

Readers write With no less than two letters cascading onto the mat, there is nothing for it but to hand straight over to the members! More please.

Sir,- I am writing to answer your request in the ERAS newsletter for members who own metal detectors to 'own up', and I believe that I can inform you on the capabilities of these machines (if used sensibly).

Personally I own a relatively cheap machine which will only detect objects the size of a pre-decimal penny to a depth of approximately four inches, which makes it almost incapable of destroying old stratified remains.

Thousands of sites of interest are lost daily in Britain. By sites of interest I mean sites in which no official body is interested. With no recorded knowledge that any given piece of land contains anything of interest, there is nobody at hand to recover anything which may come to light.

To understand the whole concept of Treasure Hunting in its fullest extent is to understand the thinking of past generations, and this (a mammoth task) the deeper one delves into it, the more one's knowledge is expanded and the more one comes to understand human needs, human rights and human ingenuity.

The only places where I have used my detector were, and are, construction sites of major land upheavals, where the artifacts which I have recovered would probably have been lost forever after houses, car parks and roads have been built over them. The items which I have recovered range from Roman coins, pottery of all ages, early clay tobacco pipes, medieval and post-medieval artifacts.

The main fear about metal detectors is that they can ruin important archaeological sites, which is true to a certain extent, if used in the wrong hands! Personally I believe that they can actually be employed

by archaeologists to search the spoil heaps from excavations, which almost inevitably could hold mud-caked coins and artifacts which are accidentally missed and which could help date sites!

However, forgetting my rantings about the (terrible/marvellous?) metal detector, I must make another point. With all of the urban redevelopment taking place in the Old Town of Hull and the building of roads such as the Beverley by-pass and the new Hull bridge, I think that as many members as possible should visit these sites and try to strike up acquaintances amongst the J.C.B. drivers and workmen to find out just what is being found and often thrown away again. One such workman has found all kinds of artifacts including coins and clay pipes, and even stamped leatherwork!

I sincerely hope I have thrown some light upon the use and misuse of metal detectors, and remain faithfully yours,

M.Stothard,
14 Grosmont Close,
Chestnut Farm Estate,
Sutton upon Hull.

Sir,- May I through the medium of your columns answer some of the points raised by Mr Calvert in the last issue (No. 6, Sept.1980) over the cost of membership and the matter of publications.

Some members of the Society have paid by covenant for several years. This system was instituted by our Treasurer, and periodically appeals have been made for members to pay this way. Until recently we had a separate officer looking after the covenants but this office is at present vacant for the want of a volunteer. If anyone is willing to undertake the small amount of work involved, we can once again have a campaign to promote this method of payment by more of our members.

A larger question raised concerns the proper aims and duties of the Society. Some members may wish only for the winter lecture programme and these, I hope, we satisfy fully. Others wish to be actively involved in work in the field as informed laymen.

To this end the Society has either itself undertaken or aided in excavations run by various professional groups, and has also undertaken some non-excavational fieldwork. Archaeology is a form of destruction whose only justification is not the discovery but the dissemination of the information pertaining to it. The first is useless without the second. Traditionally such knowledge has been spread through the medium of publication. This Society has always upheld the principle that it has a duty to publish excavation reports. This is a matter at present under consideration owing to the ever-increasing costs of such publication. It may be that in the very near future all such excavation reports will only be published in any meaningful depth in microfiche form. When that day comes reports will be very much more cheaply produced but only those with access to special reader machines will be able to consult the source information. This will be a sad day for the interested amateur, but D.o.E. directives are already pointing us along this path.

While it is accepted as a Society duty to publish, the Committee have had long, hard discussions as to ways, means and economics. An economic fact of publishing life is that the fewer journals are printed the greater the unit cost, and consequently the higher the selling price. At present three-quarters of the printing costs of a report of a D.o.E. backed excavation is paid back to the Society by D.o.E., so that Society funds are only temporarily depleted until one-quarter of the publishing costs are recouped on sales. It has always been Society policy since its inception in 1961 that members should receive a free copy of each publication produced. It ought not to be forgotten that a proportion of our members who either live at a distance or are for some reason unable to attend meetings receive the publications as the principal return for their subscription. In view of the number of local members who have not yet collected their copies or sent postage instructions, it is very doubtful whether reasonable sales to members would be achieved if a separate charge were to be made.

I do appreciate Mr Calvert's concern at the doubling

of members' subscriptions at a stroke, but costs of all things have increased. Hospitality and travelling expenses for guest speakers and postage to name but three. It is also hoped that we can widen the field of possible lectures if we have enough funds to offer a realistic fee, since many leading professionals now expect this.

In the twenty years of the Society's existence, the subscription has been raised on two previous occasions: At foundation in 1961 it stood at one guinea; in 1971 it was raised to £1.50; and in 1976 to £2.50. If we compare like with like over this period something interesting emerges. The value of the 1981 subscription at £5.00 is the equivalent of three, or maybe four, quality paperback books. In 1961 the guinea subscription would have alternatively bought seven or eight of the same! In those terms, and in many others that could just as easily be quoted, the new rate might be considered actually to be lower than the original.

Yours sincerely,

Jean Dawes,
27 Esplanade,
Hornsea.

Annual Dinner Keeping at least one eye on maintaining prices at a reasonable level, there is no elaborate or contrived theme for the 1981 dinner, as we return to Hull University Staff House on Wednesday February 11th. From past experience excellent fare, good company and the occasion itself are guarantees enough of success. But this year there is a real attraction in that we are delighted to be able to welcome back as our guest speaker John Bartlett, whose contribution to the East Riding Archaeological Society as leading founder and Hon Secretary for the first twelve years of its existence remains unparalleled. February 11th will provide the opportunity indeed to renew old acquaintanceship, and even if Saucisse à la Rudston Monolith with Brantingham pickle doesn't figure on the menu it will still be an archaeological occasion nevertheless, I have no doubt! And at £4.25 it ought to be within the reach of all.

All details and booking form are enclosed separately.

Field Study Group Peter Halkon writes:

Coincidental with the Archers' discovery of a medieval grange by the Ambridge field survey group, our own band braved the cold east wind of October and made its second sortie into the countryside of East Yorkshire. The area chosen was the southern part of Holme-on-Spalding Moor.

In 1970-72 the E.R.A.S. excavated a Romano-British kiln at Hasholme Hall. Many other pottery sites have been located in the same area, including of course the Throlam kilns excavated by Corder in the 1930s. The Survey of Archaeological Sites in Humberside records a large number of cropmarks from aerial photography in the form of double-ditched square enclosures, hut groups and traces of ancient agriculture along the River Foulness (pronounced Founa) between SE 800330 and 842326. A large amount of iron slag and unworked ore has been ploughed up by many generations of farmers, mainly from the sand hills. The excavation at Hasholme produced an iron smelting oven, and furnace bottoms have also been found. It seems likely considering the quantity of pottery kilns in the southern part of Holme that the many marl pits appearing on the O.S. maps were used for pottery clay extraction long before their product was used for soil enrichment.

All this evidence seems to suggest a major industrial producing pottery and metalwork during the Roman period.

With the kind permission of Mr Alan Johnson of Bursea House, the group spent a most interesting and enjoyable day walking his farm. On arrival at Bursea the group was shown a large number of Romano-British and medieval sherds which had been found during cultivation. We were also treated to a fascinating history of the area and shown a 1909 6inch O.S. map on which the farmer has recorded features of interest over the years. Much of the groundwork therefore had already been done for us.

The first area investigated was in fact the garden of Bursea House, which produced sherds in minutes

among home-bred irises! It is obvious that there were several kiln sites under the farm house and out-buildings themselves, because kiln debris and pottery have been found during renovations to the latter. (The pottery was kindly donated to the writer)

During the laying of a new drain Mr Johnson came upon two V-shaped ditches contrasting sharply with the yellow sand. Romano-British pottery and slag were found at this time. This field was walked by the group at SE 812338, and after a careful traverse Romano-British sherds, oyster shell, slag and burnt stones were discovered. As these were concentrated on the sandy hill opposite Bursea House, it could be that this is the site of a square-ditched enclosure undetected by Loughlin in the Survey.

The afternoon was spent walking over a field in which a scatter of hand-made bricks and medieval pottery had been turned up. The scatter of material seemed to be restricted to a sandy rise in the curve of the lane between Bursea and Bursea House (SE 809338). The very earliest O.S. map shows a small field here. It is possible that a late medieval brick structure stood in this spot.

Although several other fields were walked in areas where Mr Johnson had discovered remains of iron working, some of these were not ploughed and therefore observation was difficult.

A detailed survey of the whole area of the River Foulness would be an extremely worthwhile project for the Field Study Group. Many thanks once again to Mr Johnson.

P.H.

Early Iron Age in Eastern Yorkshire So runs the title of a day conference jointly organised by the Prehistory Research Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society and ourselves, the E.R.A.S. The date is Saturday May 16th and the venue is The Hall, Lairgate in Beverley. The programme is yet to be finalised but there will be morning and afternoon lectures, followed by a coach excursion to Iron Age sites in the Riding, taking tea at some cosy corner (suggestions please!) The conference fee will probably be somewhere around

the £3.00 mark and we are hoping for good support from our members. The March newsletter will have all the relevant details, but in the meantime reserve the date!

A villa site at South Newbald An exploratory excavation in the side of the Hotham/South Newbald road, which the E.R.A.S undertook in 1973 organised and led by Derek Brooks, has not hitherto been reported upon. Whilst not purporting to stand as an excavation report, the following note on the work, supplied by Derek, serves as a brief record.

The original site of the villa was found in 1939 by a Society member, the late Jack Taylor, who was keeping a watching brief on a water main which was being laid in the northern grass verge (SE 904354). His find was reported to Messrs Corder and Barley who undertook an excavation of similar magnitude to our own, although their trial trenches were sited within the field. The results of their work is rather vague, and I have still not seen any of their papers. What is certain, however, is that work was soon brought to a halt by the outbreak of war.

There are several local rumours about the site. One such tells that a local joiner erecting a wooden fence around the field cut off the bottom of one of his posts rather than dig into and damage a Roman pavement!

The original intention behind the 1973 excavation was to open up a one metre wide trench between the water pipe and the hedge to try to locate Roman levels. As this operation soon revealed a hint of a chalk floor with painted wall plaster laid on it, a wider search was undertaken. A large expanse of chalk floor was discovered which had a band of plaster laid across its centre, as though it may have dropped from an arch above. The floor was traced to two of its sides, but no walls were found. In this very sandy soil robber trenches were extremely hard to identify. Under this floor another was found. Its walls had been robbed in Roman times, prior to the rebuild or

alteration, and some mortar and wall plaster was found from this earlier building together with a Dalesware vessel (280-340AD) and a coin of the emperor Crispus (317-26AD). Both of these floors had a pitched stone hearth, their positions coinciding almost exactly. A small hole one foot square was dug well into the field where Corder and Barley had worked and this also revealed chalk flooring.

Other finds from the site include a stone roof tile with one nail hole, brick roof tiles, both tegulae and imbrices, and a flue tile. Pottery includes Samian and colour coat, together with native fabric cooking pots. A heart-shaped bronze object sheathed in iron, which may have been a mirror, and a bone gaming counter were also recovered.

When I first saw a map of the location, I thought it possible that some obstacle had remained until the road line had become fixed because of its detour at this point. If this is true, then I do not think it was this Roman period structure, since the dog-leg of the road actually drives right through the buildings. I am convinced by the material evidence from the site that these buildings are part of a Romano-British villa.

D.B.

Alan Calvard Earlier this year one of our members, Alan Calvard, died following a sustained and painful illness. Alan was as keen an amateur as you could hope to find and he gave much of his time in his wonderfully cheerful way to both Society and Unit excavations at Brough and Beverley. His last archaeological contribution was on the Hall Garth bridge site at Beverley. But there is even now a continuing contribution from him to the Society. His wife recalled the enthusiasm with which Alan had greeted the suggestion put forward in ERAS News 2 that the Society should gather to itself a collection of books and archaeological literature which members might share. It was her wish, therefore, that most of Alan's own history and archaeology books should come to the Society to form the basis of the proposed collection, and on December 14th I took delivery of 53 titles on behalf of the E.R.A.S. from Mrs Calvard.

It is an exciting prospect that around this nucleus the collection might grow and serve the memory of one of the nicest people archaeology gave me the opportunity to meet and get to know. A system obviously must be worked out for the organisation of a functioning "library", but first we must build. Will you help to enlarge upon this splendid donation. Old or new books, pamphlets, guides, maps, anything which will be of interest or use to your fellow members. Call the Hon Secretary on 632946 (evenings), and someone will collect. Alternatively see any of the officers or committee members at one of our lecture meetings.

Roman Yorkshire A one day symposium on Saturday March 28th 1981 has been jointly organised by the College of Ripon and York St. John and the Roman Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society, to be held at the Ripon campus of the College. the programme is:

B.Hartley	..Roman Fort at Lease Rigg (Nr. Whitby)
P.Scott	..Roman Fort at Piercebridge
B.Heywood	..Roman York-Minster excavations
R.Hall	..Roman York-Blake St and Coppergate
P.Mayes	..Roman Castleford
P.Armstrong	..Problems of Brough-on-Humber
D.Riley	..Probable Roman landscape in S Yorks.
D.Haigh	..Roman Roads in W Yorks.
H.Ramm	..Roman Roads in E Yorks.

The day is from 10am to 4.30pm and the conference fee is £2.00 (cheques payable to the Y.A.S. Roman Section), for which coffee only is provided by way of refreshment. Bookings should be made through J.M.Young, Dept. of History, The College, Ripon, North Yorkshire.

C.B.A. Group 4 Symposium Another one day job at the University of Leeds is the annual parade of 'holes I have dug', this year on Saturday February 7th. There won't be another opportunity to advertise this before it happens, and unfortunately the programme is not yet published. However further details and booking will no doubt be possible through the organiser Pam Judkin at Wakefield Museum.

Practical Field Archaeology The Peak National Park Study Centre at Losehill Hall at Castleton in Derbyshire is offering two course-cum-holidays in 1981 which seem to be most attractive. The weekend 'Practical Field Archaeology of the Peak District' is April 10th - 12th and includes lectures, minibus field visits to five sites (prehistoric, Roman and medieval), but principally practical field survey of the Hope area (Roman and Saxon and Medieval) and drawing up of site plans from the field work. The course is designed to teach recognition of archaeological sites and the methods of site surveys to interested amateurs, beginners and more experienced alike. The course is residential with all-in board at £39.50. The second course is billed as a 'Holiday With a Difference' from August 22nd - 29th and entitled simply 'Practical Field Archaeology', and I quote: "The Peak District is an area rich in archaeological remains of all periods ... many important sites are being threatened by industrial development and new farming methods and it is important to identify, investigate and record sites before they are lost. The holiday aims to illustrate the great variety of archaeological remains in the Peak District and, by means of field visits, practical survey work, talks and films, to teach you how to recognise and survey archaeological sites. The visits will include examples from many different periods, including Prehistoric cave sites, the Arbor Low Neolithic henge monuments, Swine Sty Bronze Age settlement, the Roman Fort and settlement at Navio, Benty Grange - the site of a rich Saxon Burial and the Medieval remains of monastic granges, castles and villages... Most of the time will be spent walking outdoors (including rough walks of up to 7 miles) ... The course tutor is Clive Hart, an experienced field archaeologist who has recently completed an extensive archaeological survey of the Peak District". (Clive Hart is also course tutor for the April weekend). The cost of the holiday is £98.00 (+ V.A.T.). I think that both these courses sound really first-rate and offer a great opportunity for those of you who relish the outdoor holiday as well as enjoy your archaeological interests in a

practical way. Losehill Hall sounds a treat in itself too! (I'm not on commission - honest! - but I do get enthusiastic about a good thing!) The hall started out as a private house built in 1882 and stands in 27 acres of parkland. It has been modernised and has accommodation for 60. For full details of these and all the other interesting courses you are advised to contact the Principal, Peter Townsend, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire, S30 2WB. Telephone 0433-20373. Do it!

Award for Flying Those of you who attended Derrick Riley's lecture given to the Society last November (1979 that is) probably spotted the Chronicle Award winner before Magnus had even warmed up. And now the book of the lecture can be yours for £7.50. Entitled "Early Landscape from the Air - Studies of Crop Marks in South Yorkshire and North Nottinghamshire" it is available from Anne Hill, Dept. of Prehistory and Archaeology, University of Sheffield, (Cheques payable to U.R. Collis: re publication'). The whole thing really is a phenomenal piece of work culminating in this splendid publication. Congratulations are extended to Derrick.

Situations Vacant

Thriving archaeological society in N.Humberside (formerly East Riding) is seeking to fill the post of SECRETARY from April 1981. This challenging and rewarding position will suit any interested amateur archaeologist who is seriously contemplating not renewing his/her TV licence. A sincere wish to develop a more meaningful relationship with a typewriter and/or an irrepressible urge to duplicate the written word would be advantages but the desire to promote interest in archaeology is the sole qualification. Salary scale: Hon.00.

Lecture summaries:

17th September - Early Man in Yorkshire. Terry Manby
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Timed to coincide with the exhibition on the same theme at the Town Docks Museum, Mr Manby addressed the Society reviewing the changes in thought and emphasis which have occurred in archaeological studies in the last decade. In particular he pointed out the change from a three phase - early, middle and late - to a two phase - early and later - conception of various cultural groups.

The patchy nature of evidence from the neolithic is now thought to be due in considerable part to the differential preservation and past exploitation of differing natural areas of the Yorkshire region. Also of material effect on our knowledge is the difference in applicability of modern techniques, such as aerial photography and pollen analysis, to different soils.

Neolithic long barrows are well known, but many more had been detected in recent years, and with better excavation and post-excavation techniques their date had been pushed back to between 2500 and 3000 years BC. Occupation and cultivation areas are now known frequently to predate and underlie such structures, which may have been sited on marginal or exhausted lands. No flint mines are known for this area, but the source of flint for implements could well be littoral. Boundaries between adjacent areas could be inferred from the examination of excavated and chance finds of various artefacts on a topographical basis. Differing distributions of allied types fashioned by differing techniques or materials suggest differing manufacturing traditions or different origins of raw materials. Hand axes were commonly found in the area but different types predominate in the Wolds and Holderness areas respectively. The occurrence of axes made from stone of Cornish origin around Bridlington may indicate a narrow trade zone.

Other barrows, kidney or crescent-shaped as well as the large round barrows such as Duggleby and Willy Howes, are now believed to be contemporary with the

long barrows, rather than later than them. All may belong to the complex of neolithic monuments which include henges.

In the later neolithic an advanced culture was producing elaborate grooved and Peterborough ware pottery and stone mace heads at the same time as the Rudston cursus were being built. Such works of civil engineering must have been effected by well-organised communities. The Thornborough circles probably had a seasonal function for the surrounding community. The early beaker burials are now known to date from this later neolithic period. The high-grade food vessels found with coffin burials may have been the produce of a few specialist craftsmen.

The round barrow tradition continued into the Bronze Age along with the individual beaker culture graves. Community burial circles could be found, as at Todmorden, and could contain cremations, with or without urns. Wood was probably plentiful at this time, even on the Wolds, for construction and fuel. The scatter of bronze finds is much lower than that of stone implements. This may be partly due to the ease of recognition of bronze, together with its inherent value, which would encourage the retrieval and recycling of the metal by the medieval peasant.

Finally by the late Bronze Age the hillforts at Grimthorpe and Paddock Hill, Thwing, were being constructed. More recent developments would have to await a future lecture and exhibition on 'Iron Age in Yorkshire'. (See pp 6-7!!)

J.D.D.

15th October - Biologists on the trail of the urban
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past. A.R.Hall, A.K.G.Jones and H.K.Kenward
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This three-for-the-price-of-one lecture was given by members of the York Environmental Archaeology Unit. Allan Hall set the scene describing the Unit's foundation in 1975, supported by D.O.E. and the Leverhulme Trust, to meet the need for environmental study of the regularly encountered 25ft of richly organic deposits which is the archaeology of York. A great deal of work is involved in soil sample preparation for the extraction of beetles and insect remains, seeds

and small bones, which often prove to be invaluable aids for site interpretations. For the first paraffin flotation is necessary after washing down and sieving. For seeds the process employed is bank sieving followed by hand sorting under a binocular microscope, as with the insects. Small bones of mammals and fish are extracted by bulk sieving through a coarse lmm nylon mesh, which also collects fruit seeds, small pot sherds, and even the odd coin or glass bead! The Unit staff also undertake the identification of wood species - essential information for the conservator before object treatment can begin. Wooden needles are often fashioned from yew; a pan-pipe found recently was of boxwood; but the commonest woods encountered are oak, ash and alder, the latter occurring on occasion in timber piling. An example of archaeological interpretation achieved by environmental sampling was given by Dr Hall:

At Coney Street in York, by the River Ouse and outside the legionary fortress, excavations revealed timber slots filled with organic material, samples of which were found to contain at least 100 million grain weevils! Although no grain survived, the presence of this beetle in such vast quantities left no doubt that the structure represented by the timber slots must have been a granary, a conclusion impossible to establish without this evidence. Carbonised grain (75% wheat, + oats + barley + rye) in the higher fill and a total absence of beetles indicated the demolition of the granaries by fire.

Harry Kenward outlined progress in the research topic of the changes in British city life over the past 2000 years as demonstrated through the environmental evidence. In Skeldergate, Coney Street and other sites in York, glimpses of the environment in the Roman period have been seen. Buried soil sealed by dumped material in Skeldergate seems to be pre-Roman humic soil prepared for Roman occupation. A flora of rough meadowland and the presence of dung beetles suggest Roman or Iron Age pasture. Although these deposits lie a considerable way below the present day water level, the evidence shows that the Roman period did not experience flooding on the mod-

ern scale, indicating a change in the nature of the river. Roman levels are not normally environmentally productive, but a long-lived well of 4th century date was found to be exceptionally helpful in its assemblage of biological remains. A skin of insects lying on the bottom of the well indicated its long use. Infilling was marked by rubbish dumping, including grain and bran affected by pests. Thereafter there was a decreasing number of beetles in evidence toward the top. Grain and woodworm beetles were present; surprisingly so too was black rat, usually thought to have entered Britain only 700 years ago. Hemp, coriander and peat blocks, gathered from raised bogs for fuel, were also in evidence in the well fill.

In the Viking period the picture is far more colourful throughout the deposits, notably at L oyd's Bank and Coppergate. 90% by volume is organic material on these sites in the form of wood, straw, reeds, etc. The environmental picture is a mixture of cereal field seeds, weeds (nettles + edible species), nuts, cherries, and insects almost exclusively of compost heap and dung types! The Viking town, by contrast to the Roman, must have been squalid and submerged in decaying matter. Several metres of occupation deposits in this period is clearly explicable by the occupants living in their own rubbish heaps! On occasion aquatic plants and insect remains occur in abundance, possibly indicating the marshy nature of the Foss area from which insects would swarm and plant seeds would be blown. But aquatic seeds could equally well have been brought in on boots, and such plants could actually also have been growing on the sites in which they appear. Much of the plant growth was probably nonetheless kept down by pigs and chickens. A puzzle in the environmental record for the Viking period is the failure sometimes for the insect and plant remains to tally, in that the insects might give indications of rapid changes while the flora remains stable. Another odd one is that whilst parasitic lice have been identified from combs found at Coppergate, the species is more appropriate to sheep or deer than humans - which says something either about the condition of the Viking users or the use

of the combs themselves! A further interesting observation is that the Viking and early medieval periods in York do not produce grain pests.

In the medieval period, the rotting vegetation species are not in evidence, and the little Ice Age in the 13th century may have had its effect in this respect. For the first time plaster beetles and bed bugs appear, indicating changes in house interiors and furnishings.

After the medieval period so much material was carted out of town for disposal that the environmental picture is denuded and its study is no longer therefore profitable.

Whilst the Unit wished to examine environmentally as many towns as possible, in practical terms this actually means York, Hull and Beverley. In all instances the fauna has been found to be the same throughout the medieval period, and this view can be extended to include Scandinavian towns too where similar work is proceeding. The clear conclusion is that man creates the same urban conditions everywhere.

Andrew Jones undertook to examine a single York site, Coppergate, from which 2000 samples awaited attention, with only 150 examined to date! In general terms the evidence from the Viking town may prove to be biased compared with that from the Roman town since the former lies southward on lower ground near the river. The Coppergate site had produced domestic occupation at the street frontage with workshops and open ground to the rear. Industry had brought its own special traces to the site, such as trisulphate of arsenic, an element used in decorative colouring and probably imported in this instance. Lavatory remains had provided evidence of diet, diseases and digestive complaints, demonstrated by the presence of round worms - an indication of the lack of personal hygiene. York, Hull and the Scandinavian towns have each produced evidence of this kind. A high fibre diet is betrayed by bran, which remarkably includes 4% by volume of corncockle, which is a poisonous cornfield weed and one obviously ingested at a dangerously high level. Amongst the usual animal

bone evidence of pig, sheep and cattle, rabbit and hare were found to be common in the medieval period at Coppergate. The large open area at the rear of the site has been found to be a rich source of environmental material, where trees and plants grew wild, producing a picture as lifelike through the examination of its microscopic remains as the more traditionally colourful evidence of structures in evidence visually at the site's street frontage.

12th November - Recent Excavations on Iron Age
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Cemeteries in Champagne. Dr Ian Stead
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In a richly illustrated lecture, Dr Stead described the results of archaeological work in the Champagne region of Northern France, between 1971 and 1980, where burials of the La Tène culture are especially prolific. The archaeology of the region had been stimulated in the 19th century by Napoleon III, and between 1860 and 1914 an estimated 12000 burials were excavated, including chariot burials. Of this total only three had been adequately recorded! The collections of grave goods from this work reside at Rheims, Epernay and Châlons-sur-Marne. Today motorway, quarrying and agriculture pose threats to the archaeology, and the project aim of the Anglo-French work in Champagne was to set the 19th century finds into their appropriate context through the application of modern, carefully recorded excavation. In the first instance limited area excavations were undertaken from expedition headquarters at Ville-sur-Retourne, since the entire operation each season had to be completed in France, including the compilation of all data and finds' drawing.

A reexcavation of a La Tène II burial at Ménil-Annelles (Ardennes) was undertaken in 1971, and trial trenching examined others in the vicinity. A large La Tène III cremation cemetery was encountered and the differences between the La Tène II burials with bronze grave goods and the La Tène III cremations with iron grave goods and large quantities of pottery vessels was clearly demonstrated by this work. The La Tène II pottery is hard-fired with rusticated

decoration and the La Tène III is wheel-thrown but badly fired.

The Champagne excavations increased in size and at Ménil in 1974-76 the excavated area not only revealed square barrows with cremations of La Tène III, but also post hole structures. One 2m square was not directly related to the burials although within the cemetery; two four-post structures were surrounded by an irregular gully and a La Tène II inhumation lay in the centre of one. There were also two eight-post features, each with a shallow grave containing La Tène III cremations. A sequence of burials within enclosures with additions to the enclosures was apparent.

Aerial survey over Ville-sur-Retourne followed by excavation in 1972, 1977 and 1979 produced a similar picture to that at Ménil but with richer graves. La Tène III cremations abounded, with single graves containing up to 35 pots. Male burials included six pots or less, the larger quantities occurring with females. A sword and scabbard, the latter bent and too small for the former, were found with one burial. Folded arm inhumations, normally in a coffin, and without grave goods extended the burial sequence into the Roman period as far as the 3rd century AD - a hoard of coins c.300 AD was found cut into the grave fill of one - but in the 4th century grave goods reappear and include bracelets, bone combs, glass vessels, hairpins, beads, and in one case a whole jewellery box. Of this period were four niche burials where coffins were tucked into the side of the grave at the bottom. The attitude of some burials lying at an angle clearly indicated that Roman graves had been cut into the slopes of La Tène I mounds, the very existence of which had been in question until now.

Evidence of La Tène I, dating from the 5th century BC was sought. Diagnostic features of these earliest cemeteries were found to be large circles and small square enclosures amongst the burials, some of which demonstrated a Hallstatt overlap. The graves of La Tène I are often found in a badly disturbed state, a condition also noted by archaeologists in the 19th

century. It is a matter for debate who it was that was responsible for these intrusions, whether it was the La Tène peoples themselves or those that came after them. However a disturbed grave excavated by Dr Stead was demonstrably not in the search for grave goods, and it had been reported that in another example only the cranium had been removed from a grave. This suggests perhaps that a La Tène ritual is involved. Another characteristic of La Tène I graves is the dark earth fill, which has also provided a topic for theorising in the past. It seems likely however that loess, a dark, wind-blown soil formerly overlying the chalk when the graves were first cut, has subsequently been blown from the higher ground down into the valley bottoms, where a test excavation by Paul Buckland revealed its existence.

At Saulces Champenoises (Ardennes) in 1976 and 1978, circular enclosures were found with extremely narrow entrances of less than 1m wide, without exception on the southern side. A Hallstatt C cremation of 6th century BC date contained an iron sword and bronzes, including phalerae indicating at least a rider's burial if not actually a charioteer. Twelve-post structures were present. In the last season only six burials were encountered, but all proved of great interest: A grave with two slots in the bottom, 1m long x 20cm wide x 20cm deep, one containing an iron knife and iron ferrule, was otherwise without finds. Another grave had pottery disturbed throughout, although the setting of the original four pots was ascertainable, flakes of iron, indicating objects of this metal were originally included, and gold in the form of tiny discs and indicating its La Tène I date. A chariot burial was finally discovered of unique plan. Trapezoidal in shape, 2.2m long x 1.6m wide at one end narrowing to 1m at the other, slots for the wheels extended beyond the back of the grave and hub slots were also cut out of the sides. The wheel slots were further unusual in that their alignment followed the narrowing sides of the grave. No fittings survived, but there was a jumble of partly articulated human limbs in the middle depth of the fill, and another higher up. The disturbances creating this

effect were clearly recent to the burial and are therefore to be seen as rapid grave robbing or ritualistic.

The Champagne excavation programme had demonstrated the existence of a complete cemetery sequence of all three periods of the Iron Age La Tène culture extending into the Roman period within a small geographical area where relative chronology from site to site might be more closely established by further work.

The beginning of a new E.R.A. The journal for 1980, East Riding Archaeologist 6, is number 4 in the Hull Old Town Report Series, "Excavations in Scale Lane/Lowgate 1974" by Peter Armstrong coupled with "A late medieval pottery kiln at Holme-upon-Spalding Moor" by P. Mayes and C. Hayfield. Selling at £4.50, it is of course issued free to members and will be available from next month. Out of town members will receive their copies by post as usual, and local members are asked to take the opportunity to collect at the next meeting of the Society on January 21st when Ben Whitwell will be talking on "The Coritani". Other meetings in 1981 which you won't want to miss are:

- Feb. 18th - The Medieval Landscape: Documents and Digging ... Stephen Moorhouse
- Mar. 18th - The Roman Army in the North: Some Recent Gleanings ... Brian Hartley
- Apr. 15th - Annual General Meeting

... and the return of an E.R.A. The Hon Editor, Ben Whitwell is seeking material for the next issue of the journal, East Riding Archaeologist 7, which is to be a compendium volume (as was Vol.1 part 1, and Vol.2) comprising site reports and notes and planned for a year hence. Contributions are invited - articles, notes of archaeological finds, etc. Enquiries, suggestions or contributions themselves should be directed to Dr J.B. Whitwell, H.A.U., Central Library, Albion St., Hull.

and

A HAPPY NEW YEAR