

Finding Fryston: Discovering our heritage from the Monks to the Victorians

Hopefully, as a parent or carer of a Monk Fryston Primary School Pupil, you will be aware that last year Monk Fryston Time Team secured a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake a 2 year project to discover a more about our village's past. Indeed, last July Class 4 visited the archaeological dig and whilst there made some remarkable discoveries including a piece of a high status, medieval wine jug, dating from around 1300 which would have been used by the Monks, maybe even the Abbott of Selby when visiting Fryston.

Overall, over 10,000 artefacts were discovered dating from the Ice Age to around 1900. This has helped us to understand much more about how people lived in Monk Fryston and Hillam over many centuries.

The children and staff who visited the site, not only with school, but with the Rainbows, Brownies, Guides or their parents all thoroughly enjoyed themselves and learnt lots.

We want to give everyone an opportunity to discover our past – in your own homes - and take part in the:-

Monk Fryston and Hillam Big Village Dig over the weekend of Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd July

What is a Big Village Dig? It is when a number of small test pits are dug at various locations, mainly in families gardens, to find out what is just below the ground; identify and record what and where an item is found and then plot the finds on a full village map to see if any patterns emerge. The past is all around us; we just do not know where, and who was living and working near to where we live today. A big village dig will help us learn more.

A small scale, 4 test pit dig in 2011 revealed items from the Ice Age to the present day. Significantly, we found our first piece of Romano British pottery, lots of items from the medieval period, much more from the 16th and 17th century and even a 20th Century Monk Fryston Brewery Beer Bottle stopper. A few years ago we didn't even know we had a brewery in the village, let alone find part of a bottle!

What does it entail? Using part of your garden to dig a 1m x 1m x a maximum of 1m deep test pit under the supervision of our archaeologist or/and one of our team of over 20 experienced volunteer excavators. We will show you how to dig up part of your garden, discover what is there, and then put it back so that in a couple of weeks you will never know where you have dug.

Will my children be able to take part? Of course they can with their parents. It's a great family experience and one you will remember all your lives because you will all discover something together – not parents first – it is a really exciting, shared experience. **Finding things is not just for adults but they can help! If you need any encouragement in the last month recently a Roman coin was found in our Villages. Perhaps the first but maybe not the last!!!**

Is my garden suitable, and if it's not suitable can I still take part? Most gardens will be suitable although a few might not be as some houses have been built in former quarries. After all, Fryston was owned by the Monks for almost 500 years primarily to quarry its stone, whilst Hillam has been quarried for gypsum and clay. We know where most former quarries are; if someone's house is not suitable we have organised some other sites so everyone who wants to take part should be able to.

We've never done any archaeology, can we take part? Yes – our archaeologist will give everyone a short introductory explanation of how to dig and our volunteers will help you learn.

What do we need? A FINDS TRAY (a seed tray) and a few gardening tools to help you fill it! Plus a washing up bowl and tooth brush to see what you have found; paper, pencils, tape measure, and camera to record your discoveries.

How long will it take us? Most test pits are completed in a day and at the end of the day everyone will be invited to see everyone else's discoveries which have been identified and most probably dated by Simon, our archaeologist.

What do we do next? Register your interest, either at school or go to www.findingfryston.co.uk and register on line. We will get in touch with you and confirm your details and give you more information about:

The Monk Fryston and Hillam Big Village Dig – Saturday 2nd and Sunday 3rd July