

# COBHAM LANDSCAPE DETECTIVES AND A COTTAGE DIG IN KENT

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To my great amusement both my wife, Sophie Adams and I have been working in cellars today...I have been digging a Georgian cellar out, while Sophie had been researching in Maidstone Museum's cellar... do read her dayofarch post!



For the last week the Shorne Woods Archaeology Group and the North Downs YACs have been assisting me in the excavation of an old cottage in Cobham Woods, Kent.

This work is taking place as part of a new 3 year Lottery funded project, Cobham Landscape Detectives. Beginning this Spring, the project will aim to tell the story of the varied and fascinating landscape, centred on Cobham Parish, Kent.

We have already spent many hours walking through Cobham Woods, with LiDAR printout in one hand and GPS receiver in the other! The LiDAR results have guided us to old trackways through the woods



and many a mysterious lump and bump...not to mention the most amazing trees!



### **Medieval trackway running through Cobham Woods**

We have participated in the annual Park open day at Shorne Woods to spread awareness of the project...





Our work in Cobham Woods led us to one site that seemed very suitable for the first community excavation of the new project...a demolished cottage that once stood in the SE corner of the old Cobham Hall estate...





### **Volunteer with window frame from the Cottage**

With permissions in place from Natural England and support from the National Trust who own and manage the land, we set aside 2 weeks to examine the layout of the cottage site and recover dating evidence....





### **First day on site with the amazing North Downs YACs**

I am writing this at the end of week one, after seven brilliant days on site, with the hardest working and most dedicated volunteers I have ever met (and in some cases now worked with for over 10 years!)...

We have identified the layout of 2 buildings on the site, the first is a Georgian building dating to the 1780's:





The second is an additional building added in the later 19th century:





This second building survives much better than the first, with intact internal and external surfaces, full of finds!

The first building has suffered from the full force of the demolition crew that tore apart both buildings in the 1950's, leaving a gaping hole in the north wall.



**COUNTRY HOME: The cottage where the Tuppen family lived**

**Newspaper article showing the cottage pre-war**

Amongst the many interesting finds from the site is one rather special mug fragment:





It appears to depict a kangaroo holding a cricket bat! This is an incredible link to the wider Cobham Hall estate, as one of the owners captained the first Ashes winning cricket team in the 1880's...could this be a piece of memorabilia depicting this event...celebrated on the estate by the estate workers?

We have another week to further puzzle out the mysteries of the cottage. Does the Georgian building's cellar have an intact floor? What will other finds tell us about the owners of the cottage and the wider estate? What is the function of the enigmatic brick structure in building 2?

In a finale fitting to the day of archaeology, a spot of further research on-site today produced a lovely drawing of the cottage, presumed to show it in the first half of the 20th century....





**Image from the Cobham and Ashenbank Management Scheme Report**

To keep up to date with the dig and the Cobham Landscape Detectives Project, follow @ArchaeologyKent on Twitter and ArchaeologyinKent on facebook, as well as our dedicated, volunteer-run website!

I always end my day of archaeology posts by thanking the volunteers, both local and further afield, who make every project we put together possible through their dedication and hardwork...thank you 😊





**Volunteers hard at work on the Cottage Dig**