

ERAS News

March 2008

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ERAS LOCAL NEWS . .

Renewing your ERAS membership

ERAS membership runs from January to January unless you joined in the last three months of the year, in which case your fee includes the following year. If you haven't already renewed, please send off your cheque and the form on the back page of the newsletter, to save Lesley sending you a reminder letter. People are usually crossed off the list if they haven't paid by the end of March. It is much easier for everyone if you can arrange to pay by standing order/direct debit.

Book Offer

Following Tony Wilmot's, recent lecture, on the excavation of the Roman amphitheatre at Chester, Tony is offering members a discount on his book about the excavation. Please contact Richard Campbell on 07903 628989 who will give further details and deal with orders.

Field Studies – change of contact number

Graham Myers, the Field Studies officer for the society, has changed his telephone number so apologies to anyone who has been trying to contact him on the old number, as given on the membership cards, and in the December newsletter. If you are interested in doing practical work at the Southburn Archaeological Museum, please contact Graham, on 07815 088573 and he will be able to give you the date, time and place of the next planned work session. For details of what has been done so far and what is still to be done, see Graham's article on page 4.

Have your say

The Annual General Meeting is coming up in April and it is your chance to vote new people onto the committee and influence the way ERAS is run. You can ask someone to propose you for the committee or, providing you have asked them first, you can propose someone else. If there are more proposals than places, then there will be an election. Committee members are re-elected each year but can't stay on for more than 4 years, unless they are doing a specific job, ie unless they are elected as one of the eight officers. (Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer, Secretary, Programme Secretary, Main Editor, Website Officer, Field Studies Officer). Being on the committee isn't hard work and meetings are only held about 3 or 4 times a year, according to what needs to be planned.

ERAS's success depends on having a committee with a good balance of continuity, organisation and new ideas, so if you know someone you think would be suitable, please don't hesitate to ask them if you can nominate them. Its your society.

Ferriby Bonze Age Ship

Sponsorship by the John Good Shipping Group, added to earlier input by Andrew Marr International, has finally enabled the Ferriby Heritage Trust to purchase the half size replica of the Ferriby Bronze Age ship. After so much input from Edwin and Joyce Gifford, Ted Wright's son Rod, and shipwright Jeff Bird, Wendy Dobbs of Ferriby Heritage Trust has said that the Trust is now ready to consider a project which was Ted Wright's greatest ambition – the construction of a full size replica, to sail across the North Sea. The half size replica is being displayed at Hull University again, as part of the opening celebrations for the new Logistics Institute.

Edwin and Joyce Gifford have always insisted on calling it the Bronze Age *ship* rather than *boat*. If a full size reconstruction could be made, I'm sure people would see why they think of it as a ship - it would be not just twice the length of the present model but twice the depth and twice the breadth and that really would make it a ship.

New Entrance to Hull University

You might have noticed that the old goods entrance to Hull University, adjacent to Newland High School entrance, off Cottingham Road, is closed. The new entrance is immediately north ie. slightly closer to the Chanterlands Avenue traffic lights and takes traffic round in a big loop to join the old road at its north end. It is worth going down the new entrance road, just to see the magnificent sculptural heads outside the new Logistics Institute.

Big Flint Event at Arram

As part of National Archaeology week, ERAS is arranging a Flint, Food and Fun Day at Arram on Saturday, 12th July, from 1pm -6pm. There will be demonstrations of flint knapping by specialist John Lord, who will then supervise small groups of people who want to have a go at knapping themselves. There will certainly be some sort of food and there might well be a barbecue, but plans aren't yet finalised.

It is hoped to arrange other demonstrations, possibly Roman cooking, and possibly a demonstration of the new addition to the resistivity meter which produces 'pseudo-sections'. So put the date in your diary and watch out for further details in the next newsletter, or failing that, on the ERAS website.

Southburn Archaeological Museum Project

The Field Studies group has been assisting in the processing of the archaeological material at Southburn Farm for about 9 months now, with work so far concentrating on pot washing and identification and cataloguing of other objects in the collection. The main body of finds was amassed over 25 years by Brian Hebblewhite, during his day to day farm work and from 3 seasons of targeted excavation carried out during the 1980s. An account of his activities and a plan of the area covered by the project can be found in East Riding Archaeologist Vol. 7. Brian's collection has been augmented over the last 10 years, by a large number of metal objects recovered by detectorists from several fields in the collection area, with a resultant assemblage of objects spanning all periods from the Neolithic onwards.

Much of the pottery has been washed and re-bagged, and the sherds sorted into groups by fabric type and/or period. The resulting assemblage includes hand made pottery forms possibly of the Later Iron Age, a few sherds tentatively identified as being Middle/Late Saxon in date, and a larger quantity of Medieval and Post-Medieval wares. The bulk of the pottery washed so far is from the Romano-British period, mainly of the 3rd and 4th centuries including grey wares, Crambeck and Huntcliff pottery. But earlier Roman pottery is also represented by smaller amounts of imported Samian and amphora, Nene Valley colour coated, and fragments of rusticated ware that is often associated with the presence of the Roman army.

The next largest component of the collection is the metalwork, the earliest object being a near complete Bronze Age spearhead, though, as with the pottery, much is Roman in date, including a variety of brooches and coins mainly from the House of Constantine (330-48 AD) and the House of Valentinian (364-78 AD). The stand out group among the metalwork is Anglo-Saxon, including fragments of small-long, cruciform and annular brooches some of which have been burnt, and several wrist clasps, all of which suggest the presence of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery within the collection area. There are flat-headed, facet-headed and round-headed Middle Saxon pins. The most varied metalwork belongs to the Medieval and Post-Medieval periods, many of these objects having only been provisionally identified and dated, giving opportunities for more detailed identification by anybody interested in objects such as the buckles, dress hooks and buttons.

Time is now beginning to press as the museum is to open in early July, meaning that in the coming weeks, as well as the completion of the catalogue, decisions need to be made about what is to be displayed. The stands needed to hold the chosen artefacts have to be designed and constructed,

details for the labels and for the more general information boards around the museums walls need to be compiled. So if you feel you have something to contribute in the diverse fields of museum display, finds identification, or simply yearn to pot wash, your assistance over the coming months will be greatly appreciated.

Graham Myers

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Often in archaeology, you meet people for the duration of a project or course and then lose contact. If you have news of friends and acquaintances about whom members might be interested to hear, please ask them if they would like to be in an occasional 'Where are they now?' column.

Peter Armstrong

Many members will remember working with for Peter on digs in Brough, Beverley and Hull's old town area. After many years living at Foston-on-the-Wolds, Peter and his wife Stephenie, who organized several period-themed evenings for ERAS, have settled in N. Ontario, Canada (Stephanie's home country) where they are enjoying the remote area which has lots of wild-life. They are still in contact with friends and Rod Mackey reports that they are both well and happy in their new life.

Gail Hama

Gail Hama (formerly Foreman) now works as a post-excavation manager for NAA (Northern Archaeological Associates) and lives in Barnard Castle, only a few minutes walk away from the school which son Thomas attends. She still does some freelance work, mainly on Anglo-Saxon – Post-medieval metalwork finds.

Liz Chamberlin

Those members who did the part-time archaeology degree course at Hull University will remember Liz, who taught an excellent module on Vernacular Buildings. She used to be a Sites and Monuments Records officer in Hull but recently moved to West Yorkshire to work for West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service. Liz says she is really enjoying the new job, dealing with listed buildings and gets out and about to see lots of buildings, which are quite different in character from those in the East Riding. She lives just outside Barnsley but manages to get back to Beverley most weekends and still does one evening per week teaching on the part-time course at Hull University.

Sue Gibson.

Having spent a year in the Shetlands, following a stint with VSO in Namibia, Sue is currently doing a one year Post-Graduate Certificate in Education (for teaching adults) in Barnsley. She's due to qualify this summer and is hoping to find work in IT training or teach in the business admin field within Yorkshire, but if not, further afield again.

TWO AXE HEADS FROM THE HOLME-ON-SPALDING-MOOR AREA

A report from ERAS member Brian Hawe

The purpose of this article is to report on two finds which I have made recently in the Holme-on-Spalding-Moor area. I carry out some voluntary work with the Finds Liaison Office at the Yorkshire Museum, York, and the finds are entered into the records there, however, this brief résumé will hopefully be of interest to fellow members within the East Riding. Specimen 1. (below) was a surface find made whilst walking a field of freshly drilled oilseed rape, in an area which has produced, for me, in the past, a number of Mesolithic and Neolithic scrapers and blades.

Description: Material – a light grey/green volcanic tuff (Langdale Greenstone)

Length: 83 mm max.

Width: 54 mm max.

Thickness: 29 mm max.

Weight: 180 gms

Dating: *circa* 3500-2100 BC

Appearance/Manufacture

The surface area is split into two distinct and clearly defined areas, each covering about 50% of the axe head. The butt end is pecked and pitted, probably to create a more secure grip for hafting. The blade area is ground and smoothed to a cutting edge. The blade end is finished to an overall fine matt surface and there is no evidence of final polishing or surface patina.

Condition as found

It was undamaged, other than an area of sharp edged chipping to the mid point of the cutting edge which is obviously comparatively recent. Other than this, all the ground edges are intact with no blemishes. There is absolutely no sign of ancient damage from use or otherwise.



Specimen number 2 (above) was found whilst examining the spoil from a recently re-cut field boundary ditch. In the past, the area in which this find came to light has produced stone hammers and anvils probably associated with the working of bronze.

Description: copper alloy flanged axe head

Length: 125 mm.

Width: at butt 22mm min.

at blade 70mm max.

Thickness: 18 mm max.

Weight: 350 gms

Dating: *circa* 1400 BC

Appearance:

Mainly a rich nut brown patina with areas of blue-green verdigris to the blade area. The blade retains its full and still relatively sharp cutting edge.

Condition as found

Overall the axe head is complete and virtually undamaged, the only blemish being one minor indentation which carries over two parallel flanges and is most probably recent plough damage as the patina of age is disturbed.

Thanks go to Dr. Peter Halkon for his kind input regarding the finds and his directions to the relevant sections within the website: Valley of the First Iron Masters.

<http://www.ironmasters.hull.ac.uk/>

For archaeological, environmental and geological information relating to the area, including details of other finds, see the above website.

Brian Hawe

FIELDWORK & EXCAVATION AT THWING, 2007

An Interim Report, by Rose Ferraby, Paul Johnson & Martin Millett

Survey and excavations in 2004-06 investigated a concentration of Roman pottery ploughed-up in a field near Thwing, East Yorkshire. This work revealed details of the layout and evolution of a pre-historic ladder settlement and led to the excavation of a well-preserved stone structure. In the summer of 2007, the excavation continued with the aims of exploring the building more fully, assessing the survival of plaster in the southern most room, and sampling the floors and surrounding midden deposits in order to better understand the site's economy. The work was undertaken over 4 weeks in July-August 2007 and involved excavation of the same area as was opened in 2006.

The area opened was the same as that from 2006, except for a limited extension on the eastern side designed to ensure that the south eastern corner of the building fell entirely within the trench. Backfill was removed by machine and hand to expose the structures to the same levels as previously excavated. Excavation then continued with two principal foci: the building itself and the middens to the west.

Excavation of the eastern side of the building demonstrated that the sequence was more complex than previously identified. It is now clear that its eastern side was rebuilt on three occasions. Initially, the building was planned as a simple rectangular structure c. 7.5 by 19.2m. However, the front (eastern) wall seems to have subsided into the ditch along the central axis of the earlier ladder settlement, and so was rebuilt 0.3m to the west, narrowing the width of the structure in the centre with the creation of small pavilions at either end of the building. This second phase front wall was built with the additional support of a substantial rubble foundation, in an attempt to prevent further subsidence. However, following further subsidence the frontage was again modified in a third phase with the construction of a very substantial wall a further 0.6m west of the second phase wall (see Plan). The pavilions were also modified to provide a standard 'winged corridor' type of plan in this final phase.

The sequence of construction within the pavilions is complex and is made more difficult to disentangle since these features had been extensively robbed. Sufficient survives of the walling and associated external surfaces to confirm that in the third phase the door was in the middle of the eastern side of the building. The approach from the east is also visible in the geophysical survey, flanked by a pair of ditches. During this third phase there is evidence of large post holes constructed on the rubble of the second phase wall at the north and south ends of this eastern wall

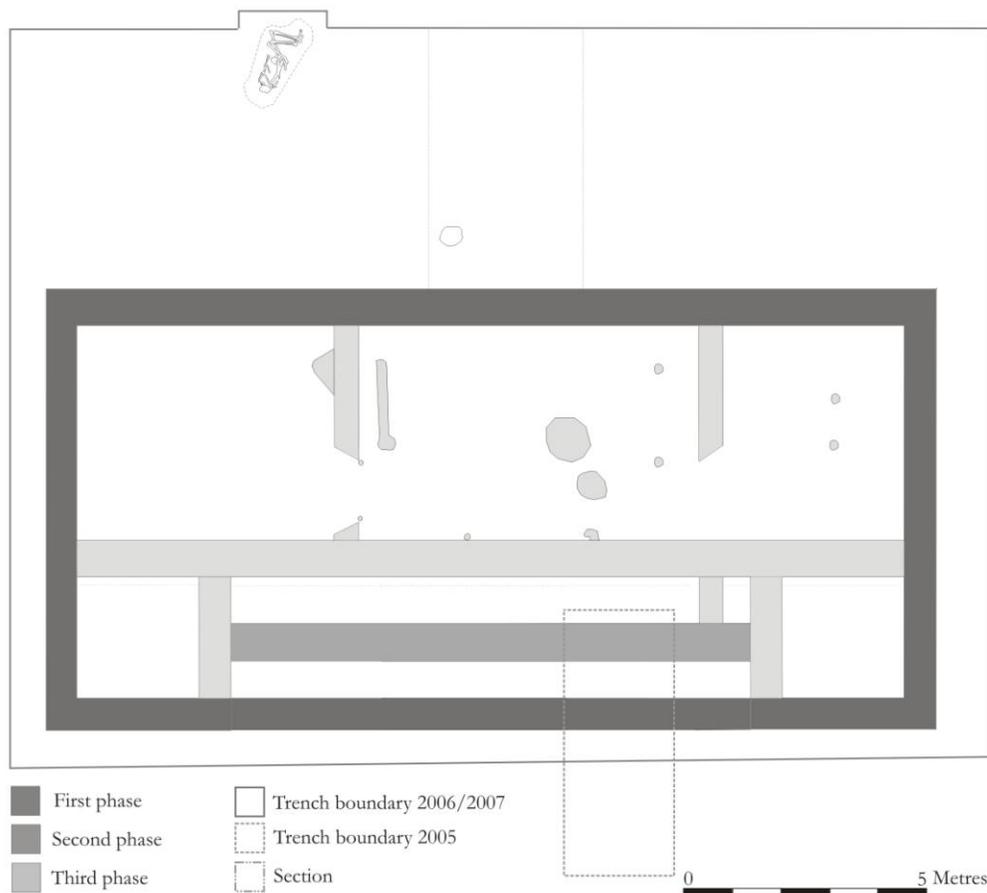
(as well as a series of smaller ones in between). These have the potential to reveal information about the position of the roof, and whether it remained in the same position into the third phase.

The interior of the building was further explored with the northern room as identified in 2006 completely cleared of rubble and excavated. This confirmed that the floor was made of rammed chalk overlying a rubble platform. The southern room which contained *in situ* rubble intermixed with painted wall-plaster was examined in order to assess the survival of the plaster and how it might later be lifted.

The northern part of the interior turned out to have comprised two rooms, although the wall separating them was heavily robbed, surviving only at the west. The most northern part of the room was 3.8m by 4.4m in the final phase and the only features identified within it were a pair of post holes 2m from the end wall, perhaps associated with the roof. The central room was significantly larger (8.2m by 4.4m) and had the main entrance in its eastern wall. Two post holes adjacent to the wall, in the area of the door, may have been associated with its frame. A pair of further post holes towards the northern end may again relate to the roof. In the northern half of the room, on the central axis of the building a major area of burning undoubtedly represents a central hearth or oven base. At the southern end of the room, close to the internal dividing wall a linear feature with an expanded chamber to the east had been cut into the floor. Excavation of this feature was not completed in 2007 but initial exploration (and analysis of the flotation samples) demonstrated that it was associated with iron-working, and probably dates to the end of the building's period of use.

The internal wall separating the central and southern rooms was well preserved and revealed key details of the design of the structure. A doorway 1.25m wide was located towards its eastern end (although we should note that it was approximately central within the phase 2 plan indicating that the subdivision probably dates from that phase). The doorway had a splayed rebate with the post holes for the door post surviving at either end. This suggests that there was a two-leafed door that opened into the southern room but with the rebates almost large enough to house them within the thickness of the wall. This shows an unexpected sophistication of design for a building such as this. The design of the door in this wall enables us to suggest that the

Thwing 2007 : Plan of excavation



angled terminal of the robbed wall separating the northern and central room probably had a similar design. It should also be noted that a stub of wall surviving between the second and third phase front walls at this end of the building provides support for the suggestion that the divided interior originated in the second phase.

The southern room (5.35 by 4.4m) was not fully excavated because of the presence of wall plaster in the rubble. Excavation did establish that the floor of this room (also made of rammed chalk) lies at a slightly lower level to that in the other rooms. A feature against the wall separating this room from the central one appears to be a fireplace although this remains to be confirmed. It is notable that excavation of the midden to the north of the building produced several fragments of a ceramic chimney pot that was perhaps associated with this.

The investigation of the wall plaster demonstrated that there was a considerable amount of painted plaster present but that it was mostly fragmentary and intermixed with rubble. In the one area where excavation went down to floor level beside the wall there was none adhering to the wall face. This work enabled us to develop a strategy for

the full excavation of the room in a planned final season in 2008. We await full analysis of the plaster that was lifted but this did reveal a variety of colours with sufficient survival to suggest that we will be able to offer some information about the decoration of what was the main reception room of the house.

These results confirm the domestic character of the building but also challenge some of our usual categorizations and assumptions. The evolution of the building is the reverse of that usually seen, with the portico and pavilion façade created by demolition and reduction, not by extending the structure. Furthermore, the house has some fine architectural detail with an excellent quality of masonry as well as the refined details of the internal door openings. However, these sit uneasily alongside what appears to be a central work-hall even with an iron working furnace in its final phase. In this sense the structure appears to have been used both for display and for production.

Two areas outside the building were examined with a particular emphasis on analysis of the middens. A small area was excavated to the east of the building but the main emphasis was on the area to the west where a large section

was cut against the back wall of the building. In broader clearance of the area to the west a flexed adult inhumation burial was located and excavated. There was little dating evidence associated with it but its stratigraphic position suggests that it must date to the later Roman period or beyond.

The main section behind the building revealed a sequence of shallow gully deposits associated with the removal of rainwater from beside the western wall of the building. To the west of this a series of deposits seem to relate to levels of yard use. Interestingly, aside from a pit dug for the burial of a young sheep, there was little else in the way of evident rubbish deposition. Surface deposits contained reasonable numbers of finds but these overlay a probably stable buried soil deposit. Similarly, the deposits in front of the building also revealed a probable buried soil. Samples to assess the nature of these sequences using soil micromorphology were taken for laboratory analysis. These deposits (and the floor deposits within the building) were also intensively sampled and the samples processed on site. Analysis of these samples is in progress.



Photo: R. Mackey

Future work

The excavation in 2007 achieved the objectives set. In order to complete the project we would like to focus on three issues in 2008. We aim to:

1. Complete the excavation and analysis of the interior of the structure, further exploring the furnace in the central room, clearing the rubble and wall-plaster from the southern room and completing work on the east frontage.
2. Examine the deposits around the southern end of the building, examining the ditch beneath it, in order to gain better evidence for the dating sequence, as well as a clearer understanding of the pre-building sequence.
3. Excavate some more of the yard area to the west to gain a clearer understanding of the relationship of the buildings to the working areas which surround it.

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to Julie Scruton and Stephen F. Stubbings for not only allowing us to excavate on their farm again, but also for providing considerable help for the project. Tim Moore was also extremely kind and generous in managing the farm around us and providing all kinds of help, while Stevie Thomas was again enthusiastic in his support.

The excavation work was financed by grants from: the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge; the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research; The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, and the British Academy. The excavation team was supervised by Rose Ferraby and Paul Johnson. Daisy Knox organized and supervised the finds processing. The principal members of the project team were: Rachel Ballantyne, Nick Dodd, Nisha Doshi, Helen Doyle, Eleanor Durie, Mags Felter, Sarah Green, Holly Hardisty, Amy Gray Jones, Tom Kimber, Kathleen Magill, Marden Nicols, Jeanne Pansard-Besson, Ben Regel, Nancy Shippen, Barry Taylor, Lacey Wallace and Natt White. James Hales led the team which assessed the wall-plaster. Nisha Doshi did the on site sampling. Rachel Ballantyne and Nisha Doshi organized the palaeobotanical sampling and analysed the resulting material, and Krish Seetah recorded the animal bones. Metal-detecting was undertaken by Roy Doughty.

*Rose Ferraby
Paul Johnson
Martin Millett*

ERAS VOLUNTEERS

Prof. Millett has said he would welcome volunteers from ERAS on the 2008 excavation which will run from July 6th to August 1st. However, you should **not** just turn up on site unexpectedly but arrange the dates beforehand. If you would like to volunteer, please email Martin on mjm62@cam.uk stating which dates you would like to work or send your details and dates by post to Prof. Martin Millett
Department of Classics
University of Cambridge
Sedgewick Avenue
Cambridge.

If you are going to contact Martin by post, it is probably a good idea to do it well before the end of term time. Once you have agreed on dates, I can give you the grid reference or directions for finding the site, if you contact me by email or phone. You will need to take packed lunches as there is no local shop or pub.

Editor

A Week in the Life of - An Archaeological Consultant

For anybody who has a business as an archaeological consultant, there is probably no such thing as a typical week, but it can be guaranteed there will be masses of paperwork, liaison with clients and contractors and lots of driving. When I caught up with Adrian Havercroft of The Guildhouse Consultancy in Beverley on Friday evening last week he had just returned from a 'day trip' to attend site monitoring meetings, near Kings Lynn and Southwold - a 5.45am. departure and a 7.30pm. return! This was his second 'trip' of the week the first being a commissioning meeting close to Heathrow Airport and a monitoring meeting near Peterborough. In between his hectic schedule Adrian had agreed to give me a small flavour of his consultancy as it was felt that this mysterious occupation might be of interest to ERAS members.

Adrian explained that with the advent of Planning Policy Guidelines requiring the developer to pay for archaeology and with the increasing complexity of archaeology as a discipline, it was inevitable that the need for consultants arose. The role of the consultant today is very much related to Planning, the consultant's main function being to ensure that the archaeology is properly programmed and dealt with, which safeguards both the Planning Applicant's position and the archaeology. Guildhouse, set up by Adrian 12 years ago specialises in mineral and aggregate sites although he has over 35 years field experience on all types of site. Guildhouse Consultancy is selective, preferring to stay with its well established client base, ranging from a world-wide operator with a turnover of £11.5 billion(!) to small scale local developers.

I asked Adrian how clients react when they find they have to pay for archaeology, since it is one of the few matters which does not show up in the Local Authority searches when land or property is purchased. He explained that PPG 16 started in 1990 but it was 1993-4 before most planning departments had built it into their policies. At that time, the big developers, after a short period of understandable panic, got to grips with it and now consider timescales and costs as a matter of course. It is often the small scale operator, building a single house or extension, who is caught out, but most accept it as a legitimate requirement.

Costs inevitably are a key factor in consultancy work. In the mineral extraction world, contracts are often long-term. It can take 5-10 years to get planning permission and a further 5-15 years for extraction and restoration. Adrian said that his clients spend a large amount of money every year and yet, he feels, rarely get the credit they deserve. Seven figure archaeology sites are by no means unusual today and Guildhouse currently has four such live sites on

its book – one has a reserve of £5m for the archaeology which is £1.5m more than the entire development, infrastructure and plant costs! It is not surprising that the developer needs to make sure that he gets the best deal. With such large sums involved, tendering on large scale projects is a fact of life and Guildhouse also deals with this for its clients. On one recent project, the estimated costs varied between £1.75m and £2.5m for the same work. I asked if developers always take the lowest price tendered and Adrian said that in his experience this happens 'only rarely'. Everything depends upon the tenderer's ability to do the job on time and at the right price – the last thing a developer wants is poor performance which leads to delays, additional hidden costs and loss of productivity.

Talking about how the planning process works, Adrian pointed out that 'Pre-determination works' are all about the provision of information to the Mineral Planning Authority (MPA) to enable informed decisions to be made, whilst 'Post-determination works' are all about complying with the imposed Planning Condition and dealing with clearly identified stages of excavation/clearance, archive consolidation & interim assessment and full analysis/publication (& archive deposition). The consultancy offers a full service to deal with all of these stages. Pre-determination works usually start with a desk-based assessment, and it is difficult to assess how long this will take as it requires a trawl of the Sites and Monuments information, Local Studies Library, County Record Office, Internet checks, aerial photography screening (usually at the National Monuments Record, Swindon) and a 'walkover survey' to check for earthworks and landscape features. Sometime you can get away with updating an earlier survey but there is so much new information out there these days – especially 'grey' (unpublished) literature, that this is a rarity. This is followed by a period of synthesis and report writing. Everything has to be meticulously checked as it could end up in a public enquiry with a QC trying to take it to pieces.

Further pre-determination 'evaluation works' usually follow - (fieldwalking/metal detecting, geophysical survey, trial trenching and reporting on each). Exceptionally, more specialist requirements may come in to play e.g. aerial survey. All these works have to be costed and have project designs written and approved by the local 'curator' (e.g. Dave Evans for Hull and East Riding). All works have to be monitored, and site interpretation and results checked and reports approved by Guildhouse on behalf of the client prior to their submission to the MPA for formal approval. Each step has to be programmed to avoid such things as having to pay compensation for access to land which may be under crop or stock and all expenditure has to be submitted to the client for approval. Once all the information is available Adrian normally has to produce a

document stating how the affects of the development on the archaeology will be mitigated. For mineral sites, development usually means total loss – unless the features are on the margins and can be left in. Once permission has been a granted and the wording of the ‘Planning Condition’ has been issued, Guildhouse has to produce a written scheme of investigation (WSI). This is a formal document which details the framework in which the ‘Condition’ will be met and contains the application details, the planning and archaeological background, the agreed mitigation strategy and a whole list of matters required to satisfy the ‘Condition’ for the applicant and the MPA. It also requires a project design by the appointed archaeological contractor (who needs to be approved by the MPA) stating how the terms of the WSI will be met - this too has to be checked and approved by Guildhouse.

Guildhouse prefers to supervise any initial soil stripping required, although it can mean long hours on site. It gives the consultant a better understanding of the archaeology and makes project management easier. It is a critical operation as a badly stripped site affects feature definition, and poor definition can double the costs. Stripping is usually carried out by a 20-30tonne 360° digger, several 25-30tonne dumpers and a bulldozer. Soil movements and storage are regulated by the MPA to preserve soil quality. Excessive moisture is the main danger as use of heavy machinery can lead to wheel rutting and ground compaction which can wreck the archaeology. Keeping the heavy plant working and production continuous are unwritten rules, but he is authorised to stop the works if the archaeology or potential archaeology is at risk.

‘Health & Safety at Work’ is a major issue and the quarry industry is high regulated by government and by self-regulation. Method statements and risk assessments are always needed and no-one can work on a site without a work permit and valid quarry safety passport requiring a 2-day course and test. Although quarry safety is the responsibility of each quarry manager Adrian explains that Guildhouse needs to ensure all paperwork is in place and that only appropriately qualified staff and specialists are allowed on site. HSW is very much a matter of common sense but given that a bulldozer can weigh up to 90 tonnes fully loaded, discrete working areas and correct procedures have to be rigorously followed. Archaeology in general has an excellent safety record, the biggest danger being complacency. The only real incident in the past 12 years involving Guildhouse was when a tornado picked up a steel cabin and rolled it over several times with five people in it! Fortunately there were no long term injuries.

I asked Adrian to give me a quick run down of the past week’s work. Monday’s meeting in Berkshire had been to commission work for this year, as ground needed to be

released for an extension to a conveyor line, an access road and c. 250,000 tonnes of mineral extraction. Keeping up to date with post-excavation work is vital and the interim archive and assessment from last year’s work were well advanced. The site is producing extensive Bronze Age deposits with field systems and enclosures overlain by Roman rural settlement and ?Iron Age roundhouses. It forms part of the Heathrow Terminal 5 landscape. Here on the Thames Valley flood plain preservation of organics is excellent and Neolithic birch bark bowls have been found.

After delivering urgently needed paperwork for a London site, the rest of Monday was spent travelling to a mineral site in Lincs. where stripped ground needed to be checked to enable release for a tunnel works for a conveyor line under a road. Delay could be expensive as penalty clauses could be involved. Fortunately the area was almost blank and, subject to final checking by the archaeological contractor, he was able to release the areas with MPA approval. It was also a chance to assess some of the additional 80,000 sq ms being stripped, which should save a further visit next week. The site is producing Roman settlement with some prehistoric background material.

Tuesday morning was devoted to telephone calls, letters, budgets, assessment of the additional ground from the previous day, likely staffing and resourcing levels etc. The rest of the day and Weds were earmarked for a WSI urgently required to enable the start of works before a planning approval expires for a new recycling plant site in West London. The archaeological background section proved a headache as it involved going through 164 pages of SMR information to enable a ‘context’ for the site. Unfortunately the SMR information came without a location plan *!***!!! Telephone calls also took place regarding outstanding client purchase orders and payments, as the end of the financial year is approaching. Calls came in from a contractor chasing up an interim report awaiting Guildhouse approval, but with due apologies, it had to wait until the following week. Informal advice was given to someone dealing with a PPG 16 Condition on a single house extension and he had to ring round to remind contractors to send their new rates of pay for the next financial year. Thursday – and it was back to trying to complete the WSI. Friday (already!) and a 5.45am start driving to Norfolk, to assess the archaeology on a quarry extension (necessary as mineral quantity on the existing site had been less than expected). The archaeology on other parts of this site had been impressive but a headache for the client as the archaeological costs are likely to outweigh the value of the mineral! In conclusion Adrian added that he was pleased to record that all his clients took a very responsible view of archaeology and whilst they would naturally be happier if someone else paid for it, as responsible developers, they accepted it.