



Blackden 2007



Creating a presentation.

The season from April to October included archaeological investigations, courses for participants of all ages, visits to the Trust, and also courses given in schools.

April Professor Richard Morris and Dr Mark Roberts extended their investigation of a seventeenth century drain and, below it, found a more ancient drainage ditch, which was possibly Neolithic.

June The Northern Branch of the Oxford Society spent an afternoon at Blackden, looking at the artefact collections and at the buildings.

Primary school students who had attended a course at Blackden last year, returned for a celebratory day, where they demonstrated the work they had done based on their previous visit. They designed, created and danced their own labyrinth.

June and July Professor Mark Edmonds gave a course on flint technology and initiated novice flint knappers into the skills of flint tool making.

Gifted and Talented students from both primary and secondary schools attended courses, where they were introduced to some of the skills needed for the study of archaeology and history, including the washing, sorting and dating of pottery sherds that had surfaced in the garden and surrounding fields.



Dating pottery sherds



Using a garden hose to mark the line in the creation of a cobble labyrinth.

August Professor Richard Morris and Dr Mark Roberts returned for more drain digging.

Twenty members of NAGTY visited Blackden as part of a summer school course on The Age of Chivalry run by The University of Leeds.



Surveying round Toad Hall



October



Students examining artefacts from the site

Professor Richard Morris ran a course for 6th Formers on the inter-relationship between archaeology and history, where the students examined maps, aerial photographs and artefacts from the site. They were encouraged to make their own observations of the significance of what they saw. Most of these students were offered places at their first choice universities.

Members of Pathways broke their journey at Blackden on their walk from Wales to Jodrell Bank.

The work that The Blackden Trust has pioneered with Gifted and Talented students was mentioned in a case study in Heritage Counts 2007.

A course taking archaeology into the classroom was piloted at a primary school. Amongst other activities, the students dated sherds of pottery and drew a reconstruction of the pot that their sherd might have come from.

Dawn Parry gave a lecture about this initiative, at Edge Hill University, to third year trainee teachers, who were specialising in history.

Among the academics and volunteers who generously gave their time and expertise were Dr David Barker, Senior Archaeologist at Stoke-on-Trent Archaeology Service; Professor Mark Edmonds, Professor of Landscape Archaeology at York; Dr Melanie Giles, lecturer at the School of Arts, Histories and Cultures at the University of Manchester; Professor Richard Morris, Director of the Institute for Medieval Studies at The University of Leeds; Professor Dominic Powlesland, Visiting Professor at the Institute for Medieval Studies at the University of Leeds and Director of the Landscape Research Centre; Dr Mark Roberts, Principal Research Fellow, University College London; Dianne Tibbitts, the Curriculum Adviser for Vulnerable Children in Cheshire; Richard Smith, freelance teacher and part-time lecturer at Chester College; qualified teachers, Jill Gover, Antonella Novarina and Carol Ray; Dawn Parry and Fiona Sharpley, both of whom graduated in July; and Eloise Halling, who first attended a course at Blackden in October 2006 and who returned as a volunteer on courses for the younger students.



Mark Edmonds advising a student on how to knap flint

The Trustees of the Blackden Trust are most grateful for the support of its tutors and volunteers and for the kind donations of its benefactors. Only with this backing is the Trust able to fulfil its educational policy, which is to provide intensively supported courses to small numbers of students, giving them the opportunity to work with primary evidence, and to enable them to contribute to the making of history.

In 2008 the Trust hopes to expand its activities with several new courses, hosting the Manchester Branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club and running events during National Archaeology Week.