoever.

But it was mostly sunny, and I was out in the fresh air, and I got a close look at a very cool Roman tomb complex. And the tea was very good.



*This chap driving was very skilled, and I'd have liked to say thanks here but he asked me not to post his name on the internet.*



*Roman Tombs at Brambletye, dating to the 3rd Century AD. I have failed to post a workable link but if you put "Roman Tombs Keston" into Google you'll find the Council for Kentish Archaeology website with more details.*



*A slot foundation cut into very clean natural clay.*



*OK back to the trench. Very neat!*



*Section through wall footing.*



*TEA! This should really be further back in the gallery but somehow looks nicer here.*



*Surveying using GPS Smart rover. Very handy bit of kit. I love those Swiss dudes...so meticulous.*



*Oh well, nothing there. Fill it in again.*



*You'd hardly know we were ever here at all.*



*20:24. Enough said.*

Altogether a fine day.

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