



Roman Burial Site Uncovered

A ROMAN burial ground has been discovered on land in Staverton near Trowbridge.

Over the past two months archaeologists have extracted the remains of four Roman people from the ground. Some of the graves contained two skeletons.

They believe the field behind New Terrace is on the edge of a Roman settlement dating back to about 55AD.

Known locally as Blacklands the field is a source of much superstition for locals who have passed on folklore from generation to generation about the ghosts that lurked beneath the soil.

The remains are likely to be the descendants of Roman peasants who farmed the land before leaving the country in advance of the Anglo Saxon invasion from 410AD onward.

Heavy digger work on the field by Persimmon Homes, a development company that is seeking permission to build around 100 houses on the site, uncovered the historical artefacts.

Persimmon employed Cotswold Archaeology to carry out an archaeological dig after Wiltshire County Council archaeologist Melanie Pomeroy-Kellinger requested the developer carry out the investigation work.

News of the find was kept under wraps for many weeks in order to deter treasure hunters and enable the dig to carry on undisturbed.

But the full details of the discoveries are emerging with Wiltshire County Council confirming the discovery of skeletons and other artefacts indicating a Roman settlement and graveyard.

Pete Lavis, a Staverton resident and local historian has written a book on the history of the village. He has been keeping a close eye on the archaeological work. He said: "Local legend had it that Blacklands was a burial site for plague victims but there was another theory that Blacklands relates to the black patches left in the soil by Roman burial grounds.

"This appears to have been borne out by the recent discoveries. As well as the skeletons they also found Roman coins and pottery in the graves.

"There are pits and post holes as well as what they think is the remains of an Iron Age roundhouse, probably raided by the Romans for other uses.

"There are lots of stone features including the remains of a possible corn drier where they would have kept the harvested corn.

"A wide and deep ditch indicates some sort of enclosure and they also found some Roman nails, stone roof tiles and bricks.

"There appears to be the beginnings of a Roman dwelling which may continue under New Terrace."
Gary Male, technical director for Persimmon Homes Wessex, said: "The discovery of a small number of Roman burials was not unexpected and will not affect our plans with regard to developing housing on the site."

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