

# ERAS news

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No 38

September 1992

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I must apologize for the omission of summaries of some of last year's lectures, but I am about to leave the country - not to avoid editing further issues of ERAS News but simply for a few days' holiday. The fact that I am not actually writing this on the cross-channel ferry is probably due more to the lack of a lap-top computer than anything else. I can only recommend that you try not to miss any of the inviting-sounding 1992-93 lectures previewed by Andrew Foxon in the following pages. More 'goodies' to look forward to are the Hermann Ramm memorial lecture on 31 October and the ERAS excursion to South Wales on April 13-16, preliminary information about which appears in this newsletter.

I must thank the contributors to this issue: Andrew Foxon, Peter Halken and Bryan Sitch and remind you that I am always pleased to receive items for ERAS News, so if you have visited any archaeological sites or museums this summer, write and let us know. I can accept articles on disk (please contact me to check on format compatibility), typewritten or (ideally) handwritten. Copy date for the next issue is 15 November. Expect to read an account of some of the megaliths of Brittany in ERAS News (if I catch the ferry!).

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## ERAS LECTURE PROGRAMME 1992-93

1992

Sept. 23      **Reports Meeting**

The annual round-up of work undertaken and discoveries made in the area over the last year.

**Oct. 21 Jim Spriggs The Worcester Pilgrim: a suitable case for treatment**

Head of conservation for the York Archaeological Trust since its foundation in 1972, Jim Spriggs oversees the preservation of the many finds made through excavation in York. Such is the expertise the York laboratory has developed that it also provides conservation facilities for many sites throughout the country. One of Jim's own specialisms is organic materials and he was responsible for the treatment and reconstruction of the timber Viking buildings in the Jorvik Viking Centre.

His talk concerns one particularly fascinating project. Excavation in Worcester Cathedral uncovered the remarkably well preserved remains of a medieval pilgrim complete with his staff and cockleshell - a badge of pilgrimage. The burial was lifted intact and brought to York where a team of researchers have gradually unravelled the various strands of evidence to provide a clear picture of the individual, his life, times and a tentative identification of his name.

**Nov. 18 Julian Litten The dead beneath our feet: the archaeology of the English burial vault 1450-1800**

Julian W S Litten of the Victoria and Albert Museum is most widely known for his work on English burial practice, his book 'The English Way of Death: the common funeral since 1450' and his involvement as consultant for the 'Art of Death' exhibition at the V & A. He is an authority on ecclesiastical conservation.

In his talk to the Society he will be bringing his considerable knowledge and a wealth of illustrations to explore the changing ways we have buried and commemorated the dead. It has been said that no one else this side of the grave has as good a knowledge of the subject!

**Dec. 16 Dr Paul Bahn America on the rocks: rock art of the North American Indian**

A native and resident of Hull, Paul Bahn studied at Cambridge and Liverpool Universities and is a world authority on rock art - art on rocks in the open air or in caves. Amongst many other papers he has published an excellent book on European Palaeolithic art, the new 'standard' university



Medieval pilgrim with staff and shell attached to his hat as a sign of pilgrimage

textbook (with Professor Lord Renfrew) and a recent study of the Easter Island figures, as well as 'The Bluffers' Guide to Archaeology'.

Now a researcher, author and freelance writer, Paul has had the opportunity to examine first-hand many of the world's important rock art sites. Recent trips have taken him to China, Australia and southern Africa, but it is the rock art of the native North Americans which he will be exploring with the Society.

1993

Jan. 20 Mary Kershaw **Pieces of the Past: Medieval Knaresborough**

Mary Kershaw was recently promoted to the position of Curator of Harrogate Museums and Art Gallery Service. Previously she was their archaeologist and served as Programme Secretary for CBA Yorkshire & Humberside.

She has been involved with a number of projects at Knaresborough, near Harrogate, and will be speaking about two of them in particular. Over several years she directed excavations at Knaresborough Castle and has more recently been investigating St Robert's Cave, a 12th century hermit's site.

Andrew Foxon  
Keeper of Archaeology  
Hull City Museums and Art Galleries

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## **ERAS EXCURSION April 16-18 1993**

### **South Wales**

Arrangements are well underway for what should be a most enjoyable and interesting visit. Dave Evans, who is as his name suggests a native of those parts, and myself are attempting in our itinerary to provide a cross-section through time of the rich archaeology on offer in this beautiful part of the British Isles.

Travelling from Hull (probably *via* Goole) the coach will take us into

Wales through the borders and down the Wye Valley. We will probably be taking in a hillfort and castle on the way down to Usk College of Agriculture, where we will be staying. Dr Richard Brewer of CBA Wales and an archaeologist at the National Museum in Cardiff has offered to be our guide around the Roman Town of Caerwent, with its very impressive Roman walls, where he has been excavating. We will be visiting the excellent Roman Legionary Museum at Caerleon, the Legionary Baths and the impressive amphitheatre, one of the best preserved Roman structures in Britain.

The prehistorians will no doubt look forward to seeing the remarkable neolithic chambered tombs at Tinkinswood, to the west of Cardiff. We also plan to meet up with the Monmouth Archaeological Society, winners of the Pitt-Rivers Award and Silver Trowel Award of the 1988 British Archaeological Awards, to be shown round their excavations in the medieval town, which have also recently provided some of the earliest evidence for the Romans in Wales. Tintern Abbey and either White Castle or Chepstow castle are also possibilities for our excursion. Please reserve the dates in your diaries and look out for further details.

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## **NEWS FROM THE MUSEUMS**

### **Some recent identifications at the Hull and East Riding Museum**

The identification service at the Hull and East Riding Museum has had a busy summer, some results of which I am pleased to be able to present to readers of ERAS News. Unfortunately lack of space precludes a full discussion of every object received for identification and it is only possible to feature here a few of the more important, interesting or unusual enquiries. The identification service is free to members of the general public and staff will offer an opinion on any archaeological material - including metal-detected finds provided they are documented - brought to the Hull and East Riding Museum.

Readers of the Hull Daily Mail will no doubt have seen the report about

the Treasure Trove Inquest held in Hull on 13th August (Green 1992). Treasure Trove law dates back to medieval times and is quite complicated (Richard I was mortally wounded trying to enforce it). In England and Wales it states that ownership of silver and gold objects, concealed with the intention of recovery by an owner who can no longer be traced, rests with the Crown. The Coroner is empowered to call a jury to decide whether such material has been deliberately concealed or whether it has been lost accidentally. In the event of objects being declared Treasure Trove, the British Museum, acting as an agent of the Crown, usually compensates the finder at the market value of the object, although sometimes people have been penalised for failure to report discoveries promptly.

The recent inquest in Hull found that none of the sixty items were Treasure Trove. The only gold item was an Iron Age gold stater of the Coritani or Corieltavi as they now tend to be called (Tomlin 1983 but see also Todd 1991: 19-21). The coin was found by Mrs Virginia Brown at Cottingham. The coin has a nice, crisp reverse (Figure 1) depicting the figure of a horse galloping left with a whirligig beneath. A short line above is part of a panel or cartouche containing pellets which did not make it onto the coin disc when it was struck. The obverse bears the last vestiges of the headband of the god Apollo which appeared on the Macedonian prototype for Celtic coins (see *ERAS News* 35, 30-34). The stater is Derek Allen's Type L (numbers 242-243) and Van Arsdell's Dominoe Type (number 829-3). It weighs 5.32 grams or 82.09 grains.



Figure 1: Iron Age gold stater from Cottingham  
Scale 2:1 (Bryan Sitch)

The coin is not simply of interest because it is made of gold but because of what it can tell us about the people - the Parisi - who lived in the East Riding during the Iron Age. Over eighty gold, silver and copper alloy Iron Age coins have been found in the region since the early 1900s and a few are in the Hull City Museums numismatic collections. To her credit, Mrs Brown has expressed a desire for the Cottingham gold stater to come to the Hull and East Riding Museum and the arrangements are now under discussion.

I am grateful to Mr White of Drifffield for reporting an enamelled copper alloy Romano-British disc brooch (Figure 2), found whilst metal-detecting on the Yorkshire Wolds. The site cannot be named for fear of attracting unwelcome interest. The decoration consists of a bar and two half moons of orange-red enamel within two chords of green enamel. Unfortunately parts of the enamel have decayed but this is still an attractive piece. There are twelve projecting lugs on the circumference and a green pellet in the centre.

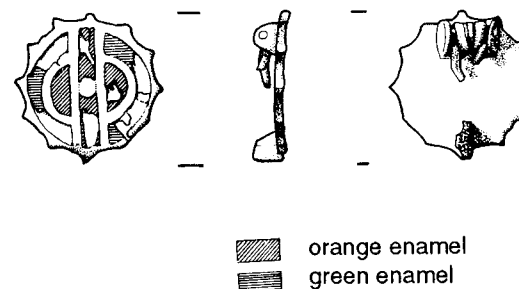


Figure 2  
Scale 1:1 (Bryan Sitch)

A very similar brooch is illustrated in Richard Hattatt's *Brooches of Antiquity* (1987: 175, number 1040). Hattatt mentions other examples from Brough (which one?), Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Stratford-on-Avon, perhaps pointing towards a workshop in the Midlands (ibid 172). He does not say whether museum collections were checked but the brooch appears to be quite rare. I would be very interested to learn if readers know of any other similar pieces.

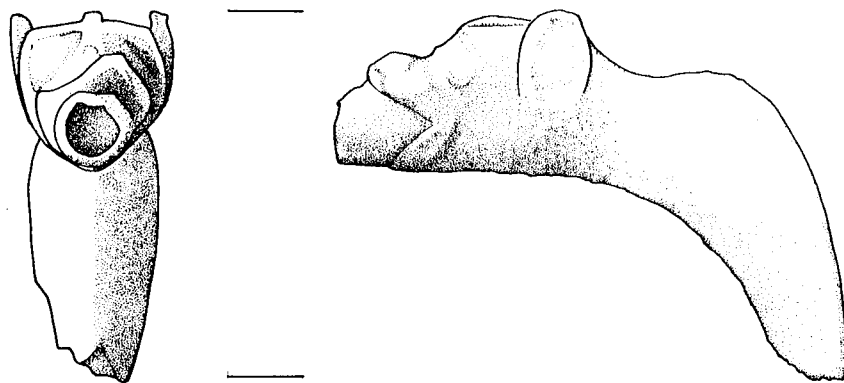


Figure 3: Late medieval copper alloy zoomorphic spout found near Hull  
Scale 1:1 (BJS)

Figure 3 shows a copper alloy zoomorphic spout, probably of late - post medieval date, found by Mr Steven Swales whilst metal-detecting near Hull. The spout was originally part of an ewer and a complete example from Strata Florida Abbey in Wales is illustrated in Figure 4 (after Lewis 1978: 30). I have shaded the latter's spout to show where the Hull piece would have fitted.



Figure 4: 16th century copper alloy ewer from Strata Florida Abbey in Wales  
Scale 1:4 (BJS)

Finally, to bring us almost up to date, there is a military badge found by a pupil at Driffield Secondary School. It is 90 mm in diameter and consists of a wide ring of copper alloy with a regimental badge partially covering the hole in the middle (Figure 5). The arc above the horse bears the legend 'SCOTTISH LIVERPOOL' and the scroll beneath 'KINGS'.

The Liverpool Scottish battalion of the King's Regiment was raised in 1900 as part of the great wave of patriotic feeling roused by the Boer War (McGilchrist 1930). The battalion was recruited amongst young Scotsmen in Liverpool (there was already a London Scottish Battalion). The Liverpool Scottish arrived too late for any of the engagements of the Boer War but it served with distinction during the First World War (City of Liverpool Museums, no date). One of its officers, Captain Noel Godfrey Chavasse, won the V.C. and bar for his heroic action in rescuing wounded men from no-man's land despite himself having suffered a fatal wound.

The Liverpool Scottish naturally wore tartan and a large brooch like this would have secured a sash or a kilt. We can only speculate on how it came to rest in a field near Driffield. I am grateful to Ross Weekes and his unknown pupil at Driffield Secondary School for sending this to the museum.

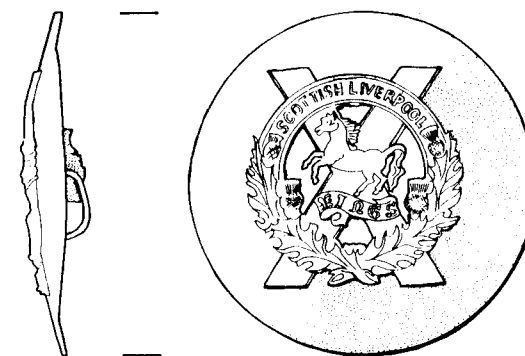


Figure 5: Copper alloy regimental badge of the King's Liverpool Scottish,  
found near Driffield  
Scale 1:2 (BJS)

The four items described above are just a few of the identifications undertaken for members of the public by staff at the Hull and East Riding Museum. Files of identifications go back to 1976 and represent a rich seam for future research. I hope to be able to offer a more detailed account of the identification service in a future issue of *ERAS News*.

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### A funny thing happened on the way to the museum The Roman invasion of Hull 1992

What's this you say: the Romans in Hull? Well if you had visited the Hull and East Riding Museum in mid-July you would have seen the second Roman

invasion of Hull - and large crowds wielding weaponry, grinding grain and asking all sorts of questions about Romano-British life.

We usually think of the Romans as coming from the European continent via southern England. Well, ours came down the A1 and the A19, from South Shields and Co Durham and arrived as Time Travellers and Quinta Cohors Gallorum.



Let me part the mists of time a bit. During July several events were funded by the Hull Festival, and Hull Museums were successful in getting approval for what is loosely known in the trade as 'living history' or in the jargon as 'first person interpretation'. No clearer? Well, in the year that saw Hull invaded by the English Civil War Society, we thought we would get our own back.

Working in the Roman galleries from Monday-Friday we had two individuals in 4th century character. One took the part of a native Briton - Hyfaidd - a slave working in the Petuarian workshop at Brough which produced the fine mosaics you can see in the museum. The other - Thamalla - was a North African soldier who was part of an elite regiment sent to Britain to put down rebellion. Whether working with booked schools groups or with 'ordinary' members of the public, they answered questions about what their lives were like, how well fed they were, what the country looked like, how long it takes to make a mosaic, what the army thinks of the native people, and almost anything under the sun.

Extensively briefed, Hyfaidd and Thamalla gave very a convincing impression. They were dressed in replica clothing, confused by modern attitudes and equipment (such as cameras) but above all made people think a little more deeply about the distant past.

At the weekend we were invaded by Quinta Cohors Gallorum (the fifth detachment of Gauls). This is a 3rd century Romano-British re-enactment group based at South Shields Roman fort near Newcastle (itself a museum). The group has an interest in both military and civilian life and while some members showed how to put on chain armour, helmets and weaponry, others taught writing and weaving and explained about Roman baking and cooking. With a soldier based at the entrance to the museum, this proved a great attraction as children and adults alike took part and kept the group working for every minute of their visit! I spent an afternoon recovering from a particularly well-spiced Roman sausage - watch out the for whole peppercorns!

Whilst such events cannot tell us exactly what the past was like, they go a long way to making us think how different and how similar things were. It is an excellent way of finding out about the technical details of making and using things and brings us to think about how extensive the Roman Empire was and what it was like to be far from home in a strange land.

Of equal importance is the realisation of our own prejudices: I did not realise they were so skilled in metalworking, pottery, making mosaics ...; did they have enough time to go to the theatre?; I did not know there were black Africans in Britain then .....

What we found most impressive was the way that visitors made use of the galleries and displays. Having seen the re-enactment groups, they spent longer looking in the cases and in discussing the objects and words they saw. Their interest had been caught and they understood better the significance of the fragments of everyday life we display.

We received good press and radio coverage (although misinformation in one local paper had visitors coming a week early) and as a result our visitor numbers for the week were 2737 compared to 1812 for the equivalent week in 1991. Pleased as we are at such an increase in numbers, visitor reaction to the event was even more satisfying. To get such qualitative and quantitative success was very gratifying.

As a result we hope to have other events like this in the future - perhaps next time it will be Saxons or Normans. Given that the English Tourist Board is promoting 1993 as the year of the Romans (the 1950th anniversary of the Claudian invasion!) maybe it will be Romans again, even if they did

not permanently move north of the Humber till almost 30 years late.

Andrew Foxon

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## Not D.R.O.W.N.I.N.G. but W.A.V.I.N.G.

The East Riding of Yorkshire has some of the fastest-eroding stretches of coastline in North-west Europe and there is clearly great potential for a society such as ERAS to play an important role in archaeological monitoring. Over the last few years Valerie Fairhurst, as local co-ordinator of W.A.V.E.S. (W.A.R.P. Accredited Volunteers for Evaluation and Survey. W.A.R.P = Wetland Archaeology Research Project) (Ed: yes, really!) has regularly visited the foreshore at North Ferriby, where parts of three plank-built sewn boats were excavated during the 1940s and in 1963. Access to the foreshore is dependent upon the conjunction of tides, weather and the availability of enthusiastic volunteers willing to brave the glutinous Humber mud.

In late August some members of ERAS walked the stretch of foreshore between Melton and North Ferriby. Hopes were fulfilled in a different way from that expected when Susan Gibson found a gun in its holster! (Ed: This is the first time I've ended up in the police station as a result of archaeological fieldwork.) Undeterred she then spotted some animal bones sticking up out of the mud in the area to the east of the boat sites. These proved to be the skull, pieces of the lower jaw and ribs of a very large creature. One half of the jaw was about to be washed away and it was recovered for identification by staff in the Natural History Department at Hull City Museums. Michael Boyd, Assistant Keeper of Natural History, identified the jaw fragment as that of a large cow and suggested that the skull might possibly be that of an aurochs (*Bos primigenius*), the ancestor of domestic cattle. A return visit recovered more of the skull (including the horns which had been buried in the mud), an impressive humerus, a vertebra, rib fragments and some pieces of wood, although conditions on the foreshore were atrocious. I am particularly grateful to Graham Bate for kindly taking level readings and to Valerie Fairhurst, Susan Gibson and Diane Brown for coping with the strong winds. Their perseverance was rewarded, however, when Michael Boyd identified the skull as very

probably that of an aurochs. The species is thought to have become extinct in this country during the Bronze Age (e.g. Bedlow 1991) but it survived in Poland into the 17th century (Zeuner 1963: 203).

The North Ferriby specimen may prove to be of greater interest to natural historians rather than archaeologists. A link with the North Ferriby boats is not necessarily proven but in all fairness there has not yet been time to evaluate the discovery. It is certainly a potential exhibit in the new displays about people and the landscape at the Hull and East Riding Museum scheduled for 1995. The programme of inspections of the foreshore will continue, weather and tides permitting, and there will be opportunities for survey work, should other ERAS members be interested.

I would like to thank Michael Boyd, the Assistant Keeper of Natural History at Hull City Museums for kindly identifying the bones and providing the bibliographic references.

#### Bibliography

Bedlow, R (1991) '20,000 went to Bronze Age orgy' *The Independent* 14.10.91

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Bryan Sitch  
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Hull City Museums and Art Galleries

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#### A NEW DIRECTION FOR THE CBA

As some readers may already know, in January of this year, I took up a new post as Education Officer for the Council for British Archaeology and York Archaeological Trust, which I enjoy very much as it encompasses a national role in promoting archaeology in all aspects of education, with working for one of the largest archaeological trusts in Britain. It is therefore an opportune time to inform or remind readers about the CBA and the changes that will be taking place in its organisation.

The CBA, a registered charity, exists to promote the study and safeguarding of Britain's historic environment. Formed in 1944 as archaeologists became aware of the threats to Britain's heritage posed by post-war reconstruction, it has a regional network which brings together all bodies concerned with the protection, study and interpretation of Britain's past. The CBA will therefore be celebrating its Golden Jubilee in 1994. Its regional groups bring together archaeologists of all kinds, amateur and professional. We are in a very active region as those who attend the annual symposium in Leeds, organised by CBA Yorkshire and Humberside each February, will know.

There is a core of full-time staff, now mainly based in York which is due to become the national Headquarters, who deal with research, conservation, education, publication and information. The Conservation Officer and assistants, for example, give advice on applications for the demolition of historic buildings in England and Wales, relying heavily on voluntary help within the regions. They have also appeared to give evidence at public enquiries such as those which recently have been held at Stonehenge and Hadrian's Wall. The CBA publishes a range of handbooks, major excavation reports and *British Archaeological News*; the latter, BAN, currently appears six times a year and remains one of the best guides to issues and events on the British archaeological scene.

The CBA also provides grants to support publication and answers thousands of enquiries about all aspects of archaeology.

In April 1993 there will be an opportunity for you to support the work of the CBA by joining as an individual member. The regional structure, however, will continue to exist as on joining, members will subscribe centrally and then be allocated to a regional group. The membership package will include subscription to BAN, which will by then be even better and appear more frequently. The fee will be around £15 per annum. It will still be possible to join as a member of a local region, (eg, just CBA Yorkshire and Humberside) but BAN will not be included, nor will other benefits of national membership.

Why not join the CBA as it looks forward to the challenges of the 21st century and help to ensure its aims and activities are continued? For further details about the CBA contact:



The Secretary  
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For CBA Yorkshire and Humberside contact:

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(Ed: several ERAS members enjoyed the 1992 Beatrice de Cardi lecture and associated lectures; the day's lecture programme was free to CBA Group 4 members. The various dayschools are very moderately priced: for example a pottery dayschool on 14 November at £2.50 to members of CBA 4).

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### **Piecing together past landscapes - practical archaeology in the southern Vale of York and Yorkshire Wolds**

Here is an opportunity for readers to get involved in active investigation of this rich historic environment by field walking and geophysical survey on sites revealed by aerial photography. Jim Pocock and myself will be leading this work which forms part of a course run by Hull University Department of Adult Education and the WEA, centred on Holme on Spalding Moor. ERAS members will be welcome to attend the whole course or just come along for the practical days (at a reduced fee - though this is still under negotiation with the WEA). Sites visited will include a newly discovered Roman villa in the Pocklington area, where those participating in the "Seeing Beneath the Soil" practical day last March found much Roman pottery, roof tile and animal bone. More details of this and other sites will be given at the Reports meeting.

We also hope to examine further sites in the Market Weighton, Holme-on-Spalding Moor, and North and South Cliffe areas, especially those along the eastern margins of the former tidal estuarine inlet of the River Humber in which the Hasholme Boat sank and those associated with the Roman

road leading from Brough to Stamford Bridge/York.

The practical sessions will last from 10.30am to about 4.00 pm. Participants will be carrying out line-walking, gridded surveys and will have hands-on experience of geophysical surveying. The Thursday evening sessions, 7.30pm - 9.30pm at the County Primary School, Holme-on-Spalding Moor, will involve washing, sorting and identifying material found and analysing results. More precise details are available from me at Field Study meetings, lecture meetings or by phone.

Dates are as follows:

- 17. 9.92 (Thursday)- introductory session- Holme School 7.30pm - 9.30pm
- 26. 9.92 - fieldwalking
- 1. 11.92 - fieldwalking
- 12. 11.92 - Holme School
- 12. 12.92 - fieldwalking
- 17. 12.92 - Holme School
- 10. 1.93 - fieldwalking
- 28. 1.93 - Holme School
- 13. 2.93 - fieldwalking
- 25. 2.93 - Holme School
- 11. 3.93 - Holme School

- 3. 4. 93 - alternative day for fieldwalking.

Peter Halkon  
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### **LECTURE SUMMARIES**

Dec 18: **In the steps of Sir Mortimer Wheeler.**  
**Excavations at Maiden Castle, Dorset** Niall Sharples

Maiden Castle must rank as one of the most famous archaeological sites in

Britain. This is due not only to the sheer scale of its defences but also to the excavations conducted there by Sir Mortimer Wheeler between 1934 and 1937. The discovery of what was then interpreted as dramatic evidence of the storming of the hillfort by Roman legionaries captured the popular imagination. A photograph of the unfortunate Briton who died with a ballista bolt in his spine is almost obligatory in books about Roman Britain. Recent work under the auspices of English Heritage, however, has prompted a reinterpretation of the evidence from the earlier excavations.

Niall Sharples' involvement with Maiden Castle started in 1985 when English Heritage set up a project to re-examine the monument for various reasons. Since the 1930s, livestock and visitors had caused considerable erosion, which it was necessary to repair; there had originally been little attempt to interpret the site for the benefit of the general public, and finally, the development of new archaeological techniques and commensurate expansion of knowledge about the past had not affected Maiden Castle, whose interpretation remained much as it had in Wheeler's time. There was clearly a need to upgrade the standard of presentation to the public, to deal with management problems and to improve archaeological understanding of the hillfort.

Maiden Castle lies in the centre of South Dorset, just 11/2 miles (2.5km) south of Dorchester on an isolated chalk ridge overlooking the valley of the South Winterbourne, a tributary of the river Frome. The earliest occupation of the site began about 6000 years ago during the neolithic period, when the eastern edge of the ridge was cleared and an oval enclosure consisting of two concentric ditches laid out. Archaeological remains from this time survive best where the ground surface was covered by the later Bank Barrow, a mound of earth 546m long, which acted as a funerary monument and a territorial marker. In the Early Bronze Age the abandoned hilltop was used as agricultural land and it was only much later during the Iron Age that the hillfort began to take shape.

In contrast to the hilltop, the surrounding landscape was quite densely occupied during the Bronze Age. At Middle Farm on the western outskirts of Dorchester, a Late Bronze Age settlement consisting of a roundhouse surrounded by a ditched enclosure has been excavated. Discoveries of single items of Bronze Age metalwork in the area testify to contemporary human activity. Status within the community appears to have been defined by the control of the creation and exchange of metal implements.

During the Early Iron Age a small enclosure of 6.4 hectares (16 acres) was created on the ridge. This was a good position, being close to good agricultural land, and water was easily obtainable from the South Winterbourne. The defences of this, the earliest phase of the hillfort, comprised a single bank with v-shaped ditch. Wheeler believed he had found evidence of a timber structure supporting the bank but the more recent excavations suggest that Wheeler's postholes were probably part of an elaborate wooden gateway. The bank is more likely to have been a simple dump rampart, which is typical of other hillfort defences, such as those of Danebury and Yarnbury.

Over one hundred hillforts have been identified in Wessex and there appears to be a link between their siting and the surrounding landscape. They invariably overlook low-lying land at the boundary between arable and pasture land. Unfortunately the interiors of many hillforts have been disturbed by later occupation. One exception is Chalbury, overlooking Weymouth Bay, where evidence of Early Iron Age settlement has been found. Chalbury hillfort was built on a limestone outcrop and its pockmarked surface reveals the tall-tale signs of over forty roundhouses. The evidence suggests that the hillforts were intensively occupied and were well-ordered settlements.

Before the Middle Iron Age Maiden Castle was no different from many of the Wessex hillforts but in about 450BC it was expanded from 6.5 hectares (16 acres) to 19 hectares (47 acres). The surrounding bank and ditch was strengthened so that the vertical distance between the bottom of the ditch and the top of the rampart was about 8m. Over the next 200 years in a more or less continual phase of construction, further bank and ditches were added. Wheeler thought he could see discrete sequences of construction but the recent work suggests that this was an oversimplification. As part of these changes the east gate was completely redesigned. In the past this was interpreted as a response to more sophisticated methods of warfare but the hillfort is so massive, with numerous blindspots, that it would have been impractical to defend it without large numbers of warriors on each rampart. Niall Sharples suggested that the defences made more sense as an enormous status symbol for the inhabitants of Maiden Castle.

The recent excavations adjacent to Wheeler's Trench D exploited the natural accumulation of soil in a hollow behind the south-western rampart. Here the stratigraphy survived relatively well, with evidence for a

phased chronological sequence. During phase 1 the principal focus of human activity lay in the south-west corner of the hillfort and the area was covered in gullies, pits and postholes. During phase 2 three roundhouses were built, complete with cobbled areas, boundary fences and a wooden stairway leading onto the rampart. The houses were up to 6m in diameter and had an inner ring of upright timbers supporting a conical thatched roof, similar to the roundhouse reconstruction in the Celtic World Gallery in the Hull and East Riding Museum. Three hearths and the remains of a clay dome oven were found. These features survived because they were covered by soil creeping down the back of the rampart. During phase 3 a row of three roundhouses was built aligned along a roadway. This seems to suggest that the interior of the hillfort was reorganised. The other striking feature about this phase is the large number of pits excavated in the chalk for use as grain silos. Measuring 3m in diameter and 3m deep, the pits cover the interior of the hillfort and are especially noticeable on the magnetometer survey of Maiden Castle. The pits were lined and sealed with clay to preserve grain over winter. The ability to store large amounts of grain in this way may explain why the hillfort expanded. Sometimes the clay seal failed, the grain perished and the silos were used as refuse pits. Some of the best finds came from these pits, including some almost complete pots. During phase 4 the organised settlement gave way to a haphazard spread of occupation. The area was abandoned some time in the early 1st century AD.

These developments may also be seen at Hambledon Hill, which expanded from 4.85 hectares (12 acres) to 12.5 hectares (31 acres) in the Early Iron Age. The huts were more tightly packed because the ridge on which the hillfort was constructed was narrower and steeper than at Maiden Castle. In the Middle Iron Age the inhabitants appear to have moved from Hambledon Hill to Hod Hill, which is bigger, flatter and better-suited to the organised settlements being built at this time.

Niall Sharples also described recent work on the so-called war cemetery at the eastern entrance to Maiden Castle. In the late Middle Iron Age part of the area between the elaborate earthworks was used as a burial ground. Wheeler found 52 crouched skeletons usually lying on their right side, the head facing east and invariably accompanied by grave goods such as necklaces, knives, axes, rings, pots and joints of meat. Thirteen skeletons showed pathological evidence of wounding and Wheeler suggested that these were victims of the final Roman assault on the hillfort. Although

this interpretation has undoubted Romantic appeal the archaeological evidence need not be associated exclusively with the Roman conquest. The people could have died during the decade before or after the invasion and they could just as easily represent the victims of tribal squabbles or a later rebellion against the Romans. The Maiden Castle cemetery might also be a variant of a ritual activity connected with the abandonment of the hillfort. At South Cadbury and Danebury bits of human remains and scattered objects were found near an entrance.

Adjacent to the cemetery was a metal-working area in which over 62kg of smithy waste was found. This, the most productive iron-working area yet found in south-west England, probably forged iron ingots obtained through trade with specialist production centres. Both the smithy area and the cemetery lay on the edge of the hillfort settlement as though this was a prescribed place for unusual activities.

The recent excavations at Maiden Castle may be attributed to control of agricultural produce. Sharples suggested that the decline of the hillfort might have been caused by entrepreneurs who exercised individual control over the production and trade of prestige goods, which underlined the social cohesion and authority of the community.

Niall Sharples directed the Maiden Castle project from 1985 and has spent several years writing up the results of the excavations. The full excavation report was due for completion early in 1992 and so should now be available.

#### Bibliography

Sharples, Niall M (1991) *Maiden Castle* Batsford and English Heritage, London

Bryan Stith  
Hon Secretary ERAS

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Jan 22: **A Saxon trip to the flicks: the Middle  
Saxon aristocratic site at Flixborough** Kevin Leahy &  
Ben Whitwell

This site on wind-blown sand came to light in 1988 following a planning

application for sand extraction. Partly because of records of earlier finds and partly because of the site's situation against the dip-slope of the Jurassic limestone and near the junction of the Humber and the Trent, Kevin Leahy of Scunthorpe Museum visited the site with Mary Lakin and decided that it might merit further investigation. This initially took the form of a watching brief, while quarrying work proceeded. With the help of the developer, who was fortunately sympathetic to archaeology, the upper layer of sand was removed with a bulldozer. A fine brooch with the figure of a wolf scratched on its back was found and a number of burials associated with iron coffin fittings. Little of the bones remained but sufficient to indicate extended burials aligned east-west in the Christian manner. Some of the burials were intercut, indicating that the burial area had been in use for some time. Fieldwalking produced sixteen pieces of mid-Saxon pottery. A small excavation looking for archaeological features in the subsoil revealed a wide ditch containing a good deal of bone and pottery mixed with dark humic soil.

At this stage funding was obtained from English Heritage for a more extensive excavation, led by Dave Tomlinson from the Humberside Unit. As sand extraction continued and the quarry face advanced, the excavation team noticed a dark horizon in the quarry face which proved to be an occupation surface of the late-7th to late-9th century. Archaeological work had to proceed rapidly before the area was consumed by quarrying. The dry-sieving which was carried out on-site contributed to the numbers of animal bones recovered (600 boxes!), resulting in an important collection of mid-Saxon animal bone, valuable for comparison with samples from contemporary urban sites. The animal bone was very well-preserved because the deposits were sealed, unlike the earlier discoveries of human bone.

Eventually the ground plans of fourteen timber halls were revealed. It was perhaps fortunate that it was in the first of these to be discovered that a low sill wall was found; the discovery of other buildings required the detection of postholes cut into the sand and filled with sand - not the easiest of tasks. Most of the halls measured approximately 14 x 6 metres, with one larger hall 20 metres in length. These buildings were rebuilt on the same sites over about two centuries of occupation. They were connected by yards or paths surfaced with compacted rubble.

This site has perhaps already become famous for the enormous numbers of

finds of metalwork - literally thousands of everyday objects of bronze and iron: pins and tags, brooches and buckles, awls, chisels and knives; but the most unusual find must be the small lead plaque inscribed with seven Anglo-Saxon names, two of them female, followed by 'nun' for 'nunna', a nun. Holes around the border of the plaque may have been for attachment to a reliquary. It was found in building 1, as were pieces of glass, including window glass, which has led some people to suggest that the building was a church. Three of the names on the lead plaque can be tentatively identified in Bede, but the forms of the names are not quite the same. Kevin Leahy suggested that the names might refer to people to be remembered in prayers, perhaps by a religious community. Near the plaque was found a gilt bronze ring inscribed with the first half of the alphabet. This could have been an aide-memoire to prayers, a sort of rosary. The discovery of so many styli, some of iron, 26 of copper alloy and one even of silver, also fits the idea of a religious connection to the settlement, as at that time literacy was associated with the clergy, though an aristocratic household would have had a scribe. The elegant silver stylus suggests someone of high status.

Many items of a more workaday nature were found: iron objects such as a cauldron hanger and a plough share, hundreds of loom weights and numerous carding comb teeth. Quantities of lead melt and iron slag suggest that these metals were worked on the site, though the appropriate furnaces or ovens were not found.

Seventy-five percent of the pottery was of the local, handmade, shell-gritted Maxey-type ware, while most of the remainder came from Ipswich, shipped round the coast and up the Humber, the largest assemblage of Ipswich ware outside East Anglia. The coins indicate contacts with Northumbria, Mercia and East Anglia in this country, while Frisian coins, German lava querns and a little French pottery are evidence of trade with the continent.

The latest dated coins and other artefacts are from the end of the 9th century, when the site was apparently abandoned and never re-occupied. The reason for the abandonment is not clear, but though it happened at a time when Viking ships were known to have sailed up and down the Trent, the end of the settlement does not appear to have been a traumatic one. This lack of intrusion by any later occupation material adds to the importance of the site, already of great significance because of the rarity

of Middle Saxon sites. It has been suggested that the settlement was founded by St. Ethelfreda, the daughter of King Anna of East Anglia, who is known to have passed through the area in about 670AD while fleeing from her husband, and to have set up a monastery in nearby West Halton.

Much work is still being carried out on the finds, so perhaps we might in the future hear more of this site, excavated before it was, quite literally, lost to the sands of time by the continuation of quarrying. Perhaps concrete isn't such a modern material after all!

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## DIARY OF EVENTS

Wednesday 23 September 1992	7.30 pm
ERAS Reports Meeting	Old Grammar School South Church Side Hull

Saturday 17 October	9.45 am - 5.00 pm
Dayschool, University of Leeds, Dept Adult Continuing Education: A History of Gardens in England, <i>Penny Muter</i>	Springfield Mount off Clarendon Road Leeds 2

Saturday 17 October	10.15 am -
YAS (MS) dayschool on medieval craftsmen: The York tile project: a potter's tale, <i>John Hudson</i>	10.15 am
A day in the life of a medieval shoe maker, <i>Mark Beaby</i>	11.15 am
The medieval lathe-turner, his techniques and products, <i>Carole Morris</i>	2.15 pm Oakwell Hall Barn, Birstall

Wednesday 21 October	7.30 pm
ERAS lecture: The Worcester Pilgrim: a suitable case for treatment, <i>Jim Spriggs</i>	Old Grammar School South Church Side Hull

Saturday 24 October	10.30 am - 4.00 pm
YAS dayschool: Linear Earthworks of East Yorkshire	Old Grammar School South Church Side Hull

Saturday 31 October	2.30pm
YAS Memorial lecture for Hermann Ramm: The Arras culture, <i>Dr Ian Stead</i>	Tempest Anderson Hall York

Saturday 7 November	10 am
YAS Aerial Archaeological Committee 21st anniversary conference	Leeds Art Gallery

Saturday 14 November	10.30am -
CBA Group 4 pottery dayschool:	Archaeological Resource Centre St Saviourgate York

Wednesday 18 November	7.30 pm
ERAS lecture: The dead beneath our feet: the archaeology of the English burial vault 1450-1800, <i>Julian Litten</i>	Old Grammar School South Church Side Hull

Wednesday 25 November	7.00 pm
YAS lecture: Barden - an upland estate in the 19th century <i>Dr Heather Beaumont</i>	

Saturday 28 November	10.00 am -5.00 pm
Dayschool, University of Leeds, Dept Adult Continuing Education Archaeology in West Yorkshire <i>Panel of speakers from W. Yorks. Arch. Service</i>	Springfield Mount off Clarendon Road Leeds 2
Wednesday 16 December	7.30 pm
ERAS lecture: America on the rocks: rock art of the North American Indian, <i>Dr Paul Bahn</i>	Old Grammar School South Church Side Hull
Wednesday 20 January 1993	7.30 pm
ERAS lecture: Pieces of the Past: Medieval Knaresborough <i>Mary Kershaw</i>	Old Grammar School South Church Side Hull

YAS: Yorkshire Archaeological Society - ERAS is in the process of becoming affiliated to YAS, enabling ERAS members to attend YAS meetings.