

ERAS news

No. 21

October 1985

Membership subscriptions At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Society held before the opening lecture of the 1985/86 programme on September 18th, a Committee motion was placed before members proposing an increase in annual membership subscription to new rates of £8 Ordinary, £12 Family, and £5 Student, and that these should come into effect on January 1st 1986. The motion was carried without opposition.

Increases in subscription rates are never popular or welcome of course, but it is felt that this is a necessary step to take in order to be able to maintain the high standards that the Society is achieving in its lecture programme and events, to ensure the flow of newsletters, to support fieldwork in the area, and - equally as important - to regularise the publication of the Society's journal, East Riding Archaeologist, which it is now planned to issue every two years. Members of course receive the journal without further charge.

Although we are approaching that hectic time of the year for many people, would members who pay their subscription by Banker's Order please be good enough to find the time to make the necessary adjustment through their bank before December 31st. And please may we ask everyone to help the Society to maximise its income

EAST RIDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

potential (and thereby forestall the need to seek increases in subscription) by considering covenanting your subscription. A Deed of Covenant form and a fuller explanation of how this will benefit the Society - and therefore its membership as a whole - is enclosed with this newsletter.

The journal Whilst we are touching on this subject, you may like to know that the Society's next journal will be no.5 in the Hull Old Town Report Series, "Excavations in High Street and Blackfriargate" by Peter Armstrong and Brian Ayers. The manuscript (of daunting proportions!) is now complete and ready for submission to English Heritage for grant aid. If all proceeds smoothly this should be published as East Riding Archaeologist volume 8 in the Spring of next year. The final set of reports of excavations in Hull (actually no.2 in the pre-numbered Old Town Series and destined to be issued as the missing E.R.A. volume 4) will be published by the Society at a later date. It will include the remaining sites excavated by the Humber-side Archaeological Unit in Mytongate, Vicar Lane, Queen Street (the medieval town gaol), and Blackfriars/Monkgate (the Augustinian Friary Garden).

Hull Museum Notes Readers of the last instalment will recall that conserved pottery from excavations in medieval Hull has been on show in the museum, but activity on this front has not been confined to the gallery. Behind the scenes recently we have seen probably the largest single transfer of archaeological material into our care since we were founded with the mighty Mortimer Collection. The pottery, bone, brick, tile, masonry, metalwork and other finds from excavations in the Old Town have now at last been properly boxed-up, labelled-up and delivered into our modern, well-equipped stores. Getting on for 1,000 boxes of material, each box

around a cubic foot in capacity has crossed the threshold, and there is more to come! Before the year is out we will have acquired massive quantities of excavated material from Iron Age excavations on the Wold, including sites at Wetwang and Welton. By April, the store, opened in 1983, will be full and we must plan for extra space now to ensure that future acquisitions can be expedited as effectively as this one.

Now, with progress hopefully assured for our much-needed new Transport Museum, the time has come to think about how best our expanding collections can be used in exciting new displays. And there is a lot to think about: Iron Age Chariot Burials, excavated at Wetwang last year, could provide the museum visitor with an opportunity to see a unique, peculiarly Yorkshire, burial rite of the local Iron Age aristocracy. They can make a wonderful contrast to the Garton Chariot Burial, already on display at the Transport and Archaeology Museum in High Street. The famous log-boat from Hasholme - forty feet of waterlogged oak requiring a conservation programme of spraying for at least eight years - can make an exhibit of national, even international, interest. These are exciting times for Hull Museums' Archaeology.

The museum continues to initiate and coordinate fieldwork of its own in conjunction with the Society. The museum's project on the Humber foreshore at Melton is beginning to show important results as the first remarkable radio-carbon dates are confirmed for the wooden structures exposed on the mudflats at low tide. The first date - around 900BC and firmly in the Bronze Age - has vindicated our belief, first expounded by E.V. Wright of "Ferriby Boat" fame, that virtually on our doorsteps a prehistoric landscape is being slowly but steadily eaten away by the tidal ebb and flow of the Humber. The

"Melton Pilot Project", as this study programme is called, is now turning its attention to the higher and drier land of the Red Cliff behind, where the erosion is such that archaeological evidence of enormous potential is quite literally falling into the sea; or, and this is deeply worrying, into the hands of "treasure hunters" who search that part of the beach with their metal-detectors at weekends.

Dave Crowther



ARCHAEOLOGY IN HUMBERSIDE A CURRENT REVIEW

... but seriously though, as they say ... The Day School of that name, jointly organised by E.R.A.S. and Hull University's Department of Adult and Continuing Education on October 12th, was by general consent an unequal-

ified success. All the speakers presented masterly expositions of their current work, and our warmest thanks are extended to them - Tim Schadla-Hall, Dave Crowther, John Dent, Peter Didsbury, Colin Briden, Dominic Powlesland and Martin Millett. Special thanks go to Ben Whitwell who stepped in at extremely short notice to substitute for Kevin Leahy who was unable to attend through illness. We are very grateful also to Tim Schadla-Hall for initiating the event, and to Paul Milne and the University for organising and hosting the school. We are also extremely pleased to be able to welcome new members who took the opportunity to enrol into the Society on the day. The success in all departments encourages us to repeat the format and perhaps make a full-day review of archaeological activities across the county an annual event.

Footnote: no summaries of the lectures are given here as plans are now well advanced between the several contributors and the E.R.A.S. Promotions Sub-committee to produce a spin-off illustrated booklet of the papers presented on the day.

Letters

Dear Editor,

Thank-you and congratulations to the Society for recent events. The weekend trip in August was most enjoyable - obviously the result of careful organisation; the archaeology wasn't bad either!

The day school on 12th October was well worth the brain-stretching and covered a wide range of topics from boats to barns and coins to chariots. ... speaking of which, I wonder if space could be found in your magazine to answer some of my puzzling about these latter. Why chariots? They seem to be the least useful thing to have in remote, rough hill country in the Iron Age when serviceability and economy would have seemed

to be essential. They don't seem suitable for work vehicles. If, therefore, it was the wealthy few who had these as status symbols, it seems to indicate a distinct tribal hierarchy in existence which I find surprising in the context of the times. And why bury the chariots? Even to the



modern mind used to disposables it seems an act of exceeding rashness - like burying the farmer with his Volvo!

Finally, why the Wolds? They do not seem to be the most likely place to succour a people who seem to be significant in a national context. Could it be that these wild and lonely places were the Mecca of civilisation as the Iron Age knew it?

Yours faithfully, Margaret Walter,
30 Highfield Road,
Beverley

(John Knowles has been turning his thoughts in a similar direction - see opposite - whilst John Dent offers a somewhat more conventional consideration of the questions posed by Mrs. Walter - see page 17. Ed.)

... and on a subject not unconnected

Dear Sir,

I was very interested to read Dr. Stead's recent comments on his work on the Arras Culture (ERAS News 20). No one can be left in doubt about the importance of the material from the burials, or indeed the great contribution Dr. Stead has made to the understanding of this important Iron Age culture. I do hope that at some stage it will be possible for further work to be done in possibly isolating, or at least producing a strategy to isolate, the residences of the individuals and groups who make up those rich burials, in the hope that it would be possible to elucidate more information about the Iron Age society of Eastern Yorkshire; possibly Dr. Stead might be able to outline such a programme in a future letter?

I don't think that a "vociferous minority" provoked a difficult situation, or indeed that the impression was necessarily given that a "group of outsiders was plundering Yorkshire's heritage". In my capacity as Principal Keeper

of Museums I did ring Dr. Ian Longworth to ask what would be the fate of the material from Wetwang Slack, because I had assumed that as Hull Museums had already agreed to take the material from T.C.M. Brewster's excavation at Garton and Wetwang Slack, then this additional material would also be going to the same museum - a policy which is broadly in line with at least current archaeological thinking. In addition, I had assumed that as the excavation was receiving H.B.M.C. funding at least to a limited extent then current H.B.M.C. advice about the excavator arranging for a museum to handle the material would also apply.

I don't know who the "senior member of the Society" to whom Dr. Stead refers to in his note was, but it sounds more like J.R. Mortimer to me! After all, as early as 1900 Mortimer was writing of his deep concern that his great collection of East Yorkshire antiquities might leave the area unless they could be purchased by a suitable local authority, and he went so far as to list all those collections which had disappeared from the area - including the Greenwell Collection - and which had therefore failed to benefit the local community in any way. Mortimer clearly recognised the need for material to stay locally and was followed in this by Thomas Sheppard, Hull's first museum curator, who ceaselessly argued publicly and frequently that local material should stay in the local area for the benefit of the community. Indeed Sheppard recognised the problems that the financial hegemony of the British Museum created in keeping material locally.

One of Sheppard's prime concerns was of course to educate local people, but he also saw very clearly the need to create an attraction both in the East Riding and in Hull which would bring the people to the area for the economic benefit of the community. Today, when many of our larger towns and cities are struggling with unemployment

and when there is widespread unemployment in the rural community too, the need to attract people to the East Riding is probably greater than at any time in the past. Lord Young has recently commented on the growth that tourism can create in the local community. As Ian Hodder has indicated recently, we are not archaeologists solely for ourselves but for the broader public as well, and in this context it seems to me that the attitudes of both elected members, and professional members of the Area Service for Museums and Art Galleries in Yorkshire and Humberside, and the Federation for Museums and Art Galleries in Yorkshire and Humberside - i.e. keep it in Yorkshire - is perfectly understandable and indeed justifiable.

Dr. Stead's own remarkable work has indicated that the Arras Culture, at least in terms of its spectacular burials, is restricted to Eastern Yorkshire nationally, and therefore what more appropriate than that both in national and international terms visitors should come to Eastern Yorkshire to see that material? It would benefit, for example, the railway lines which we are told are always under threat; it may well boost the holiday industry, shopkeepers and service industries; it may well employ directly or indirectly more people in publishing, in museums and elsewhere, and generally act as a boost to the local economy.

I was always under the impression that the British Museum had at least one chariot burial in its collections already which is not displayed, and it seems to me altogether more appropriate that the material should therefore rest in East Yorkshire where it came from for the general benefit of that community. More importantly I am sure that Humberside County Council with its drive to increase tourism to the area will also recognise how important that cause is, as indeed will all those who can see that there is more to archaeology than research. I dread

to say it but I could see a new campaign coming out from County Hall suggesting that the general public visit "chariot country". Let noone think that archaeology is the province of the few - indeed the biggest problem is that we have kept it the province of the few rather than try to justify it to greater numbers of people. The publicity generated alone over the recent finds would have a tremendous effect bringing direct economic benefits and at the same time illustrating to local people the value which archaeology could have.

I should like to add that I find Dr.Stead's comments interesting about "placing" the material in context. There would certainly seem to be no reason at all why any museum in Yorkshire should not be able to borrow from the British Museum's collections material which would indicate the development of Celtic art from the Continent, and by displaying the material on the East Coast would indeed encourage a foreign tourist element as well to linger longer in East Yorkshire. In addition of course the best local context of the material is already provided by collections which are retained in East Yorkshire and which I have already mentioned.

May I pick up one small point Dr.Stead made - presumably as some form of justification for material being sent to London - that 90% of the funding for the work mentioned in his note had come from national sources. He is of course quite right: it has come from the tax payers, just the same as most money comes from the tax payers, and it seems to me perfectly justifiable that the tax payers of East Yorkshire, who no doubt contribute to this national source, should be allowed a fair crack of the whip. If these great finds were properly promoted by Humberside County Council, who after all has the funding, and were kept in the area - just as the finds from the Jorvik Viking Centre have been used to

benefit the community in York and create extra employment - so could the chariot burials bring advantage to East Yorkshire. And, quite frankly, having one in the British Museum would detract from the need of people to travel to the area. In terms of research many archaeologists have to travel the country to gather their information, and it seems to me there is no reason at all why those archaeologists with research aims should not travel to East Yorkshire for the same reason.

Unlike Dr.Stead, I cannot believe that the view he offered is the view of the majority; indeed all the evidence I have suggests he is wrong.

On a personal note, I welcome the fact that Dr.Stead is helping to open up a debate which I believe must be considered nationally, and that is on the role and collection policies of the British Museum. Such a debate would be of tremendous significance for all those who are seriously concerned about the distribution of resources both within museums and within research in archaeology in this country today.

Yours faithfully,

R.T.Schadla-Hall,
Leicestershire
Museums,
96 New Walk,
Leicester.

Archaeology at Shiptonthorpe The collaboration between E.R.A.S. and the Department of Archaeology, Durham University, continued this season with work at Shiptonthorpe. Dr.Martin Millett sends the following report which, apart from the obvious value and interest of its archaeological content, has the unprecedented merit of being submitted in a word-processed A5 format - possibly the shape of things to come for ERAS News readers, if Santa Claus brings the Hon.Ed. what he wants for Christmas!!

FIELDWORK AND EXCAVATION ON THE ROMANO-BRITISH SMALL TOWN AT SHIPTONTHORPE (DELGOVICIA), EAST YORKSHIRE, 1985: AN INTERIM REPORT.

Introduction.

The site of Shiptonthorpe has been recognised for some years as a major settlement in the Roman period (Eagles 1979) although no attempt has been made to assess either its size or status. It has recently suffered considerably from the attention of metal-detector users. Fieldwork in the surrounding area since 1983 has identified the site a major focus of the Roman settlement system, and has suggested that it might be a site of up to 30 hectares, falling into the category generally known as "small towns" (Rodwell and Rowley 1985). Its location suggests that it was the settlement of *Delgovicia* listed in both the Antonine Itinerary and the Ravenna Cosmography (Rivet and Smith 1979, 331-2) hitherto identified as Wetwang. Work on the site was thus initiated by Hull City Museums, the East Riding Archaeological Society and Durham University as a part of the joint project presently examining the Romano-British landscape in this part of East Yorkshire (Halkon 1983; Millett and Halkon 1984; Millett and Halkon 1985; McGrail and Millett 1985).

The first stage of the work was undertaken by Peter Didsbury who collated all the known findspots from the immediate vicinity of where metal-detector finds has been made. The map produced has demonstrated that there is a substantial settlement in the area, although no single node emerged. The second stage of work involved the examination and cataloguing of the large collection of metal-detector finds made available by kind permission of the landowner, Mr D Stephenson. The objects were catalogued and drawn by the staff of the archaeology section of Hull City Museums, whilst the 526 coins were examined and listed by Mr P J Casey. Whilst this work was in progress two large fields within the area of the site were walked by members of the East Riding Archaeological Society. This exercise demonstrated that the settlement was linear, and focused on the Roman Road from Brough to York in the area where it crossed the Fox Beck at SE 852422.

Against this background it was decided to undertake trial excavations and more detailed fieldwork with the following aims:

- i) to obtain a series of stratified groups of pottery to aid the dating of the industry of the Holme-on-Spalding Moor area which has been the subject of examination in the earlier part of the project.
- ii) to obtain a sequence of botanical and faunal samples in order to examine the relationship of the small town to its rural hinterland where such samples have already been collected.
- iii) to establish the nature and extent of the site such that future work could be planned to examine a representative sample of the site.
- iv) to assess the preservation of the site in order to establish whether further, larger scale work would be justified.

Survey work

Despite difficulties caused by the weather a substantial area of the site was surveyed using three methods. First, a further 4 ha of the site were grid-walked so that the distributions of ceramics in the ploughsoil could be plotted in detail. The area of the site where this has been undertaken now covers approximately 12 ha, giving a detailed picture of a substantial area. Secondly, 3.2 ha of the area where fieldwalking had indicated a major concentration of activity were surveyed using a Geoscan Soil Resistivity Meter. For this survey (which was undertaken by David Jordan) measurements were taken at 1m intervals across the whole area. Computer plotting of these results is in hand and should, for the first time on such a site, provide the data for a sensible strategy of sample excavation. Provisional hand plotting of the results is encouraging and shows a good correlation with the evidence of the fieldwalking. Finally, in order to establish the influence of soil hydrology on the resistivity results a close interval contour survey was made of the first of the two fields examined. In conjunction with this a series of soil pits were dug to examine the depth of topsoil and the nature of the subsoil (which is extremely variable in this area).

The aggregate results of this intensive survey will not be entirely clear until computing is completed, however, they seem to indicate that the settlement consists of a series of minor nodes of activity clustered at closely spaced intervals along the Roman Road. This activity seems confined to a strip approximately 60m wide on either side of the road. As such it seems a reasonable working hypothesis that the settlement type is similar to, and perhaps evolved from the "ladder settlements" common in the later Iron Age of Yorkshire (eg Dent 1983, fig.2). Further survey is planned to test this hypothesis.

Excavation.

A single trench 30m by 5m was excavated, together with three 2m by 1m trial trenches (which were excavated only to the top of archaeological deposits). These were located at SE 85104250 and were designed to establish the nature and extent of the archaeological deposits, their relationship to the Roman road, and their degree of preservation. The trench cut the Road which proved to be c.10m wide, and extended for 10m on either side. The trial trenches extended the section line for a further 30m from the road to the south-west.

The excavation revealed a good sequence of stratigraphy which had not been badly eroded by agricultural activity; deep ploughing had taken place but only in the form of "pan-busting" so disturbance was limited to very deep narrow linear cuts. These had made no substantial difference to the recoverability of information from the site.

The sequence revealed seems to have begun in the late first century AD² with the construction of the Roman Road, which involved the clearance of a series of trees and the use of an ard or plough to level the ground. The

road was then laid-out with a substantial ditch on either side. The southern most ditch was subsequently filled with a large deposit of pottery provisionally dated to the early second century. Both ditches were subsequently replaced on two occasions the latter being infilled after AD 341-6. On either side of the road the remains of later Roman timber structures were identified, although the details of their phasing and dating has yet to be finalised. On the northern side of the road a pair of urned cremation burials were located. These appear from their position in the sequence to date to the third century AD, although a fourth century date cannot be ruled-out. The main concentration of later Roman activity was on the southern side of the road. Here were elements of a timber structure dated to the last quarter of the fourth century or later.

The strata examined were rich in cultural material, and when phasing is completed should provide the beginnings of a valuable stratified ceramic sequence for the area. In addition the quality of metal and bone preservation was good so calibration should prove possible and an examination of the faunal remains should enable conclusions to be drawn concerning the rural economy and its relationship to the site.

Conclusions

The results of the work in 1985 have demonstrated the potential of the site for answering questions concerning the role of a small town and its relationship to its rural hinterland. A good sequence is present and preservation is satisfactory. Furthermore the site has proved susceptible to economically viable methods of large scale detailed survey such that the site can be sampled in a way likely to produce representative results. It is therefore proposed first to examine one node of activity within the site next seasons provided resources are available.

References:

- Dent, J. 1983 "The Impact of Roman Rule on native society in the territory of the Parisi" *Britannia XIV*, 35-45
- Eagles, B. 1979 *The Anglo-Saxon Settlement of Humberside* Oxford: British Archaeological Reports
- Halkon, P. 1983 "Investigations into the Romano-British Industries of Holme-on-Spalding Moor" *East Riding Archaeologist 7*, 15-24
- McGrail, S and Millett, M. 1985 "The Hasholme Logboat" *Antiquity LIX*, 117-120
- Millett, M and Halkon, P. 1984 "Excavations at Bursea House, Holme-on-Spalding Moor 1983" *Universities of Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, Archaeological Reports 7*, 45-48
- Millett, M and Halkon, 1985 "The Romano-British landscape in Holme-on-Spalding Moor" *Universities of Durham and Newcastle upon Tyne, Archaeological Reports 8*, 36-38
- Rivet, A.L.F. and Smith, C. 1979 *The Place-names of Roman Britain* London: Batsford.
- Rodwell, W. and Rowley, T. 1975 *The Small Towns of Roman Britain*

Oxford: British Archaeological Reports.

Footnotes:

1. None of the work reported upon here would have been possible without the kind help and co-operation of the landowner, Mr D Stephenson; to him I am extremely grateful. The work was a co-operative effort which only succeeded because of the energy and enthusiasm of those who participated. In addition to those mentioned by name in the text special thanks must go to Andi Dutton and Andy Boddington who supervised on the site Phil Clogg who looked after the on-site conservation and Peter Halkon who initiated the whole project and remains central to it with his fieldwork. Final thanks must go to the Society of Antiquaries of London and the University of Durham who generously funded the work.
2. The dates and phasing given here are very provisional and will be revised as the details of the site and finds are examined.

Martin Millett
October 1985

Preparing the Dinner Stephanie Armstrong has a couple of things to say and seeks your help ...

In Elizabethan times the term "banquet" was reserved for the final sweet course of a formal dinner, when guests proceeded to another room or, in fine weather, to an outdoor banqueting house or arbour decorated with ivy, holly and flowers interwoven with fresh fruits and streamers of gold cloth. Here the guests would indulge themselves with sweet wines, fruit tarts, preserves and "suckets" (sweets).

The Society's Elizabethan Fanfare, to be held on April 25th next year, presents the opportunity for a collective effort amongst members to provide both flowers and foliage to decorate our banqueting hall and to add to the delights of the food to be presented with a final offering of our own in the form of home-made suckets or comfits. Val Fairhurst lists below a number of plants authentic to the period which would be available in April (weather permitting!) to give a decorative and sweet-smelling effect for the occasion. If members have any of these

growing in their gardens and think they might be able to spare something we should be very pleased indeed. Any donations, whether of individual flowers or branches of ivy or box, would be most gratefully received and arrangements to collect the material can be made nearer the time. Val is especially interested in lily-of-the-valley and snowflakes for the table decorations:

box, daphne, lily-of-the-valley (suitable for forcing), bluebell, lavender, snowflakes, daffodils, grape hyacinth, myrtle, Solomon's seal, auricula, primrose, cherry laurel, rosemary, cotton lavender, lilac, tulips, violets.

Listed also are two recipes for suckets, the first from Gervaise Markham's *The English Housewife* (1615), as adapted by Lorna Sass, and the second from *A Closet for Ladies and Gentlewomen* (1608) as published in Esther Aresty's *The Delectable Past*. The rose water in the first recipe is rather expensive at 25p per 50ml (from Boots), but a straight substitute of plain water should be acceptable as in the second recipe:

CANDIED ROOTS, FRUITS, OR FLOWERS

These *suckets* are delicate and easy to make. You'll be amazed how carrots and parsnips turn into candy. If using fresh flowers, choose only unblemished, unsprayed blossoms. Wash them gently in cool water, and drain on paper towels. Do not experiment with wild flowers unless you are certain they are edible.

- 1½ cups rose water
- 1½ cups sugar
- one of the following:
 - 2 large carrots or parsnips, scraped and sliced into ¼-inch discs
 - 2 small apples or pears, peeled, cored, and cut into ¼-inch slices
 - 1 cup fresh flower petals (trim off white tips which attach petals to stem)

1. In a heavy saucepan, combine rose water and sugar. Bring to a boil.
2. Add vegetable or fruit slices or flower petals. Stir.
3. Return to a boil; reduce heat to a gentle boil and cook for 15 minutes.
4. As soon as sugar begins to caramelize (it will turn light brown), remove pan from heat.
5. Remove vegetable or fruit slices or flower petals, and set them on waxed paper. Refrigerate for 10 minutes.
6. Peel candies off waxed paper and store them in an airtight container.

YIELD: about 2 dozen candies

Candied Blossoms

Rose petals or whole violets may be prepared in this manner: Select *choice petals or blossoms*; wash them; spread them out on flat plates to dry. Make a syrup of 1 cup sugar and ¾ cup water. Boil until it spins a thread. Pour the syrup into a bowl and place bowl on a bed of *cracked ice*. Have handy a pair of tweezers. When the syrup begins to crystallize, dip the blossoms, one at a time, and coat with syrup. Shake off any surplus and place them on waxed paper to dry. As they begin to harden, dust them with *powdered sugar*.

If enough members are willing to have a go and try these recipes, we may be able to end our meal in true Elizabethan style. Why not make a batch for the family and if its successful and you enjoy the culinary adventure, do volunteer to make up a second batch of these sweetmeats for the Annual Dinner!

If between now and January you think you will be able to provide flowers, foliage or home-made suckets, please get in touch with Stephenie Armstrong, 37 West End, Swanland, or Valerie Fairhurst, 10 Etherington Drive, Hull, and we will take it from there.

So off to the kitchen and into the garden, and we look forward to hearing from you soon!

Some questions answered John Dent offers some answers and comments on Margaret Walter's puzzling over the Wetwang chariots (Letters, page 5) ...

Why chariots should have been preferred to horses is far from clear, but they were certainly important symbols of rank. Classical writers gave accounts of barbarian warriors using them for fighting, both on the continent and in Britain during the Iron Age. British chariot-eers were able to control their vehicles on steep slopes, and the Wolds had an extensive communications system during the Iron Age which left no areas less accessible than they are today (with the possible exception of those

areas which were still afforested). Contacts between the Wolds and the continent, even the Classical World, were sufficiently good for Mediterranean coral and possibly glass to reach the area, while continental metalwork influenced native smiths profoundly. The area was not as rough and remote as we may think.

The proportion of burials with chariots: something like thirteen out of a thousand suggest that they belonged to an influential minority. The Wetwang burials with weapons and richly decorated metalwork may indicate a wealthy section of a stratified society, controlled by warrior chieftains. Strong class distinctions are a feature of the Early Iron Age throughout Western Europe and some of the continental burials are a good deal richer than anything found in Yorkshire - for example that at Hochdorf (Germany) - the "Tutankhamen" of Europe. Such rich burials are a product not only of the resources of the individuals but also of their beliefs. How cheaply we could bury people today were it not for customs and legislation! Some Romans were buried with a coin to pay Charon for access to Hades; perhaps the chariots were a way of reaching the afterlife more quickly, (Sadly, they often are today!!)

The national significance of the Wolds is one of their archaeology as it survives today. We have no evidence that the region was considered in any way special by Iron Age people elsewhere; nor do we have any evidence that the cemeteries were used by anyone other than local people. It seems likely that the population was substantial, but no more than other areas with comparable climate and soils.

Most of the surprises which our ancestors provide us with are, in my opinion, the result of us constantly underestimating them.

South Bank Letter (The Editor nervously holds up the Sports Page, waiting

for news from the other side:- in the nick of time our Kev snatches one from nowhere!) ...

... er, sorry about this: Ed. scores own goal in extra-time! We shall have to be patient and wait for the next issue of ERAS News to get all the latest from Kevin Leahy's Archaeologic Athletic of Scunthorpe!!

* * * *