

LIVING IN THE PAST COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT: DIY HOUSE AND GARDEN ARCHAEOLOGY

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Living in the Past Community Archaeology Project (LIPCAP) is developing ways to enable public participation in exploring the historical environment amongst which many live and work today. We are based in Derby – a town (now city) with a long history, which particularly came to prominence, substantially growing in size, during (and especially after) the 18th century, as an important centre of industrialisation.



Derby Silk Mill (much rebuilt after early 20th century fire): one of the earliest factories in the world – part of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site

Though much of the older housing once occupied by industrial workers has since been demolished, most of the late 19th and early 20th century small terraced houses built for the increasing workforce – many of whom were employed in the numerous local mills and factories – remain, and continue to provide homes for modern families.



Rykneld Mill behind housing within West End study area



Late 19th – early 20th century terraced housing within LIPCAP study area

LIPCAP aims, in partnership with local communities, to discover more about the daily lives of 'ordinary' people in the past by investigating the history of these houses (in particular), examining the traces of

earlier domestic activities through standing building surveys and surveys of artefacts found in the associated gardens and yards. We provide guidance for investigating the surfaces of gardens and houses: this is to broaden access through 'DIY' surveys and recording, which are designed to be of low or no cost, and to prevent damage to the historical environment; at present, there are no plans for excavations, but may consider this in the future.



Project study Areas

In order to make fieldwork manageable, to make best use of resources, due to the existing evidence, and to enable comparisons, the project incorporates **four study areas**: Allestree Village, Little Chester, West End, and Friar Gate area; due to the opportunity to carry out detailed surveys, one property provides an interesting case study.



The remains of early toilets investigated at one property outside Derby

We hope that this will provide opportunities for participation by those that neither inhabit old housing, nor live in houses built upon the plots of demolished earlier housing, by investigating the remains of Victorian and Edwardian rubbish 'dumps' in and around the town.



Spread of surface finds: probable Victorian and early 20th century rubbish tip on the outskirts of Derby that LIPCAP is applying to investigate

However, by taking opportunities to investigate house interiors, we also record other remains that provide clues for home life in the past: close investigation often reveals (even in houses that have been much modernised) remains for earlier décor, utilities, and use of household space.



Chips to later white paint revealing remains of early finishes within LIPCAP case study: late 19th – early 20th century 'grained' varnish beneath dark early – mid 20th century paint, within project case study, No.



Wall paint (probable early 20th century) within bedroom at No. 8 (below)

One task that has held particular interest for the project (and others) is recording of graffiti – through which we have gained insights into childhood attitudes and behaviour.



Graffiti discovered during a survey of 'No. 8'

We look at the material evidence alongside documentary records (such as census returns and trade directories), photos and maps, and oral histories and memoirs, and in this way are beginning to build up a more complete picture of everyday life at this point in time (c. 1880 – 1940) when the modern world comes into being.

Name	Relation	Condition/ Yrs married	Sex	Age	Birth Year	Occupation	Where Born
<i>ELEY, Thomas</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>1866</i>	<i>Smith Striker Railway</i>	<i>Derby Derbyshire</i>
<i>ELEY,</i>	<i>Wife</i>	<i>Married</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>1868</i>		<i>Derby</i>

<i>Maria Jane</i>		<i>15 years</i>					<i>Derbyshire</i>
<i>RIPPIN, William</i>	<i>Stepson</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>1892</i>	<i>Cotton Winder</i>	<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>
<i>ELEY, Harry</i>	<i>Son</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>1892</i>	<i>Fruiterer's Salesman</i>	<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>
<i>ELEY, Selina</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>Single</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>1893</i>	<i>Cotton Winder</i>	<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>
<i>ELEY, Lily</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>1897</i>	<i>Tent Maker Canvass</i>	<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>
<i>ELEY, Jane</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>1899</i>		<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>
<i>ELEY, Eva</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>1902</i>		<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>
<i>ELEY, Mabel</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1904</i>		<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>
<i>ELEY, Doris</i>	<i>Daughter</i>		<i>F</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>1910</i>		<i>Derbyshire Derby</i>

No. 8 Census evidence for 1911

We will soon make guidance publicly available, to support local communities in carrying out garden surveys; over the next few days, we will test the step-by-step instructions for public participation that have been recently devised, which we will describe in a following post.



Finds discovered during a test survey of a garden outside Derby



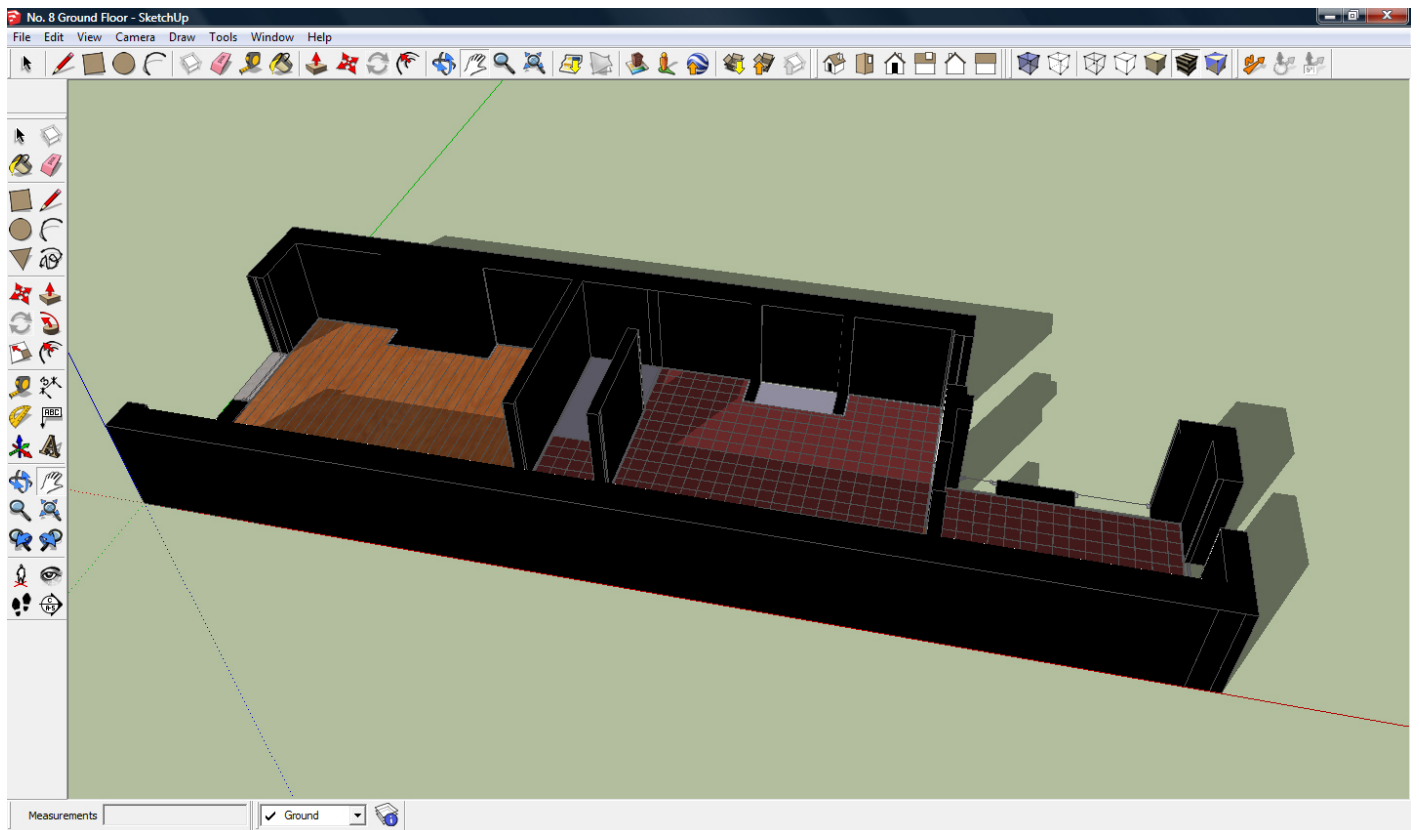
Test Garden: location of above finds

The pilot stage of the project – testing new ways of integrating public and professional research and fieldwork – will run until 2015. LIPCAP is currently run by volunteers, and funded by donations; at present, our project team is small, and led by local historical archaeologist [Dr Kirsten Jarrett](#). We would welcome further volunteers who would like to get involved in running the project and more sustained and detailed research and fieldwork – particularly those experienced in archaeology or local history, but this is not essential. A forthcoming post will hear from other members of the project team.



Project case study, No. 8

If you would like to know more about the project, see our website; follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#), and see our [Flickr](#) and [YouTube](#) channels; we are also in the process of developing a History Pin channel. The [Journal of Victorian Culture Online](#) has also published a short [article](#) on the project.



No. 8 3D reconstruction in progress: to be 'redecorated' and furnished in late Victorian, Edwardian, and 1920s – 30s style

Project Social Media

Website: www.livinginthepast.org.uk

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UrbArc20>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/>

Flickr: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/living-in-the-past/sets/>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCcy3KUXbjyFdaCodnHRy6lQ>