# ERAS News

EAST RIDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY No. 66 MARCH 2007

*Arram 2006: Neolithic stone axe incorporated in a later cobbled surface.* *Photo: I & F. Wilson*

# *CONTENTS*

# *LOCAL NEWS . . .*

**BATTLE OF CRECY**
Many thanks to Helen Fenwick who stepped in when the scheduled speaker did not arrive, for the February lecture meeting. Helen gave an excellent illustrated talk, based on her own research on battlefield archaeology, looking in particular at the famous Medieval battle of Crecy in Northern France. There was much interest and many questions from the audience.

**AGRICULTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY**
ERAS is hosting the 2007 Council for Independent Archaeology (CIA) Congress at Bishop Burton College on the weekend of August 31 - Sept 2nd. The group supports and encourages independent archaeologists, whether professional or amateur and has always been strongly championed by Andrew Selkirk, (editor of *Current Archaeology*) and Neil Faulkner.

If you are involved in agriculture, either as a land-owner, tenant farmer or worker we would like to hear your point of view as this year's conference will focus on the link between farming and archaeology, looking at such topics as the new agri-enviriironment schemes, crop regimes, recording of farm buildings under threat and what farmers and archaeologists can learn from each other. There will be examples of successful co-operation not just locally but from all over the north of England.

The college offers excellent accommodation on an attractive campus and the catering has a very good reputation, but you will be able to register as a day visitor. A booking form will be in the next ERAS newsletter but if you would like to have any specific topic included in the programme, contact Kevan Fadden on 01525 402273 or email fadden@kbnet.co.uk

**MEDIEVAL HULL CONFERENCE 2008**
Hull University History Department is planning a conference for November 2008 on the history and archaeology of Medieval Hull.

**SHIPTONTHORPE PUBLICATION**
Those who worked on excavations with Peter Halkon and Martin Millett may be especially interested in the recently published Yorkshire Archaeological Report No. 5. *Shiptonthorpe, East Yorkshire: Archaeological Studies of a Romano-British Roadside Settlement.* Edited by Martin Millett and published by YAS Roman Antiquities Section and ERAS, it is available from YAS, 23 Clarendon Rd., Leeds. £25+pp (YAS members £23 +pp)

**WILBERFORCE MUSEUM**
As part of the Wilberforce celebrations, the official re-opening of the refurbished Wilberforce House will be on Sunday 25th March, with a ceremony presided over by the President of Barbados.

**BEVERLEY TREASURE HOUSE**
The 'Treasure House' Beverley's new archive centre is now open and includes displays which will be changed or adapted throughout the year. It was hoped that the internationally important cache of over 30 spear heads and five Iron Age swords in their scabbards found in 2002 by three local metal detectorists, including ERAS member Mick Carr, would be part of the opening display. However, they are still being conserved and examined by MOLAS (Museum of London Archaeological Service) and Dave Marchant of ERYCC estimates that it will the end of the year before the swords are able to be displayed, under controlled conditions, in the Treasure House. Meanwhile a series of related workshops and lectures is being organised.

**BOOK DONATION**
Thanks to Patti Neale, for donating some books which belonged to her late husband, Prof. John Neale, to ERAS. Some might go into our collection at the university library, but those which are duplicates will probably be offered for sale to members at the get-together following the AGM and lecture in April. To obtain a reader's ticket for the University library, simply show some ID and your ERAS card at the library reception desk.

**FERRIBY SHIP REPLICA**
The North Ferriby Trust has now raised the funds to obtain the half size replica of the Ferriby Ship, which you might remember seeing at Edwin Gifford's ERAS lecture or at Hull and East Riding Museum. These vessels seem to have gone into the record as the Ferriby *Boats* but when we talk of a 'half size' replica, it means that the original was not just twice the length, but also twice the breadth and twice the depth – in other words considerable sized *ships*, as Edwin Gifford would prefer to call them.

**DEMOLITION AT KILNSEA**
Alan Williamson of the Fortress Study Group reports that the dangerous parts of the Godwin Battery, overhanging the cliff at Kilnsea, since storm erosion, have now been demolished for public safety. A history of the Paul batteries is being prepared.

*Editor*

# *FROM THE FORUM ...*

The Humber Archaeology Forum, which meets two or three times a year in Beverley, is a forum for the exchange of news and views from representatives of commercial archaeology companies, educational establishments, community archaeological organisations, museums and archives as well as independent archaeologists. This page gives some of the news from the last meeting

**METAL DETECTING POLICY FOR BEACHES**

The Tourism section of the East Riding of Yorkshire Council is developing a Metal Detecting Policy for beaches. This will entail the purchase of a permit at a charge of around £10-£15 per year, with finds being reported to the Treasure House. Anyone wishing to view a copy of the document should contact the Helen Fenwick on H.Fenwick@hull.ac.uk Comments can be forwarded to Ian.Cook@eastriding.gov.uk

**LAST SEASON AT THWING**

Cambridge University's ongoing excavation of the ladder settlement at Thwing, led by Prof. Martin Millett will probably be coming to an end this season.

**BRONZE AGE JET ARTEFACTS**

Paula Gentil of Hull and East Riding Museum reported that a Leverhulme project, led by A. Sheridan of Scottish Museums, is underway, to look at ritual in Bronze Age grave goods, with a particular emphasis on jet artefacts from this region.

**NEW SCIENCE ADVISOR**

The new Regional Science Advisor with English Heritage at York, (replacing Ian Panter) is Dr. Andy Hammon.

**EXCAVATION IN THE RIVER HULL VALLEY**

ERAS member Mick Carr continues his excavations investigating cropmarks of possible prehistoric features in the River Hull Valley near of Leven.

**AGGREGATES LEVY FUND**

The English Heritage Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund has received the go-ahead for another year. Several marine projects have been funded, with Historic Landscape Characterisation of the seabed being undertaken by MOLAS (Museum of London Archaeology Service) in the area south of Flamborough Head and Cornwall County Council looking at an area further to the north. Wessex Archaeology has undertaken a project called Artefacts from the Sea which was intended to enhance the SMR records

**COMMERCIAL WORK IN THE AREA**

The SMR has been very busy dealing with two new gas pipelines (Ganstead to Easington and Asselby to Pannal, North Yorkshire) and two new power station applications for Aldborough, as well as other large strategic developments.

Other recent commercial archaeological work in the area includes –

- MAP (Malton Archaeological Projects) working at: Salthouse Road, Hull - ditches containing Iron Age pottery and preserved wood.
- On-Site Archaeology working at Southgate, Market Weighton – prehistoric gully, plus well-preserved 16th-century sequence.
- MAP working at Bridlington (St Mary's Walk), next to two scheduled barrows - Earlier geophysics had suggested a possible third barrow. A couple of undated ditches, and a large medieval fish-pond were examined in the trenches, but no trace was found of any more barrows.
- On-Site Archaeology excavating in Churchside, Howden, opposite the Minister - Well preserved sequence of Medieval and Post-medieval deposits, including a number of superimposed Medieval timber buildings.
- HFA (Humber Field Archaeology) excavating at North Cave, as part of another proposed quarry extension - Iron Age and Roman features being revealed in almost all evaluation trenches across the new area.
- HFA also excavating at Easton Farm, Boynton, and at Flamborough Maltings, as well as carrying out a monitored topsoil strip at The Plough, Hayton.
- In January HFA had undertaken preliminary evaluation at Wold Top, Market Weighton. This had revealed ditches, pits and stake holes. Further work is intended here in March, when the footprint of a new agricultural building will be stripped, planned and recorded, followed by targeted excavation.

A large number of agri-scheme applications (see previous newsletter) are also being dealt with by the Sites and Monuments Record Office. *Kate Dennett*

# *A VIEW FROM THE CHAIR*

A little over three years ago I was persuaded to accept a nomination to chair the Society. Then I wasn't sure what to expect, now I can look back over the last three years and reflect on what we've done, and also look forward to the future as the Society approaches its 50th anniversary.

As well as the lecture programme, the highlights have been our excavation of the Easington barrow being a runner-up for the Pitt-Rivers Award at the British Archaeological Awards in 2004; the launch of the Valley of the First Iron Masters website, making available to an international audience the work lead by Peter Halkon and Martin Millett, and contributed to by members of the society over many years; the excavation at Arram, including the fantastically well-attend open day for the National Archaeology Day in 2005; and, later in 2005, the Mortimer day-school, we ran with East Riding Archaeological Research Trust, University of Hull, Hull and East Riding Museum, YAS and CBA Yorkshire. We've also had the publication of the long awaited "Pots in Pits" volume of the East Riding Archaeologist and have supported the publication of YAS Report 5 on Shiptonthorpe.

Last year, we asked for members' views on various points. What is quite clear from the answers is that you want us to consider a wider range of activities, including more visits and fieldwork; different social events to the single annual social evening; and more frequent day-schools, possibly incorporating the annual evening reports meeting into an annual full day event. Hopefully, we'll be able to incorporate some of your ideas into next year's programme.

Before next year's programme, however, there is a date for your diaries. On the weekend of August 31st to September 2nd we are hosting the biannual conference of the Council for Independent Archaeology at Bishop Burton College. This is always an excellent weekend as independent archaeologists from around the country gather to tell each other about their work.

You will see from the AGM papers accompanying this newsletter that we are seeking your support to change the Society's constitution to replace two ordinary committee member places with specialist roles, one as a field studies officer, the other as website officer. Over the last few years two things have become evident. Firstly the Field Studies Group hasn't been working effectively for various reasons. Secondly, a website needs some focus to keep it up-to-date and interesting. The committee feels that having specific people responsible for those areas, in the same way as having an editor and a treasurer on the committee, will give the required focus. Dave Clark has made a splendid start by redesigning the website and has the firm support of the committee in being nominated as our first website officer, if you agree to the change in the constitution. We have not yet identified a potential field studies officer but we hope to find someone who is enthusiastic about enabling and supporting members in carrying out archaeological fieldwork. In both cases, I'm sure that there is more work to do than can be done by individual committee members, so if you have an interest in helping, but can't commit to being a committee member, we're still interested, no matter how little time you can offer.

There are many opportunities to get involved in archaeology. The group working at Southburn museum needs more volunteers to get involved; the Yorkshire Quern project is looking for people to work on a catalogue of querns in E. Yorkshire; there is post-excavation work to do on our past excavations, including Arram; and plenty of opportunities to do 'geofizz' using our resistivity meter. If you're interested in any of these, contact me or any committee member and we'll put you in touch with the right person.

The last three years have been very enjoyable and it is with mixed feelings that I end my term of office. It has enabled me to see that the Society depends on more people than just the committee for its success. I must make special thanks to all those who have helped organise activities in all sorts of ways: organising the food and drink for the socials; arranging the speakers for the lecture programme; editing and posting out this newsletter; maintaining the Society website; running bookstalls; organising fieldwork; the list goes on. I must also thank those who have been committee members over the last three years for their hard work and support.

*Paul Brayford. phone: 07768 776134*
*(email:* paul.brayford@bcs.org.uk *)*

# *Shetland Amenity Trust Viking Unst Project*

*By Chris Dyer*

The Shetland Isles lie closer to the Arctic Circle than to London and are nearer to Bergen in the east than to Edinburgh. The archaeology exists as testament to a landscape subject to at least five millennia of human occupation. Whilst settlement patterns have evolved, themes of fishing, crafts and husbandry remain fundamental to the present day. The nature of past land use, characterised by livestock grazing with minimal cultivation, has permitted the above-ground survival of many sites. Sinuous prehistoric dykes remain upstanding and may run for hundreds of yards, their course distinct and unrelated to current road, track and fencelines. Their contemporary date with the earthworks, entrenchments and tumuli of the Wolds offers a stimulating vision of how a large number of East Yorkshire monuments, now identified by cropmarks alone or truncated by post-enclosure arable intensification may once have appeared.

The cluster of over one hundred islands, fifteen of which are presently inhabited, were ruled by Norway for more than six centuries following the Viking impact of the late eighth and early ninth century. Despite the transfer of political power in 1469 when Shetland was pledged in pawn to Scotland for 8,000 florins, the archipelago retains a strong affinity to its Norse heritage. Aspects of modern culture, notably place names and dialect, are replete with Scandinavian origin and intonation. In recent times, historic links with Norway were famously strengthened during the Second World War, when Shetland was the base for resistance fighters undertaking operations in their occupied homeland via the 'Shetland Bus'.

The Viking Unst Project, initiated by Shetland Amenity Trust and sponsored by the Heritage Lottery Fund, is an archaeological investigation of Shetland's Viking past. Unst is the northernmost island in Britain and represented one of the first Viking landfalls, situated at the crossroads of western migration and trade routes. The excellent preservation of archaeological remains here allows a rare opportunity to study rural Viking life – a thought-provoking contrast to the familiarities of urban Jorvik. Thirty possible house sites have been identified, many of which can be viewed within an early medieval landscape, enclosed by contemporary field systems and nearby maritime, ecclesiastical and grave sites.

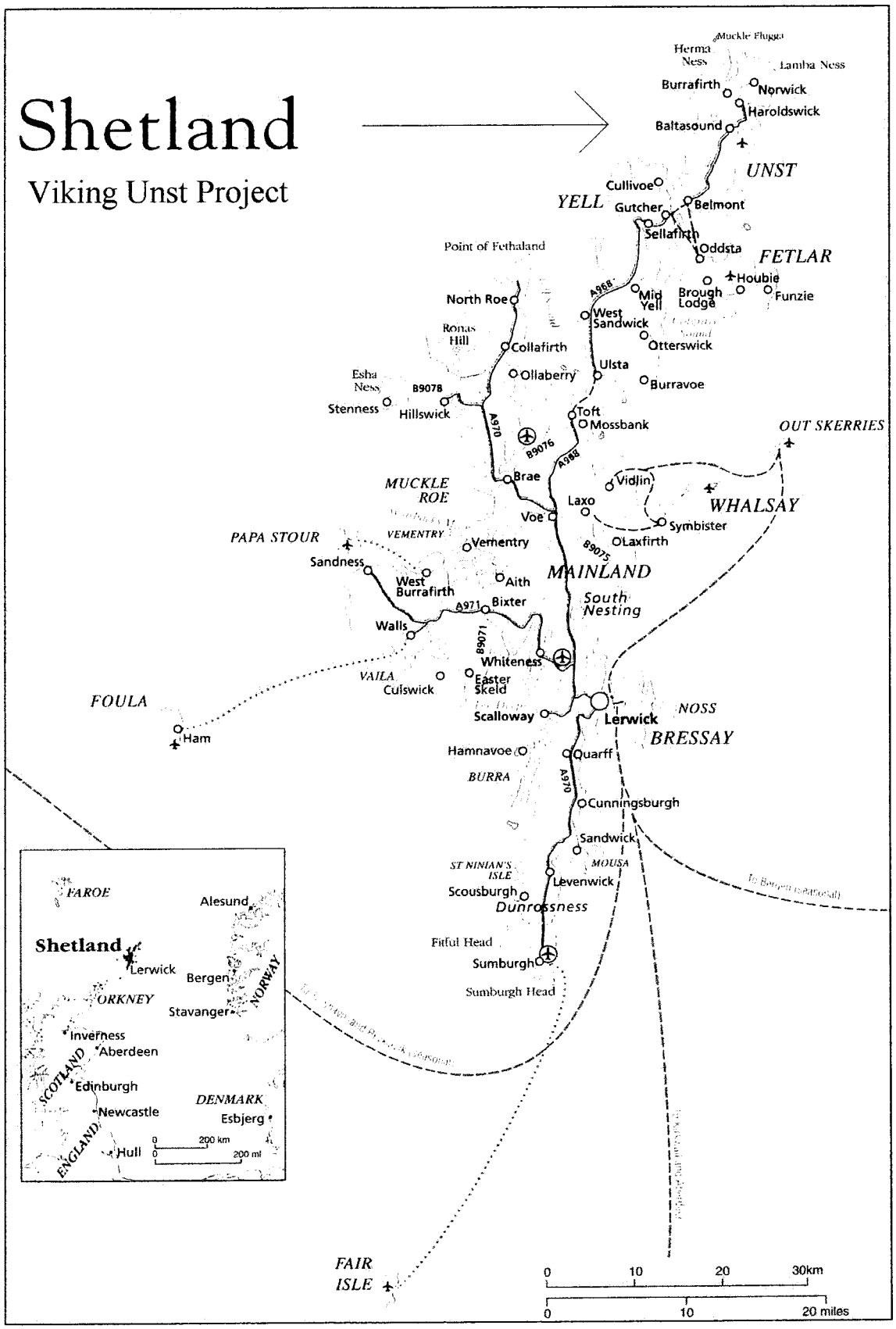
Unst is just 12 miles long from north to south and five from east to west. The twenty-first century population of approximately six hundred is concentrated in the three principal settlements of Uyeasound, Baltasound and Haroldswick, the latter named after King Harald whose fleet landed in AD875 to support Norway's claim to Shetland. The shoreline is cut by numerous inlets, the sea visible from almost everywhere with hills rising to 284m in the north around the former RAF station at Saxa Vord. Around these inlets, low-lying areas suitable for settlement and agriculture exist. A significant proportion of this landscape shows signs of relatively recent depopulation, with ruined crofting structures dating from the eighteenth through to the mid-twentieth century.

The Viking Unst Project brings together a team of European specialists to assess the first Viking settlement in Shetland and its impact on the landscape and people. Following pilot work over the past decade, 2006 saw the first of three seasons of fieldwork which will, in due course, be complemented by a Viking trail around the island, the display of the replica longship 'Skidbladner' and the reconstruction of a Viking longhouse based upon excavated evidence.

**Belmont (HP 568 008).**

A short distance uphill from the ferry pier at Belmont, Anne-Christine Larsen of the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde, Denmark and students of Copenhagen University undertook excavations at the site of a multi-period Norse settlement. Fieldwalking, survey and trial excavations initially took place in 1996, removing a crofting period planticrub which covered a structure, aligned downhill, interpreted as a two-phase Norse longhouse. The principal objective for 2006 was to define the area of Norse settlement to allow interpretation of the social history, economy and phasing of the site.

During its earliest phase, attributed to the 9th/10th century AD, the east-west orientated longhouse was 22m long and 7m wide with curved walls of between 1m and 1.5m. They were constructed with casings of dry stone with cores of turf and smaller stones. In the eastern, up-slope end, a hearth was centrally placed and along the inner sides of the walls, possible benches were recorded. Further evidence of internal construction was represented by a posthole for a probable roof support. The western, lower-lying end of the structure seems to have functioned as the byre with a drain running under the wall and away down-slope. The longhouse had at least one entrance situated near the middle of the northern wall.


Shetland
Viking Unst Project
Muckle Flugga
Herma Ness
Lamba Ness
Burrafirth
Norwick
Haroldswick
Baltasound
UNST
Cullivoe
YELL
Gutcher
Belmont
Sellafirth
Oddsta
FETLAR
Point of Fethaland
Houbie
Brough Lodge
Funzie
Mid Yell
A968
North Roe
West Sandwick
Otterswick
Ronas Hill
Collafirth
Ollaberry
Ulsta
Burravoe
Esha Ness
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Laxo
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Symbister
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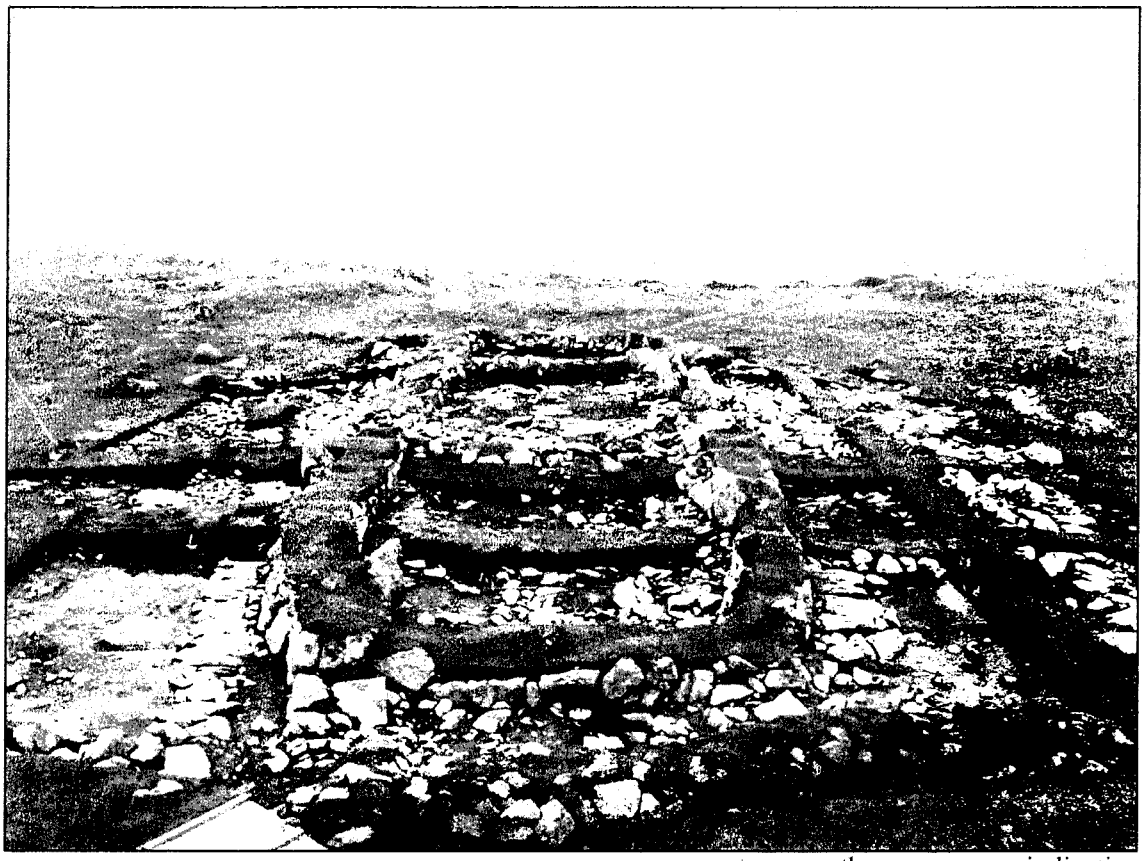


*Belmont Longhouse July 2006, looking west.*
*Photo: Chris Dyer*

At a later stage, tentatively dated to the 11th/12th century AD, the house was rebuilt on a smaller scale to measure 13m by 6m, using the original foundations at the western end. The interesting sondage method employed by the Danish team, as opposed to open area excavation *(see photographs)*, led to the discovery of two extensions to the north of the longhouse which passed beyond the extents of excavation. Several paved areas were identified inside the house whilst a stone-built drain was revealed outside, along the southern wall. Approximately 300 finds were recorded during the excavation, including artefacts such as steatite vessels, spindle whorls, schist lamps and net sinkers.

**Hamar (HP 646 093)**

Excavations were simultaneously undertaken by a team led by Julie Bond from Bradford University at the site of the preliminarily-phased late Norse structure at Hamar, east of Baltasound. Previous work on the site had included trenching within the upper room of the house. The aim was subsequently to excavate the structure fully, in order to understand the site in terms of the cultural and economic evidence recovered. Fieldwork revealed a sub-rectangular building divided internally into an upper and lower room and linked by two small doorways, aligned down-slope on a small terrace. Intriguingly, it is unclear whether the longhouse was composed of turf and timber elements or built entirely of stone as there were no indications of a slumped turf deposit and only a minimal spread of tumbled stone.

It is significant that, compared to Belmont, a very shallow depth of stratigraphy was encountered at Hamar before natural stone outcropping was encountered. A possible explanation is that the area of the hillside had been scalped, perhaps for turf. Deposits identified in the upper room which indicate post-medieval disturbance and sherds of a seventeenth century North German redware pipkin handle found immediately outside the structure may support this theory. However, well-carved fragments of steatite vessels were found in secure contexts at the upper end of the building, contemporary with structural remains and ashy deposits interpreted as occupation surfaces. Further excavation, together with environmental, dating and scientific analysis in 2007, will confirm the extents and whether additional internal deposits lie sealed, terraced into the hill at a greater depth.

The longhouse material produced during the 2006 excavation season as part of the Viking Unst Project, as well as that identified historically throughout Shetland, Orkney, the Faroes and Norway, indicates several interesting similarities in architecture at the time of the westward Viking expansion. Longhouses are typically aligned down-slope with curved walls of at least one metre in thickness. The structures may have sunken

floors with benches along the inner walls. The upper part of the house would function as the sleeping area, with the central hearth indicating living space and a well-drained byre at the lower end.

Continuing fieldwork on Unst will provide a greater understanding of the concept of the Viking Age farmstead and the emigrant communities of the North Atlantic. We look forward with anticipation and many questions to the 2007 excavation season. Volunteers are encouraged and ERAS members would be warmly welcomed!

Chris Dyer,
Deputy Regional Archaeologist
Shetland Amenity Trust, Garthspool, Lerwick. ZE1 0NY
Telephone: 01595 694688
Email: chris@shetlandamenity.org

Credits: Val Turner. Regional Archaeologist. Shetland Amenity Trust
Dr. J. M. Bond. Senior Lecturer in Archaeology. University of Bradford
A-C. Larsen. Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde & University of Copenhagen

*Chris Dyer was formerly an assistant in the Sites and Monuments Record Office in Northumberland Ave. Hull. He helped and advised on the Arram excavation and the Southburn Museum project and likes to maintain his various contacts in the East Riding. (Editor)*

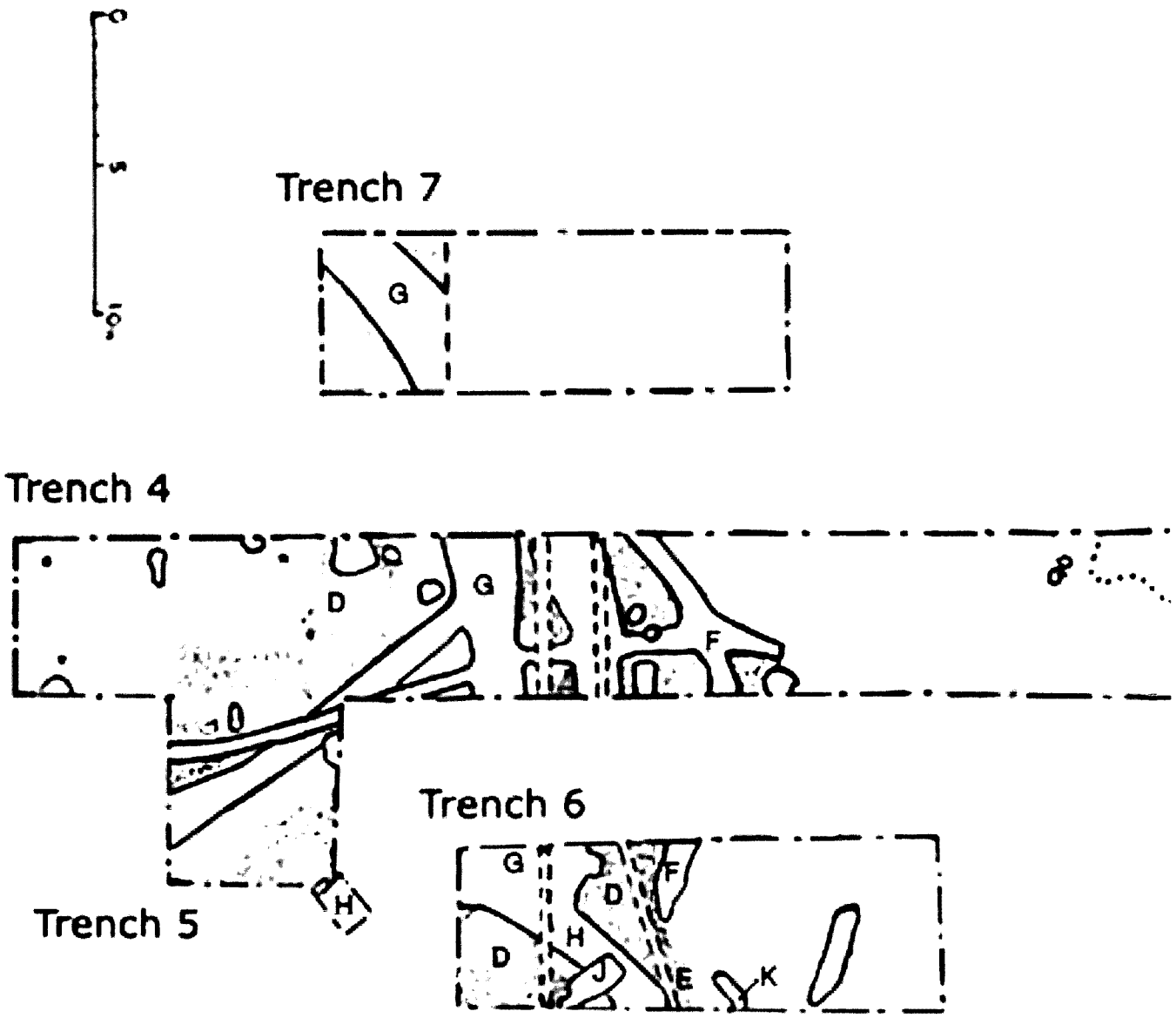
*Above: Hamar longhouse, July 2006, working shot looking north, Bradford University. Keen of Hamar rising to the north in the background.*

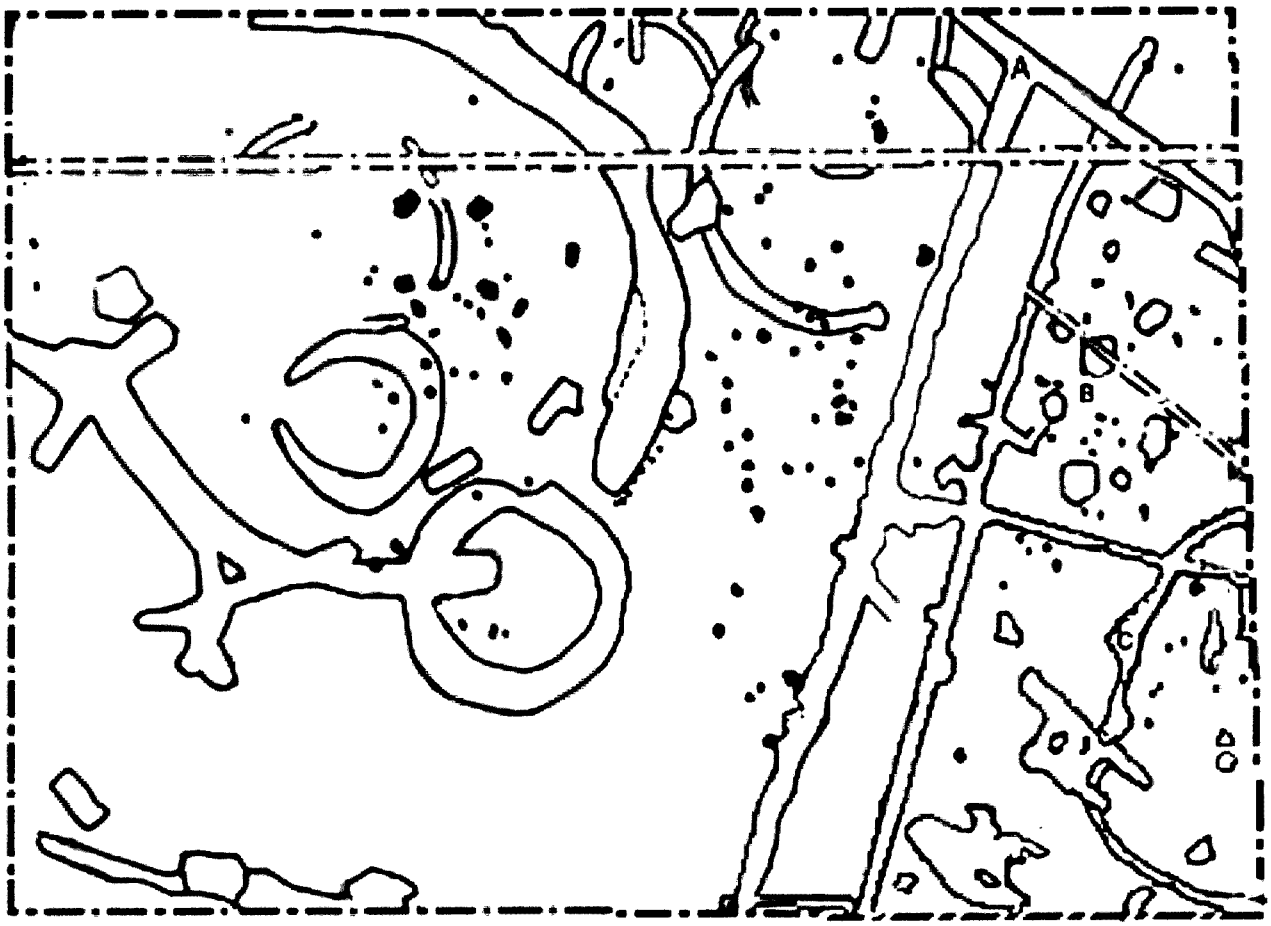
*Photo: Chris Dyer*

# *An Update on Excavations at Arram*

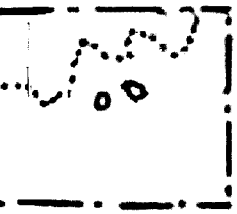
*Fiona Wilson*

The Arram Chapel Garth project comprises archaeological fieldwork, investigating a previously unknown Iron Age and Romano–British settlement on the wetland margins in the Middle Hull Valley. The site, centred on TA 035444, is situated to the north of Beverley, on the river Hull's tributary Arram Beck and close to the edge of the floodplain area known as Arram Carrs. The Arram Chapel Garth project ultimately aims to define the limits, nature, spatial patterning, temporal development and social dimensions of the settlement and consider its place within the wider landscape. Whilst also providing further knowledge about settlement and industry in the Iron Age and Roman period in the Hull Valley, with particular reference to the wetland margins. It provides fieldwork opportunities for beginners and experienced volunteers, in ERAS and the wider community. The 2006 plan of excavated features is shown right and below.






Trenches 1 2 3 & 8




Excavations up to 2005 revealed what may be a settlement of roundhouses, post-dated by late Iron Age ring ditches, followed by an enclosing ditch with a south-east entrance, and the possibility of an internal bank (north-west area of trenches 1 2 3 & 8). The earliest Roman phase in this area was represented by 2nd or 3rd century linear ditches and a possible square cornered building. In trench 4 the Roman activity featured much more predominantly, with a series of ditches and possible metalled surfaces. The economy of the site included metalworking in the form of bronze casting, whilst animal bone assemblages indicated pastoral farming by the presence of horse, cattle, fowl, pig and sheep or goat, and arable activity was evidenced by the large quantities of quern stones and presence of barley and wheat. The pottery assemblage at this stage was already considerable and the presence of a Birdlip brooch, late Iron Age wheel thrown pottery and a Corieltauvian coin, suggest cultural influence from the south of the Humber.

In 2006, trenches 1, 2 and 3 were extended to the south and east to expose a continuation of the early Roman linear ditches (feature A on plan) which ran both north-

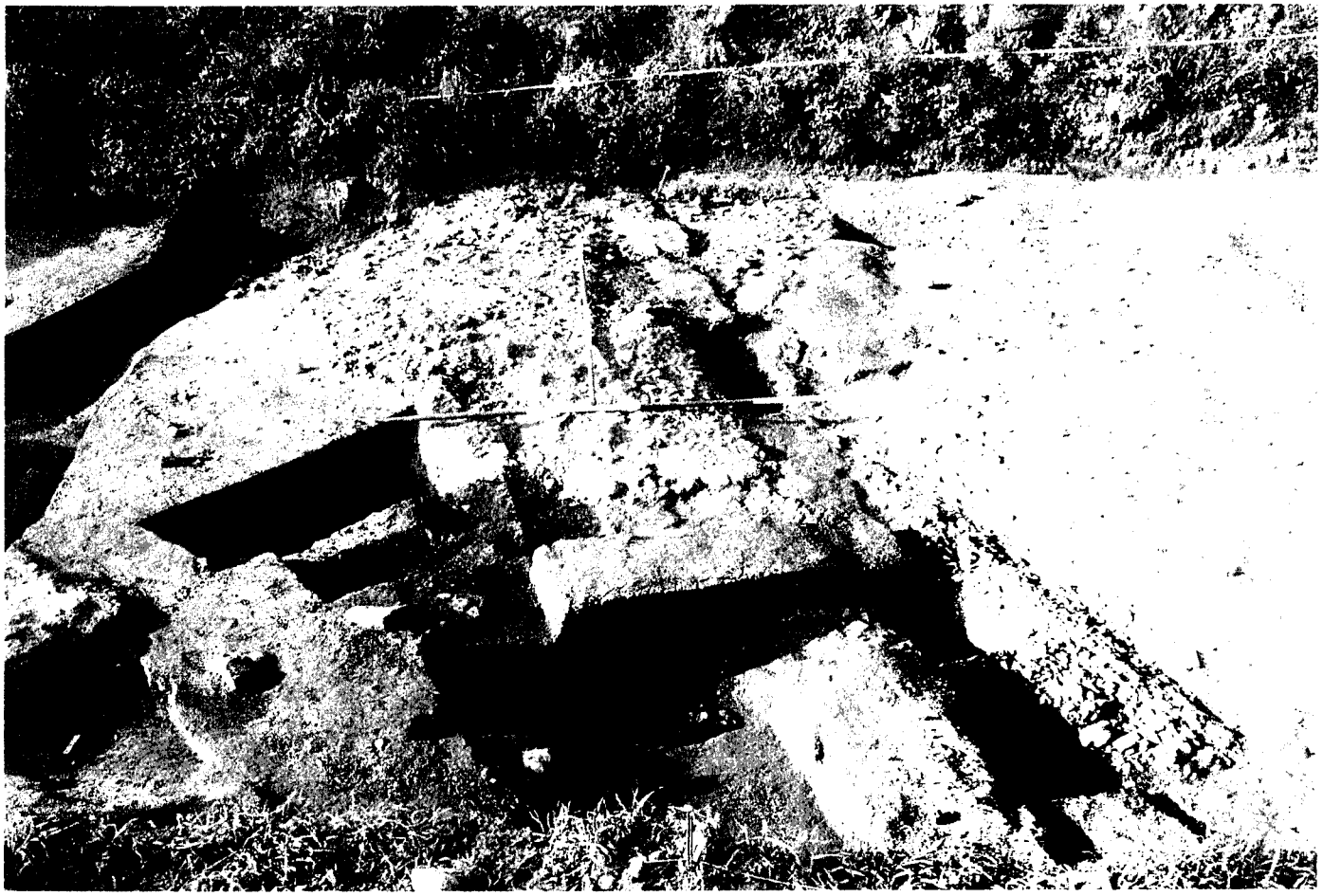


*Fig. 1*

south and east-west, and are still being interpreted as field boundaries. The east side of the trench also included many post holes and several straight sided pits (B); these contained very few artefacts, suggesting they may have been used for storage. The oval enclosure (C) showing in the south east corner of the trench was very narrow and shallow so cannot be interpreted as an effective ditch, but it also had no substantial posts to imply it was a fence. The fill was quite loamy, which suggests it silted naturally rather than being backfilled, so it was likely to have been an open feature. The ditch contained hand made pottery and a large piece of loom weight, so has been interpreted as an Iron Age feature. Within the enclosure was a shallow pit containing a considerable amount of charcoal; so it would seem that it was an area of activity. A possible interpretation is that of a drainage gully around a building, but although a number of internal post holes have been uncovered, it is not possible to connect them, with any confidence, to a structure and it would be necessary to reveal the full extent of the gully to ascertain if the long side of a small feature or the short side of a large feature is being dealt with. The oval enclosure was cut by short shallow gullies, that were a feature of this area of the trench, but their purpose is also unclear.

Trench 4, dug in 2005, revealed a series of Iron Age and Romano-British ditches, and what was interpreted to be a metalled surface (D). In 2006, trench 6 was opened, to the south, to ascertain the extent and purpose of the cobbles, and further understand the ditch sequences. Several ditches were revealed cutting into a sandy surface, much of which was a shallow deposit overlying cobbles. The cobbles themselves still remain a bit of a mystery. There is still the possibility that many could be naturally deposited, however they occur in only a shallow layer and a considerable amount of pottery and other artefacts have been found within it, therefore the majority opinion is that they comprise a man made deposit, probably consolidation. Further supporting evidence is the presence of possible wheel ruts (in the area of E) where the cobbling also dips into a hollow.

The metalled surface (Fig.1) was cut by a modern drainage pipe trench and by several ditches, all of Roman date. The curvilinear feature (F), showing above right of the ranging poles in Fig. 1, continued from the 2005 trench 4 and showed very distinctive stratigraphy. The primary silting was sandy and devoid of artefacts, however the secondary fill consisted of organic silt with a large concentration of animal bone occurring in the

interface between the two fills. The north west of trench 6 comprised a very large area of ditch fill. This included the termination of ditch (G) that can be seen running from the north through trenches 7 and 4, also a curvilinear ditch (H) which was also identified in trench 5. The next discernable sequence is what appears to be a shallow gully (J) containing many very large cobbles, almost forming stepping stones down a slope. The fill within the gully also yielded a piece of lead, large sherds of late Roman pottery and a late Roman coin. A further shallow gully feature (K) also contained very large stones and mid 4th century Proto-Huntcliffe pottery, broadly contemporary with the ceramics found in (J). Following the filling of gully (J) the dip in the area of metalling containing the wheel ruts, silted up, but was nearly devoid of artefacts, suggesting the focus of occupation had ceased in this area by this time.

The 2006 artefact assemblage again produced an amount of bronze working material, although not in the quantities of the previous years. Justine Bayley of English Heritage very kindly provided her expertise in identifying some of the metalworking debris, and it is now clear that copper-alloy casting was taking place in the late Iron Age and possibly the Roman period. The artefacts were very typical of casting debris from contemporary sites across the country and consisted of moulds, sprue cups, crucible fragments and hearth material, some of which was quite vitrified. A large amount of fragmented fired clay material also appeared to be associated with the metalworking debris. An interesting development was the presence of material seemingly from a parting vessel, which would suggest gold and silver were also being worked on the site. Bog iron ore has also been found and a piece of possible iron tapping slag, but there is no adequate evidence for smelting. A study by the author notes the association of bronze working sites in East Yorkshire to wetland areas (Fig.3). Easy access or links to waterways would be an obvious benefit for raw material acquisition or finished product distribution.

Arram has produced several late Iron Age artefacts derived from the modern North Lincolnshire area, including Dragonby type pottery, which has recently also been found on a nearby site to the east of the river at Baswick (Carr pers. comm.). This further evidence for waterborne exchange highlights the potential for riparian settlements to benefit economically from links to the culturally advanced tribes to the south of the Humber. The pottery assemblage from 2006 was once again considerable. Amongst the most interesting examples were a piece of second century stamped mortarium, a pouring spout from a similar vessel and two late Iron Age pottery handles, both quite unusual, one with a rare

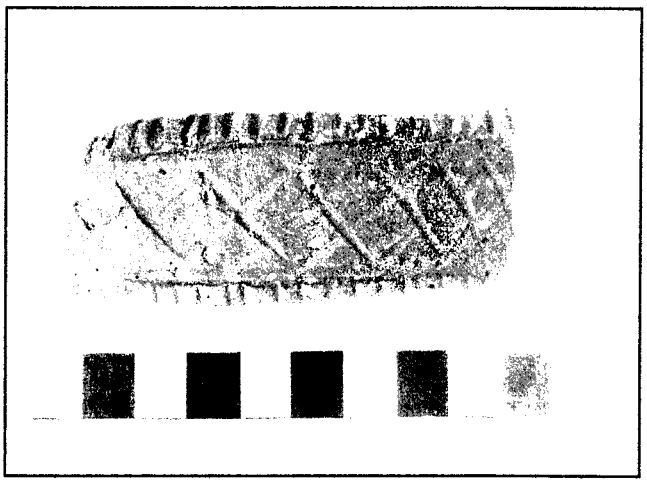


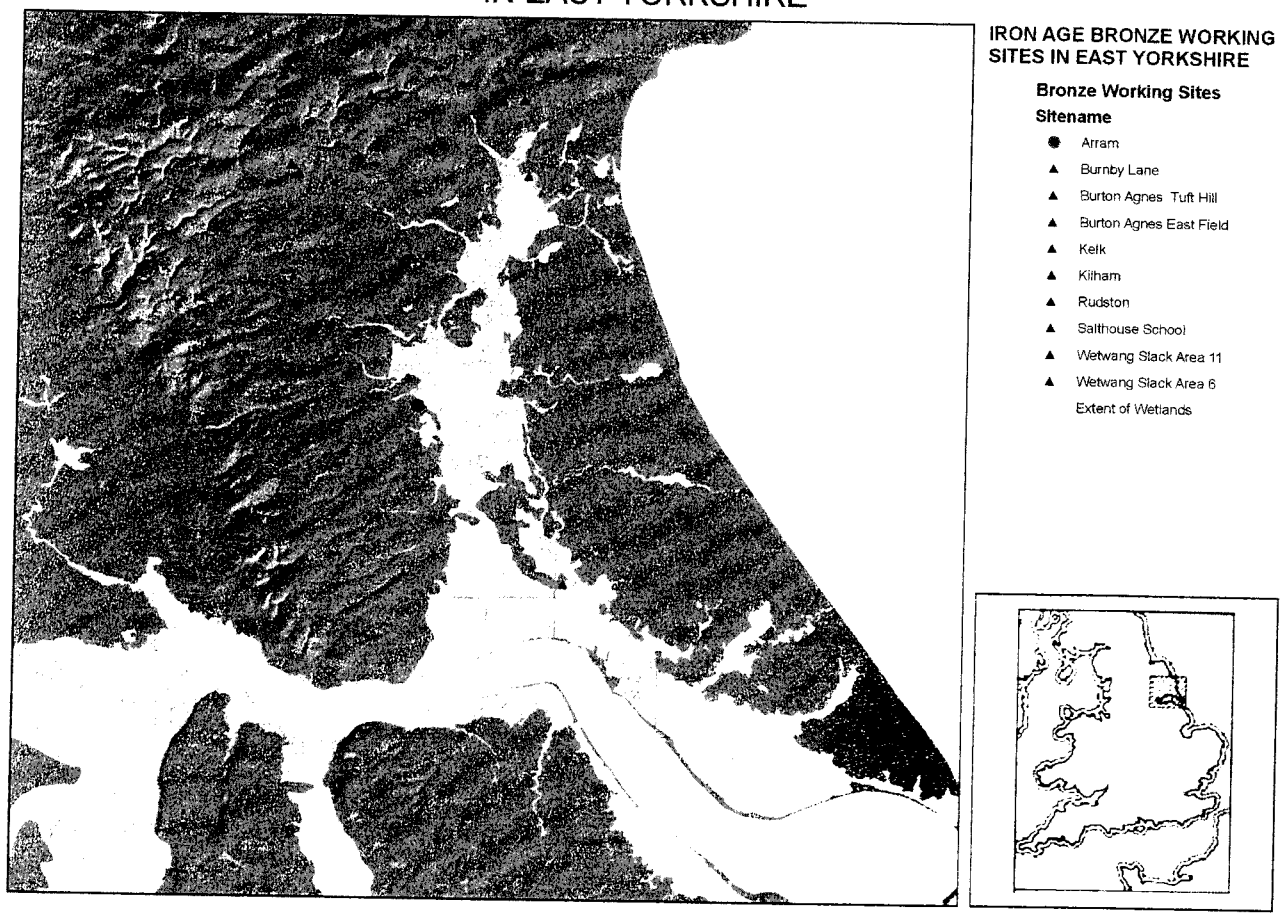
*Fig. 2*

incised decoration and the other a squared raised handle (Fig. 2 above) for which, so far, no parallel has been found. The earliest artefact came in the form of a Neolithic group 6 axe, (front cover) possibly from Langdale, Cumbria. It lay in the area of cobbles in trench 6. Interestingly a further two axeheads have been found in Arram, both close to the excavation site, one to the south east during the laying of the railway lines and another to the north at the edge of the watercourse that runs adjacent to the Chapel Garth field.

There is bad news regarding the dating of a fragment of human skull that was found in 2005. The skull fragment was found lying upside down at the western edge of the base of a pit. It may be that this small fragment was what remained from a burial which had been cut through at a later date, or that it was placed in the pit on its own for some other reason. The positioning however may have further significance, as the skull lay in the only part of the pit which was cut deeper than a deposit of stones and pebbles which formed the remainder of the base. The stones are thought to be of glacial origin, rising close to the surface in a small area of trench 3 but otherwise dipping down beneath a layer of clay. In order to prove the stones were representing the natural at the base of the pit, they were excavated below both the pit side and base. Within this area of stones, a piece of apparently cut antler was discovered, which because of its position, may be considerably older than the rest of the site.

The skull fragment was identified as human by Malcolm Lillie at Hull University, who suggested it was of an unusual shape to be Iron Age in date and so, thanks to funding from ERAS, it was sent for radiocarbon dating. Unfortunately the sample failed to yield a separable collagen fraction, thus could not be dated. A second sample was sent but the same problem occurred. Removal of the collagenous components can be caused by many natural processes; these include bleaching by

ARRAM LOCATION MAP SHOWING THE EXTENT OF WETLANDS AND OTHER BRONZE-WORKING SITES IN EAST YORKSHIRE




the sun, leaching by water, microbial activities, partial heating or burning, replacement by other mineral species and degradation due to extreme age. The cause of this in the Arram bone is unknown, but the result was nevertheless disappointing.

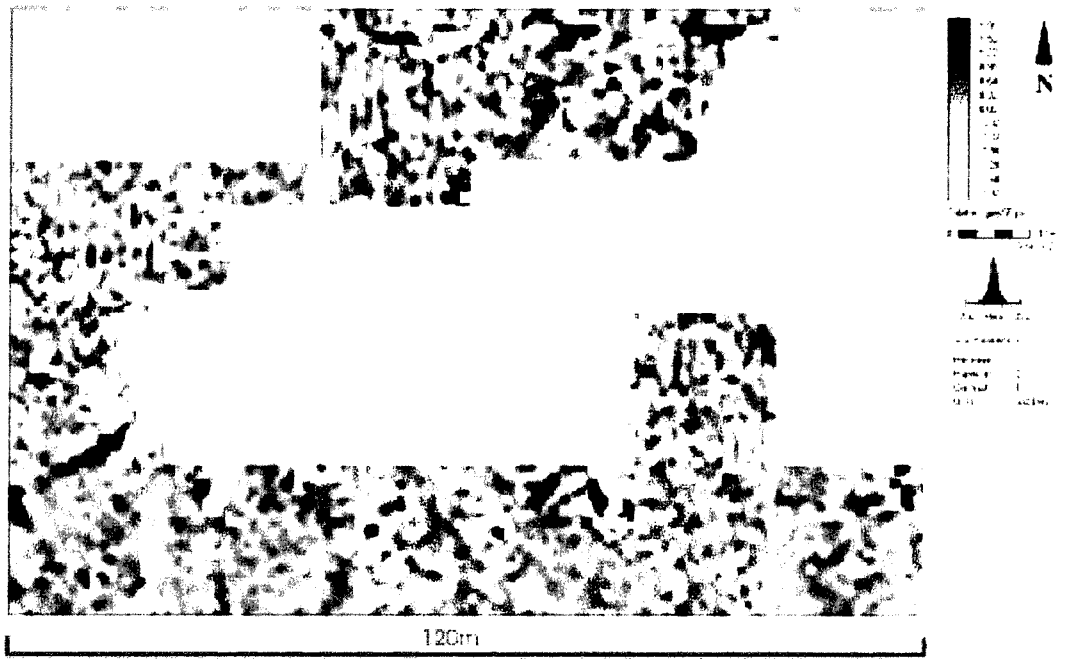
In 2005 the Chapel Garth project joined the Leconfield Carrs Conservation Group, in a joint venture that ultimately aims to re-create an Iron Age cornfield using traditional grain. Plant macrofossil samples from the Arram excavations showed spelt wheat to be most evidently grown on the site, and therefore this variety forms the main focus for the experiment. The project gained the runner-up prize in the Ministry of Defense Sanctuary Awards, which are presented to groups or individuals who benefit wildlife, archaeology or community awareness of conservation on MOD land. The award was presented by the Under Secretary of State, Derek Twigg MP, and the author represented ERAS at a ceremony in London.

Also in 2006, thanks to Mick Atha from York University, a magnetometry survey (Fig. 4) was carried out over a large area of the excavation field; although the geology is not conducive to clear results, the interpretation by the surveyors suggests a number of curvilinear features, possibly representing Iron Age roundhouses, whilst a squared feature may suggest a later structure, therefore the findings may provide a basis for more targeted excavation in the future. The Arram team again wishes to thank all the volunteers who worked on the site in 2006.

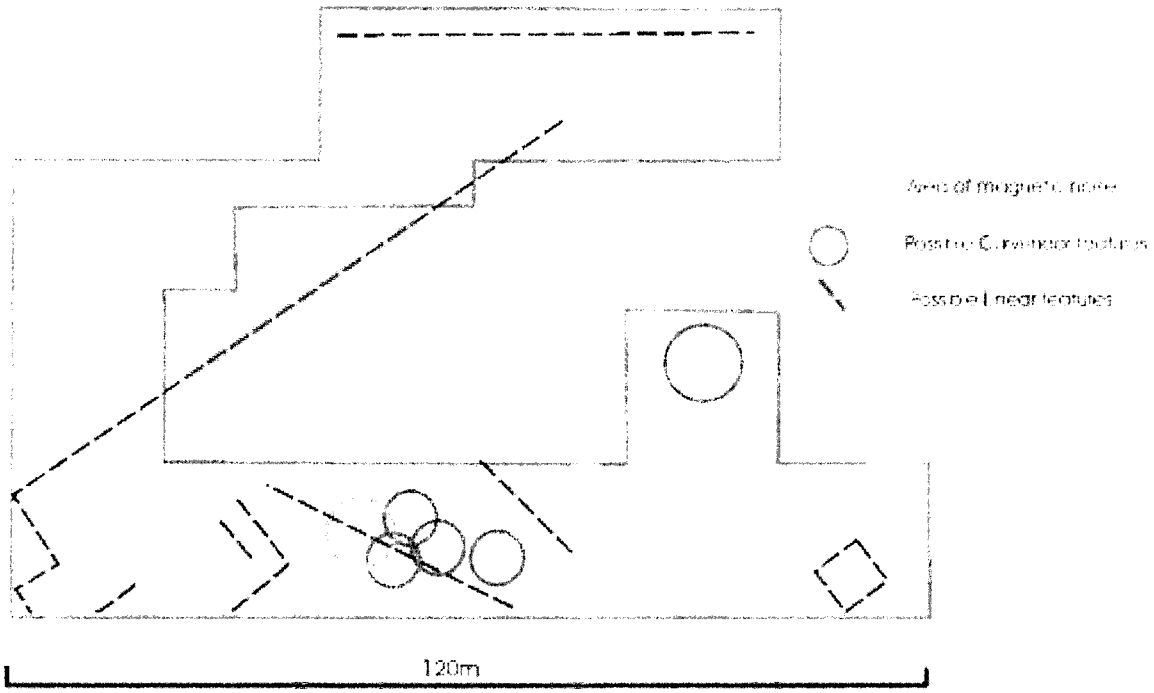
*Fig.3. (Above)*

*Fiona Wilson*

Arram, East Yorks. Greyscale plot of gradiometry results 2006




Arram, East Yorks Outline interpretation of magnetic anomalies



*Lecture Summary:*

# *A Tale of Two Wetlands: Hatfield Moor and Beccles Marshes*

*Dr. Ben Geary. January 2007*

Wetland sites are important not only for our current environment, but for the preservation of archaeological landscapes and features in a dateable context which can indicate earlier climate and conditions. Sadly, it is often the drying, erosion, drainage or extraction of the peat which exposes, and thus puts in danger, the features preserved beneath it. Ben Geary spoke about two wetland sites, with trackways, Hatfield Moor in South Yorkshire, investigated from 2003 to 2006 and Beccles Marshes, in Suffolk, where the first excavations took place in 2006.

**Hatfield Moor**

The peat development on Hatfield Moor is associated with sea level rise and subsequent paludification. However, the highest areas appear to have become wettest first, so climate deterioration might well have played a large part. Although it has always been low-lying, Hatfield Moor, the second largest area of extant lowland raised peat bog in England, has islands of slightly higher land, formed from sandy moraines, beneath the peat. Before being drained, for the commercial extraction of peat, the bog supported many floral species including Ling and Cotton Grass, but little or none of the original surface of the peat bog survives. When visitor Mick Oliver (a member of the Thorne and Hatfield Conservation Forum) discovered the timber trackway, Dr Geary was already working on environmental projects within the area and so funding for the investigation of the feature and its environs was accessible.

The state of preservation of the 45m long track of transverse parallel pine logs, dated to 2900-2500 BC, over longitudinal rails was variable. It narrowed gradually from 3metres in width at the south end to 1metre at the north end, where it ended in a platform of slightly smaller pine logs. At the junction with the platform, an area of laid birch bark was apparent and a threshold of the same material was noted at the dryer southern end of the trackway. In plan, the trackway was laid on a dogleg course, jutting out into what would have been a shallow pool and skirting around a small area, of slightly higher sandy ground, possibly an island or at least an area of shallower water

Palaeo-environmental work suggests that the pre-peat landscape was Pine heath on sandy soils but with Lime dominating on the slightly higher Lindholme Island moraine area to the south. The trackway is almost at the base of the peat, with only 60cms of sediment beneath it and may be seen as built in a landscape becoming increasingly wetter and which eventually drowned completely. The mire-heath immediately beneath the trackway has been dated to 2920 – 2760 BC. A date of *c* 5345 BC just to the north of the site is the earliest date for wetland formation and the lower mud pool deposits beneath the platform date to 4350 – 4230 BC. Elements of the pre-peat landscape such as old drowned trees are incorporated into the site and some naturally fallen trees might have been included in the trackway. Certainly the Pine logs used were locally derived.

The function of the feature as a whole is not clear. It could well be interpreted as a hunting platform, yet there is no evidence for any fringing carr (wet woodland) which might be expected in relation to this activity. It was suggested, during questions from the audience, that it could be a jetty, for fishing or wildfowling. It is thought that the water was probably too acidic for fish but wildfowling was a possibility. It had not been possible to assess whether the water was deep enough for boats and the fact that the trackway skirted around the small area of higher land, rather than utilised it, tends to make this theory less likely.

A ritual function for the feature is being considered, with the narrowing of the trackway seen as a possible use of 'forced perspective', designed to give a more impressive appearance. At its narrowest, the trackway would allow the passage of only one person at a time. Birch bark has been found on earlier Neolithic sites in a funerary context and in folklore, it is associated with rebirth and regeneration as Birch is one of the first trees to grow in regenerating woodland. Thus the site echoes ritual themes identified in other Neolithic features such as henges and cursuses, which frequently appear to have associations with spectacle, procession, exclusion and the proximity of water.

Hatfield Moor has recently been purchased from the peat extraction company by English Heritage and a programme of re-wetting is starting to result in peat regeneration.

**Beccles Marshes**

During construction of a soak dyke, at the Broadland Flood Retention Project at Beccles Marshes on the River Waveney in Suffolk, fresh looking timbers had been brought up by the mechanical excavators. These timbers

were in very good condition and at first appeared to be modern, but the sharpened ends and the presence of axe marks suggested an earlier origin. Subsequently, a joint excavation by the University of Birmingham and Suffolk County Council, started in the summer of 2006.

There appeared to be several phases of activity, the earliest being a brushwood trackway heading towards the river. The feature is thought to be of Iron Age date, but confirmation of the dating is awaited. Further investigation revealed a second and later feature, a double post alignment of large timbers driven vertically into the ground. All the main timbers, probably sourced from overgrown coppiced oak, had lap joint slots cut into them, aligned at the same finished level. However, although the posts were either single or in groups of two or three, the lap joints were not all aligned in the same direction, which could suggest the posts were being re-used, or could indicate a more complex structure than is currently understood.

Between the post rows, were several spreads of woodchips, probably indicating woodworking activity, but the debris did not appear to be related to anything present on the site, as excavated. Some planks of wood were present, but no clear stratification could be established between the post alignment and the separate planks and it was not possible to ascertain what was being made, although boat building could be suggested. About 22 of the posts were lifted and a single radio-carbon date of 260-240 BC was obtained, although it was felt the feature might be multi-phased. Subsequent dendrochronology results supported the idea of two different phases of work, showing a felling date of Spring 75 BC for the main phase.

Some Roman artefacts were present, including a single pottery vessel and the small-scale animal bone waste present included cattle, sheep, goat and wolf/large dog. Analysis of the bone suggests primary and secondary butchery and food waste, suggesting consumption.

A depth of up to 6m of peat was shown by an augering survey carried out over the wider area and it appears that the river has followed the same course for most of the Holocene period. The site of the activity currently being studied appears to be on the edge of the Waveney estuary, which was able to be defined by sediment and diatom analysis. Palaeo-environmental samples gave good results for beetles, although pollen was less well-preserved. Many woodworms of the species *Anobium punctatum*, which feeds only on dry wood, were present although there was also evidence for marine transgression, with a series of wet and dry episodes throughout the peat formation period. The flood plain was probably grazed seasonally.

The site was generally well preserved with little damage by dredging and there are parallels at Flag Fen and at Fiskerton in Lincolnshire. Only a small part of the site has been excavated and more work is needed in order to clarify both the form and the function of the feature.

*Article compiled by the editor from her notes, together with those of Val Fairhurst and Angela Gowland, also thanks to Ben Geary.*
*Responsibility for any errors lies with the editor.*

## *SAM Needs Your Old Mobiles*

Over the last few months work has progressed well on the Southburn Archaeological Museum (SAM), with the efforts of many volunteers including numerous ERAS members. A very sincere THANK YOU to everybody who has helped with the renovation of the display room, painting of cabinets, recording of the collection, educational aspects and general organisation of the project. There is still a great deal to be done and we need the continuing support of everybody. New helpers would also be very much appreciated, to help us build on the work done so far.

SAM is a voluntary project, so as well as helpers, we need funds. One way you can help us with our fundraising, while at the same time we can help you with your spring cleaning is by using Fone Aid. The way it works is that SAM collects your old mobile phones and the Fone Aid initiative donates £3.00 per phone to SAM. Fone Aid ensures that old mobiles are either re-used in developing countries or re-cycled. The organisation is committed to ensuring that old mobiles do not end up in landfill sites, so you are helping SAM and the environment.

Please bring any old mobile phones to the next ERAS meeting and give them to Bill or Margaret Coultard or Val Hebblewhite or call us on 01377 271180. Once again, huge thanks to all who have helped SAM in any way and please continue to support us. If you would like to help but are not sure how, just call us on the number above. Southburn is just off the A614, between Bainton and Driffield, so is not difficult to get to.

*Margaret and Bill Coultard*

# *Resistivity Survey at Burton Agnes*

Field walking for a dissertation project, in Green Lane Field, on the outskirts, Burton Agnes, had revealed a spread of Mesolithic and Neolithic flint artefacts. The pattern of the finds (area stippled on the sketch map) suggested more activity in the adjacent field, known as the Old Cricket Pitch field and it was decided that this field should be the focus of further study.

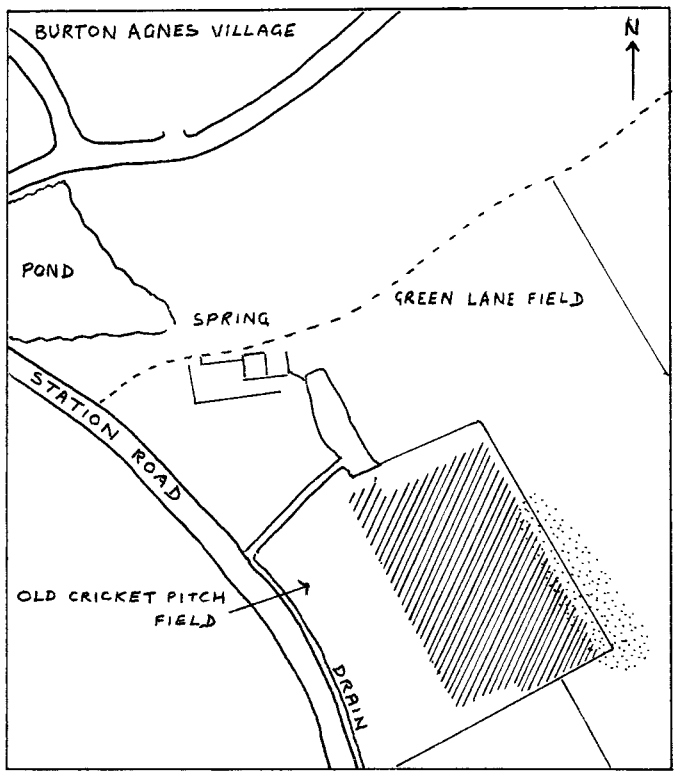
ERAS kindly agreed the loan of the resistivity equipment, and with the help of Rod and Kate the survey started in September 2005. There were various setbacks - sheep and horses eating the grid canes, flooding, working and dissertation writing, but Rod, Kate, Fiona and Will amongst others, came to my aid (thank you) and the survey covering the hatched area on sketch map, was finished in November.

The results were better than expected. In the bottom right corner (south east) a circular feature approximately 15m in diameter, can clearly be seen, along with a smaller circular feature about 5m in diameter just up to the left. (NB. the photocopied image on the right will probably not do justice to the original print-out. *Ed.*) My first instinct was to say this was a round barrow but there are many other possibilities as the area has been in use, judging from the field walking artefacts, since the Neolithic and possibly even the Mesolithic. With Burton Agnes Hall being in such close proximity (just a few hundred meters away) and all the Medieval activity in the area, we must not rule out features from a later period, for example, a mill or dove cote. The very light areas represent high resistance, caused by what we think is a dump of modern building materials but this is to be checked out.

The results of the survey were sent to the SMR for their records, and they forwarded it on to Yorkshire Water and to Northern Archaeological Associates, who were monitoring the ground works for the water pipeline which runs from Bridlington to Driffield and which is now almost completed. Fortunately or unfortunately, according to which way you look at it, the pipeline did go through Old Cricket Pitch Field but not near to the circular features shown by the resistivity survey. All that the pipeline works revealed in the field was an arc of burning, which the archaeological team monitoring the excavation claimed had no evidence for being ancient.

So far, approaches to Burton Agnes Estates for permission to test pit the field have come back as negative but I'm working on it ...

*Pam Cartwright*

# *Conferences, meetings and training courses*

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|---|---|
| **Wed 21 Mar** | **ERAS lecture**. Yvonne Luke. Rethinking Ingleborough. |
| Sat 24 Mar | Archaeological Cave Audit. Public launch event summarising the results of a study of archaeological cave resources in the Yorkshire Dales and Peak District. Info - herinfo@yorkshiredales.org.uk |
| Sat 24 Mar | The Upper Luddenden Valley. Study weekend - Lectures on med & post-med industry held at YAS, Leeds. Site visits on Sunday. Info - Janet Senior 0113 245 7910 |
| Sun 25 Mar | Opening of refurbished Wilberforce House Museum, High St. Hull. |
| 1-5 April | Roman Army Conference in Durham organised by the Hadrianic Soc. Day/residential. Info - Dr B. Dobson, 16 Swinside Drive, Belmont, Durham. email annedobson1@uk2.net web www.hadrianicsociety.co.uk |
| **Wed 18 April** | **ERAS AGM at 7. 0pm followed by last lecture of the season -** Prof. Rosalie David. Ancient Egyptian Mummies: a resource for studying disease and everyday life. (Followed by drinks and bookstall in the west reading room) |
| Fri 6-7 July | Conference - Disease, disability and medicine in Early Medieval Europe. Info - Dr C. Lee, School of English Studies, University of Nottingham, University Park. Nottingham. email christina.lee@nottingham.ac.uk |
| Sat 14 July | Start of National Archaeology Week |
| 23 Jul-18 Aug | Annual fieldschool at W. Halton, Lincolnshire, run by Sheffield University. Saxon - 16th century site. Training as short courses £200 / £100 per week. Fees include accommodation and food. email west.halton@sheffield.ac.uk |
| Fri 31 Aug | Independent Archaeology Congress - weekend/day event at Bishop Burton College starting on the evening of Friday 31 August. Featuring farming and archaeology. Hosted by ERAS. Info from Paul Brayford or from Kevan Fadden email fadden@kbnet.co.uk |
| **Wed 19 Sep** | **First ERAS lecture of the new season.** Topic to be arranged. If you have not received your new card by then, just turn up anyway. |

ERAS lectures, are held in Room S1, Wilberforce Bldg, Hull University, 7.30pm. Members free, visitors £1.

**I would like to join/renew my ERAS membership from January 2007 - January 2008**

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**Or**

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**Send to the treasurer, Lesley Jackson, 24 St Stephens Close Willerby , E. Yorks. HU10 6DG**

* Students please give institution, course & year .....