

The Ice-house was thought to stand on a mound in Darley Park shrubbery (Figure 1); lying west of the Barn Centre, according to old maps (Figure 2)

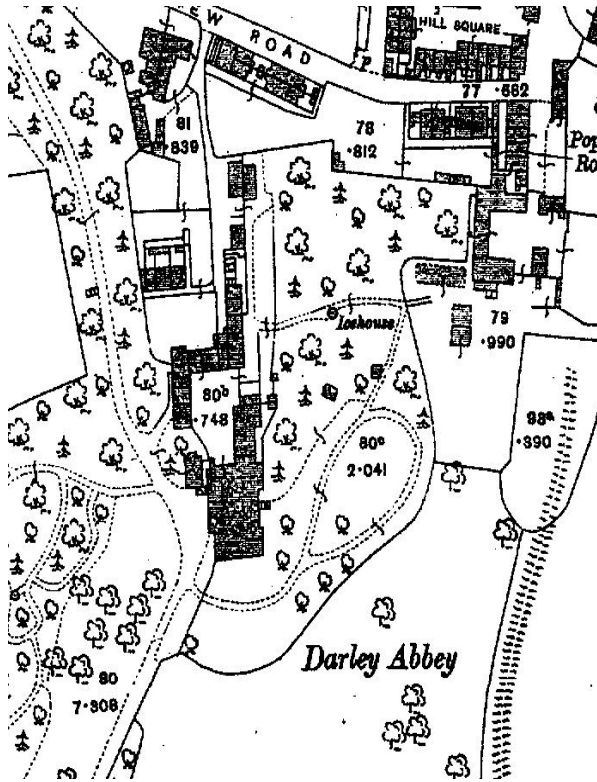


Figure 2 -- 1881 OS map

After a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund a project was initiated by DAHG for "The Ice-House Dig", managed by professional group Trent & Peak Archaeology and supported by Derby City Council.

With the help of DAHG and local Volunteers, Darley school groups and the Darley Scout group and with facilities provided by local sponsors, the 10-day excavation took place in The Shrubbery of Darley Park in late September 2017.

Following a geo-physics Resistivity Survey, which indicated likely buried features, five trenches were dug.

Trench 1 quickly revealed the octagonal red-brick foundations of a building above ground rather than below, as was expected for an Ice-house, but exactly where the maps had indicated.



Figure 3 -- The Game-larder exposed

Research showed that this building (Figure 3) was probably a "Game-Larder" misnamed by the mappers. Or, it may have been a Summer-House. Similar structures exist locally at Kedleston Hall and Calke Abbey.

Trenches 2 & 3 did not reveal features, contrary to the resistivity survey. In Trench 4 a light-coloured 'circle of stones' was exposed, as found in Dowsing surveys, but this was considered an insubstantial feature (see Figure 4); maybe one for a future DAHG investigation?



Figure 4 -- Showing the 'Circle of Stones'

Trench 5 cut to explore a 'dowsed drain from the stone circle', reached mixed stone and base rock at ~1m. depth (Figure 5 below). Again this was left for a possible future investigation.



Figure 5 -- The 'Drain' stone-work

No walls of monastic stone-work were unearthed by this dig.

The trenches revealed an interesting spread of Finds :- pottery of the 12th to 20th C.; glazed floor tile and quality roof tiles; clay pipe bowl; and many limestone nodules. The 12th C. pottery and tiles show the monastic presence, but their admixture with later pottery and artefacts indicate that they are dumped debris from the surrounding park area, rather than used on this site. See below.



In Conclusion, The Dig did not reveal more of the 'lost' Abbey of Darley, but showed its presence in the vicinity from the Finds. However, it did reveal the Victorian "Game-Larder" which we hope will be re-excavated by DCC and left open along with an Interpretation Board for the interest of Visitors.



DARLEY ABBEY HISTORICAL GROUP

This leaflet has been produced by DAHG to broadcast the outcome of The Dig to all those who contributed and to thank them for their invaluable contributions.

These include :- Heritage Lottery Funding and Lottery Users for the grant; Derby City Council for support and permission to dig in Darley Park; Derby Archaeologist for support; Darley Sanctuary for use of the Bakehouse facilities; Darley Barn Outdoor centre for use of facilities; Darley Parks Volunteers for the site clearance; Darley Abbey Community Association (DACA) and Friends of Darley Open Spaces (FODOS) for support and to all those Volunteers, school children and teachers, scouts and scout-masters who gave their time and effort willingly to make this project a success.



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DARLEY ABBEY HISTORICAL GROUP

DARLEY HALL

ICE-HOUSE EXCAVATION

Since its formation in 2004, the Darley Abbey Historical Group (DAHG) has investigated the history of the Darley area, to record and compile the resources of the village and its people. This research has revealed built features, which point to the location of the Abbey of Darley, whose existence is recorded from AD 1140 to 1538, but of which the exact site is 'lost'. Excavations in 2007 at The Barn Centre revealed monastic foundations. It seemed pertinent therefore to excavate the Darley Hall Ice-house, which might reveal more Abbey ruins.



Figure 1 -- The Ice-house Mound