

FIRST TIME SINCE 1793

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New Section Of Woodchester Roman Pavement Uncovered

DURING the past few weeks work has been going on at Woodchester on the site of the Roman Villa and several tessellated floors, last uncovered nearly 200 years ago, have been exposed and will be on view to the public for two weeks from July 26th.

Using the authoritative book compiled by Samuel Lysons when he first excavated the whole extent of the Villa in 1793, villagers, under the watchful eye of the rector (Rev. H. D. Woolcott), have been measuring and digging to a depth of about three feet in the grounds of the Old Priory.

The hard work involved has been well worth while as the floors have been found in almost identical condition to what they must have been when Lysons plotted them.

As the pavements now revealed are those in side rooms they are not of equal merit to the great Orpheus pavement in the main hall for which Woodchester is so famous. Nevertheless, they are of very great interest, and, when it is borne in mind that the tesserae were laid nearly 2,000 years ago, in a marvellous state of preservation.

The owner of the property under which a considerable portion of the Villa lies, is Mr. L. Nelson Bower, and no one has been keener than he to see just what lies under his orchard.

There will be no charge for admission to see the floors but donations for church funds will be gratefully received in collecting boxes at the site.

From 10 a.m. until 8 p.m. there will be a local guide in attendance, to explain about the Villa and to talk about the more recent excavations.

The rector of Woodchester will be pleased to give further information to anyone interested in visiting the site.

On Wednesday evening an interesting piece of mosaic work was uncovered. It depicts two boys holding a basket of fruit and leaves with the words "Bonum Eventum" inscribed beneath.

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When the great pavement was last opened three years ago, for the Festival of Britain, 42,000 people visited Woodchester over a two weeks period.