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**Archaeologists will focus on Norman structure during dig in Chichester’s Priory Park**

A team of archaeologists will be looking to further our knowledge about a Norman structure in Priory Park, Chichester when they begin their latest dig on Tuesday 21 May.

The dig is a collaboration between Chichester and District Archaeology Society and Chichester District Council, with the council’s own archaeologist, James Kenny, leading the project. This is the seventh dig that James has led to help uncover the secrets that lie beneath this fascinating site.

The excavation will run from **Tuesday 21May** to **Monday 3June**, and members of the public are welcome to come along and watch. As in past years, there will be a special public day on **Saturday 1 June** where people will have the opportunity to hear about the team’s discoveries. James will give a series of talks throughout the day, scheduled to take place at 10am, 12 noon and 3pm.

Last year the team uncovered the foundations of the walls associated with a building that was part of a medieval Franciscan Friary that stood on the site, including a buttress on the south-east corner of the building.

But last year’s star find was the remains of a ditch that surrounded the central mound, or ‘motte’, of Chichester’s Norman castle, together with a masonry structure associated with it. This may be part of a causeway or bridge across the ditch.

“A series of geophysics and ground-penetrating radar scans carried out in 2022 indicate that the Norman wall connects to a large, rectangular masonry structure that may be part of the bridge or its defences,” explains James. “Following last year’s exciting finds, the aim of this year’s dig is to investigate this further and increase our understanding of the motte.

“Some people may not be aware, but the motte and bailey castle was probably built directly after the Norman Invasion in 1067 or 1068 by Earl Roger Montgomery. He was one of the most important Norman barons, in charge of most of what would become West Sussex.

“Only a small part of the motte remains today, but back then it would have been a significant structure – four or five times bigger than it is today – and probably comparable in size to the one at Arundel Castle. Chichester’s castle was intended to intimidate the Urban English population and to dissuade them from rebelling against their new Norman lords.”

Councillor Adrian Moss, Leader of Chichester District Council, says: “The painstaking work that has been carried out by the team over the last few years has been so exciting to see, and I know that residents have been absolutely fascinated by their discoveries. Last year it was amazing to think that the wall associated with the Norman castle hadn’t been seen by another human since the Middle Ages. We’re really looking forward to welcoming the team on site later this month and following their progress.”

People can also find out more about the work of the Chichester and District Archaeology Society at: [**www.cdas.info**](http://www.cdas.info)