



South Oxfordshire Archaeological Group - Ascott Park 2019

We are delighted to confirm dates and plans for our second year of excavations on the presumed site of the 17th century manor house in Ascott Park between Stadhampton and Chalgrove. For 2019 we have planned a 10 day dig over two long weekends with a two-day break in between. It's a month later than last year, the dates being: **Fri 23 – Tue 27 Aug** and **Fri 30 Aug – Tue 03 Sep**.

We now need volunteers to sign up as soon as possible so that we can get an idea of numbers and skills available. The dig is open to anyone, whether experienced or not, and as with other field projects we are inviting volunteers from neighbouring groups. So, if you would like enjoy some time (any time from 1 to 10 days!) in this parkland site, do please get in touch with Mike Vincent (contact details below) and let him know which dates you can do.

The excavations will again be on the 'hollow and bank' site at the centre of the picture, the hollow being the remains of a basement (or cellar) and the bank those of a raised terrace. Our main research aim is to try to prove 'beyond reasonable doubt' that these are indeed the remains of William Dormer's new manor house that burnt down in October 1662 when near to completion, and to determine the site plan.



The 2018 season relocated key features in the trenches of previous excavators' and opened many new trenches to examine more of the surviving structures, such as the massive house south wall and terrace retaining wall shown here – note that this is only the upper courses of a house wall that survives to height of about 1.8m! This has already greatly expanded our understanding of these structures and gone some way towards recovering a ground plan of the terrace and house. In 2019 the aim is to complete a full ground plan by

reopening and extending some of the existing trenches and opening several new ones. Volunteers who worked so hard at heavy digging in the baking heat of 2018 will be delighted to know that we will be using a mechanical excavator for some of the initial hard work!

It is a rare privilege to be allowed to excavate on this beautiful, County Council owned parkland site and to be given the opportunity to finally solve a long-standing mystery, so do come along and help. Needless-to-say there is a great deal of interest in the project from the local and regional archaeology community, not least from our friends and sponsors at Oxfordshire Buildings Trust who started the Ascott Park research project so many years ago. For those unfamiliar with the project, there is an introduction to the site and earlier work on our project web page at www.soagarch.org.uk/projects/ascottpark/ascottpark.html.

Contact details

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