

CHESHIRE HEROS

July 23, 2014 MoyaWatson Bronze Age, Curation, Day of Archaeology 2014, Public Archaeology, Roman Archaeology, Cheshire, coin, HER, Historic Environment Record Officer, Historic Gardens, Portable Antiquity Scheme, Roman currency, Round Barrow

As jobs go, being an Historic Environment Record Officer (or HERO as we like to be known) is a pretty interesting one, not least because I get to look at maps, aerial photographs and read about archaeology every day.

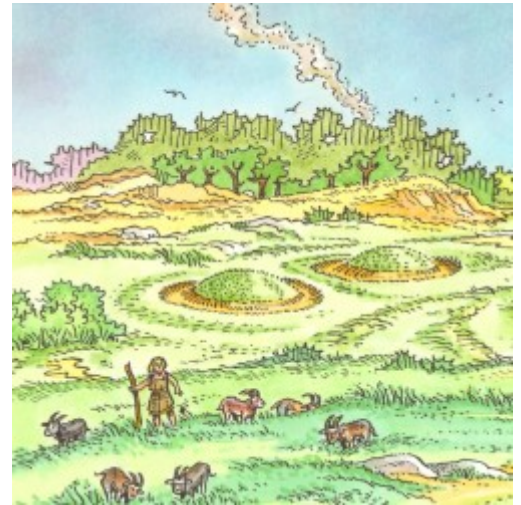
A large part of the job is maintaining the Cheshire Historic Environment Record (HER), adding new records and updating existing ones. We also carry out searches for archaeological consultants, academic researchers and the public. This does involve a lot of time spent in front of a computer, but occasionally I get to go and look at actual archaeological sites (outside!).

This week, thanks to information from a member of the public, I am making a visit to a possible round barrow, deep in rural Cheshire. Cheshire has 135 round barrows, but in general they are not much to look at on the ground, being mostly ploughed out. Looks however, are deceptive. In 2012 a training excavation for the HLF funded Habitats and Hillforts project uncovered four Bronze Age cremation urns from a de-scheduled round barrow. This barrow (one of a group of seven) was believed to have been completely ploughed out.

It's not only looking at archaeology in the field that can yield exciting results though. We receive regular updates from the [Portable Antiquities Scheme database](#). When we incorporate the new information about individual finds into the HER we can discover some surprises. Most recently we have added a group of around fifty Roman coins found in close proximity and including four radiate coins, over thirty nummi, five other copper alloy coins and an Islamic coin. Amongst the group are three unusual coins from the Eastern Mediterranean; a nummus from Constantinople c.AD 348-51; a decanummium of Justinian I from Constantinople AD 542-9 and an Islamic coin which probably dates from the eighth to tenth centuries AD. The coins all display corrosion consistent with exposure to the British soil conditions, suggesting that they are not souvenirs introduced to the site at a much later date. This is a notable concentration of coins from the eastern Empire and may represent a hoard which has been dispersed by ploughing.

In addition to the PAS data, a regular flow of new information into the HER comes from Grey Literature, local society journals, members of the public and research projects.

Today I received two new research and recording reports from the [Cheshire Gardens Trust](#). We have been assisting their volunteers in their work in recording survival of undesignated historic gardens and



Bronze Age burial mounds illustration by Dai Owen. ©Cheshire Historic Environment Record.

landscapes. Their reports are full of really useful information about the development of large houses, gardens and designed landscapes and their survival today.

They do a lot of documentary research and we recently held a training day in the HER for their members so we could show them what resources they could access by visiting the HER, in particular the digital aerial photographs and maps.

Visitors to the HER can view our full set of digitised aerial surveys of the county, taken every 10 years since the 1970's as well as the 1940's RAF Aerial Survey. They also have access to the printed source material behind our digital HER records and as much tea as they can drink (and occasionally cake.)

For more information about the Cheshire Historic Environment Record and to visit the online version of the HER visit www.cheshirearchaeology.org.uk