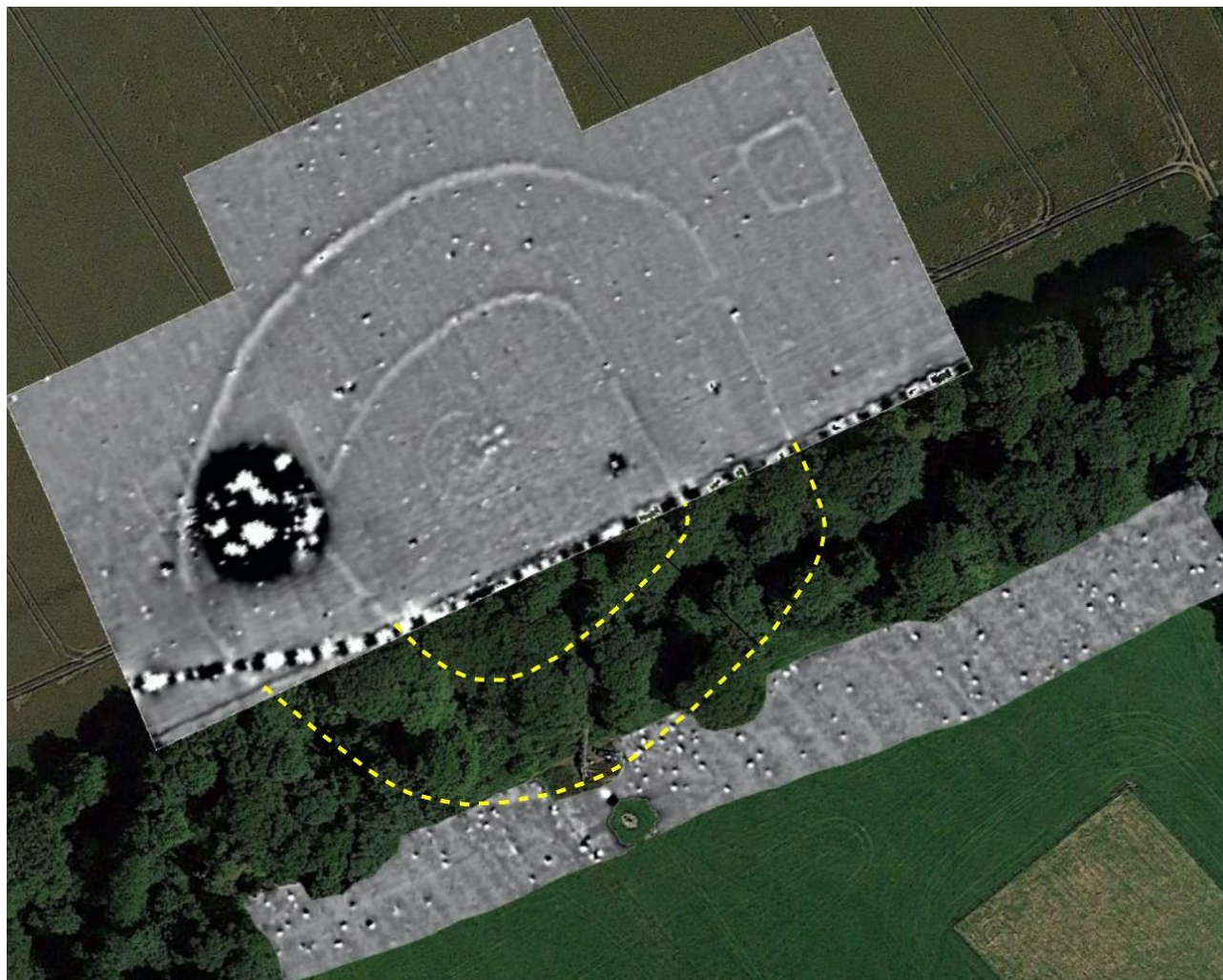


# *ERAS News*

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*EAST RIDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, No. 91 MARCH 2019*

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*Fig. 1. Geophysical survey, Kipling House Farm 2017 and 2018 by James Lyall. Extrapolation of enclosure circuit by Mike Haken based on the 2018 magnetometer survey. The dark circular anomaly is a filled in pit. The band to the southern edge of the field is a metal water pipe. Site of the 2018 excavation project, part funded by ERAS.*

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*Local News ~ Lecture Summaries –Iron Age E. Yorks & Binchester ~FFWAP Magnetometry  
Kipling House Farm Excavation ~ Pearson Park ~ Irish Conference ~ AGM Notice ~ Events*

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## **ERAS LOCAL NEWS . . .**

### ***Day Trips 2019***

Flag Fen and Peterborough Museum has been suggested as a possible day coach trip for June this year. A guided tour around the Elsecar Heritage Centre, near Barnsley is also on the cards, with a special Engine House tour from our own Richard Lamb so keep an eye on the website for details. The latter visit would be on a car share basis. If you have any other ideas of sites you would like to visit with ERAS, please contact Richard on [coates8@coates8.karoo.co.uk](mailto:coates8@coates8.karoo.co.uk)

### ***New ERAS Volume***

Volume 17 of East Riding Archaeologist has now been published, so if you want your free copy, make sure you have renewed your membership for 2019. They will be distributed at the April lecture meeting and AGM. Many thanks to our editor Dr. Dave Evans, who gives of his time so freely and so ably on this much respected series of publications.

### ***Discounts using your ERASmembership card***

The committee has negotiated a discount of 10-20% off goods bought from Trespass in Beverley's Flemingate Centre, if you show your current ERAS membership card. Trespass sells outdoor clothing, boots and accessories etc. Please note that this only applies to the Flemingate branch.

### ***PayPal***

Our excellent and committee is working with treasurer Colin Parr to introduce PayPal into our system, so we will be able to take membership payments online, also card payments at booksales, publicity stalls and meetings.

### ***Tony Brewster memorial fund***

Terry Manby reports that the campaign to raise funds for a memorial in Winteringham New Churchyard (near Malton) to the archaeologist Tony Brewster, is going well and they are nearing their target. Brewster's best known excavation was probably the Bronze Age site at Staple Howe. Any of our older long-standing members who might remember Brewster and would like to make a small donation, can send a cheque (made out to East Riding Archaeological Research Trust) to Terry Manby at 43 Meadow Drive, Market Weighton YO43 3QG

### ***Archaeology magazines still available***

Archaeology magazines donated by the family of a late ERAS member are still available. Please contact the secretary if you would like them. One

collection comprises every issue of *Current Archaeology* from No. 149, Sept 1996 to No. 333, Dec 2017. The other collection comprises every issue of *Current World Archaeology*, from No. 1, to No. 86, Dec 2017. All but the last few issues are bound in CA/CWA folders.

### ***Field Studies***

Though there are plans for more variety in Field Studies meetings, the group is still working on sorting and labelling the many pottery sherds (all rejects) from a Roman kiln. You will be shown how to handle and sort the pottery and helpers are still needed, so join them at 7.30pm on the first Weds of the month at St Nicholas Community Centre, Holmechurch Lane, Beverley or contact Richard on [coates8@coates8.karoo.co.uk](mailto:coates8@coates8.karoo.co.uk)

### ***CITiZAN Funding***

The Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network, known as CITiZAN has been successful in their Heritage Lottery Fund bid, to enable them to continue their work for another three years. It will include the Humber Estuary, the East Riding coast and parts of North Lincolnshire.

### ***DigVentures2019***

We hope to continue our association with DigVentures by doing more surveying this summer, but hopefully closer to the excavation site.

### ***Anyone remember Pockley1969-72 ?***

Spencer Carter is trying to reconcile some flint artefact with records of the excavation of four Bronze Age barrows. If you know anyone who worked on this Ministry of Works project near Beadlam and Helmsley, Spencer would be pleased to hear from you, especially if you have photos or just background memory info. If you can help, please email [sdcarter10@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sdcarter10@yahoo.co.uk) or contact the editor who will pass on your details.

### ***Researchers, Don't ever give up!***

Twenty years ago, when I was doing some research into Victorian archaeologist Henry Bendelack Hewetson, who first excavated the Easington Bronze Age Barrow, (later excavated by ERAS) I sent off a few letters in the hope of getting some responses. A few weeks ago, I had a phone call from Spain, from one of HBH's descendants, saying she thought maybe she should reply to my letter. I was, of course, delighted even after 20 years and hope to arrange to meet up next time she is back in this country. Just in time for the publication of the Easington site, if I can pull all the specialist reports together and get it written up.

*Editor*

## ***ERAS Lecture Summary Women, Mobility & Power in Iron Age East Yorkshire***

***Dr Melanie Giles***

***21 Nov. 2018***

Discussing gender, Dr Giles proposed an alternative way of looking at Iron Age society, challenging traditional interpretations of well studied evidence, also supporting her argument with results from recently excavated sites. Gender theorists have been unnecessarily oppositional and it has even been suggested that the well known lavish female Iron Age burial at Vix in France may have been a transvestite male priest. There will always be problems defining gender in archaeological contexts, as some males are quite gracile, whilst some females are very sturdy. Statistically there are also problems, as we do not see enough baby or child skeletons as these were often placed in ditches etc but it would appear that childbirth deaths may actually be quite rare.

Dr Giles considered that gender was not much of an issue in the Iron Age society, a more important factor being age. We – or rather osteologists - do tend to under-estimate the age at death, when analysing skeletons. The Wetwang Slack cemetery layout shows that the graves of older women, especially those buried with beads, may have created a focus for other burials. It appears that age, knowledge and wisdom were much valued.

There are interesting differences in the items buried with males and females. Weapons and metal working tools are only seen with males, whereas craft tools, especially spindles are found only with females. The Wetwang Village burial of a female with a chariot contained more coral decoration than any other burial known. The bronze or iron mirrors found with female burials of the period may not have been simply for looking at the face, but might have been a way of enabling contact with the spirit world. As such, perhaps they could be viewed as ‘spiritual weapons’, in a society in which spirituality played a large part. It was noted that a woman (Kirkburn 6) who probably died in childbirth was buried with amber and jet objects; both materials thought to have powerful properties.

Another unusual burial which has potential to be viewed in a way different from the traditional is that of the couple buried in Barrow 1, at Garton Slack, interpreted by Brewster as ‘*the sinful couple*’. The male buried with a female and a seven month foetus could have resulted from several different situations, even the death of a female in

late pregnancy, followed by the suicide of the husband or partner. We should careful not to project modern values onto Iron Age contexts.

Dr Giles also referred to the work of Jay, Richards and Montgomery on isotope analysis. There are not enough results to know whether the Yorkshire Wolds chalk has a very different signal from that of the chalk in France, but it is thought that the Wolds burials represent a local population. Isotope analysis shows little difference in diet between the elite and the rest of the population, whereas continental burials show big differences between these groups. The Yorkshire burials seem to show that the elite had better teeth, so is it possible they had access to superior, finer bread? An interesting comparison of two burials from Napton Wold shows a female of c 45 years with osteo-arthritis and some bone porosity, who was buried in a barrow, possibly in a shroud or a basket, together with joints of pork and a single potsherd. The second female, a flat burial of a slightly younger woman with interesting tooth wear, possibly showing use in craft work, was related to the first female through the maternal line and confirms ideas of family links within cemeteries.

The theory that some Iron Age bodies were subject to a process of mummification has emerged in recent years, especially in relation to those studied by John Dent, who excavated several highly compressed female skeletons. Dr Giles asked whether perhaps people were curating grandmother figures, suggested that sometimes bodies may have been kept in this way until such time as a funeral could be arranged, according to weather, season or the need to contact distant family. It was noted that one adolescent male from Garton Slack cemetery had definitely been mummified, whilst another, thought to have been similarly treated turned out not to have been.

Dr Giles concluded with a particularly intriguing thought; remember the decorated sealed bronze canister on a chain, fondly known as the ‘bean tin’ found with a female burial at Wetwang Slack? It was assumed to represent some sort power or status for the owner and now recent tests have shown that it really does contain something and could actually be opened!

*These two lecture summaries are written up from notes speedily taken during the lectures and any errors are strictly the fault of the editor.*

*Editor*



## ***ERAS Lecture Summary*** ***Roman Binchester***

***Dr David Petts***      ***January 2019***

Having visited the Binchester site on an ERAS trip, it was of special interest to hear this excellent lecture. Situated where Dere Street crossed the River Wear, this Roman fort site with bathhouse, barracks and a vicus, has been excavated over nine seasons by students from Durham and other Universities, together with community groups. Occupied from the (early) Flavian period, the fort has the typical playing card outline, although parts of an earlier, larger vexillation fort detected by the TV TimeTeam group using geophysics in 2006 has not yet been fully investigated.

The lower half of the fort was unavailable for excavation, having slumped downhill due to the loose, sandy subsoil of the area and extra care was needed to deal with this instability during excavation. There was clear evidence that the buildings had had to be repeatedly repaired during their period of use, due to this movement. It is also known that a very large amount of stone from the Roman buildings was used to build later local buildings, including the well known Anglo-saxon church at Escombe. On the remaining upper half of the site, excavation focussed on the barracks, the bathhouse and the vicus. Walls only survived to such a good height (2-3 metres) because rooms were infilled with 4<sup>th</sup> century domestic rubbish after some parts of the fort went out of use. Dr Petts was particularly interested in the RB/ early Medieval interface period and the excavation was able to extract plenty of this material for study, which perhaps in the past might have been rejected in order to get down speedily to the main Roman contexts.

Originally a wooded structure, the barracks were mainly occupied by a Spanish auxiliary cavalry unit, Ala Vettonnes and later by a Frisian unit. Men and horses were all housed under one roof, and there were ample gully drains to deal with waste from the stables and latrines and with rainwater. A large room for cavalry officers was also excavated. There was no sign of an aquaduct and it was assumed that horses would have been watered down at the river, whilst water for drinking and cooking was probably brought up in barrels. Although the buildings appeared to have been roofed with stone tiles, the roofing material of the original wooden buildings may have been heather thatch. A trench excavated through part of the vicus showed shops and work units, and there was

evidence for jet working in this area, with lumps of raw Whitby jet and much working debris.

The bath house, with hypocaust beneath, was used over a long period of time and painted wall plaster was evident from the early phase. Engraved graffiti on the bathhouse walls was also detected but was difficult to decipher. One of the changing rooms, had a stone bench around the periphery and two small personal plunge pools seem to have inserted at a later date, as was a concrete lined cistern. It can be assumed, as there was no sign of an aquaduct, that the bath water would have been a little smelly.

The assemblage of finds from this longterm excavation was huge and work on it is ongoing. It includes ballista bolts, glassware, pottery, brooches, rings, earrings, jet, enamel, bone, metal-working moulds, lamps, rings, intaglios with early Christian motifs set in silver, figurines, face pots, head pots, phallic symbols, etc. Many of the butchered cattle scapulae were pierced, probably indicating the meat was hung – either for drying or just as part of the processing. Exposed only by accident, a stone altar with excellently preserved inscription and imagery (see below) was found in situ on a stone bench in the bath house changing room. Dedicated to the goddess Fortuna, it had been put up by a retired military engineer or architect.

45 graves situated behind two mausolea structures, found much earlier by TimeTeam, were excavated by the Durham team. Due to the acidic sandy soil, skeletal preservation was extremely poor, although hair pins, bangles, pottery and glass vessels were present. About half of the graves had evidence of a coffin. There was one stone cist and four with stone slabs at head and foot, but very little human bone was present.



*Altar to Fortuna*

*Photo: D Petts*

## **FFWAP – A Year of Magnetometry**

**By Alison Spencer**     *Photo: Sue Cowie*



This time last year I wrote in the *ERAS News* article *FFWAP's Further Adventures*, that the Fridaythorpe Fimber Wetwang Archaeology Project continued to be active throughout the winter and twelve months later this still remains true. When our excavation project at Green Lane Farm, Wetwang (see *ERAS News* 89) ended in Sept. 2017, we were not sure whether the group would survive. A continuous and meaningful excavation project would undoubtedly attract many people, especially those who have retired as they have time to spare, whereas competent supervision, post-excavation costs and facilities are an inevitable financial restraint on idealistic ambitions.

However all was not lost. James Lyall, the director of Geophiz.biz, has trained a core of FFWAP members to undertake magnetometer surveys. He has also organised for our group to have the long-term use of an FM36 magnetometer (from David Bunn, of PCA Geophysics). More recently we have also been granted use of a second magnetometer (from Dominic Powlesland, of the Landscape Research Centre). A recent grant from the CBA Mick Aston Fund, which is supported by Historic England, has enabled us to purchase the necessary ropes and survey equipment; we now have all we need to conduct our surveys.

And survey we have ...

Between 8<sup>th</sup> April 2018 and 4<sup>th</sup> March 2019 FFWAP has completed the following :

- ✓ 108 sessions comprising of 297 people days and approximately 2070 hours of site attendance.
- ✓ 858 grids of 30m x 30m which involved walking 480 miles (nearly as far as walking from Wetwang to John O Groats!).
- ✓ 70 hectares of survey.

So – what have we found?

The reference for known archaeology in our area is based on the cropmark maps produced by Stoertz in 1997. Generally, we are establishing more detail to this wonderful resource.

Our main discoveries are :

- ✓ Two previously unknown ladder settlements located between Wetwang and Fridaythorpe.
- ✓ Magnetometry showed no signs of the Roman road Margary 810 that was believed to cross one of our surveyed fields. We hope that the farmer will allow us to carry out a small excavation next autumn to verify this.
- ✓ Several previously unidentified round and square barrows.

So what's next?

The farmers we have approached to date have been very welcoming to us. We hope to continue and extend these good relations and have access to further fields in the FFWAP area (nearly 1,200 hectares) over the next few years – yes – optimistically that is the aim of our undertaking. Recently FFWAP received training in the use of the Sensys 5 probe cart system belonging to the Roman Roads Research Association. Our current magnetometers take 4 readings per metre whereas the cart takes 20 so the resulting plots have a greater and clearer resolution. We will dream on, but meanwhile we are very grateful for the equipment available to us. Our dedicated core team is enthusiastic and willing, but more help would be welcome, allowing more survey days to be undertaken. If you are interested in becoming involved please contact Alison Spencer on email

[ffwap.alison@gmail.com](mailto:ffwap.alison@gmail.com)



*Yes, we survey (almost) whatever the weather.*

*Photo: A. Spencer*

***Excavation of a Ring Fort at  
Kipling House Farm, Middleton-on-the  
Wolds. Interim Report, 2018  
Peter Halkon and James Lyall***

At Kipling House Farm, near Middleton-on-the Wolds, a large ovoid enclosure was revealed as a crop mark and plotted during the then RCHM(E) National Mapping Programme of the Yorkshire Wolds (Stoertz 1997). The aerial photographic plots show concentric D shaped features, presumed to be the enclosure ditches, the outer enclosure having a diameter of 150 m, and the inner 65m. To the East of the outer enclosure was a square concentric feature, 20m wide. Both Stoertz, Manby (2007) and Halkon (2008) interpreted the feature as a later Bronze Age ring-fort; however, at that stage no internal features were visible. As part of an ongoing project to investigate cropmark sites on the western Yorkshire Wolds, a geophysical survey was undertaken using a dual sensor Bartington gradiometer in April 2017 by James Lyall with the assistance of Peter Halkon and Hull University MA Archaeology student Claire Whiteley. The results were unexpected and spectacular (Fig. 1, cover).

Most striking was the central circular feature, with an outer ring 20m in diameter and what appears to be an inner ring of posts around 5m in diameter. A corridor flanked by post settings leads from an inner circle of posts to the outer ring, forming an entranceway of some kind, which aligns almost exactly with entrances in the inner and outer enclosures. The positioning of these entrances on the eastern side of the feature may not be coincidental. The geophysical survey showed an entrance in the western inner enclosure ditch and another in the northern outer ditch, but no post holes were visible in the survey plots. The large magnetic anomaly on the western side of the outer enclosure is a filled in pit, visible on old Ordnance Survey maps and on Google Earth imagery, filled in between 2007 and 2012.

The closest parallel to this feature is the later Bronze Age ring-fort at Paddock Hill, Octon Grange, Thwing, E. Yorkshire, and Springfield Lyons and Mucking in Essex (Manby 2007). This new discovery is therefore likely to be of national significance. The square enclosure to the East was interpreted as a possible Romano-Celtic type shrine (Halkon 2008) however field walking during the 2017 geophysical survey produced no Roman material on the surface and little evidence of any building material. In April 2018 further aerial survey by Tony Hunt of Yorkshire Archaeological Aerial Survey by drone showed the outline of both

enclosure ditches as soil marks. Because of the potential national significance of this site, it was decided that an exploratory excavation should be carried out in 2018. The Key research questions to be addressed were as follows:

- What is the date of the site?
- What was the function of the site?
- What is the condition of the site?
- What is the landscape context of the site?
- What is the relationship between the features revealed through geophysical survey with those encountered during the excavation?

Although the field had been planted with potatoes, a strip parallel to the wood on the southern boundary of the field had been left without a crop due to poor condition during sowing. Excavation took place from 25<sup>th</sup> Aug. - 9<sup>th</sup> Sept. Five trenches were opened over the inner and outer ditches on the western and eastern sides, with a further central trench in the centre to establish the presence and condition of any internal features (Fig. 2). The plough soil was removed by JCB on 24<sup>th</sup> Aug. and excavation began on the following day.

***Trench A***

Measuring 13x3m this trench had been correctly positioned over the westernmost enclosure ditch (Fig. 3). Due to time constraints the ditch itself was half-sectioned. Almost 4m wide and 1.5m deep, the ditch had been cut down to the chalk bedrock and was noticeably steeper on the outer side and flat bottomed. The fill on the inner side was dominated by a dense tumble of chalk rubble, presumably the remains of an inner bank. The frequent voids within the matrix and absence of soil imply that the bank mainly comprised chalk and had been deliberately pushed in. Only a vestige of the bank remained intact. At some stage the ditch had been recut. The ditch fills contained animal bone and sherds of pottery which were identified as being of later Bronze Age or early Iron Age in date.

***Trench B***

This trench, 10.5m x 2.8m, revealed the southernmost butt end of a ditch forming the inner entrance to the enclosure from the west. Its upper layers contained animal bone and pottery similar to that found in Trench A, however there were several sherds in a darker, harder-fired fabric which could be Anglo-Saxon, but this is yet to be confirmed.

***Trench C***

This trench was positioned within the centre of the enclosure to investigate possible internal features. Although the magnetometer survey showed

possible anomalies, these proved to be glacial in origin.

### **Trench D**

Positioned over the inner ditch on the eastern side, this trench measured 8 x 3m. At first both edges of the ditch proved difficult to define as they were obscured by a spread of darker material in the upper layers containing animal bone and pottery.

### **Trench K**

This irregularly shaped trench was the first to be opened by JCB and the main focus was an 8x3m block positioned over the outer ditch on the eastern side of the enclosure. Again the edges were at first difficult to define. The ditch was half-sectioned. Almost 4m wide but shallower than the ditch in Trench A, the Trench K ditch was flat bottomed and chalk rubble on the inner edge may have been the remains of the bank, probably slighter than its western equivalent. At some stage the ditch was cut by a narrow slot 0.5m across, which may have held a beam or palisade (Fig. 5). Once again the ditch fills contained pottery and animal bone.

### **Geophysics**

The paddock, south of the wood, was surveyed by James Lyall using a magnetometer. It had been unploughed at least since before the 18<sup>th</sup> c Acts of Enclosure and was still covered in rig and furrow. It was still possible to pick up the southernmost outer enclosure ditch. Apart from showing the scale of the site, it demonstrated that the large round house was not actually central, but may have been positioned deliberately on the highest point of the plateau on which the site stood. ERAS also undertook a resistivity survey in an attempt to provide images of the sections of the enclosure ditches. but very dry conditions meant that the results were inconclusive.

### **Aerial survey with a UAV**

Twice during the excavation Tony Hunt of YAA undertook drone surveys to provide an aerial view of the trenches. It was noticed that the Plant health setting of the DroneDeploy software which provides a false colour infrared image showed both inner and outer ditches and the rectilinear enclosure very clearly in the potato crop as it was dating off prior to harvest. These features were almost invisible in the normal orthomosaic photographs.

### **Conclusion**

All of the five aims of the excavation were achieved. Although full analysis has yet to be carried out, the pottery which mainly consisted of handmade heavily gritted fabrics, was identified by Dr T.G. Manby as being of later Bronze Age date

resembling that from Paddock Hill, Thwing. Considering the relatively small scale of the excavation, the amount of animal bone found was surprising. Preliminary assessment of the bone by Clare Rainsford showed a higher than expected proportion of cattle bone, with some pig and horse and very little sheep, which is unusual for the Yorkshire Wolds. Excavation showed that the site had been truncated by many years of ploughing and in most places the plough soil extended down to the bedrock. In Trench K, however a remnant of the original Brown Earth that once covered the Wolds survived. The scale of the ditches, particularly on the western side confirmed the impressive character of the site. Commanding all-round views provided by its prominent position, the site would have been visible from long distances. It is intriguing to consider that the Kipling House ringfort was inter-visible with the site on Nunburnholme Wold (Halkon and Lyall 2014; Halkon, Lyall and Lillie 2015; Halkon and Lyall 2016) and was probably contemporary.

### **Acknowledgements**

The excavation was funded by The Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society and the East Riding Archaeological Society. Many thanks to both tenants and landowner who gave permission for the excavation and to all the digging team.

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*Excavating at Kipling House Farm (top) and using the resistivity meter to take readings for a pseudo section at the site.  
Photos: Peter Halkon*



## ***ERAS in the Park, Oct 2018***

***By Susan Harr, Friends of Pearson Park  
(A View from a non-archaeologist)***

The park was alive with interest on this Sunday, when ERAS brought equipment and a gazebo to display exhibits such as pottery fragments dating back as far as five thousand years, animal bones - and for me, the *piece de resistance*, a RESISTIVITY meter! Sunday was dry and sunny, so their activities attracted a steady stream of interest throughout the day.

### ***Pots of Luck?***

I personally marvelled at the skill and knowledge of the archaeologists who could recognise an insignificant fragment of pottery, which few would have noticed, as being five millennia old! I also enjoyed putting my thumb into a distinct fingerprint on an Iron Age jar which had obviously been shaped by hand and not thrown on the later potter's wheel; it was strange feeling this tiny reminder of a human being from centuries ago. There were medieval fragments too, with their beautiful glazes and in some cases intricate patterns. One jar was imprinted with the fierce visage of a long-ago tyrant in an attempt to dissuade the populace from drinking too much alcohol. One doubts it had the intended effect, but nice try.

### ***Dem Bones ...***

Animal bones, more up to date, provided a guessing game for the many children who came to look at the stall (and adults too) the pug's leg being the easiest to match up!

### ***Vive La Resistance!***

The main purpose, however, in siting their activity in the park was to use the aptly named Resistivity Meter to find evidence of the 'Folly' or 'The Ruins' as the construction came to be called, which existed in the park from 1864 to well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The meter, of course, probes into the earth until it meets resistance, and a pattern of readings is produced on a small digital screen on top of the meter. An area had been mapped out to indicate where the archaeologists thought the folly had been built, and from the data they had already collected, it seems they were right. This data, by some magical means that I, as a non-technical person don't quite grasp, is sent and stored to a remote device, there to be analysed and interpreted. This was particularly interesting, not least because the

park is garnering a lot of publicity pending the start of the restoration work funded by the Heritage Lottery fund. Many old photos, including pictures of the folly/ruins have been on display, so it was fascinating to watch the patient progress of those wielding the meter and to try to visualise how the edifice must have looked. One detail has emerged: of the two main pathways across the park, the one to the left, which leads to the archway and to the Beverley Road entrance, would not have been routed as it now is; the folly extended across that area, and the park would have looked quite different from the one we know now. Finally, Friends of Pearson park and other local organisations thank ERAS for providing us with such an intriguing and lively afternoon on the Sunday and also for braving the storm on the Saturday. We look forward to hearing more about the results.

## ***ERAS CHRISTMAS PARTY 2018***

Many thanks to Lisa Johnson and Sam Braham for organising our Christmas party in Beverley again. Most popular activity of the evening was the pottery making competition, won by Ken and Jackie Parker's team. The shape of the pots, pictured below, might well have been influenced by the contents of the bottles, cans and glasses to be seen in the background!



*Photo: Sam Braham*

## ***Archive on Hull's Town Defences***

One of the early excavations organised by ERAS was in Humber Street in 1964 and then later, three trenches were opened at the north walls. ERAS was also involved in the Beverley Gate excavation 1986, 1989. A full account of these and other pieces of work on Hull Town Defences are now available as a free PDF download from the ADS website, if you go to the following link <https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/orthull/he2018/downloads.cfm>

## **Conference Report**

### ***Pathways to the Cosmos***

#### ***The alignment of megalithic tombs in Ireland and Atlantic Europe***

***Sept 2018, Dublin Castle, Ireland***

This conference was well advertised in the archaeological press, but in Ireland, such is the interest in culture, that it was fully booked, well before the closing date, with frequent and frantic email appeals for unwanted tickets as the date drew near. A show of hands in the audience proved that only a small proportion of attendees were archaeologists, most having only a general interest in the period in question. There was a sprinkling of astronomers and interestingly, astrologers! It was perhaps not the archaeologically specialised audience that the organisers were expecting, but never-the-less, there was a great deal of enthusiasm. British archaeologists – you had better book earlier next year. Below is a brief summary of a few of the presentations at this excellent and generously funded event. Any errors are my own, and are down to my hurried note-taking. (*Editor*)

**Prof. Chris Scarre**, University of Durham, opened with an extensive background survey of tomb orientations *Children of the Sun? The European Megalithic Phenomenon*. Many chambered tombs in western Europe align with the sunrise, whereas east of the Rhone, entrances tend to face west. He pointed out that Iberia and S. France show a shared belief system which breaks up further north and west. There is much less consistency in Normandy and in Orkney and there is differentiation between north and South Brittany. Referring to the earlier non-megalithic Passy type long mounds (4700-4300BC) most are aligned east to sunrise, and ditched mounds in Normandy tend to be aligned EW as do the houses of this period, although the earliest longhouses tended to face south and may possibly have been looking back to a homeland. Earlier patterns of prevailing wind direction may also be significant, as may specific landforms, visible from the sites.

**Dr Fabio Silva** (UCL, and University of Wales Trinity St David.) reported on research work on mid Neolithic NW Portugal. The passage type tombs of this period are thought to have been constructed over a span of c600 years and were probably used for over 1000 years. Most have painted symbols in red and black ochre and white. In a society operating on a transhumance system, many people would have spent the summers in the mountains and would have been very familiar with the skies. There is a solar bias in past research, but

moon and stars would have featured heavily in pre-historic societies. Fabio pointed out that ‘skyscape’ is an unbiased term, whereas use of the word ‘astronomy’ is much more weighted towards study of the stars.

Of the 2000 passage graves in western Iberia only 762 are not completely lost. A large study was carried out of the 372 which have a clear orientation. Tomb condition was important, as a wider entrance viewpoint gives wider scope for different formations of the cosmos to appear over the horizon; the perspective also changes according to where one stands in the chamber. In establishing viewpoints from the tombs, reforestation projects caused difficulties, though digital reconstruction could sometimes re-establish the horizon. All the tombs in the study were oriented to the same mountain range and it was found that the area of the horizon focus narrowed down as the tombs developed and he suggests this was intentional. Some star formations eg. Aldebaron can only be seen at certain times of the year. Looking at which formations the tombs could have been targeting, Dr Silva considered that three particular stars - Alnath (blue), Antares (bright red) and Aldebaran (red) could explain 99% of the tomb alignments.

Being inside the tomb gives prior viewing of the relevant star and this may have formed some sort of rite of passage, associated with spending a night in the tomb with the ancestors. Astro-biology, the study of origins, evolution and future life in the universe had been suggested as a reason for these activities and Dr Silva was in agreement. A further 37 tombs were studied in Galicia but results could not be extrapolated from a small area to a larger one, as communities might have had very different beliefs.

**Prof. Jane Downs** University of the Highlands and Islands Institute of Archaeology, Orkney, Scotland, highlighted the great diversity of orientation and site type, in Orkney, and considered that past research has grouped together features of sites which perhaps should not be linked. Prof. Downs also raised the question of flow alignment, on sites built on sloping ground. Many cists and cemeteries are aligned north/south and she asked whether perhaps there was some regulation of the flow of essences. At MaesHowe the passage overlies a drain feature and it is not known whether this is integral or whether it is part of an earlier building, but she asks whether something was being drawn out. Barnhouse also has a complex drain system which may be more significant than it appears.

**Dr Frank Prendergast**, emeritus, Dublin Institute of Technology in his talk *Skyscape, Culture and the*

*Irish Passage Tomb Tradition, a Complex Legacy*, acknowledged that searching for non-funerary meaning in passage tomb architecture and orientation is 'fraught with difficulty, cultural conditioning and biases'.

He asked us to consider the idea that perhaps what was important was not the view of the skyline, but rather, what was coming in, ie what the souls or ashes of the dead were receiving from the sun. He also suggested that north might be associated with death and a passage into the cosmos or into another life. Thus it's possible that what was important was not so much the orientation of tombs, but their actual landscape view. He noted that passage tombs, in contrast to portal and court tombs, tend to be clustered on higher ground, where the view would have been significant.

I found Dr. Prendergast's presentation refreshingly honest in declaring that much of the knowledge we are seeking is, and will probably remain, unknowable. He is championing the Dark Skies Movement, which works to conserve archaeological landscapes from light pollution.

**Prof. Clive Ruggles** emeritus Professor of archaeoastronomy, University of Leicester. Prof. Ruggles's lively presentation ranged from Europe to the Pacific, South and Central America. He stressed the necessity to remain objective with the evidence, pointing out that, by making certain assumptions some studies are playing fast and loose with the data. Prof. Ruggles, originally an astronomer, is also very concerned with reducing light pollution. He points out that '*UNESCO's Astronomy and World Heritage Initiative aims to safeguard cultural properties and landscapes that transcribe the relationship between mankind and the sky... This means that resolving outstanding interpretative and methodological issues is not purely an academic concern: it can also influence public perceptions of what constitutes our most valuable global cultural heritage.*'

The above wording was taken from the conference booklet, produced by Archaeology Ireland.

Other speakers were Prof. Gabriel Cooney – University College, Dublin, Prof. Richard Bradley – Emeritus at Reading University, Clare Tuffy – Visitor Services Manager at the Bru na Boinne Centre, Co. Meath, Roisin Fitzpatrick – artist, and Ken Williams – researcher and photographer. It was interesting to see the more wide reaching approach of this conference, which attracted such a varied audience.

## ***A New Focus on the Folkton Drums?***

Yvonne Luke of YAHS has drawn attention to an article *Getting the Measure of Stonehenge*, by Anne Teather, Andrew Chamberlain and Mike Parker Pearson published in Volume 165 (March/April 2019) of CBA's excellent *British Archaeology* magazine. The feature links the measurements of North Yorkshire's famous Folkton chalk 'drum' figures together with the Lavant, Sussex, chalk 'drum' to a prehistoric foot (which corresponds to 1.056 modern feet). Further deductions then make a link to what appear to be standard units of length used at Stonehenge and Durrington Walls. This complex mathematical topic is discussed in detail in the BA article which is certainly worth accessing. I suspect we will be hearing a lot more about these ideas in the future. To see if you can really get your head round this concept, also try reading the more complex mathematical explanations in *British Journal for the History of Mathematics*, 34, 2019. .

The original Folkton drums are on display at the Stonehenge visitor centre, but the facsimiles, photographed below, by your newsletter editor, are on view in the Hull and East Riding Museum, High St. Hull. Although it seems unfair that we should be left with only facsimiles, they are very convincing. The same volume of *British Archaeology* magazine (which I never tire of promoting) also has a very good feature on the enigmatic Neolithic carved stone balls of northern Scotland, another of archaeology's well known mysteries.





## NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**7.0pm WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 2019**  
**WILBERFORCE BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF HULL**

- 1. Apologies for Absence**
- 2. Chairperson's Opening Remarks**
- 3. Minutes of the 2018 AGM**
- 4. Matters Arising**
- 5. Secretary's Report**
- 6. Treasurer's Report**
- 7. Election of Officers**

Committee nominations are:

Chairperson:	Samantha Braham
Vice Chairperson:	Fiona Wilson
Programme Secretary:	Richard Coates
Secretary:	Richard Coates
Editor:	Dave Evans
Treasurer:	Colin Parr
Website Officer:	Tom Clay
Field Studies Officer:	Michaela Stones
Marketing Officer:	Angela Fawcett

Any other nominations for the above posts are welcome and should be sent to the secretary, Richard Coates, no later than 3<sup>rd</sup> April. (See page 2 for Richard's address and email). Members wishing to nominate someone should seek that person's agreement before doing so.

### **8. Election of Five Ordinary Committee Members**

Members who are willing and eligible to stand for election as Ordinary Committee Members are:

Andy Fergusson, Richard Lamb, Ken Parker, John Parks, Alison Spencer

Further nominations are most welcome and may be made in advance or from the floor of the meeting. Members wishing to nominate someone, should seek that person's agreement before doing so. Should there be more nominations than places, an election will be held.

The committee recommends that Kate Dennett, as newsletter editor, is co-opted onto the 2019 committee.

### **9. Any Other Business**

The meeting will be followed by the scheduled lecture:

*Excavating Engels: recent archaeological evidence for 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial housing in Manchester and Salford.* Dr Mike Nevell

## ***Events For Your Diary***

### ***Historical Association (Hull Branch)***

**Please note changes to the HA programme published in the *ERASnews* 90**

The branch welcomes visitors to lectures. A donation of £2 is requested from non-member visitors. Meetings are currently held at the Danish Church, in Hull city centre. Details of full membership of the Historical Association is on [www.history.org.uk](http://www.history.org.uk), or for local membership, at £10, contact Sylvia Usher, [usher@usher.karoo.co.uk](mailto:usher@usher.karoo.co.uk)

**Thursday, 11<sup>th</sup> April, 7.30, AGM & lecture - *Dragon Women and Patriarchal Paranoia: Lilith, Lamia and Melusine*. Dr. Martin Arnold, (University of Hull).**  
A world view of the meaning of dragons.

**Saturday, 18<sup>th</sup> May, Visit to Malton Museum, North Yorkshire.** Museum visit to see material from the Roman fort and medieval town, and a guided heritage walk. Further details from Sylvia Usher  
[usher@usher.karoo.co.uk](mailto:usher@usher.karoo.co.uk)

### ***OTHER ORGANISATIONS***

**Thursdays. 21st and 28<sup>th</sup> March.**

**Hull's South Blockhouse excavation open days.**

**Fri. 22 March, Finds Identification Day**  
Hull and East Riding Museum, High St, Hull

**Sat. 6 April, YAHS Conference *Exploring the Archaeology of Yorkshire Landscapes.*, Hull University.** A conference inspired by the late Tony Pacitto, organised by the Prehistoric Research Section of YAHS, in association with ERAS and University of Hull. £20 including tea, coffee and buffet lunch or £12 without lunch.  
Booking forms can be downloaded from the ERAS website [www.eras.org.uk](http://www.eras.org.uk) Booking closes 26<sup>th</sup> March and **there are not many places left.**

**Sat 6 April, PLACE Conference. *The Changing Nature of Conservation*. York St John University.** Clements Hall, York. 9.15am – 4.45pm  
£10 incl refreshments. Details from Dr. M. Atherton, York St John University, Lord Mayors Walk, York, YO31 7EX. [place@yorksja.ac.uk](mailto:place@yorksja.ac.uk)

**Hull & East Riding Museum, Easter school holiday event, *Faces from the Past Trail* and Medieval object handling. Dates tba.**

**27 April - 28 August, James Cook, The Voyages**  
Exhibition at the British Library, London The BL is a wonderful (free) place to spend time if you are in London and very convenient for Kings Cross. With Cook's Whitby connections, this exhibition will surely be of interest. (There's also a very good café.) Details on BL website. £14/£11/£7

**Fri. 31 May, Finds Identification Day.**  
Hull and East Riding Museum. High St, Hull.

**Sun. 9 June, ERAS stand, Tophill Low Open Day.** Nature Reserve and SSSI, 3 miles east of Watton near Driffield. Come and help on our stand or just enjoy this wonderful site.

**Sat. 13 July, *Potty about Archaeology*.**  
Festival of Archaeology event themed around pottery, Hull and East Riding Museum, High St. Hull.

**Fri 26 July, Finds Identification Day,**  
Hull and East Riding Museum, High St, Hull

**July 20<sup>th</sup>-28<sup>th</sup>**  
**Pilgrimage of Hadrian's Wall**  
Travel by coach visiting sites along the wall, from South Shields to Maryport, with expert guides. Plenty of walking. Accommodation in Newcastle for first four nights, Carlisle for next four nights. Registration fee £410 per person. Accommodation options available. Contact Ian Caruana, 10 Peter St. Carlisle. CA3 8QP. Tel 01228 544120.  
Email [elizabethhallnutt@btinternet.com](mailto:elizabethhallnutt@btinternet.com)

**Sat 27 July Open Day at Hanging Grimston.**  
Excavation of DMV earthworks near Kirby Underdale in the parish of Thixendale, by Helmsley Archaeological and Historical Soc.

**13-28 July CBA Festival of Archaeology, ERAS geophysics surveying at Burton Constable Hall.**  
On weekends of 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> July and 20/21st July. Come to help or just to see what is going on. For further details see website..

**Sat 14 Sept. Heritage Open Days. (HODS) Archaeology of Beverley Westwood Walks,**  
bookings only, via HODS

**Sat 21 Sept, Local Book Fair, Hull Minster.**  
Come and help on our stand, or just buy from the large range of sellers in the amazingly refurbished Hull Minster (aka Holy Trinity).

## *ERAS Diary 2018 - 2019*

- Wed 20 Mar    Lecture meeting – Chris Caswell  
Findings from the Dig Ventures Elmswell Project
- Wed 3 Apr    Field Studies meeting
- Wed 17 Apr    AGM at 7pm, followed by Lecture by Dr Mike Nevell.                      Excavating Engels: recent  
archaeological evidence for 19<sup>th</sup> c industrial housing in Manchester and Salford.
- Wed 1 May    Field Studies Meeting
- Wed 5 June    Field Studies Meeting
- Wed 3 July    Field Studies Meeting
- July            Surveying at Burton Constable Hall 13/14<sup>th</sup> and 20/22nd. See website for details
- Wed 7 Aug    Field Studies Meeting
- Wed 4 Sep    Field Studies Meeting
- Wed 18 Sept   Lecture Meeting. (A round-up of recent work in the region)

All lectures are at 7.30 pm at the University of Hull, Cottingham Rd. Hull, in Wilberforce Building's main lecture theatre. (NB. This is the room on the east side of the high level walkway, not the one we used to use, opposite the cafe) Non-members are welcome (£2 donation).

Field Studies meetings are at 7.30, St Nicholas Community Centre, Holmechurch Lane, Beverley usually on the first Weds of each month, but please check the website during the summer months, as outdoor events are sometimes held. Contact the secretary Richard Coates on [coates8@coates8.karoo.co.uk](mailto:coates8@coates8.karoo.co.uk)

The September newsletter should reach you before the first lecture meeting, of the new series.

Cut here -----

### **Renewal / Membership Form,**

☐ I would like to join ERAS **OR**    ☐ Please renew my ERAS membership for 2019 (due Jan 2019)

Name ..... I enclose cheque for **£15 single / £20family/ £5 fulltime student**

Address .....

.....

Email .....Telephone.....

Please make cheque payable to ERAS & return to membership secretary Colin Parr, 32 Woodgate Rd, Hull HU5 5AH





Fig. 2. Aerial view of the trenches.

(Photo from a UAV; Tony Hunt YAA Mapping)



Fig. 3 Trench A. Section across the ditch. Note chalk rubble tumble from the bank.

Photo: Peter Halkon



Fig. 5. Trench K showing the possible palisade slot.

Photo: Peter Halkon