

ERAS News

March 2010

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Comments or contributions are always welcome. Please send to the editor, Kate Dennett, 455 Chanterlands Ave. Hull. HU5 4AY
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ERAS LOCAL NEWS . .

AGM and Peru Lecture – note the correct date

The AGM lecture on **Weds 21st April** (not the date on the card) promises to be a cracker, with Rod Mackey talking about his 1980s work on the Cusicha project, Peru. Afterwards, the social event in the reading room includes a book sale. Try to get there by 7pm in time for the AGM (see page 10). It is not encouraging for your hard-working committee, when so few people bother to attend the AGM.

Ray Ketch

Members will be sad to learn of the death of Ray Ketch, recently. Born in Swindon, Ray served in Egypt in WWII and was later stationed at Driffield. He and his late wife Marjorie set up home in Hull in 1946, going on to have three children and two grandchildren. Ray and Marjorie were enthusiastic ERAS members and went on many visits where their warmth, good humour and courtesy always added to the occasion. Ray, pictured below, standing, took part in excavations and worked for many years at Winestead with the late Angus Smith. In 1995, Ray graduated from Hull University with a degree in Local History. He was a great supporter of our lectures and will be sadly missed by all his ERAS friends. We offer our sympathy to his family. We are pleased that Ray asked for his archaeology and local history books to be donated to ERAS. Many of these will be going into the University's Brynmor Jones library, where they can be catalogued and accessible. Those which are surplus due to duplication are to be offered for sale to ERAS members at very reasonable prices and will be available at the AGM social event this month. Thanks to Rod Mackey and Helen Fenwick for transporting and listing a complete vanload of books.



WANTED - One Auditor

After many years of service to the society our Hon. Auditor, Mr. John Dunn, is switching off his calculator and retiring. We would like to thank him for all his work for the society. It is very much appreciated and we wish him a long and happy retirement. Is there anyone amongst our members who is willing to take on the role of auditor, or who knows someone who would? The task involves examining the books and the financial statement each year before the AGM. Accountancy qualifications are not required though a basic knowledge of bookkeeping would be an advantage. Please contact your Treasurer, Lesley Jackson, if you want to discuss what this unpaid role involves, otherwise put forward your nomination to the secretary Rose Nicholson, preferably before the AGM

Hull History Centre Visit

If anybody is interested in a tour of this striking new city centre building, which combines archives previously held at Hull University, Hull Local History collection (Central Library) and the City Archives (Queens Gardens) please let me know by phone or email, and I will organize it. During normal working hours, groups can be shown behind the scenes, in the workrooms not normally open to the public.

Derbyshire Trip

Please return your booking form (enclosed) as soon as possible, for the planned visit to Haddon Hall, Arbor Low and Bakewell Church on Saturday July 10th as we will need to know if we have enough interest to confirm the booking with the coach company.

Local History Book Fair

The 2009 book fair at Beverley Minster didn't have many visitors and didn't make much money for many stall holders. Bearing in mind the effort involved in ferrying books around and manning the stall, perhaps ERYCC should look at a different venue in Beverley. The Minster is somewhat cold in the winter and is certainly off the main thoroughfare. It has been suggested that the event could be held in conjunction with the Literature Festival.

Volume 12

Printer's proofs for Volume 12 of *East Riding Archaeologist* are currently being checked by Editor Dave Evans. If you know of any lapsed ERAS members who might want to have this volume, shortly to be published and free to members, do remind them to rejoin.

Thanks to Fiona Wilson

Fiona has come to the end of her three year stint as chairman and we will welcome a new chairman at the AGM. Thanks from the committee for doing an excellent job.

Editor

CBA SYMPOSIUM, 2010

It was a long, cold, foggy, February drive to this year's AGM and Symposium, in the Hambleton Forum building, Northallerton. (The usual venue in Museum Gardens, York is being refurbished). The Forum had excellent facilities, but the show of hands as to whether it was popular enough to be used again was self-selecting, as there were not many people there from the East Riding. Some of the presentations are summarized below.

Scarborough's Medieval Waterfront. Chris Hall, in a talk well supported by 19th/20th century photographs and records, described how the waterfront has gradually moved forward since Medieval times. Excavation has shown that rubbish was tipped, probably deliberately, behind new quay walls, to build up the land. Stone from an old quay wall was re-used in a new seawards quay wall. An early painting showed buildings actually built on the beach sand and it appears that some houses were built with open cellars, to allow boats to be drawn right up to the buildings.

Continuity in Cemeteries. Osteologist Malin Holst discussed her comparative research on four Yorkshire cemeteries. Looking at the possibility of continuity of cemetery sites, the topic was complex and wide ranging and would have benefitted from a more measured approach and a longer time slot to allow more background information and details of each site to be given.

North-East Yorkshire Mesolithic Project. Rachel Graham reported on progress in this English Heritage funded project, set up to fill in the gaps in our knowledge. Phase 1 (2006) involved creating a database of known sites and materials already in collections. Selective collecting from the surface and/or lack of exact findspot information was problematic in looking at older collections. Microliths were taken as indicative of Mesolithic activity and most collections showed Late Mesolithic styles. However, these collections, nearly always taken from ploughed land, have accumulated over more than 100 years, making statistical analysis and comparison with recently excavated sites difficult, on several counts.

Phase 2 involved identifying six distinct geographical zones, such as the low-lying Tees areas, lowlands in prominent positions, the edges of steep valleys etc. Test and shovel pitting, to obtain comparative data for specific sites was envisaged but poor weather and delayed harvesting of crops limited the amount of work able to be carried out. Sites investigated included Goldsborough and Farndale. Phase 3 is due to start next, but from the

information given in the presentation, it would seem that Phase 2 was not as complete as might be hoped.

Doggerland. Vince Gaffney (whose book was selling like the proverbial hot cakes) gave a lively and interesting presentation on the latest research on the Prehistoric occupation and use of the area known as Doggerland, now beneath the North Sea. Although topographical surveying through bathymetry has been used in the past, to map the seabed, this cannot distinguish modern deposition, which might well be of considerable depth. Most of the new work is based on marine seismic reflection surveys, which can penetrate the overlying sands and silts, and uses a 3D array to aid interpretation. A certain amount of coring and sampling has also been carried out. The most amazing landscape picture is being revealed and the work discussed is published in Gaffney, V., S. Fitch and D. Smith, 2009. *Europe's Lost World. The rediscovery of Doggerland.* CBA Research Report **160.** (which I can recommend).

Dutch archaeologists are also very interested in this work and much zoological and archaeological information has been obtained, in the past, from material brought up in nets during bottom trawling by continental fishermen in the area. There is controversy over this method of fishing as it is environmentally disastrous for the seabed, indeed also for the archaeology of the seabed and is soon to be banned.

York's Other River, the Foss. Chris Dunn set the tone of his talk by laughingly referring to the Romeo Club – for Retired Old Men Eating Out! The group of enthusiasts had examined and recorded the River Foss and its canalized sections, with disused locks of several different types and all the associated gear, over a long period of time. The illustrations and diagrams produced and on display in the foyer were of an excellent standard.

Others presentations were on early colour infra-red photography by Eric Houlder, Lythe Church by Christiane Kroebel, who obviously knew far more about her topic, than perhaps the style of presentation enabled her to say, the work of the Ingleborough Archaeological Group by David Johnson and the landscape of Rievaulx Abbey by Trevor Pearson.

With such varied papers, it would have been good if there had been time for questions at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions.

Editor

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF A FINDS SPECIALIST

An interview with Lisa Wastling, Senior Finds Officer with Humber Field Archaeology

How did you first become interested in archaeology?

I remember my Dad taking me to see Thornton Abbey Gatehouse at the age of four. I was fascinated by the medieval toilets and remember peering upwards into the vast chimneys. He told me it was 'Robin Hood's Castle' and from this point onwards I was hooked. Later trips with Dad involved peering through the wooden paling fences around the excavations in Hull's old town in the 1970s and standing on small wooden steps to look at the Roos Carr figurines and row upon row of flints in the glass cases of Hull and East Riding Museum.

An early source of pride for me was gaining a prize in a Hull Museum competition to design a Roman mosaic, at the age of 9 (I still have the card from the museum somewhere). Also, Rodney Mackey used to turn up periodically, at the White Horse Inn (Nellies) in Beverley, having just returned from working in some exotic place or other (Peru comes to mind). I remember looking up from my coke and crisps and thinking wow you can actually do this as a job. It seemed so adventurous and exciting.

How do you obtain your work?

We respond to tender documents from commercial developers, competing with other commercial archaeology units for the work. My part in this process involves estimating the amounts of artefactual material likely to be retrieved during an excavation and producing an estimate for the work on these hypothetical objects, in order to record them and produce assessments and publication reports. The developer then decides who to commission the work from.

Sometimes I am approached directly, to work on a particular material type or site assemblage, with funding from another archaeological organisation. Occasionally work is funded by English Heritage and other bodies, to bring sites from the 1970s and 1980s to publication. Commercial finds specialists do not have the luxury of studying a particular type of object, to address a specific research question. This type of work is now virtually restricted to the university-based artefact specialist or post-graduate student and those based in national museums.

The work of the commercial finds specialist is reactive and depends on the types of sites chosen for construction by the commercial developer. If, for example, you wish to work with Roman material and the main centres for development in your area did not have Roman occupation then very little of this material is likely to come your way.

The majority of my work is for Humber Field Archaeology (HFA) projects, though occasionally I undertake artefact reports for other units, either privately or sub-contracted via HFA. I also do the odd freebie ID or report in my own time when the work is not on a commercial basis.

How do you feel about this privatization?

I find it worrying that as consequence of the commercial nature of developer-funded archaeology there is a lack of new finds specialists. With the government-funded field units of the 1970s and 1980s and even the relatively long-term developer funded projects at the start of PPG 16 there was scope for the investment of time and expertise in training. Now that most artefact specialists are out-sourced and self-employed there is little potential for training new people. Firstly, time spent training is time lost on project work and is essentially unpaid time and secondly there is a quite understandable reticence to train up someone who may immediately become a competitor for a limited amount of work.

What are your current projects at HFA?

My current task-list relates to the artefactual material from 49 projects and includes large amounts of material inherited from the predecessors of HFA. Small projects can involve a single object or a small pottery assemblage, whereas larger ones can have thousands of objects. The largest I have worked with (Flixborough Early Medieval Settlement, N. Lincolnshire) consisted of over 9000 recorded finds. This site also produced over 600 boxes of animal bone! I'm currently writing an assessment report on the artefacts recovered from an Anglian cemetery near the Wolds.

What are the best parts of your job?

Every day is different and I get to see a diverse range of objects and material. Thinking about the people that used the objects, their mode of life and place in society as I work on the material is as exciting today as when I first started. It's also great working with people who are equally passionate about the subject. Highlights in terms of specific objects have been working on the excavation of the Hasholme log-boat (in Hull Museum), and excavating the South Cave Iron Age weapons cache (5 swords and 33 spears) now displayed in Beverley's Treasure House.

I've found it particularly rewarding to overhaul the way that artefacts are studied in the unit and to implement more up-to-date procedures and st



*Lisa excavating the South Cave Iron Age weapons cache.
Photograph: Humber Field Archaeology.*

packed in paper bags, the unit had no finds manual and artefact reports were not done to MAP2 (Managing Archaeological Projects 2, English Heritage 1991) standard. Now we produce more integrated reports which look at objects in terms of function and context, in standardised format, allowing site-by-site comparison. It's great feeling that you have contributed to the study of an artefact type and added new information during the course of your work. There is a little frisson of excitement in feeling that you can contribute to the human story.

There must be a bit of a down side!

Well, the majority of time is spent on fairly mundane tasks, to produce developer-funded reports (AKA 'grey literature') not usually published beyond the local archive. There is endless form-filling and recording, constructing databases of the information gained and manipulating this data. Contrary to the impression given by the media, most of the objects and pottery studied are also fairly mundane both in material type and types of object. In 23 years of working I have seen just two gold objects - an Iron Age coin and part of a Medieval annular brooch. Also, I must stress that archaeological work can be long and laborious - fruitful excavations cannot be undertaken in three days, as seen on Time Team.

It is also necessary to keep up with current published work, which often involves reading at home. As well as using HFA and Hull University libraries, I buy reports for my own bookshelves. (Oxbow bargains sections are very

good). Many out of print Council for British Archaeology (CBA) Research Reports and Papers are available online via the CBA and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS).

What background and qualifications do you have?

At Bransholme High School in the 1980s whilst taking A levels, I spent lunchtimes doing history teacher Peter Halkon's archaeology course. This gave me access to the excavations undertaken by ERAS with Durham University in the Holme-on-Spalding Moor area, where I spent time as a volunteer. A degree in Archaeological Sciences at Bradford University followed. I took a year out between the second and final year, working for the Trust for Wessex Archaeology (TWA) and Winchester Archaeology as a Finds Assistant on a large excavation (my first 'proper' job, as Finds Assistant). I got the Wessex job due to volunteering on TWA's excavations at Potterne, Wiltshire at the age of 17.

Two days after my graduation ceremony in 1989 I started work in the Outer Hebrides, following an overnight trip from Bradford and ferry trip the next day. I moved from there to Norfolk (with a day in between) and continued working all over the country with a mix of finds work and excavation. I became a Pottery Researcher with Humber Archaeology Unit in 1993, on a temporary basis and continued digging to fill in the employment gaps. In 1995/6 I spent a year off, working in the music business, as there was a development downturn. I returned to archaeology with the permanent post of Finds Researcher with Humber Field Archaeology in October 1996, later becoming Finds Officer and subsequently Senior Finds Officer.

Any advice for a career in archaeology?

There is no formal career structure in archaeology. To do well takes self-dedication, determination and flexibility. Be prepared to work on short-term contracts and bear in mind that getting yourself established can be difficult. Supportive parents are worth their weight in gold, particularly in the periods of unemployment when you turn up on the doorstep with all your possessions stuffed into a car. I am very lucky, as at no point was it ever suggested to me that I give up and get 'a proper job'. Having said all this I can't think of anything else I would rather be doing.

What you would recommend young people, contemplating going into this field, to study?

If you have access to archaeology courses at school then I'd recommend taking these and trying to get some practical excavation experience. Joining your local society is a good idea, whatever age you are. It's sensible not to get to the end of an archaeology degree and then find out that you hate excavation and working outdoors in all weathers (I have seen this happen).

Get yourself an archaeology degree (BA or BSc), preferably from a good, well-funded university as these offer the practical experience in conjunction with the academic study (both are valuable). Surveys have indicated that 90% of people working in the profession are graduates. Before you apply, read around your subject and try to get some practical experience. This will demonstrate your enthusiasm and help with your application. In recent years of university expansion there have been so many archaeology graduates that many are also seeking a higher degree. It is pretty difficult to go beyond the level of an excavator without a degree in archaeology or at least a related subject. The better qualified you are and more versatile, the more work you will be able to get by moving between a core group of archaeology units.

If your course has not involved much fieldwork (there are some which include none) you are likely to need additional experience as a volunteer excavator prior to landing your first paid job. Stick with it and don't be easily put off – sometimes getting the job and remaining with it is just a case of outlasting the competition. There are other routes into an archaeological career and there are jobs in the heritage/museums/cultural resource management industry. Some archaeologists never leave the university environment once they have entered it.

I asked Lisa if she would record for us what a typical week at work might involve. Below is her diary of a recent week, to give you a flavour of what life as a finds officer is like.

Day 1: Recorded wet-packed material from HFA medieval and post-medieval excavations in Hull's old town so that the material archive can go for conservation assessment to enable a turnaround within this financial year. This material included parts of late medieval leather shoes, textiles, later medieval vessel glass, post-medieval window and vessel glass and a fortuitously-preserved complete medieval turned wooden bowl, recovered from a cess pit.

Day 2: Finished off the wet-packed material, labelled it up and completed forms and databases regarding the material archive for the site. Checked for the location of records of old archives from the Hull sites of the 1980s in order to help another specialist with their work. This material was transferred to Hull museum, prior to the mid-1990s. Such pre-computerised records can sometimes be sketchy and hard to trace. After this, continued the recorded finds assessment report for a multi-period site with Bronze Age and Roman occupation and an Anglian cemetery.

Day: 3: Started going through practice questions for the Construction Skills Operatives Health and Safety Test. We now all need to pass this test and be issued with a photo

identity card in order to be able to work on or visit a development site. Gone are the days of relatively relaxed working in shorts and sandals in the sun.

Answered emails regarding samples of land snails and animal bone for isotope analysis for comparison with medieval burials at the Augustinian Friary, Hull - research by Professor Charlotte Roberts at Durham University. Checked 1st proofs for three reports to be included in the next volume of the *East Riding Archaeologist*. Spotted an interesting typo in the spelling of my name on the contents page (Wsatling) – see if this one still gets through!

Attended meeting at the council's Planning Department regarding re-structuring – breathed sigh of relief on finding I still have the same job/or any job. (One of the downsides of working in the heritage industry is the ever-present uncertainty regarding job security). Took the revision book home for the Health and Safety Test to finish having a pop at the practice questions.

Day 4: Answered email enquiry about best type of glue to use for reconstructing pottery. Back to the recorded finds assessment. Phone call from a museum archaeologist preparing an exhibition using pottery excavated in Grimsby in the 1980s by Humber Archaeology Unit. An explanation of the numbering system used at the time is required. A quote for basic pottery reconstruction is also needed. In the afternoon had a second go through the Health and Safety test book. Took the test at 5pm (passed) and headed off home via Tesco to pick up a bottle of wine and jam roly-poly.

Day 5: More recorded finds assessment. Produced a list of the artefacts for each burial, in combination with the age and sex information from the human bone report. Went through the site information for Hull's Augustinian Friary and collected the mollusc samples for lead isotope analysis.

Many thanks to Lisa for taking the time to produce this article.

Editor.

MARKET WEIGHTON WOLD EXCAVATION SEPTEMBER 2009

Interim Report by Peter Halkon and Helen Woodhouse

Aerial photography by Peter Halkon in 2003 revealed a large enclosure to the south of Market Weighton Wold. It was also photographed in August 2009. On typological grounds and its relationship to other features plotted as crop marks, the enclosure seemed to be of Iron Age date. A geophysical survey by Helen Woodhouse was undertaken between 2006 and 2008 with the aim of locating the feature visible in the aerial photographs and was supported by a topographical and surface material survey in order to provide complementary evidence relating to the possible date of the feature and its position within the landscape. Field walking was also carried out by part-time archaeology degree students from Hull University, which recovered a few sherds of Romano-British greyware pottery. Most of the other surface material was the result of night soil spreading.

The original aim of this small scale excavation under the direction of Peter Halkon and Helen Woodhouse was to section the enclosure ditch and adjacent linear earthwork in an attempt to ground prove the geophysics and crop mark data and to provide further dating evidence and possible clues as to the purpose of the site. We were blessed with fine weather and an excellent team of ERAS volunteers.

The geophysical survey plot was closely examined and it was decided to dig three 10m x 2m trenches across the anomalies. Through the tremendous generosity of the farmer, the topsoil was removed by a mechanical excavator and by the afternoon of the first day we were trowelling clean the subsoil features and proving the accuracy of the geophysics.

Trench A was opened near the entrance of the enclosure revealing rig and furrow which cut through the main enclosure ditch and the edge of one of the linear earthwork ditches that runs for about 1km north-south. As the enclosure ditch was almost 4m wide, it was decided that this trench should be left for a future occasion. Trench B was cut through the southern enclosure ditch and we reached the bottom and were able to get a full ditch profile. The ditch fill contained Iron Age pottery and animal bone. The geophysical survey revealed a number of internal features including smaller curvilinear enclosures which might contain round houses.

Trench C was cut across one of the internal curvilinear features and the fill of this feature, which had been partially backfilled with clay, yielded approximately two trays of pottery and even more animal bone. The pottery was

briefly inspected by Terry Manby who suggested an early-Middle Iron Age date. The animal bone which is being examined by Naomi Sewpaul of Bradford University comprised cattle, sheep and pig and was probably the remnants of feasting activity of some kind.

The site is important due to its location overlooking the Vale of York and proximity to a number of prehistoric burials. Although this has yet to be confirmed, it would seem that the curvilinear features on the crest of the hill were possibly contemporary with the linear earthwork features and may be contemporary with the famous site of Staple Howe which has a similar position and relationship to linear earthworks on the north Wolds. At some stage however the enclosures were themselves surrounded by a massive rectilinear ditch over 90m in length positioned between two shallow dry valleys.

It will certainly be worth further investigation and we would like to thank ERAS very much for funding the excavation and for the dedicated and talented digging team. We are also grateful to the landowners for permission for the work to be carried out and for their tremendous enthusiasm for the project.



Peter Halkon and Helen Woodhouse, February 2010

Diary Dates

Sat 13 Feb YAT's Jorvik Centre in York re-opens with new lifelike animatronics and lots of new displays.

Wed 7 April ERAS Field Studies Meeting.

Sun 18 April Flamborough Quaternary Research Group. Geology meeting at Danes Dyke.
Details from Mike Horne 01482 346784

**Wed 21 April ERAS AGM 7pm followed by lecture by Rod Mackey
Andes, Incas and Indians – Recollections of the Cusicha project in Peru. (Last lecture of the season)**

Wed 5 May ERAS Field Studies Meeting

Wed 2 June ERAS Field Studies Meeting

Thur 3 - 4 June Iron Age Research Student Seminars. Bradford University. Details f.tucker@bradford.ac.uk

Wed 7 July ERAS Field Studies Meeting

Sat 10 July ERAS visit to Derbyshire. Booking form enclosed

Sat 17 July Festival of British Archaeology.
Watch the press and local museums for events

Wed 4 Aug ERAS Field Studies Meeting

Wed 15 Sep ERAS Lecture
Topic to be announced. (New programme cards will be posted out in early September or see website)

All ERAS lectures are held in Room S1 of Hull University's Wilberforce Building, Cottingham Rd, Hull at 7.30pm.
Members free, visitors, £1.

Field Studies Meetings. 7.30pm St Nicholas Community Centre, Holmechurch Lane, Beverley
Contact Graham Myers on 07815 088573 for further details.