

ALONG THE ROAD

The community archaeology programme of the Laczkó Dezső Museum

BRIGITTA PÉTERVÁRY-SZANYI¹

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The Laczkó Dezső Museum in Veszprém started to open towards metal detectorists around 2015. The legal environment created during the year established a new framework, thus opening a window for cooperation between archaeology enthusiasts with a metal detector and museums. First, Orsolya Csirke and Ágota S. Perémi contacted the metal detectorists who wished to collaborate with the museum. At that time, applicants could participate in field walks on an occasional basis.

In no time, other archaeologists soon took over the task of dealing with the ever-growing number of interested people, and the demand for a scientific research programme involving community archaeology emerged shortly. The programme answering the demand focused on the line of the Via Magna, the paths of and relation between the medieval and Roman roads running there, and the Roman and Bronze Age sites along the roads.

Tamás Péterváry, Zsombor Györffy-Villám, Anna Balatincz, and Vivien Gönczi designed the practical part of the programme.

Keywords: community archaeology, metal detector, research programme, museum

To formulate the basic principle behind the programme, the museum's team first got familiar with several other programmes and exemplary cases of practice, wishing to utilise their experience. These included the programmes of the Community Archeology Association, an NGO cooperating with the Ferenczy Museum and bringing together a large number of volunteers by providing them with fieldwork opportunities and education; the practice of volunteers cooperating with the Nagy Gyula Regional Museum in Orosháza; and the community archaeology project of the Count Esterházy Károly Museum in Pápa.

The decisions of the management are pivotal in the life of any museum because it is not possible to allocate the necessary human and material resources to the creation and maintaining of any programme (e.g., to ensure the conservation of the collected material) without their approval and support. The museum director must be aware of what the undertaking of a programme involves and how great the social demand it answers.

Dóra Oláh, an archaeologist of our museum, will be responsible for the programme from January 2024; thus, she will rarely be involved in development-related fieldwork. In addition, every archaeologist of the museum together with ethnographers Balázs Törő and Henriett L. Karsai, provide a professional contribution to the organisation of events and the processing of the obtained data, while Sándor Pálffy plays a key role in handling war memorabilia and in education. Emma Szulamit Horváth conservates the obtained items.

THE GOAL OF THE PROGRAMME

The goal of the programme has been to become a community initiative operating according to a predetermined scientific research plan, preferably designed together with volunteers in the long term, thus involving them in as many stages of the work as possible. Presentation is also an important element of any project involving the public; therefore, we plan to make the results available in regular exhibitions and publications, where participants are not only mentioned but have the opportunity to contribute. We envisage the programme as part of an actual community-based museum cooperating with its counterparts in the neighbouring counties and national institutions and maintaining a lively interaction with other community archaeology projects.

¹ Archaeologist, Director of the Laczkó Dezső Museum; e-mail: petervary.brigitta@ldm.hu

As for the scientific value of the programme, three long-term research foci were determined: the investigation and reconstruction of the Roman road network in the county; in relation, the reconstruction of the Roman settlement structure, with particular attention to stone buildings; and the authentication of the find spots of depots only known from reports by the public. These are complemented by lesser projects carried out in collaboration with research institutes and universities in the first place.

We wish to provide quality pastime activities and education for the volunteers joining the programme.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

Reports about the programme have been published on social media regularly; the posts always include a contact e-mail address monitored by the programme's leader and her assistant. Those who wish to join the programme must first undergo a personal interview with the professionals managing it, where they can get acquainted with the rules, communication channels, and goals. These occasions also represent a possibility for archaeologists to get to know the applicant and learn, for example, whether they have a private find collection, when they started metal detecting, which areas they surveyed, what they did with the finds obtained, what kind of machine they have, what attracted them to metal detecting and why are they going on with it, do they have a special interest, and what they expect from the museum. At the Laczkó Dezső Museum, we consider it a basic requirement that, if someone has tested their machine before learning about the legal background, they hand over the objects obtained together with the data before joining the programme.

ON-SITE ACTIVITY

During field trips, when investigating larger areas, we do not usually impose a staff limit. However, when the size of the area is smaller, we determine the maximum number of participants, accepting volunteers for the event in order of application through the related Facebook group (*Figs. 1–2*).

Every fieldwork session starts with a short overview of the applicable methods and rules, the information to be recorded, the limits of the research area, safety and GDPR legislation, etc., followed by the participants signing an attendance sheet where they also accept to have learned and abide by these rules. Besides, we take a group photo, which is also important for team-building (*Fig. 3*). When enough professionals are present and the setting permits, the findspots are measured by the museum's team using an RTK GNSS receiver. In such cases, we provide participants at the start of the survey with wooden skewers with a piece of foil band tied onto them and ask them to mark the findspots with these but leave the discovered objects untouched. However, these occasions are relatively rare; it is much more common that people collect the finds themselves and measure the coordinates using the Locus app or handheld GPS. Each find is packed separately in a resealable plastic bag, accompanied by a label with a uniform panel of data, including the site name, the findspot coordinates in EOV (a projection system used in Hungary), the finder's name, and the short name of the object. Furthermore, we notify the landowners before every field session and



Fig. 1. Community event: field walking trip in Salföld (2022)



Fig. 2. Community event: field walking trip in Salföld (2022)



Fig. 3. Community event: after a field walking trip in Tálod (2018)

It is important to emphasise that the programme does not focus only on archaeological findings but we also collect items of ethnographic, military historical, and modern historical interest to include them in the museum's collection upon the decision of the relevant professional (ethnographer or historian). Certain object types, like buttons, fire tools, or pipe caps, are collected *en masse* for typological and ethnographic analyses.

Every session concludes with an overview of the findings, which the session leader then brings into the museum.

Besides metal detector surveys, we also organise instrument-less field trips within some projects. From a scientific point of view, these occasions focus mainly on learning about the scatter of primarily ceramic objects in pre-set territorial units by applying different methods. Such an occasion was the survey of a former settlement specialising in pottery making near Herend, carried out within our collaboration with the Archaeological Institute of HUN-REN.

EDUCATION

The programme includes education, where we provide participants with information on the practical part of the work, documentation, the characteristics of the find material of all archaeological eras, militaria, items of ethnographic interest, the basics of artefact handling, and the use of the ÉTDR site (the official page through which fieldwork must be administrated) for those with a private license. Education is organised as a series of lectures roughly every year and a half, where each lecture is given by a different colleague from the museum's team (Fig. 4).


Whenever we obtain suitable funds through a grant, we also plan to organise a series of lectures with invited speakers and archaeology-related top-

invite them to join the research. If the chosen site is a known one and the planned work includes surface collecting, we often also invite local residents through the channels of the local government.

We always collect bronze, iron, and other metal objects but do not record the coordinates of the findspots of recent items and, in some cases, of those of ethnographic interest. The coordinates of lead melts and projectiles are always recorded; besides, the work involves the surveying of any observed terrain formation or trace of intervention indicating human activity. Objects we cannot identify on the spot are also always collected with findspot coordinates with an eye on the principle that "it is easier to throw something out than to go back for it".

VESZPRÉM MEGYE ÉVEZREDEI II.
Veszprém megye a középkorban

Időpont: 2022. szeptember 3.
9:00–13:00 **Helyszín:** PANNON KÖZTÉR
(Veszprém Egyetem u. 10.)



9:30–11:00

PÁTKAI ÁDÁM SÁNDOR:
Szakralitás és életér a középkori
és újkori Veszprém megyében

11:30–13:00

GÖNCZI VIVIEN:
Szemlvények a középkori
Veszprém megye anyagi kultúrájából

A részvétel ingyenes, előzetes regisztráció nem szükséges.


 **LACZKÓ DEZSŐ MÚZEUM**

Fig. 4. Lectures in a series about archaeological finds and their background



Fig. 5. Community event: processing find material in the conservator's workshop (2020)

ics concerning the county. These will be organised by the Veszprém Museum Association.

THE PROCESSING OF THE FIND MATERIAL

The processing of the field documentation and the findings is an essential part of the process and the programme, as without that, the whole activity would become purposeless and, thus, nothing more than legal site destruction. The survey maps must be adequately prepared and sent to the central registry. We also try to involve our volunteers in this process as much as possible (Fig. 5). After making a list of the finds obtained, they are sent to a conservator working in the museum part-time, who is employed for processing the find material from the community archaeology programme. At this stage, a suitable number of volunteers is involved in the

cleaning of less sensitive finds and the listing of the rest under the direction and supervision of conservators and archaeologists. Everyone carries out one particular task (cleaning, photographing, and describing the finds in an Excel spreadsheet, repackaging). As a result, archaeologists will get a data sheet which can simply be copied into the museum's registry.

SOCIAL OCCASIONS

We believe non-work related programmes to be also an important part of community archaeology programmes. We start the year with a get-together where families can join us to cook something in a cauldron or roast bacon on an open fire and end it with a Christmas event where we summarise the results of the year's joint work. The lack of capacity has prevented us from organising more events, but we plan to increase the number of such occasions in the near future.

PROJECTS AND RESULTS

Currently, the museum has several smaller projects underway, including the research of a medieval village near Bakonyjákó and another, entitled *Archeology of wine*, balancing between ethnography and archaeology. We encourage the volunteers with a private license to survey the forested areas of the Bakony Mountain Range. The outstanding finds obtained through the programme include a pair of pitchers from Limoges, found by Miklós Molnár during a field trip led by Tamás Péterváry, and a 16th-century silver treasure consisting of 154 pieces, which Zoltán Krámlí discovered in an authorised survey and the museum's team authenticated shortly after (Vivien Gönczi carried out the scientific evaluation of the find assemblage). One of the most significant projects involved the identification and planned excavation of a tomb near Nagyvázsony.

COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

The volunteers participating in field trips led by archaeologists are not provided with a certificate stating they are museum-friendly metal detectorists. For someone to be allowed to conduct a metal detector survey on their own, it is necessary to build mutual trust with the museum's team and gain practical and theoretical knowledge first to make sure that the volunteer will recognise the archaeological finds upon discovery and notify the museum – prerequisites to be met so the museum can take responsibility for their activity. Before signing an agreement of cooperation with someone, they must spend two years as a volunteer in

the museum's programme, participating in at least one educational event and five days of field research led by an archaeologist, and providing assistance as a metal detector specialist in at least two development-led observations.

We encourage those possessing a permit from the Government Office (who may conduct field trips individually but *exclusively in off-site areas*) to explore the areas of our planned projects – currently, the forests of the Bakony Mountain Range.

COMMUNICATION

To apply for or enquire about the programme, one can contact us at a central e-mail address (kozossegire-geszet@ldm.hu) monitored by the archaeologists involved in the related projects. This is the usual channel used in the initial phase of communication. After a personal interview, the new volunteer is invited to the closed Facebook group of the programme, where they can learn about upcoming events, see and share field photos, participate in surveys, and reach and share all related data.

FUTURE PLANS

We are doing our best by improving the programme unceasingly, based on feedback, to make it as efficient as possible. Currently, we have launched a significant project within the frame of the research on the Roman settlement network to survey the Roman stone buildings in the Balaton Uplands, with a side goal of increasing the role of volunteers by involving them not only in fieldwork but also in the archive research preceding it. Our long-term plans include reconstructing the Roman routes in the Bakony region and completing a complex survey of the burial mounds in the mountain range.

The collecting and processing of militaria has been one of the main foci of the programme. Currently, we are planning a collaboration with the Institute of Military History to locate and present the remains of the aircrafts related to the Second World War in the territory of the county.