

ERAS News

EAST RIDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

No. 56 DECEMBER 2003



*Students from Hull University excavating on the Ian and Fiona Wilson's site at Chapel Garth, Arram.
Photograph: Rod Mackey*

*Resistivity ♦ Arram Excavation ♦ NZ Rock Art ♦ Ferrybridge Chariot
Local News ♦ Volunteer Opportunities ♦ Quiz ♦ Odds & Ends ♦ Diary Dates*

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ERAS Local News

STORAGE - Can you (yes, YOU!) help?

As we told you in the last newsletter, our equipment store on Clough Road was broken into and several very useful items stolen. (Planks, wheelbarrows and other smaller items) They were stored at our own risk and were not included on the society's insurance as the cost would have been prohibitive. Other equipment, including site fencing, buckets, bowls, sieves, shelving, plastic sheeting, small tools etc has now been moved and is currently stored in a garden. Does anyone have an empty, lockable shed or domestic size garage where we could store our stuff? It would need to be within easy reach of the Hull/Beverley area and accessible occasionally, by arrangement. Valuable items such as the site pump, level, theodolite, computer etc are with individual members, and would not be included. **If you can help, contact Rod Mackey on 01482 866816.**

WEBSITE PROJECT

Interviews take place this month at Hull University for staff for the Foulness Valley Virtual Reality website project. As you will know, the successful lottery bid by a consortium of ERAS with the Universities of Hull and Cambridge resulted in a major grant for the production of a website using the results of many years of research in the region, headed by Peter Halkon and Prof. Martin Millett. Peter has been granted a sabbatical to work on the project and ERAS committee members Dave Clark and Paul Brayford will represent ERAS, monitoring progress of the tightly scheduled work.

CONGRATULATIONS TO HELEN FENWICK

Helen Fenwick, formerly Centre Manager of the Wetland Archaeology and Environments Research Centre at the University of Hull, will become a full-time Lecturer in Archaeology, based within the History Department, from the 1st January 2004. During the first teaching semester in 2004, she will primarily be covering the courses taught by Peter as he takes a sabbatical from teaching to work on the Lottery funded project. She will also continue teaching within the Geography Dept. until July 2004.

Other changes at the University, see Dr Malcolm Lillie stepping down from the role of Director of the Wetland Archaeology and Environments Research Centre to concentrate on the development of several

large archaeology research projects within the local region and further afield. Dr Jane Bunting has stepped into the position of Director. Jane has a background in Environmental Archaeology and will be known to ERAS members from her contributions to 'Ask the Expert'.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

Apologies for the gaps in the lecture programme, this year. One of these has now been filled and in March, we have Kevin Leahy talking about Saxon, Drugs & Rock and Roll. Sounds like it will be a lively lecture! We are hoping, for the January or February meeting, to get Mark Wyman to talk about the Alluvial Archaeology of the Vale of York, a major study funded by English Heritage with monies provided by the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF). It has not yet been confirmed, but you can ring secretary Rose Nicholson on 07770 470443 to check.

NEW BOOK IN SHORT SUPPLY

The Archaeology of Yorkshire: an assessment at the beginning of the 21st century. This 455 page YAS volume, edited by Manby, Moorhouse and Ottaway, is selling very well, with less than 20 copies left. A further print run of 300 has been ordered and will be available from YAS, Claremont, 23 Clarendon Rd, Leeds LS2 9NZ (£20 plus £6.00 postage). If a number of members want to order, we could probably arrange to get several copies from YAS, to cut out postage. Phone Kate on 01482 445232 to order.

A NEW HISTORY OF SWANLAND, PART 2

The village history group, led by Derek Brooks has just published their second volume in the series on the history of Swanland. It is titled *The School and the 20th Century* and is edited by D. Brooks and S. Dalby. It is available from Cygnet Books of Swanland at £7.50. (ISBN 09543440-1-4)

SUPPER & QUIZ IN BEVERLEY

The Friary is always a popular venue for our annual event and the pub style quiz went well last year. We are looking for a better buffet caterer this year, so you can expect good food as well. There will be a shorter quiz, background rather than live music, plus one or two surprises. So mark Friday March 5th in your diary, now. Details in the post after Christmas.

Kate Dennett

Field Studies - Resistivity Surveys

Resistivity Master Class

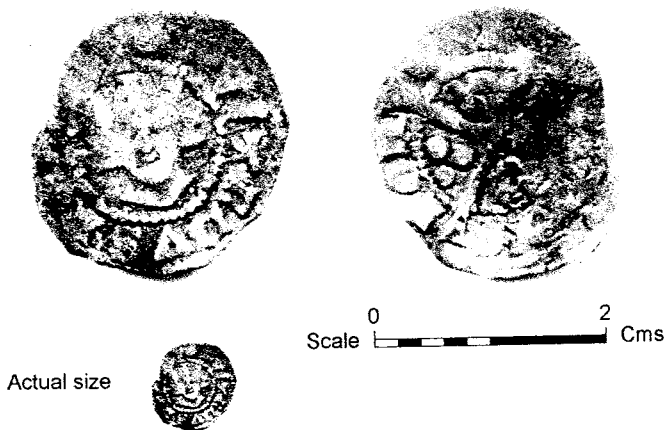
Bob Randall, of TR Systems, who designed the CIA resistivity meter and software, is putting on a course for users to learn how to get the best results on screen, from the data obtained in the field. Bob is very good at putting over complex ideas to non-specialists and we can recommend this day course. The emphasis will be on manipulating the data on screen, looking at problems people may have encountered and sharing experience. He requests that you bring along results on CD or laptop if available. The venue is Millbrook Village Hall, Bedfordshire, 10am-5pm. Cost £35 including coffee and hot lunch. Early booking is essential, so Bob can gauge the response. Forms and details from Kate Dennett on 01482 445232

Roman Villa site, Bishop Burton

Rilba Jones is co-ordinating documentary research to find the site of a possible Roman villa near Bishop Burton, with a view to ERAS carrying out a resistivity survey. If you know of references to this site, **other than** the one in Gent's, 1733 *The History of Britain* or ones which refer back to this same source, please phone Rilba on 711871.

Mini-Survey in Swanland

ERAS did a resistivity survey in Derek Brooks's garden in Swanland, recently, to see if the massive wall known to run beneath his property could be traced in other directions. After working on a huge landscape scale, it seemed odd to be working on a single grid of less than 20m, but results were interesting and showed a rectangular feature, (not extending into neighbouring gardens) which may be a building adjoining the main wall. Intervals of half, rather than 1m might have shown more detail and had we been able to demolish the shed, greenhouse and patio - even better results might have been achieved!



Medieval Coin from Walkington

Richard Coates spotted the tiny, coin (above) of Edward, during the Walkington resistivity survey. Is anyone interested in looking up the coin value, mint marks, date, etc?

Recent Surveys - Enigmatic Features!

The following letter was received from Peter Slaughter after our appeal for an explanation of the rather strange feature revealed by our survey at Newbald. We couldn't resist printing part of it.

Dear ERAS Newsletter,

I am writing to you about the anomolous feature on page 5 of ERAS Newsletter No. 55. The answer is so crystal clear, I am surprised anyone needs to ask. We all remember the story of Jack and the Beanstalk, well this is obviously the impression left by the giant's left ear when he hit the ground after the beanstalk was cut down. Modern forensic techniques will allow us to take an impression of the feature, to prove this.

In order to prove my theory, I propose that ERAS immediately apply for a Lottery Heritage Grant in order to buy a cow, which we will then exchange for some magic beans, which we will then plant. Clearly, because of health and safety concerns, we cannot allow a giant to plunge to his, or in the interest of equal opportunity, her death, so part of the grant will be used to employ a stunt giant. If we end up with the same result, then this will prove my theory.....


The letter goes on in similar vein, to offer an alternative explanation of the feature as an electric guitar enclosure, (*the Gibson Les Paul Enclosure*) constructed by the leader of the New Iron Age Party and visible in the background on the front cover of *Chieftain and Chariots*! Thanks, Peter, we like it.

Seriously though, Possible Geological Answers

The next resistivity survey, carried out near Walkington, on a possible henge known from aerial photographs, gave similarly geological looking results, as you will see from the image opposite. Whilst an archaeological interpretation has not been entirely ruled out, and further investigation probably needs to be carried out, Mike Horne of Hull Geological Society has kindly put the results from both Walkington and Newbald on a geology website, inviting comment from specialists as to how these features could have formed. Lots of suggestions are coming in and we will probably devote a feature to these in the next newsletter. Meanwhile, a brief summary of geological interpretations, mostly referring to the Newbald result, printed in the previous newsletter, is as follows.

Geologist John Catt has suggested that the small very dark features are solution pipes in the chalk, similar to those at Staxton and Thixendale Grange. The rectilinear pattern of cracks, he suggests, are almost certainly ice-



Walkington Wold Farm (SE 9716 3700) ERAS Resistivity Survey, Sept. 2003 Scale 0 20 40 Metres N 



The 'henge' feature, showing as a crop mark. Photograph: Rod Mackey 1997

Field Studies - Resistivity Surveys

wedge casts from the Late Devensian, probably filled with pre-existing overlying material. He tentatively suggests the curving channels could possibly be sub-glacial p-forms cut in the chalk by sub-glacial meltwater, under some hydrostatic pressure. However, he says, there is a problem in that both sites lie several kms west of the assumed Late Devensian ice limit.

It would seem then, that if the feature is to be geological, it is more likely to be peri-glacial rather than glacial in origin.

Some people have suggested the large ear shaped feature at Newbald might be a collapsed pingo or perhaps a periglacial naled, formed during the Loch Lomond Stadial. Another suggests it might be caused by differential weathering, due to contrasting hardness and/or composition in the bedrock. This latter view seems to be a likely, but as yet unelaborated suggestion. Some geologists are putting the ball back into our court, saying they think the feature does appear to be man-made. The presence of a spread of red flint across the ear shaped feature at Newbald is interesting as it does not, on casual observation, appear to extend beyond the feature. So more work is perhaps required on both these sites.

The small clay filled features, which show up as very

dark on both the surveys, are likely to be some sort of solution holes or dolines, common on chalk lands and less of a puzzle than the larger shallower features, previously known from cropmarks as possible henges.

Some of the comments are coming from geologists who are perhaps not familiar with the Yorkshire Wolds or with the elevated position of the Newbald site (on the top of Sancton Wold). However it is extremely useful to have this sort of discussion

This investigation has highlighted the fact that whilst there is a good and well disseminated body of geological knowledge regarding the glacially deposited Holderness clays, on which the archaeology is less often studied, the nature of the Yorkshire Wolds chalk and its surface soils appears to be less well understood, even though the archaeology has been studied extensively.

We hope to carry a full article in a future edition when further responses to our open query have come in. Meanwhile, if you want are interested in Mike Horne's geology website, go to

<http://www.horne28.freemove.co.uk>

Kate Dennett

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES FOR 2004

Please register your interest for both projects now on the enclosed form

Excavation at Arram in July 2004

Fiona and Ian are hoping to open up more trenches at Arram (see opposite page) when the crop comes off the field in July. In order to plan the scale and extent of the excavation, they need to know how many volunteers are likely to come forward and how much time people can give. If you would like to help to excavate and record this interesting Iron Age/Romano British site, please fill in and return the enclosed form and don't let it get lost amongst the Christmas cards!

Resistivity on Beverley Westwood, Jan/Feb 2004

Paul Brayford reported that English Heritage is carrying out topographical surveys of a number of urban commons, including parts of Beverley Westwood. ERAS was already planning a resistivity survey on the Westwood, for this winter and English Heritage has agreed that it would be most useful to combine the Beverley part of the project with ERAS's resistivity survey and possibly pro-

duce a joint report. We might get better results in the more moist conditions of winter, than we did during initial trials with the meter on the Westwood in the very dry summer. It might, of course be rather cold in January, but the Westwood is not far from a good range of pubs and cafes where you could warm up again.

We need to know how many people will be available to help, so please fill in the form to register your interest. Volunteers do not need to be computer literate or technically minded, as we have a core of volunteers already familiar with operating the meter and the laptop. Much of the work simply involves laying out tapes and strings or walking up and down the strings pressing a button at metre intervals. Results can be seen on the laptop, at the end of each session. We need your help, so please fill in the form. Other surveys are planned for the summer, including a couple of Roman villa sites and possibly an Anglo-Saxon cemetery site.

Field Studies - Excavation at Chapel Garth, Arram

During the summer of 2002, a stroll across Chapel Garth field, Arram, led to the discovery of a quantity of Iron Age and Roman pottery and a first century spearhead. It was decided the following year to investigate further, so with the help of volunteers, to whom we are very grateful, a gridded field walking survey and a geophysical survey, using the ERAS resistivity meter was undertaken. Unfortunately the dry conditions this year did not provide ideal conditions for resistivity, however areas of high and low resistance were apparent and a few linear features tentatively interpreted as ditches were noticed. The field walking survey produced a spread of pottery running diagonally NE/SW across the field, with several concentrations, particularly on higher ground. The pottery types ranged from Iron Age to Roman greywares, Crambeck, Nene Valley, Dales type and Huntcliffe. A metal detector survey by Ken Oliver produced two 4th century coins.

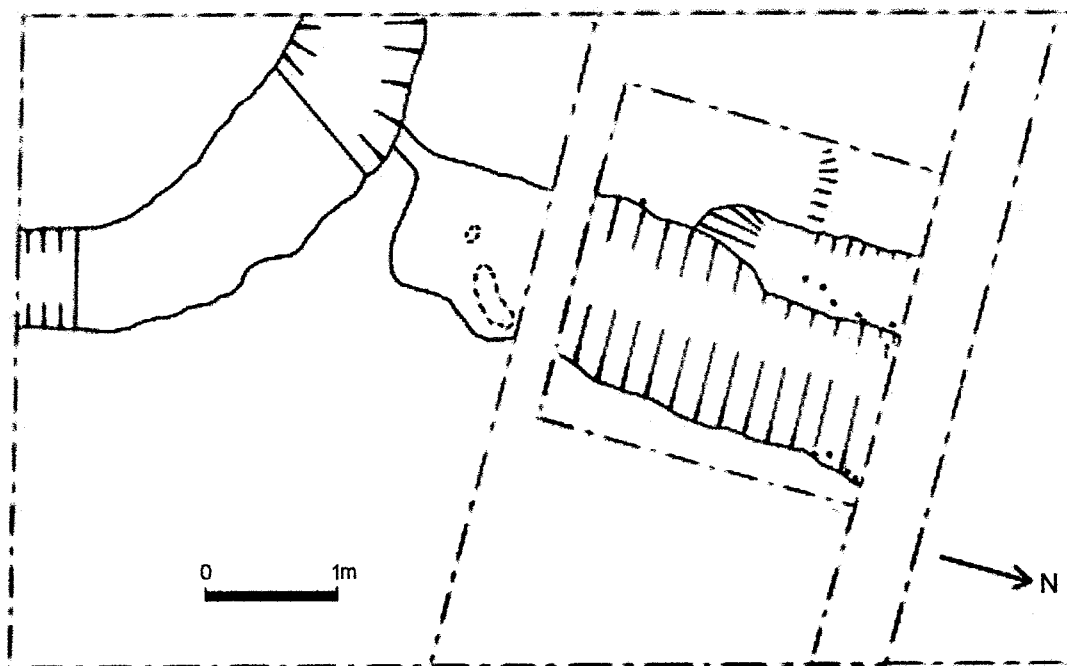
It was decided to open an evaluation trench to determine if the geophysics was purely mapping geology, to ascertain the preservation of any underlying archaeology, and to test the potential for future work. The gently undulating field with soils of glacio-fluvially derived sands and clays lies just over a kilometre from the River Hull, on slightly higher ground to the west of the floodplain area, yet close to the wetland area of Arram Carrs. As a small area was cleared using a JCB, it soon became apparent that underlying the topsoil was a dark layer of charcoal speckled soil containing pottery. As the field has been

very little ploughed, until recently, and there is no clear visual or documentary evidence for ridge and furrow, much of the Romano British horizon appears to have been preserved.

The excavation soon started to produce large quantities of Iron Age pottery, much of it concentrated in an area that was later found to be a substantial ditch about 2m wide and 1m deep. Upon enlarging the trench and cleaning the surface, the ditch terminal was revealed, which is as yet unexcavated. This area did not produce such large quantities of surface pottery, as the excavated area to the north; but it did produce the only metal object found during excavation, a small copper-alloy ring. Within the south-west corner of the trench a shallow curving gully has been identified, which may represent part of a roundhouse eaves-drip gully.

An interesting discovery at Chapel Garth has been the large incidence of quern stones. The complete top of a beehive-style rotary quern was found at the top of the ditch feature, with two other broken pieces from a similar item, at the very base. Field walking also produced several pieces of both quern base and top stones, with eleven separate querns identified altogether.

The pottery found within the ditch appears to represent Iron Age types. Many different forms were identified, mostly of a similar fabric; the pots are hand made and



Excavated features at Chapel Garth, Arram

Fiona Wilson, October 2003

Field Studies: Excavation at Chapel Garth, Arram

undecorated, with a rough external finish and of medium hardness. The temper is of crushed quartz, which is abundant, angular and ill-sorted. External and internal colours range from reddish and muddy buff, light grey and brown with areas of dark grey and black. The form of the pots appears to represent a domestic assemblage, with evidence of sooting. Considerable portions of some individual vessels were present and this together with a lack of weathering on the sherds suggests the ditch may have been used for the disposal of rubbish. Partial reconstruction of some pots was possible after excavation.

The layer overlying the ditch and most of the trench appeared to represent a later phase of activity. Wheel thrown pottery in the form of greyware and a shallow dish in a creamy coloured fabric was found, along with hand made pottery. This assemblage was discovered about 2m to the southeast of the ditch terminal and probably represents 2nd - 4th century forms. Hand made pottery was apparent across the whole of the trench, with several rims of the late 4th century Roman Huntcliffe style being identified.

Further evidence of activity occurring after the infilling of the ditch was the presence of a stakehole within the ditch fill. The excavation of the stake hole itself revealed no artefacts, but at the very top of the fill, completely filling the circumference of the hole, lay several broken pieces

of a single hand made pot and some pieces of slag. The stake hole pot was of a sandy fabric, and as with much of the other hand made pottery at this level, inclusions were only represented by holes and indentations on the pot surface, suggesting the use of a calcite based temper.

Fieldwork at Chapel Garth has revealed evidence of Iron Age and Romano British activity probably spanning several centuries. Due to relatively little ploughing in modern times, former land surfaces have survived and there is the potential for materials preserved in situ. We intend to carry out further excavation on the site in the summer, of 2004, in the hope of providing more information on its formation and chronology. More resistivity work is also planned, later in the year, in the hope that damper conditions may produce more conclusive results.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has helped us, in the preparation and fieldwork at Chapel Garth. To members of ERAS and the Field Studies Group, students from University of Hull and in particular- Rod Mackey, Peter Halkon, Helen Fenwick and Malcolm Lillie, many thanks and please come back next year!

Ian and Fiona Wilson

◆ *Dead Right ? A quick quiz* ◆

1. What is the name of the E. Yorkshire village where a chariot burial was excavated in 1997?
2. What type of burial chamber is West Kennett in Wiltshire?
3. What was the name given to the bog burial in Cheshire, popularly known as Pete Marsh?
4. What is thought to be the name of the person buried in Mound 1 at Sutton Hoo?
5. What is the most characteristic burial monument of the East Yorkshire Iron Age?
6. What is the term for a stone lined grave?
7. What is the popular name for the remains of the hominid *Australopithecus afarensis*, found in Ethiopia?
8. What is the name given to the process of removing flesh from bones after death?
9. What was found with the human remains in the pre-historic chambered cairn at Isbister, Orkney?
10. Which famous E. Yorkshire author is buried in Rudston churchyard?

Compiled by Peter Walker (answers on page 14)

How Not to See Rock Art in New Zealand

I'd like to be able to say that my attempts to find rock-art in New Zealand were thwarted by encounters with wild animals, difficult terrain or extreme weather. This is not the case. Nor is this article an account of failure on a heroic scale. What follows is simply an account of a modest failure to locate and visit Maori rock-art sites while I was on holiday earlier this year.

Geraldine, apparently, is famous for Country and Western music. You may wonder what this has to do with rock-art: Geraldine, I should explain, is a town somewhere in the middle of South Island, New Zealand. It is too small to appear in my New Zealand guidebook, but I'd been tempted to deviate from the route from Lake Tekapo to Christchurch by a leaflet which offered - as well as the usual campsites, picnic sites and walking trails - the magic words 'Maori rock-art', in relation to an area between the towns of Fairlie, Geraldine and Timaru. The leaflet merely indicated, however; it did not describe and, remembering my difficulties searching for monoliths and Neolithic tombs in Brittany, I thought a little more information was necessary for success. Hence my arrival at Geraldine Information Centre.

This was already my third attempt for information: after Timaru, I'd tried Fairlie, but their information centre was closed on Saturdays. The Geraldine centre, however, was open and I had arrived just at the right time for the Country and Western festival and the (voluntary) staff were very happy to tell me all about it - the singers, the concerts, the venues, and so on and on. I could also collect leaflets about New Zealand wine, white-water rafting, bungee-jumping, even places to stay in Australia - but not rock-art. The staff were polite, but seemed almost puzzled by my interest. I was prepared to be told that some sites were too sensitive to visit, or too difficult to reach, but not for an almost complete ignorance of such sites. None of these local people, presumably volunteering because of a pride in their home town, appeared to have visited any of the sites. Perhaps I had blotted my copybook by admitting my indifference to Country music. I do, however, get a real thrill at seeing rock-art in its natural - and frequently spectacular - surroundings.

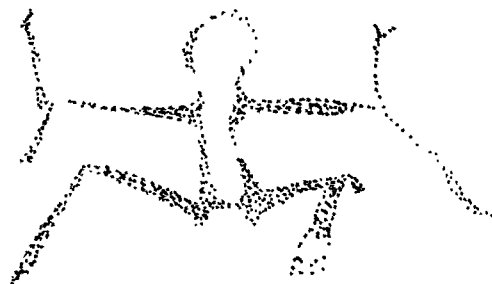
Persistence on my part did result in a search through files. A typed list of sites was discovered, but no map or directions. Anyone who has visited New Zealand will know that distances on the map inevitably take longer to travel than expected, whether as a result of scenic distractions, gravel roads or some strange factor special to the country.

I had to be in Christchurch by that night as my flight to Australia left the next day, so I decided to set off by car

along the most likely road, and hope for some sort of sign (material or otherwise). The lack of traffic along 'Middle Road' in the Raincliff Valley enabled me to scan my surroundings as I drove along and I grew hopeful as the valley became bordered by smooth vertical or overhanging rocks on the left. I spotted a wooden step beside the road. There was no accompanying sign but there was a post bearing a small, engraved metal plaque. I didn't know if this was a reproduction of a carving at that site or a general symbol for a Maori rock-art site.



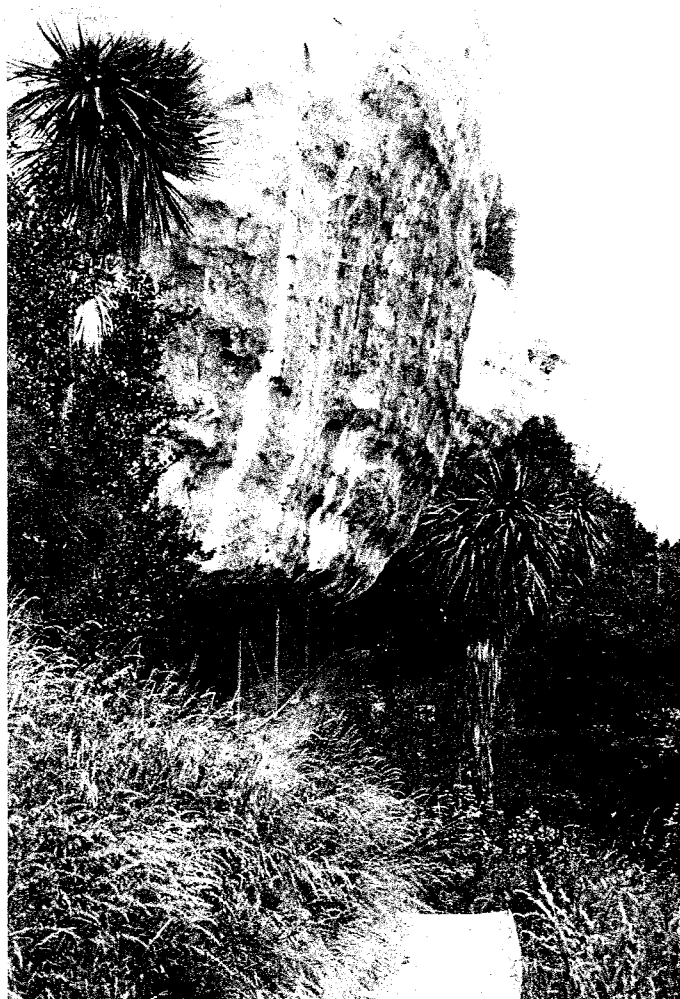
A short climb up the steps and I'd reached my goal - an overhanging rock protected by a metal cage. A fantail fluttered around me and repeatedly folded and unfolded its tail as I tried to distinguish the images and photograph them. I was not particularly successful at either activity, partly because the light was rather dim, but I could distinguish a number of 'flexed leg' anthropomorphs. I had to be content with my small achievement.



'Flexed leg' anthropomorph, Raincliff Valley, NZ.

My only visible company on the visit were a few birds, yet the steps seemed fairly new. Somebody obviously had been there recently and had decided that the site should be accessible, even if they had not also been to Geraldine Information Centre. A search on the Web after my return home found the information that a site in a limestone shelter at Raincliff is famous for a figure of people propelling a watercraft. If this was the overhang that I visited, then I'm afraid I failed to identify its most famous image! It could well be a different shelter, as another website informs me that there are at least 300 rock-art sites in South Canterbury and more are being discovered all the time. This tourism web page tells me that "there is a huge amount of work going on right now in

How Not to See Rock Art in New Zealand



Rock shelter in Raincliff Valley

preserving these sites and providing access and information for the growing number of visitors keen to have this unique glimpse into New Zealand's past".

The morning after my visit to Raincliff Valley I spent the few hours before my flight in Christchurch museum, where I got tantalisingly close to the information I sought. A Maori member of staff was the person to speak to - but, of course, it was her day off. There was very little relating to rock-art in the museum, but there was a cast of a deeply-incised engraving of spirals, (pictured right) which I think is from the North Island.

You may think that I deserved to fail because I had not researched the area beforehand and you would be right. However, in my defence, I was only in New Zealand for a week, as a detour from a visit to Australian relations. If anyone reading this is knowledgeable about New Zealand rock-art, please let me know -or better still, put it in writing for the next newsletter.

I have been unable to find a date for the site that I visited,

though I suspect that it might not be as old as some rock-art. I have read that, among the Pacific islands, New Zealand was colonised fairly late. I remain very confused about the dates of New Zealand rock-art. I realise that a continuing tradition can result in a wide range of dates, but I am unsure what is the earliest. One website talks about the prehistoric art of South Canterbury, while Frenchman's Gully in Raincliff Valley, which has bird-men and fish drawings, is described only as "over 200 years old".

Meridith Wilson has made a mathematical analysis of similarity between the rock-art motifs found in different regions of the Pacific (which covers a huge area from New Guinea to Easter Island). He then tested the relative patterns of similarity and difference against models of cultural transformation and colonisation in the Pacific. I could not even begin to evaluate the debate about cultural complexes of Polynesia, though it seems from Wilson's results that New Zealand is an isolated and homogenous group. This still doesn't date New Zealand rock-art, although I was able to take one fact away from the paper: since he analysed 38 anthropomorphs from New Zealand, there must be more petroglyphs to be seen. If the Central South Island Tourist website is to be believed, then future visitors should be more successful than I was.



Cast of engraved spirals, Christchurch Museum

How Not to See Rock Art in New Zealand

Finally, it appears that I need not have travelled so far to see New Zealand art in the landscape. Paul Bahn's little booklet, 'Geoglyphs', tells me that there is a 73 m long kiwi cut into Beacon Hill, near Salisbury Plain, by New Zealand troops during the First World War. I don't think I can comment on that!

After I'd written this article I found an abstract on the web of an article by Russell and Russell, (2002) entitled 'Little-known Maori Rock Art: a sad story', lamenting the lack of knowledge of Maori rock-art, even in New Zealand. He cites inaccessibility, lack of public awareness, and Maori exclusiveness for the lack of comprehensive recording of the art until recent decades. Some rock shelters have been damaged or destroyed by weathering, vandalism, road and dam building, or simply by rubbing by farm animals. Because so few sites are accessible, those few are overwhelmed by visitors, including school parties.

References

Bahn, P. G. (1997) *Geoglyphs*. Weidenfield and Nicholson, London.

Russell, P and P, (2002) Little-known Maori Rock Art: a sad story. In *L'Art avant l'histoire: La conservation de l'art préhistorique*

Trotter, M and B McCulloch (1971) *Prehistoric rock art of New Zealand*. A. H. Reed, Wellington.

Wilson, M. (1998) *Pacific rock-art and cultural genesis: a multivariate exploration*. In *The Archaeology of Rock-Art* ed Chippindale and Tagon, P.S.C. Cambridge University Press.

How Actually To See Rock Art in New Zealand!

Just before the newsletter deadline, I did find a good website. I cannot test it out, but it does list some sites that are accessible to the public, describes the site type and gives directions. It doesn't discuss dates for the images, except to say that the colonisation of New Zealand is comparatively recent in world terms.

A trust, Te Kaupapa i nga Tihituhi Tawhito o Te Waipounamu: South Island Maori Rock Art Project (SIMRAP) was set up in the 1990s. It enabled the completion of a pilot study around Oamaru, N. Otago. This study outdid all expectations, yielding both new sites and an increase in the number of images at known sites. There is even a good side to the patchy early recording of sites: in the 1930s some figures in the Weka Pass were 'freshened' with house paint! Approximately 100

untouched figures have now been found. While there are concerns about the vulnerability of some sites, the view of the Ngai Tahu is that, before management of these taoka (treasures) can be effective, a comprehensive overview is needed. The objectives of the project are to create for posterity, a permanent record of all the art and to produce a record that is sufficiently definitive both for developers and for Ngai Tahu, and to enable interested parties to make fully informed selections of those sites that merit further preservation and interpretation.

A full survey began in 1996 and is expected to run for 9 years. Rock-art can be recorded throughout the Ngai Tahu rohe potae (tribal area), from the hills above Kaikoura on the northern east coast of Te Waipounamu to the coastal caves occupied by penguins in Fiordland on the South Island's west coast. Most sites are in the Canterbury and Otago areas of the South Island, many being on private land, but the website lists four publicly accessible sites.

Takiroa, in the Waitaki Valley of N. Otago is perhaps the most well-known Maori rock-art site in the S. Island, significant for its high concentration of in-filled red designs, and for the variety of techniques employed.

Maerewhenua, also in the Waitaki Valley is a site which has been in use over a long period, as evidenced by the proximity of designs of a typical early style to drawings of European sailing ships and copperplate script.

Craigmore, in the 'Valley of the Moa' South Canterbury, is not far from the Pareora River. This site is famous as having the only undisputed ancient rock paintings of moa, the large bird which is now extinct. The red and black paintings are very faint, but still visible.

Weka Pass, in N. Canterbury, is another well-known site, but the most obvious figures at these shelters are the ones retouched for tourists in the 1930s. Weka Pass is north of Christchurch, near Waikari.

The ngaitahu website was updated in August 2003. If you have been to New Zealand and visited any of these sites, I'd love to hear from you.

Valerie Fairhurst

Website: www.ngaitahu.iwi.nz/dev-rockart

SIMRAP can be contacted through:

Rock Art Curator, Ngai Tahu Development Corp.,
PO Box 799

Dunedin, New Zealand

E-mail: info@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Archaeology in the News: prehistoric caves and new technology

Chauvet Cave, France

The Chauvet Cave, discovered in 1994 in France's Ardeche valley is once again in the news, with the publication of **Return to Chauvet Cave: Excavating the Birthplace of Art**. This publication, available in English from Thames and Hudson at £45 contains the 'The First Full Report' and is said to be 'one of the most magnificent reports ever produced'. However it is not so much the magnificence of the report which puts it in the news, as the controversy over the dating of the prehistoric paintings on the walls of the cave. The second issue (November 2003) of *Current World Archaeology*, the successful new magazine, edited by Andrew and Wendy Selkirk, carries an excellent article on the controversy. It was also picked up by the Daily Telegraph last month, which carried a short article and referred to the paper published by rock art specialist Paul Bahn (a long-standing ERAS member) and Paul Pettitt, who runs the Oxford radiocarbon laboratory. Their paper discussed the stylistic aspects of the cave paintings, challenging the radiocarbon dates obtained by the French archaeologists.

The cave apparently has 'red figure' drawings, mostly simple and consisting of lines of dots and the outlines of hands and 'black figure drawings'. The best paintings, mainly in black, are in the inner galleries of the cave and depict animals such as rhinoceroses, bears, mammoths, horses and felines. A series of radiocarbon tests has given very early dates, falling into two main groups. The test results date the paintings to 30,000 - 28,000 BC and hearths and torch wipes to 25,000 - 24,000 BC. Paul Pettitt point out that nearly all of the radiocarbon tests were carried out by one French laboratory. The pre-treatment of the minute samples of charcoal is vitally important and it would be usual, in such cases, to send samples to a range of different laboratories to compare the results. Paul Bahn points out that, stylistically, the paintings date to a period around 15,000 BC and the *Current World Archaeology* article asks whether it is really conceivable that any art style should remain virtually unchanged for 150 centuries? So enjoy the book if you can afford it, but watch out for further rumblings of discontent regarding the dating!

Laser Scanning and Digital Photography

British Archaeology, the excellent magazine of the CBA published two articles of great interest to rock art enthusiasts last month. Issue 73, (November, 2003) described how some of the sarsens at Stonehenge have been laser scanned, in attempt to discover more about the Bronze Age carvings known to be present. A dagger and axehead as well as 13 other axeheads were already known to be carved on Stone 53, for example, but were very difficult

to distinguish. This very small experimental project, carried out by jointly by Wessex Archaeology and Archaeoptics was much more successful than anticipated. Using a laser scanning device, in only 30 minutes, a total of 9 million measurements were collected and taken back to base for 'some number crunching' as they put it!

Archaeologists were amazed at the quality and range of results obtained from this one small exercise. The raw data taken by the scanner are in the form of 'point clouds' which are unconnected 3D points. These were converted by computer into surfaces formed of millions of triangles. After some manipulation using Demon, a powerful software programme developed by Archaeoptics, it was found that with virtual lighting, the most revealing and accurate recordings could be produced. Many more experimental manipulation techniques were tried and two previously unknown axe carvings were discovered. This technique has tremendous possibilities and although dealing with the data from a full survey would be a major project, it would seem to be a very worthwhile thing to do, before any further erosion of the stones occurs.

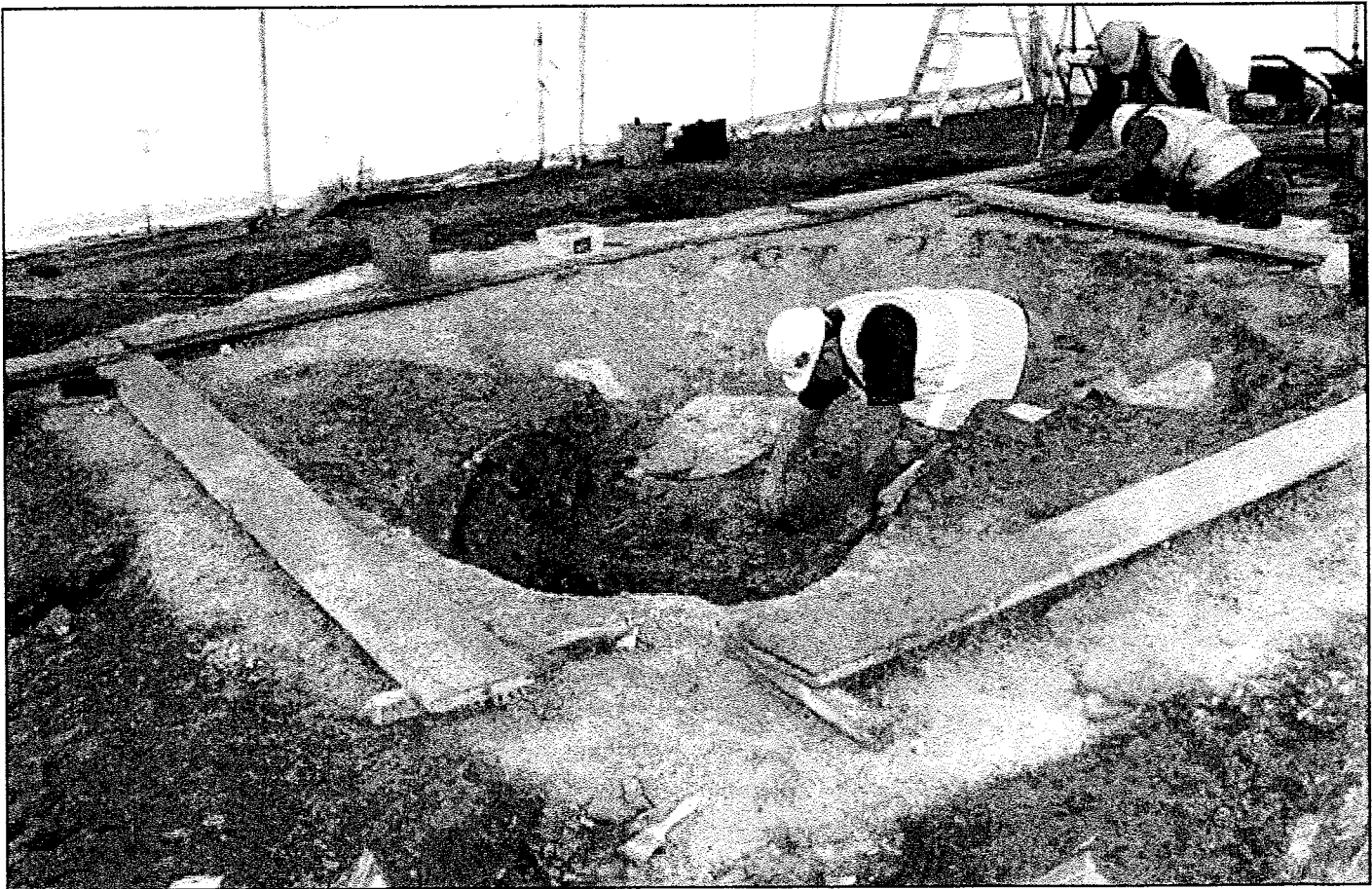
The same issue of *British Archaeology* looks at the potential for the use of digital photography with standard computer software to reveal further details of rock paintings. After taking digital photos, of Australian rock paintings and downloading them, Bruno David, Ian McNiven and John Brayer experimented with variations in colour, saturation, hue and contrast, achieving some very revealing results. Both these articles are really worth reading, even if you don't follow the more complex details.

Avelines Hole, Somerset

The Daily Telegraph, last month carried an interesting article by science correspondent, David Derbyshire about new studies of bones and teeth from a burial site discovered in the 18th century in a cave in the Mendips. Around a hundred skeletons, including both adults and children, were found lying side by side in the cave, but unfortunately most of the bones were destroyed in store, by bombing raids on Bristol in 1940. Surviving remains from the well known site, Aveline's Hole, have now been accurately dated to between 8,400 and 8,200 BC, 4000 years before the previous earliest known cemetery. Hunter-gatherer groups of this early Mesolithic period have been thought of as being permanently on the move and not in the habit of burying their dead in cemeteries such as this. (Although, a roaming, hunter-gatherer lifestyle does not necessarily preclude the burying of one's dead in a common place.) Peter Marshall of English Heritage commented that the new findings were 'of international significance'.

Kate Dennett

Chariot Burial at Ferrybridge



Ferrybridge chariot burial, with skeleton partly excavated, showing how tightly the ditch was positioned around the grave. Photograph: Rod Mackey

Adrian Havercroft, Rod Mackey and Kate Dennett, as excavators of the recent Iron Age chariot burial at Wetwang in East Yorkshire, were recently invited by Oxford Archaeology, together with Peter Halkon, Helen Fenwick and Malcolm Lillie of Hull University, to visit the excavation of a chariot burial near Ferrybridge, West Yorkshire. The site is well to the west of the known distribution of such burials. The small square barrow, already known from aerial photographs was revealed and excavated as part of ongoing archaeological work associated with the A1 Motorway upgrade.

The site was close to the huge landmark Ferrybridge cooling towers and the natural rock of the area is limestone. There did not appear to be any other Iron Age features in the immediate vicinity of the barrow.

The large north-south grave lay within a relatively small, square, ditched enclosure, which had been positioned diagonally to the grave alignment. In the tradition of the chariot burials in northern France, the complete chariot had been placed upright, in the grave, similarly to one found recently at Newbridge, Edinburgh and to possibly two more excavated in North Yorkshire in the 19th cen-

tury, at Cawthorne and Pexton Moor. At Wetwang, the grave, dug into the natural chalk had relatively few large pieces of chalk in the backfill, whereas at Ferrybridge the grave fill was very rubbly, much of the limestone background material apparently having been put back in. A large piece of limestone rubble lay immediately above the skull and had probably caused the damage visible on the published photographs.

The male skeleton, accompanied by joints of pork and a spear head, lay with head to the north, facing upwards with the legs tightly flexed. The position and angle of the body would seem to indicate that it had been contained within some sort of box. There were indications of organic material beneath the body and further work may reveal the nature of this. At the stage of excavation observed, it was noted that the dark organic stains around the body, possibly indicating a box of some sort, appeared to be relatively narrow, giving rise to the possibility that the body may have been contained in a coffin rather than the box of the chariot. Either way, its position suggests that the base-frame of the chariot lay forward of the axle. The burial of a complete, undismantled chariot is important in helping us to understand the structure of these vehicles.

Chariot Burial at Ferrybridge

(It may be better to see them as carriages, rather than war chariots.)

At the north end of the grave, lay the 5 plain terret rings, of iron sheathed in bronze, which from their upright position in the ground would appear to have been still attached to the wooden yoke when buried. The void left by the decayed wooden chariot pole was clearly visible. Due to the high rubble content of the grave fill, the excavation of such negative features as the yoke and pole had obviously been difficult, but had been carried out extremely well. (The whole area, surrounding the burial was covered by a marquee during the excavation)

The spoked chariot wheels had at the time of our viewing been exposed on their inner sides only, thus the linch pins and the outer pair of nave bands had not been uncovered. There was a large space in the grave at each side of the wheels, possibly to allow the vehicle to be lowered into the grave. The iron tyres appeared to be well preserved

and as at Newbridge, were not an exact matching pair, one having perhaps been renewed at some time.

The barrow ditch appeared to have been subject to considerable silting, before the deposition of a large number of cattle bones. It is estimated that the remains of over 300 cattle were in the middle/upper fill of the ditch, probably indicating feasting at a later date, perhaps within folk memory rather than immediately after of the burial. There did not appear to be the same evidence of feasting in the primary fill of the ditch, as occurred in the recently excavated Wetwang barrow ditch. We look forward with interest to see if there is any difference between the radiocarbon date of the skeleton and the cow bones in the ditch.

After conservation, the artefacts will go to Pontefract museum, pending the building of a new centre in Castleford.

Kate Dennett and Rod Mackey

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(For further details, tel 01904 433901 or email jc48@york.ac.uk)

Quiz Answers

1. Wetwang, 2. Long barrow, 3. Lindow Man, 4. Raedwald, 5. Square barrow, 6. Cist, 7. Lucy,
8. Excarnation, 9. Bones and claws of white tailed eagles, 10. Winifred Holtby.

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Dates for your Diary

- Wed 17 Dec** **ERAS Lecture** Tunnelling to the Past: excavations in Blanket Row, Hull.
Peter Cardwell of Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA)
- Wed 7 Jan** ERAS Field Studies meeting
- Wed 21 Jan** **ERAS Lecture** (Title to be arranged)
- Wed 4 Feb** **ERAS Field Studies Meeting**
- Wed 18 Feb** **ERAS Lecture** (Title to be arranged)
- Wed 3 Mar** **ERAS Field Studies Meeting**
- Fri 5 Mar** **ERAS Quiz and Supper.** The Friary, Beverley. details in the post to you after Christmas.
- Sat 6 Mar** Master Class on use of the TR/CIA Resistivity Meter. Millbrook Village Hall, Bedfordshire, £35 including lunch. Early booking essential. Forms from Kate Dennett, 01482 445232
- Sat 6 Mar** The Iron Makers of Myers Wood. (Medieval, monastic, industrial site) Day symposium at Huddersfield University. £15/£12.50, including lunch. Booking forms from Kate, 01482 445232 to be returned by 17th February
- Wed 19 Mar** **ERAS Lecture, Saxon, Drugs and Rock and Roll,**
Kevin Leahy, of North Lincolnshire Museum.
- Wed 21 April** **ERAS AGM 7. 0pm followed by lecture**
Roman Signal Stations on the Yorkshire Coast: recent excavations and research
Patrick Ottoway, York Archaeological Trust

All ERAS lectures are held in Room S1, Wilberforce Building, Hull University, Cottingham Road. at 7.30pm, free to members, £1.00 visitors.

Field study meetings are at 7.30pm in the upstairs room, Friends Meeting House, Percy St, off Albion St, Hull City Centre. No commitment necessary, just come and help to plan and carry out projects etc.

I would like to renew my ERAS membership from Jan 1st 2004
(If you joined between Sept and Dec 2003, your payment will include 2004)

Name(s).....Address

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I enclose a cheque payable to ERAS for £..... (£5 ***fulltime** student, £15 ordinary member, £20 family)

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

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