

Archaeological investigations at the proposed site of the new Marsh Lane School

The need to carry out an archaeological investigation has arisen because in the 1930s a Bronze Age beaker was found in the area on the river side of Marsh Lane where gravel extraction was taking place. I believe some flints were also found at some time around the 1940s as well, probably all connected to the winding down of the gravel business (Bournemouth Water bought their land in the 1940s). Because of these finds the County Archaeologist has asked that an investigation take place on the land that wasn't used for gravel extraction, the other part of the land we would like for the new school, in case there is anything there.

I was in touch with the Graziers who currently use the land about the possibility of doing this over the next couple of months but their need to have their winter grazing land left alone was paramount, so it won't happen until next late spring/early summer when the stock are off into their summer grazing areas and the ground is dry. Providing the Archaeological contractor finds nothing, or if they do find something it is of little or no interest, the 'dig' will not have an impact on our proposed timescales. If something of interest is found we will cross that bridge when we get to it - there will be options on the way to proceed depending on the nature of the find.

There have already been two sets of trial holes dug across the proposed site, the first as a ground investigation to ascertain how the structural foundation of the proposed building should be built (essentially it would be conventional concrete strip footings), the second to ascertain how water infiltrates the ground, to help the drainage engineer develop his plans for a 'soakaway' type system for rainwater, to keep the water in the ground where it is needed, and not transported off elsewhere in pipes. Neither found anything archaeological, just soil, which suggests it is unlikely anything will be found - but either way this history could be of interest to local residents and to the school, and there could be an opportunity here for residents and pupils/parents to join forces on looking into it all as a 'community' project. Let me know if I can help develop this in any way.

David Crudgington

Senior Project Manager

Dorset Property

<http://www.dorsetforyou.com/dorsetproperty>