ERAS News

EAST RIDING ACHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NO 50 MARCH 2001

40 years of the East Riding Archaeological Society

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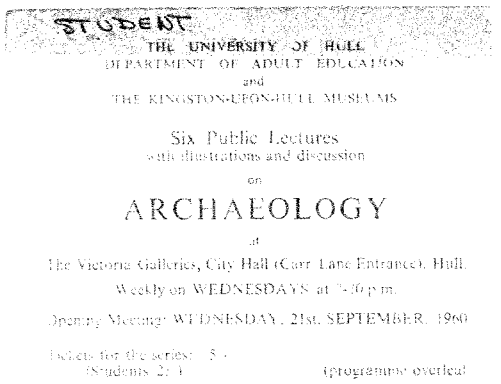
Editorial

Happy fortieth birthday to the East Riding Archaeological Society – OK: happy **belated** birthday, as the society started in 1960, though in my defence I can claim that the first AGM, at which the constitution was agreed, was in 1961. Unfortunately I didn't then live in Hull and hadn't discovered the delights of archaeology, so I was not a member in those early days and am relying on an account by Peter Armstrong in ERAS News 20 for my information.

And heady days they sound too. It was the enthusiasm of John Bartlett, the newly-arrived Director of Hull Museum that was the catalyst for the founding of the Society and the reason for the close links between ERAS and Hull Museum. The antenatal activity was a series of six public lectures organised by Hull University's department of Adult Education and Hull Museum.



STUDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL
DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION
and
THE KINGSTON-UPON-HULL MUSEUMS

Six Public Lectures
with illustrations and discussion
on
ARCHAEOLOGY
at
The Victoria Galleries, City Hall (Corr Lane Entrance), Hull
Weekly on WEDNESDAYS at 7-30 p.m.
Opening Meeting: WEDNESDAY, 21st. SEPTEMBER, 1960
Tickets for the series: 5/-
(Students 2/6)
(programme overleaf)

Subscription to the series of lectures was five shillings and the list of speakers reads like a parade of some of the classic 'names' of archaeology: Glyn Daniel, Dr Kathleen Kenyon, Dr J.K.S. St. Joseph, Prof Ian Richmond and Prof Maurice Beresford.

The first meeting of the Society proper, at which the constitution was formally adopted, was on 9th January 1961, and from then the Society went from strength to strength, with just a few wobbles on the way, which have generally been rectified by an infusion of new, and enthusiastic blood.

Some ERAS members have been persuaded to recollect a few memories they have of the Society in the following pages – memories that I am sure some of you can relate to. If your favourite memory isn't there, I'd be pleased to include it in a later issue.

It's not just the birth of ERAS that we are celebrating: it's also the fiftieth issue of ERAS News, which was started by Peter Armstrong in 1979 – and he managed to produce it a lot more frequently than I do. We now have two newsletters, though, so you certainly started something there, Peter. To celebrate reaching issue 50, Helen Fenwick has compiled an index for nos. 1-49. Over the years ERAS News has contained news items, general Society information on field trips, annual dinners and lecture meetings and articles on various local, national and international archaeological sites. Some of the lectures presented to the Society over the years have also been summarised. Thank you for your painstaking work, Helen.

Members celebrated the Society's birthday at the annual dinner, where a cake (made by Kate Dennett) was cut by Monty Pidgeon, one of the more senior members of ERAS. Thanks to to all those who helped with the dinner:
Peter and Anita Bartle, Peter Scott-Grey, Angela Gowland, Susan Gibson, Rod Mackey, Kate Dennett, Sheila Cadman, Margaret Cowell, (Peter Jackson and Martin Foreman for wine), Gay Cornelius (flowers) Gill Ainsworth and Janet Teece.

An apology is owed to all those members who were unable to get into the 'Time Team' lecture. It proved just too popular and we could not arrange (or afford) a larger lecture theatre.

After that apology, it is perhaps not the best time to remind you that subscriptions were due on January 1st, but I promised our hard-working Treasurer that I would. Please also be sure to read the AGM papers accompanying this newsletter and consider if you wish to nominate anyone for the committee or Offices of the Society.

Forty Years On

Peter Armstrong, who himself must feature in many of the memories of ERAS members, has chosen to recollect the person who, with Fred Brooks, was responsible for starting the Society, so I shall invite Peter to lead off this series of memories.

Peter Armstrong writes:

'Even now reflecting on ERAS, with its many personalities and its long and distinguished history, the Society is forever linked in my mind with the person who brought it into being in the first place and who laid the foundations for its enduring success. I refer of course to John Bartlett, one time Director of Hull Museums.

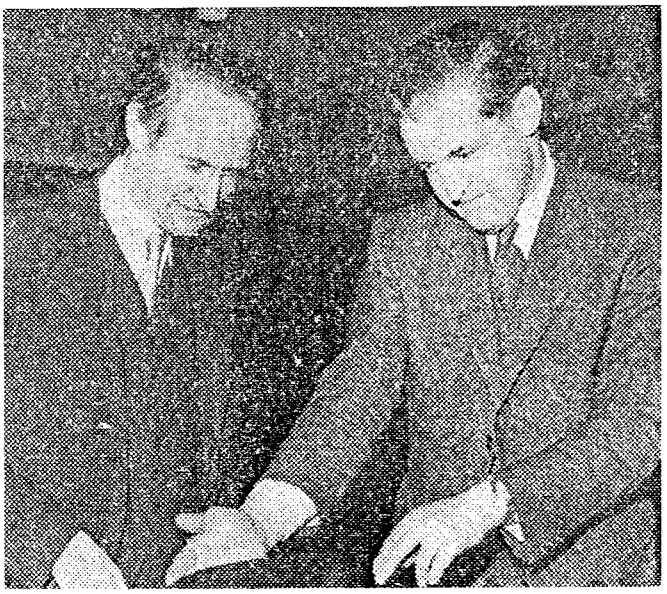
Those who remember him will be able to attest to his irrepressible energy and irresistible persuasiveness – a self-evidently unstoppable combination – that powered ERAS along and established the Society's defining character, which happily survived his departure and equally happily flourishes still. In the early formative years of the Society, Hull Museums and ERAS were so closely harnessed together under his leadership that when I first appeared on the scene as a Trainee Museums Assistant in 1968 I could have been forgiven for seeing them as a kind of mutual resource, an essential and indissoluble partnership in the promotion of local archaeology. Membership of the Society went with the job, so I naturally joined.

My arrival in fact coincided with the very end of that first high-point in the Society's fortunes, the Walkington excavations. "Do pop up to the site this weekend - it will be the last chance to see what we've been doing", suggested John to his newest and greenest staff member.

It was a pleasant Sunday, as it turned out, and a friend and I were enjoying a drive around the Wolds. Being close enough by mid-afternoon to "pop in" as invited, a detour to the site seemed a good idea. The place could only be described as thronged, but amidst the multitude of ERAS faces, as yet unfamiliar to the newcomer, John was a recognisable figure. He spotted us and came over. In that uniquely flamboyant, close-up style of his, able to charm you into feeling that for that one receptive moment nobody else in the whole universe mattered more than you, he greeted us like long-lost friends. "Aah, Peetaah, hellooo, it's so nice to see you! And you've brought a friend too. Jolly good. How very nice. Come and have a look".

Feeling like guests of honour without whom the party could never get under way, we looked forward to a tour of the site, but it was only a minute or two before John had us on hands and knees trowelling the chalky soil and filling buckets. I'd already had some digging experience but my friend had no such grounding and had certainly not been anticipating a crash-course. Unspoken glances between us shared the same thoughts: "This wasn't supposed to happen, was it? We just popped in to see the dig!" I came to realise before long that we'd had the 'John Bartlett Experience', that is to say: made to feel welcome, couldn't deny or disguise an interest, and therefore got completely suckered into helping out!

It was an object lesson on several levels, not least in the effective deployment of limited resources. So for me, whilst this remains an unforgettable ERAS snapshot (perhaps because it was one of the first encounters) it is also a happy reminder of an inspirational character who generated a momentum for the Society that lots of individuals have worked hard to maintain and which clearly continues to this day. Oh, and I almost forget, it also means that I can truthfully say "Walkington? Oh yes, I dug at Walkington!"'



John Bartlett and Ted Wright

Ted Wright's story:

'It must have been between 1960 and 1970, when I was living at The Old Rectory in Walkington. One Saturday afternoon when my wife and I were enjoying a game of tennis with a couple of friends, John Bartlett walked in, clearly with something on his mind. The Society at the time was carrying out their most ambitious dig to date on the Bronze Age barrow with its late Roman accretions up on Walkington Wold. John had been appointed Director of Hull Museums a few years earlier and was the moving spirit behind the establishment of ERAS and, of course, its first Secretary. Anyway, what was on his mind was something solid in the tobacco tin in which he used to stow small finds. So we were the first outsiders to hear how the local farmer had produced the gold torc that he had picked up in the field near the dig and that had been rattling about in the toolbox of his tractor for some time. We were sworn to secrecy in case word got out and attracted the metal-detecting crowd. We did, however, put it on our kitchen-scales to see how much bullion was involved. A careful search – with a metal detector – failed to reveal any more of the usual cluster of such things in the area, unlike the group found at Cottingham in the 1980s, of which Hull and East Riding Museum has electrotypes. It must always be exciting to find gold, which, alas, has never come my way.'

Derek Brooks, a long-time member of the Society

'My first interest in archaeology arose in 1939 when new houses were being built in Swanland. My friend and I started to find pieces of pottery that our schoolteacher described as plant pots. We were later to be told by Tom Sheppard, the then curator of Hull Museum, that they were in fact of medieval origin. Several boys collected hoards of finds and each of us secretly buried these hoards in holes in the ground and covered them with a square of turf. It would be interesting to know how future archaeologists would interpret these finds; they would no doubt be explained as votive!

When Ted Wright excavated the first Ferriby boat I was fascinated. Although I did not take an active part, I rode down on my bike each day to watch progress and to see it lifted – and even took pictures on a makeshift camera, although film was hard to obtain.

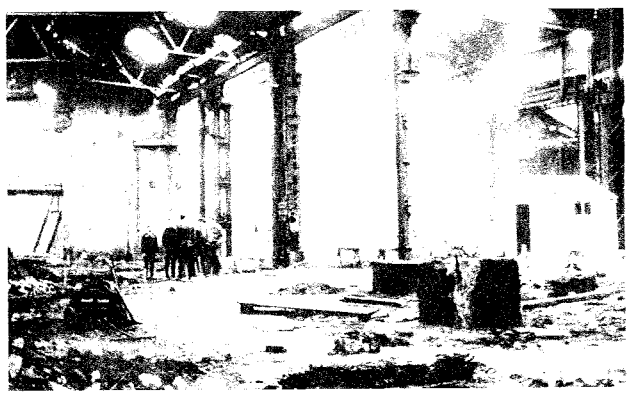
I well remember mud-walking the riverbank at Faxfleet, where we eventually attempted an excavation in the mud at low tide. One thing that impressed me about the site was that there were two distinct layers of ash with a six-inch layer of silt between them. These original land surfaces extended lower than the lowest low water marks of today. My belief is that the large amount of ash indicated the extraction of salt from the water.

Without a doubt the finest achievement of the society was the excavation at Walkington Wold. There has never been such a large and enthusiastic band of society members, 40 or more on some days. Many things held our interest, with almost every square foot producing a find, from Roman coins to skeletons. It was here that I received the honour of being assistant director. One of the most exciting events took place whilst preparing for work one morning. John Bartlett had just taken a barrow round to the back of the hut when a local farmer came into the hut and asked me if I recognised what he held in his hand. Imagine the look on his face when I called out to John "you had better come and have look, this man has found a *gold* Bronze Age bracelet". The amusing thing was that the bracelet had been hanging around in the tractor toolbox and in the garage for weeks. The farmer said "I didn't recognise it as a bit from a tractor". Another exciting find on the site was when I uncovered a bronze dirk that had only cheated the plough by a few millimetres. I took cine film at the time and have now transferred it to video and will attempt to make it available to members.

The Walkington site took two years to complete and in 1969 the society took on the job of exposing an interval tower on Hull's North Walls, where John and I directed the site. It was here that Peter Armstrong had his inauguration. It is a shame that this tower base could not have been preserved, as it was more complete than the remains of the Beverley Gate.

The next year we went into High Street Hull to explore the possibilities. A small site was chosen, conveniently situated opposite John's office in Georgian Houses. The plot that we intended excavating unfortunately had a sewer trench running down its centre but, undaunted, we decided to heap our spoil over it and dig on both sides. We were amazed and gratified to find stratified floor levels. A Tudor house that had stood on the site had piled foundations followed by a wide course of large medieval bricks with a hollow in the centre where the missing timbers had lain. This was the first time that any attempt had been made to reveal the city's past.

The next year we tackled another High Street property. At about this time Peter Armstrong came back from University and a spell with Tony Brewster and became full time archaeologist for the city. He did a wonderful job, both with his excavating and his reports. In 1970 I was asked by John if I would undertake some exploring on the site of The Belle Vue Pottery. I agreed to do this providing it did not interfere with our summer excavation. We dug inside what had been C. D. Holmes' boiler shed, a rather unstable old building due for demolition.



This activity took place during the cold weekends of March, but we kept ourselves warm with a large brazier burning scrap timber found on site. Although we were not looking for the building plan, as we already knew this, we had a pleasant surprise when we found an old cellar full of pottery wasters. This virtually satisfied our ambition, as this was what was needed to be known, examples of the material being produced by William Bell. Unfortunately we found only material from approximately 1835 and none from the earlier period 1803-6. To bring us up to date with technology I have published a full report of this undertaking on the web at http://website.lineone.net/~bellevue_pottery. I will shortly be producing a C.D. containing examples and images of the material for interested researchers.

In an attempt to confirm Barley's 1939 exploratory excavation of the villa at Newbald, I undertook another exploration with society members. This time it was done in the grass verge on the Hotham roadside. We found Roman painted wall plaster, chalk, pebble floors, a hearth and roof tiles.

My last contribution to archaeology was a rescue dig of 16th century footings in a field in my home village of Swanland. Here we found several house platforms with their houses. It was unfortunate that we were unable continue as 13th century material had started to appear.

I have been told that I have served 25 years on the committee, spread over a much longer period. It has all been very enjoyable and through the years I have made many friends.

What a pleasure those early days were, mixing with intellectual people such as Freddy Brooks (not a relation), John Bartlett, Prof Norman, Bill Varley and Aubrey Burl and many other local people. There was the botanist Eva Crackles – and Albert Royle, who could tell one more of the history of Hull than any other person that I have ever met.

I can't believe that it is forty years. I was not a founder member but not far off. The saddest day for me was when a good friend John Bartlett left Hull for Sheffield. I can still close my eyes and imagine that I can hear his rather high-pitched voice being answered by Elsie Lamb's "Mister Baaartlett".'

Peter Halkon:

'One day in 1970, Hull Museum Curator John Bartlett, looking rather avine, smoking a handsome bent pipe, visited the family farm at Hasholme Hall, Holme-on-Spalding Moor. He wanted to talk to my father, Bill Halkon, about the possibility of the newly formed East Riding Archaeological Society carrying out a dig in Pot Field.

The story really starts some years before, when our neighbour, Alan Johnson, had been ploughing a carr near the river Foulness at Bursea House. He noticed something large, round and white glinting in the sun. For a moment he wondered what an ostrich egg was doing there, but quickly realised that it was in fact the top of a human skull. Did it belong to a previous farmer who was reputed to have thrown himself into the river after the birth of yet another daughter? So he took it along to Howden Police Station, where a rather bemused Station Sergeant advised Mr Johnson that the cranium was the concern of curators rather than constabulary, and recommended a visit to Hull Museum.

After that, John Barlett became a regular visitor to Bursea House – especially on Sundays around lunch- time, according to Mrs Johnson. On one occasion the Johnsons were going to be out, so, on their advice, J. B. called in at Hasholme Hall, where my father had picked up Roman pottery on arriving at the farm in 1958, noting it in his farm-cropping book. Alan Johnson and sons, Mr Skinner, a geography teacher from Market Weighton School and his friend Neil Thwaites, accompanied by a small helper and his dad, dug a test-pit at Pot Field in the 1960s, locating a Roman pottery kiln. Eventually, with great enthusiasm, my parents gave permission for John Bartlett to organise the larger ERAS excavation there. Before any further digging took place, a magnetometer survey was carried out, though the results were inconclusive. The operator of the machine was Rod Mackey – my first meeting with him.

By this time I was a boarder at Bridlington School, where C.A. Coomber, the Headmaster, gave special permission for weekend 'exits'. Going home every weekend was an extra-special treat for boys who were usually only allowed to visit or be visited by parents once every three weeks or so. Such a privilege was justified on educational grounds, as participating in a dig was thought to be a worthy occupation! On some occasions, other pupils from the school came along to help out under the supervision of Head of History, Mike Mortimore and his assistant John Hutton.

The society dug at Hasholme for two seasons, from 197 to 1972, under the leadership of John Hicks, a Hu schoolteacher, and John Wilson, stationed at RA Leconfield. Many ERAS members, friends and relative joined in, with John Leonard and Derek Brooks takin

prominent roles. Anne Carter, now an aerial survey investigator for English Heritage, was also a volunteer. On one Sunday afternoon I remember Holme Young Farmers removing the topsoil in a new trench as fast and as cleanly as a JCB.

In the first season a kiln was excavated, and the ditches of an Iron Age/early RB ditched enclosure, visible as a crop mark in the sugar beet field in which we were digging, were sectioned. Finds included a Roman iron anvil now in Hull and East Riding Museum.

For me, however, the highlight came one Saturday in early autumn, during the second season of the dig. I was given the job, with some female contemporaries, of excavating the top layers of an Iron Age ditch, which had been used as dump for wasters. This pottery had been dumped here from a nearly-complete Roman pottery kiln, dug into the top of the earlier ditch. I clearly remember the excitement of pulling out vessel after nearly-complete vessel in the failing light, in deposits where there was more pottery than soil. After such an introduction who could fail to get hooked on archaeology? My parents spent many evenings at that time piecing together the sherds of pottery, which filled the removable oak billiard table top, helped by my brothers and myself when we were home.

During that dig I also remember being curious about the grassy riverbank and the damp, peaty clay of the old riverbed, in the meadow between Pot Hill and the present course of the River Foulness. During drainage nearby, a huge chunk of bog-oak, which resembled a horse, and was therefore regularly 'ridden' by passing children, had already been pulled out. I often wondered what else might lie hidden there – though I never dreamt of anything quite as spectacular as the discovery made by Martin Millett and myself in July 1984 as a result of further drainage operations – for the timbers we observed were fragments from the Hasholme Boat.

Ray Ketch

Ray is one of the many whose interest in archaeology was stimulated by the series of lectures organized by John Bartlett in the autumn of 1960, but it was not until 1972 that he joined ERAS. Since then, he must have worked on just about every excavation in which ERAS has been involved.

'Peter Armstrong organized a dig at Brough, on a site at the west side of Cave Road. The site was Roman and blessed with sandy soil, ideal for digging. The foundations of several large buildings were found, extending towards a drop in the surface, which we thought could indicate the edge of Brough Haven. Work on this site continued for two seasons.

My next site was at the Friary in Beverley, followed by a spell at Dyer Lane; then several weeks on Lurk Lane behind the Minster. During this period, we assisted in the recovery of timbers which were part of the drawbridge entrance to the Hallgarth site in Beverley.

Peter found another Roman site for us in Welton Road, again on sandy soil, and here we found the foundations of substantial walls on an east-west alignment. We left that site in December in a snowstorm.

ERAS investigated a moated site at Arnold, where we found the foundations of a medieval farm. There were also two substantial ditches containing Iron Age pottery.

Later, I assisted Angus Smith on a site at Weldons farm, near Winestead, which was identified by finds of Iron Age pottery.

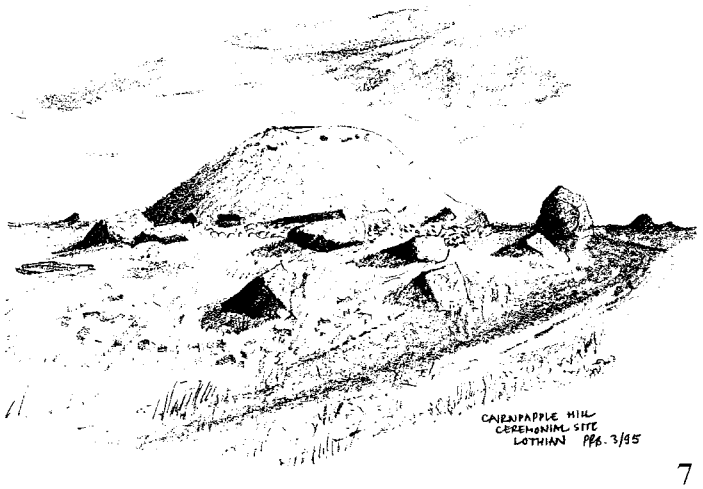
I joined several enjoyable ERAS excursions and I was able to enjoy the company and friendship of people with whom I shared an interest in archaeology.'

Angela Gowland chose, as her 'memory', an ERAS field trip in 1995 to S E Scotland, led by ERAS chairman, Andrew Foxon:

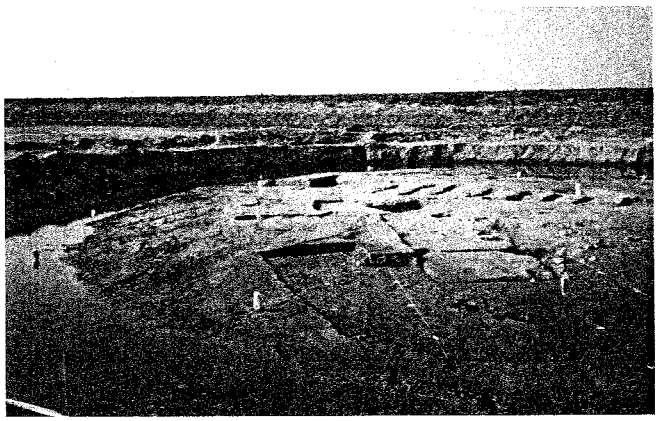
'It was springtime and the flowering gorse and blackthorn en route were at their best. It was great to listen to Andrew's informed history of the area – he had a great empathy for all things north of the border. A vivid memory remains of 'the chance to get some fresh air' after a long coach ride, when we hiked downhill and uphill, the air getting fresher and fresher all the time. At last, as we rounded the shoulder of the hillside, the broch, fort and settlement of Edin's Hall (or Edinshall) came into view – a fine, indeed breathtaking sight as we stood gasping in the **very** fresh air! It was all worth the effort when we explored the broch with its passages and cells within the thickness of the wall.

We visited many other sites on the trip, including an enormous henge in the middle of a housing estate at Balfarg, the stone circle at Balbirnie which had been moved from its original site 125 metres away, and the Meigle pictish carved stone collection, displayed in a simple setting with easy access to view all the details.

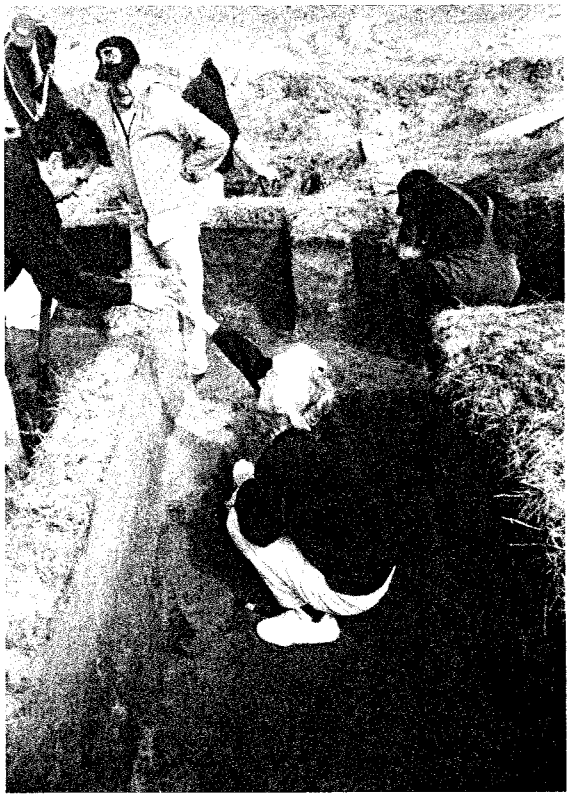
There was the opportunity to see the souterrain at Ardestie, the beaker grave site at Cairnpapple Hill, Dundee museum and Linlithgow Castle. A truly memorable field trip.'

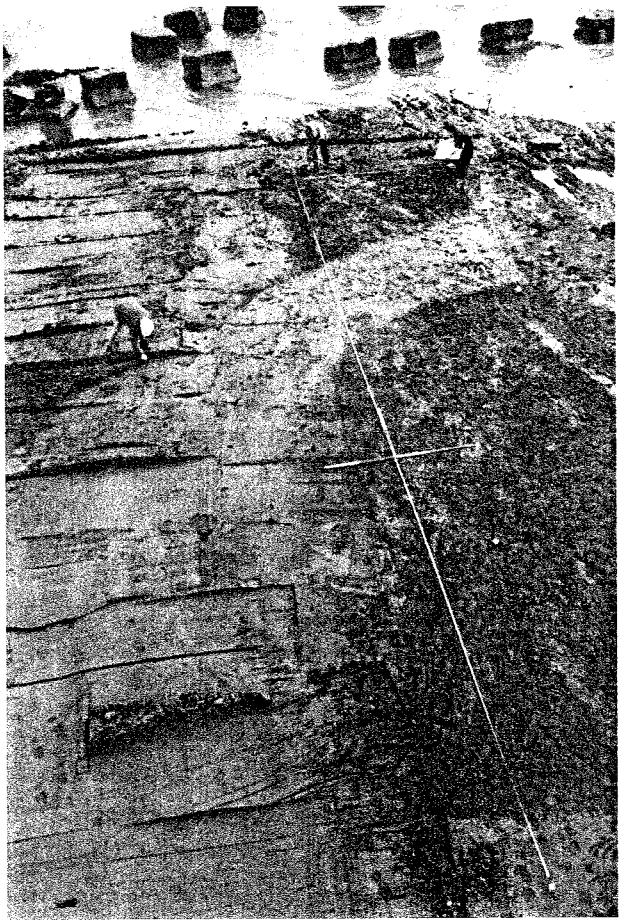


Kate Dennett recalls the Easington barrow excavation:



'I remember trying not to be last for lunch break, down in the tarpaulin-covered trench on Easington beach in autumn 1996. If you were last in, you had to crouch down near the entrance, where you were most likely to be rained upon or, worse still, to catch the stream of water running off the tarpaulin down the back of your neck. Nevertheless, we celebrated several volunteer diggers' birthdays down there over the weeks, with hot toddy and soggy birthday cake. It wasn't all grim, for in the autumn 1997 season we had the relative luxury of a beach shelter constructed of hired scaffolding poles and plastic sheeting, weighted down with sand and boulders! Oh – and the barrow? We now have an excellent record of the site (recently mentioned in the Wetlands Special edition of Current Archaeology) and English Heritage are about to do further radiocarbon dates on samples from the site.





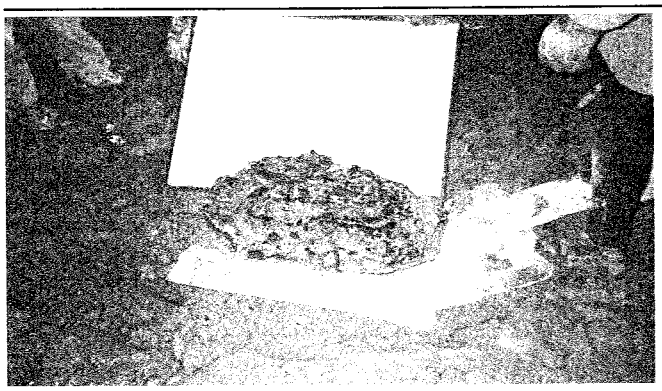
Easington henge

Peter Bartle

The setting for Peter's scene is not far from the barrow on Easington beach.

Late evening Easington foreshore
huddled figures crouch between returning tide and shore
twilight turns to darkness
the skyline is broken by figures carrying an object betwee them
they progress along the cliff edge and disappear from view.....

No sinister flashback from the distant past, but ERA members in the summer of 1998 successfully rescuing cremation from the inner ditch of a henge which ha been revealed by erosion on the Easington foreshor north-east of the barrow site. The cremated remain consisted of bones (animal and human) and charcoa After careful undermining, these were slid onto the onl available flat surface – an old refrigerator door garnere during some frantic beachcombing. This unlikely – an heavy – burden was carried through fading light an oncoming tide to Rodney Mackey's van on the cliff to Subsequent analysis has dated the bones to c.2500 B The retrieval of the cremation was followed up by a fiv day excavation by the Humber Wetlands Team at Hu University.



Retrieving the cremation in the twilight

Lesley Jackson remembers:

'Finding the Hasholme log boat. Using it as a reason to be excused hard labour on the Bursea excavation site, I went with Peter Halkon to look at a piece of bog oak a neighboring farmer had found when digging drainage ditches. It looked like a piece of boat but we can never remember who said it first. The rest is history, as they say. There are a lot of memories from that dig, some less archeological than others. I managed to get my fellow diggers into trouble for eating sweets on site – and I thought I was being friendly by sharing my toffees. Peter Jackson also got into trouble for smoking on site and contaminating the finds! We had to move the (very large) spoil heap – but I don't think it was connected with these misdemeanours.

"Mud, mud, glorious mud", also known as excavating on the Humber foreshore. We were excavating and recording a timber structure. Due to the fragile state of the wood we couldn't use conventional tools and so my plastic kitchen spatulas were donated to the cause. We spent many a happy hour scooping mud out of the hole and labelling pieces of wood with plastic tags. As we could only excavate at low tide it was a race between what beat us first, the rising tide or the failing light.

Finds at the Friary in Beverley – my first archaeological excavation under the guidance of Peter Armstrong. My first find was part of a leather boot, which I was very excited about, although I wasn't able to convince my family that this was a notable achievement!

The medieval banquet we had one year for the annual dinner. It was as authentic as possible and we ate the meal off trenchers using our fingers. This saved on the washing up and identified those members of ERAS who would have been too genteel to survive medieval society.

Retrieving timbers from Skerne bridge which had been stored in a fish pond. The location of the immersed timbers was recorded on a very small 'record sheet' (which may have resembled a cigarette packet) and there was a great deal of very careful wading around before all the timbers were found. The main memory is that of the smell (it had been a fish pond for quite a time, long enough to collect a deep and aromatic sediment). We got covered in a deal of mud (and fish guano) in the process. It was a very hot day and, as we stood around drying, the smell intensified. When we visited a local hostelry at lunchtime we had to send a clean person in to get the drinks while we stood and stank outside. I try not to remember the leaches, which were long and thin and thus, presumably, hungry.

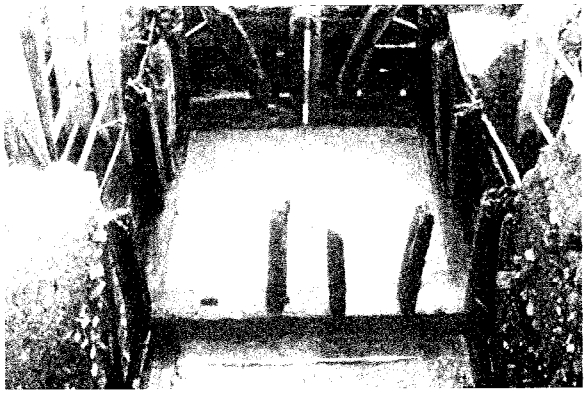
Susan Gibson:

The Melton/North Ferriby foreshore is well known for the parts of three plank-built sewn boats which were excavated during the 1940s and in 1963, and for the more recent discoveries of the trackways excavated by the Humber Wetlands Team. It was in this area in autumn 1992, while carrying out a periodic check of the foreshore with other ERAS members, that I had quite an eventful day. With trusty stick in one hand (to avoid getting completely stuck in the mud when I stopped to look at something) and trowel in the other (just in case...) I suddenly caught the gleam of something metallic protruding from the mud. Careful excavation yielded a gun in its holder! We stowed this in a carrier and continued our foray. A short while later, finding little in the way of wooden structures or objects, and starting to feel somewhat despondent, I spotted some animal bones sticking out of the mud. The jawbone was in danger of being washed away by the tide, so we retrieved it added it to the gun. We took our booty off to the local police station and, after giving a statement, the gun was retained for identification (and later disposal) and we were allowed to leave with our jawbone, which thankfully was not human and of no interest to the police.

We later returned to the foreshore on a very windy day to excavate the remaining bones, including a skull, various vertebrae, rib fragments, a humerus and some pieces of wood. Our efforts were rewarded when the skull was identified as that of an aurochs, the ancestor of modern cattle, which is believed to have become extinct in this country during the Bronze Age. It just goes to show that you can never tell what the Humber muds are going to yield up next – another boat maybe, trackways, fish traps – who knows? I just hope that I'm there.

Peter Jackson writes:

My ERAS memory is exactly 21 years old this Easter Saturday. Yes, Easter 1980. I was not involved with archaeology but had always been interested, when a front-page article in the Hull Daily Mail reported that the remains of a medieval bridge had been found during deep drainage works at the Hall Garth end of Long Lane Beverley. The report said that they would welcome help but only from people with experience. Undaunted, however, my eldest daughter, then 11years old, and I went along to have a look. It was a hot sunny day and the only people working were Peter Armstrong and Rodney Mackey, covered in mud, shovelling away to clear many tons of debris to expose the ancient bridge framework.



We watched for about half an hour before I eventually plucked up the courage to offer our help. We didn't have any previous experience, but we could shovel mud if that's what they wanted. Peter Armstrong suggested we go home to get our wellies and we could help. We helped all the Easter weekend and at every opportunity until the bridge was fully exposed, recorded, and dismantled, which lasted until well into May. This was my first memory.

I then went on to the Lurk Lane site for a few weeks and then on to a Roman site at Brough.'

ERAS is fortunate in retaining the interest of many members who have moved away from the region. Ian Chorlton is one of these.

Ian Chorlton sums up his memories of ERAS thus:

'My memories of ERAS relate to the late 80s and early 90s, and my most abiding memory is that of a great sense of fun, excitement, camaraderie and leg-pulling on digs and fieldwalking. I never went digging or fieldwalking without feeling completely at ease or without getting along with everybody present.

Like others, I suppose I remember specific digs or activities when I was at the end of the trowel when finds were made: finding Roman pottery at Sigglesthorne, a decorated bronze lace-end at Flixborough with members from Goole, the oldest tree in the East Riding at that time at Long Lane with Peter Didsbury, the editor, Lesley, Susie et al; and working with Peter Halkon and John Martin on the last day of the Market Weighton by-pass dig to empty a large pit in the pitch dark at about 8pm. Another happy example was discovering that a previously unknown Roman ditch, on the boundary of the farm I then occupied, was full of goodies, and digging it one Sunday with the field study group, led by Peter Didsbury. Finally, I remember working with a big team again, trowelling back between Dave Priest and Ray Ketch on the Market Weighton by-pass, when a leaf-shaped arrowhead flew put of the ground, spun through the air in slow motion and landed right in front of me.

This exercise is like 'desert island discs'; it is almost impossible to pick your favourite moments with so many to chose from. Thanks for the memories.

Ian Stead was one of the founder members of ERAS, even though he did not live in Hull. He writes of going with Tony Pacitto to what must have been the inaugural meeting of the Society in the Victoria Galleries on the 9th January 1961. He particularly remembers John Bartlett and the lifting of the Roman mosaics, particularly the first ones at Rudston in 1962. "It was a very efficient and successful operation – John and Bill Southern had done their homework thoroughly and seemed like old hands at the job. I was most impressed. It was easy to work with John; his enthusiasm was infectious; he was always helpful, and he brought out the best in everybody – despite the handicap of a very "Oxford" accent.'

Ed: from a slow start (and not a little arm-twisting) your reminiscences of forty years of the East Riding Archaeological Society have been arriving in a steady flow. Digging into the night seems to have been a recurring theme (difficult to photograph!). Fortunately, nothing has been libellous or otherwise unprintable – although accusations were made against various animals: cows which ate tapes at Sigglesthorne, a very friendly horse at Sigglesthorne which kept trying to help, horses and sheep which destroyed a surveying table at Bainton, and a certain dog, belonging to the landowner at Winestead, which was intent on 'making its mark' on everyone's belongings, including their packed lunches.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed so far. If we've started those neural channels twitching – or if you think someone needs their memory correcting – then put pen to paper, or fingers to keyboards, and get in touch!

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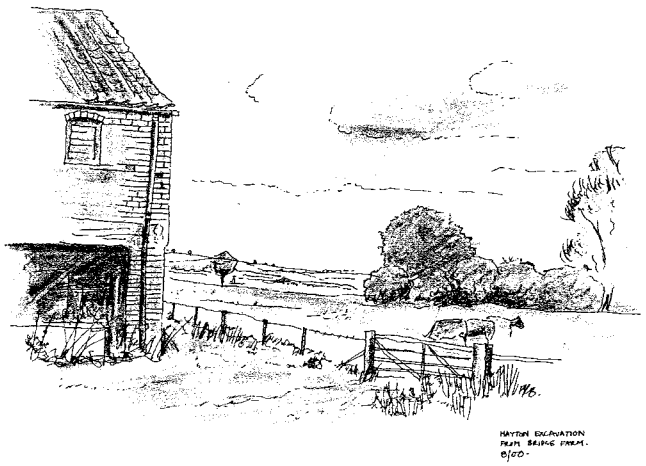
Reports Meeting

20th September 2000

Hayton: Peter Halkon



Peter's contribution covered the results of the summer 2000 season of excavation at Hayton. This was the fifth season of research on this site, at Burnby Lane Hayton, which is part of a broader landscape survey of the archaeology of the Foulness Valley, investigated in partnership with Martin Millett, of the Department of Archaeology, Southampton University.

In 1999, the construction of the BP pipeline provided the opportunity for the investigation of a large strip across the pipeline corridor in advance of the destruction of any archaeology. In the 2000 season the aim was to explore further the extensive Iron Age settlement, which contained several roundhouses, and expose more of the plan of the succeeding Roman buildings.

Below the remains of the ridge and furrow was a continuation of the stockade trench, extending to an area underneath the bath house and visible on aerial photographs. This part of the excavation also included a stockade, perhaps for horses, with postholes for substantial timbers. A series of gulleys and ditches leading to a pond feature was also investigated. The stockade contained an aisled building, the aisles formed by posts. In the centre was a drain feature.

Considerable quantities of organic materials were excavated from one of the ditches, which will provide valuable opportunities for environmental analysis. There was also a large number of animal burials, including cattle and sheep, which are likely to represent ritual deposits. Infant burials from the Roman and Iron Age periods were also uncovered. The continuation of a stone building, first discovered in 1997, was excavated, dating from the later Roman period and overlying a timber phase.

One of the most significant discoveries, however, lay at the edge of the site: this was an Iron Age ditch which produced evidence for non-ferrous metalworking. The team may return to this part of the site at a future date.

The excavation was notable for considerable involvement of the local community, with both children and adults taking part, resulting in up to 50 volunteers on any day on the site. Peter expressed his thanks to those who took part.

Rodney Mackey

Rodney spoke about an archaeological evaluation on a small housing development at the eastern end of Wetwang, which he and Kate Dennett had done for the Guildhouse Consultancy. A preliminary geophysical survey by Tony Pacitto had identified a number of features, some of which were also apparent on a subsequent contour survey.

Initial trial trenching in June 2000 revealed several ditches, a large quarry and the chalk wall of a building so shallow that it would have been destroyed by normal gardening. It was therefore decided to open up a larger area in July to investigate the rest of the structure. A long narrow building was found extending onto the site from the west. It contained two internal structures, one of which was probably an oven. As time did not allow for the building to be planned 'stone by stone', it was photogrammed using a camera from a four-metre-high rig (a 'Rod special'). The yard area south of the building produced over 50 'fiddle key' horseshoe nails, the latest of which could be dated to the late 13th/early 14th century. Pottery from the floor of the building suggested a hiatus of occupation around the late 12th and 13th centuries, although there was some evidence for earlier Saxo-Norman activity in the vicinity.

Part of an associated enclosure was identified, with an entrance on the east. This boundary had followed the line of a Roman ditch, the bank of which may possibly have survived as a visible feature in the landscape. Another Roman ditch ran at right angles to it across the southern part of the site.

A pronounced hollow on the high part of the site was initially thought to be a 19th century dew pond. On excavation it turned out to be the enormous weathering cone around a well shaft, estimated to be about 170 feet deep. The cone was 8 metres in diameter and 3.6 metres deep. Pottery from its upper fill suggested it had been finally backfilled in the 13th century, but dating its construction was more difficult. Rod explained that it was not yet clear whether it belongs to the Norman or the Roman period of occupation. Three very large post-holes had been cut through the fill of the cone, flanking the gateway to the medieval enclosure. Perhaps they were part of a stout fence erected to prevent animals from straying into what would then have been a dangerous muddy hollow.

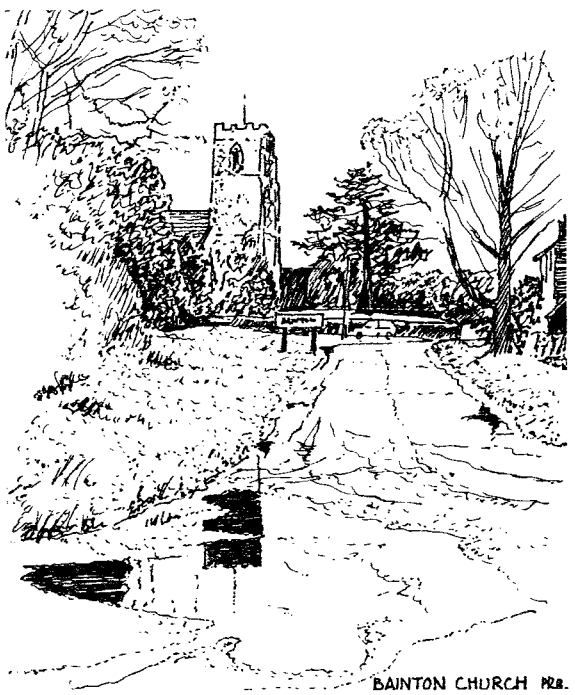
The 1909 OS map shows Wetwang before the new Driffield road was built. It is clear that the village has a classic Saxo-Norman layout with its main street running up to a manorial enclosure behind the 'Mere' at the eastern end. The building discovered on the site lies on the highest ground within this enclosure and could be the rear part of a manorial complex. An early 18th century document refers to 'a former Manor' within an enclosure 'so demolished that not a stone is to be seen where it stood'.

Occasionally, archaeological excavations turn up interesting burials, so there was considerable excitement when a large bird wearing a 'copper alloy' ring on its leg was uncovered inside the medieval building. Judging by its size and form it could only have been one of three birds: a peacock, a great bustard or a turkey. Hopes were for a peacock as this would clinch the Manor hypothesis. Imagine the embarrassment when the 'copper alloy' ring was removed and found to be green plastic! 'Peacock Close' had to be abandoned as a possible name for the development; 'Turkey Shed Terrace' somehow didn't have the same ring!

In all, about seven hundred square metres of the site were excavated and recorded in four weeks by a team of three during the first week and only two for the rest of the time. Further work was envisaged for early 2001 when the roadway is due to be built.

Bainton: Peter Bartle

Peter summarised the progress made over the last four years in the Bainton Project, work that is being undertaken mainly by members attending the Field Studies meetings.



Drawn by Peter Bartle from a photograph taken by Angela Gowland

He described the sources of data, which included field survey, maps and documents. The Hilly Fields area has been a particular focus and is now thought to be a moated manor site with two enclosures. Some members are determining the landholdings of each strip of land identified in the area: they have prepared tracings of an original 1620s map held at the Borthwick Institute (York) which shows individual strips in detail together with tenancy or ownership. Further fieldwalking has been carried out to the west of Hilly Fields to establish the survival of features from this map. Research into brickmaking in the area has established links to John Shaw, owner of Hilly Fields in the 1730s. ERAS contributed a display and two lectures to the 'Millennium' exhibition organised by Bainton and attended by 120 villagers. This resulted in requests for future talks and offers of further access to farmland.

Ken Steedman and John Tibbles (Humber Field Archaeology)

The speakers described a number of projects completed this year. The first described was an excavation at the end of Chapel Lane Staith, next to the Hull and East Riding Museum, carried out in March 2000 ahead of a planned extension to the adjacent Streetlife Museum (as part of the creation of a Museums Quarter along the riverside). The work uncovered both late 15th/early 16th and late 17th/early 18th century waterfronts to the east of an area first dug during the 1970s. The excavation was constrained by the presence of Victorian foundation walls and by shoring requirements to prevent the collapse of the sides of the trench. Despite the unfavourable conditions an accurate sequence of waterfront structures was obtained, spanning the fifteenth to eighteenth centuries. Reused boat timbers had been incorporated into the earliest structure that consisted of vertical timbers with articulated horizontal planking behind.

The timbers had come from a clinker-built ship constructed from timber originating from the Eastern Baltic in about 1400. Dumped behind the structures was night soil and domestic and industrial refuse with a dressing of chalk on the surface.

Later waterfronts reclaimed more land from the river, with further substantial timbers with joints still visible. Behind the second revetment, occupation deposits, perhaps representing warehouse buildings, were in evidence.

surviving as pockets between the stanchions of the Victorian buildings. A report on the site sequence is being prepared which will be published either in the ERAS journal or in Medieval Archaeology, with a specialist article on the boat timbers planned for the International Journal for Nautical Archaeology.

The speakers then turned their attention to discoveries made on the route of the BP Teesside to Saltend Ethylene Pipeline. At Carberry Hall, near Wilberfoss, a round-house within an enclosure had been excavated, and finds from the gully around the roundhouse, and nearby ditches, included fragments of Iron Age pottery.

Further east, at Goodmanham, a 2 m wide trench, over 300 m long, was dug and expanded widthways as necessary. A piece of millstone was found at the base of the topsoil, while the remainder of the stone, plus another, was discovered below. Structural features included postholes, slots, pits and ditches. A number of burials were also uncovered, both adult and infant, including one crouched burial of Iron Age date. The finds assemblage was large and varied; it included large quantities of pottery and a number of metal finds. The most outstanding discovery was an iron woodworking plane with an elephant ivory stock, in a very good state of preservation.

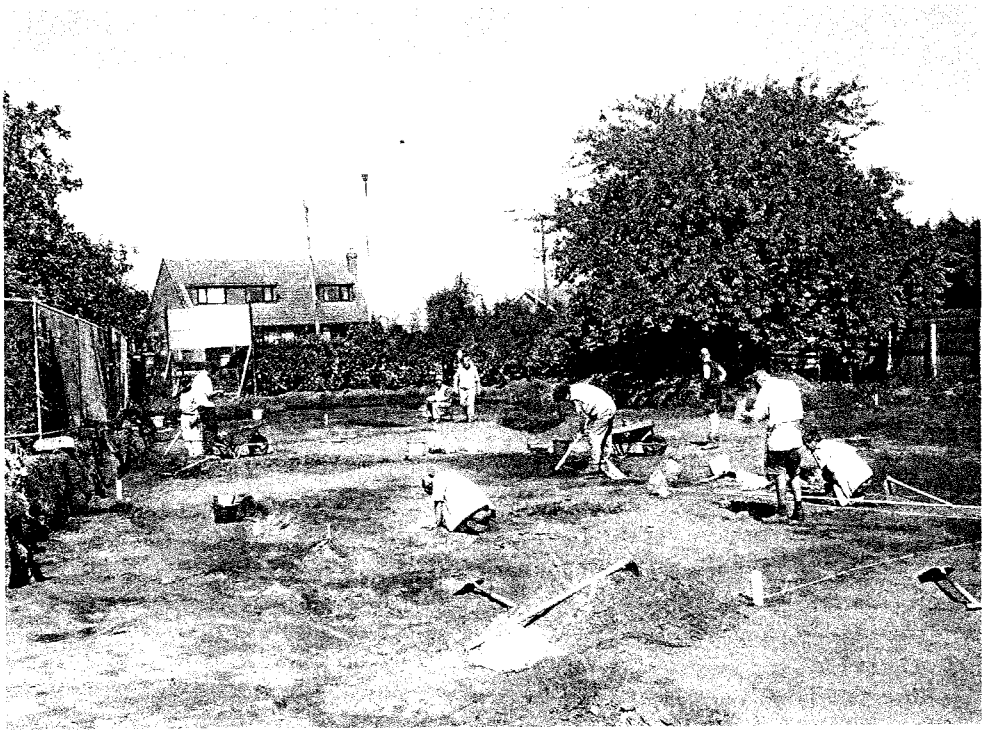
Excavations at Ganstead, on the eastern edge of Hull, uncovered animal bones and large quantities of handmade pottery (probably Iron Age) in association with building remains that included at least one roundhouse and an extensive gravel surface. Ditched enclosures of three clear phases were investigated and handmade pottery was found associated with each. Roman pottery was also recovered from a series of ditches defining a trackway. Radiocarbon dating on samples of bone and wood should assist dating of the various phases.

After completion of work on the pipeline, excavation took place on a site in Holme on Spalding Moor where housing development was planned. The development area lies in a field and orchard to the east and south of The Homelands, Selby Road, within the medieval village and pottery production centre. Evidence for a number of medieval pottery kilns had been found within the immediate area, and fieldwalking over the recent years had produced substantial assemblages of pottery wasters and kiln debris within the field. A total of seven trenches were excavated in the field, within areas where geophysical survey had detected strong dipolar magnetic anomalies. Upon investigation these were found to represent a medieval ditch partially backfilled with kiln wasters, some pottery debris, and two early 20th century rubbish pits.

The main area of excavation involved the orchard, a roughly rectangular area of 1100 square metres, and a 30m by 30m square area extending into the field. Evidence for at least two clamp kilns was recorded, the best-preserved of which was approximately 4.5 m in diameter and partially surrounded with a 1.5 m wide stoke-pit, filled with pottery wasters.

In the centre of the excavation area a large oval pit was uncovered, surrounded by a series of post-holes, and representing a timber structure. A similar structure further north was also recorded, and it is suggested that these were drying sheds associated with the pottery manufacture. An area of 84 stake-holes may represent a repeatedly re-built wattle fence serving as a windbreak for a stone oven-like structure.

Partially surrounding the complex, a boundary ditch had been re-cut up to eight times, each time moving further to the east and to the north. At one stage the ditch had been partially infilled deliberately with waste pottery and kiln debris. Finds from the site include some 200,000 pottery sherds of 15th and 16th century date, with several near-complete vessels and prime examples of wasters.



Holme on Spalding Moor

ERAS lecture summary: Recent Archaeological Survey around Rome

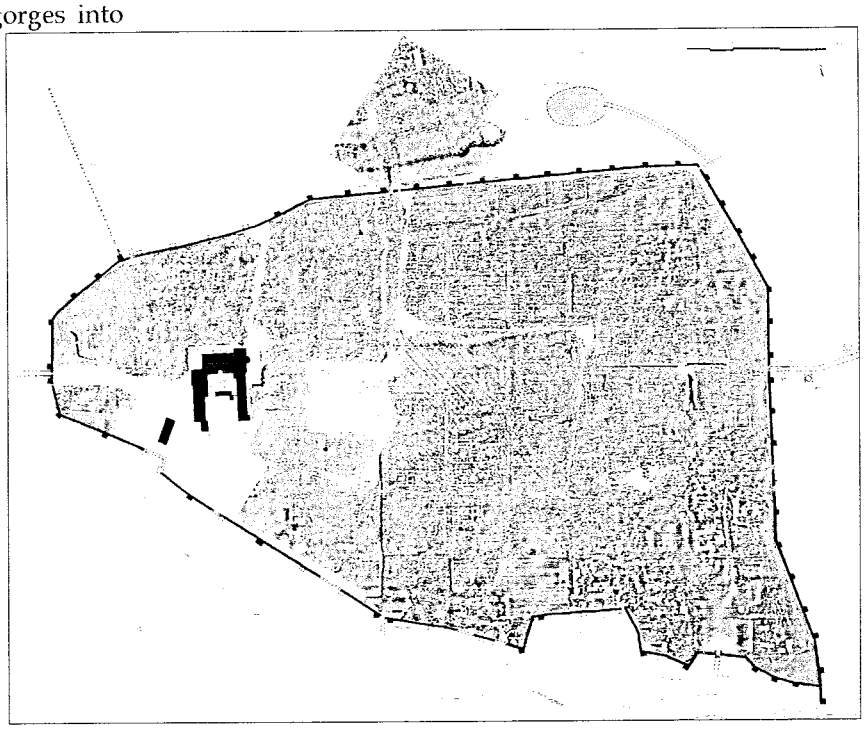
Martin Millett 19 Jan 2000

Professor Millett introduced his lecture by suggesting that if you are a Roman archaeologist you need a long-term project on the continent in addition to any in Britain. The overseas project is likely to be different in character, partly because you are a guest in another country and partly because of the need to avoid such problems as collecting large quantities of pottery (he recalled a room full of pottery just from just one field in Spain). Bearing these considerations in mind, Martin Millet has chosen to base his work overseas on non-invasive archaeology. In 1997 there were discussions at the British School in Rome about a suitable 'umbrella' project, which led to the choice of the valley of the river Tiber from Orte in the north to where it disgorges into the sea. There are various strands to the project: Martin and Simon Keay are looking at the characteristics of Roman urban sites, whereas Birmingham University is doing an intensive survey of a single town. A third part of the project involves the reconsideration of published fieldwork carried out by the British School in Rome in the 1950s. All in all, some 40 archaeologists from the UK are involved in the project, working from the British School in Rome.

Martin posed the question of what was urban Roman life like? There has previously been some keyhole excavation at a number of urban sites, but for full-scale excavation we have to look at sites like Pompeii and Herculaneum, which may not be typical. Martin has identified about 20 Roman town sites which may be suitable for survey, and he intends to survey as many as possible over the next five years. The two sites that he talked about in the lecture were Falerii Novi, some 80 km north of Rome, and Portus (at Rome airport).

The first of these is in an area of volcanic plateau where the flatness is broken by deeply incised valleys. A 7th century source says that Falerii Novi was built in 241BC as a new town because the old town had been destroyed in a revolt. Falerii Novi was more or less abandoned in the Middle Ages, leaving an empty site. Today, there is an open area of some 29ha in agricultural use, surrounded by walls. Most of the previous archaeological work has been published, together with earlier work from the 19th century, but the resulting plan is more or less hypothetical.

The work led by Martin Millet involved geophysical survey, topographical survey and fieldwalking. Using these techniques, virtually all the site has been covered and a plan of the town has emerged. This is only the fourth complete plan of a Roman town to be determined. It shows that the town had several phases of development. The core of the town is a grid of streets, with the forum and a temple area at the centre. Most of the houses in this core area around the forum were large. The second phase of development involved extension of the street grid in relation to a road skirting around three sides of the town, marking the boundary. Temples were positioned along this road, which is being interpreted as a sacred way. The third phase is characterised by the construction of town walls.



Martin Millett showed a close-up of the geophysical results together with an old photograph of the same valley area. One could visualise that people entering the town would pass through a gate into an area surrounded by buildings, and from there they would go up a series of terraces. In other words, a lot of the architecture seems to have been arranged for effect and Martin suggested that Falerii Novi might have been more like Pompeii and Herculaneum than had been expected. It has been possible to build up a picture of the major public buildings. Most impressive was the forum, a huge complex 190 m long and 90 m wide with a white marble temple that is thought to be about 20 m high. It is believed that the entrance to the forum was marked by triumphal arches and flanked by large shops on either side.

When it came to the fieldwalking, two new techniques were tried (to avoid collecting an unmanageably high quantity of pottery). One method involved wearing a satellite receiver (attached to a baseball cap) wired into a computer carried in a backpack. The wearer identified what was visible on the surface while walking across the area at the same time as GPS was recording position via the baseball cap receiver - a method obviously only suitable for the expert! The level of visibility was also noted. This method enabled the whole site to be surveyed in two weeks, which seems quite remarkable. The second method was designed to identify what was related to particular structures, so when the latter were located from the geophysical survey, a marker was positioned and pottery was collected from these specific spots. (It seems that everything was not completely straightforward on the site - Martin mentioned an incident with the landowner that involved the police raiding the landowner's house for antiquities).

In a period of four years from beginning to end, the whole survey was taken to completion, including publication in November 2000.

After the first season of work at Falerii Novi, the Italian authorities approached Professor Millett with a problem in relation to Portus, once a large and important port of the Roman Empire. Archaeological evidence was required if the site was to be protected, but the landowner wouldn't allow the collection of the evidence. The antiquities legislation in Italy is such that the State can compulsorally occupy the land for an archaeological assessment, but on a single occasion only.

The Portus site is a large and complex area related to a harbour which was built by Claudius but subject to reconstruction after it silted up. An inner hexagonal area, the Porto di Trajano, still contains water but the rest of the site, which is located near Rome's Leonardo airport, is buried and overgrown. The team's brief was to survey the eastern half – the western half was already owned by the State. In his lecture, Martin talked about the area between the harbour and the river Tiber within this large and complex site. The route of a canal was detected, 40m wide and more than a kilometre long, its route defined by high walls. It is thought that the canal linked the Tiber, not to the Porto de Trjano, but an area of warehouses. A river port on the Tiber has been located, and a triumphal arch.

We were shown three areas: on the geophysical survey map of the urban area, Martin drew our attention to north-south stripe effects, which are thought to represent earlier pre-Roman sea frontages. These are overlain by the Roman archaeology, which includes a temple. Outside this area is an area of graves. Between the canal and a road, the land could be described as an industrial suburb with wharves and warehouses, an area which he described as ankle-deep in amphora sherds. The present surface looks stony but is in effect concrete, possibly an area of the river port where local goods were unloaded. More than twenty inscriptions were found, probably many of which are the by-product of clandestine excavation and represent merely the bits that were dropped – one can't help wondering what was successfully carried away.

Another area of this large site remains to be surveyed. Professor Millett was also engaged in negotiations to investigate a couple of smaller sites, so perhaps there will be more for ERAS members to hear about in the future!

ERAS lecture summary: The Linear Earthworks of East Yorkshire

***Chris Fenton-Thomas** 18 Oct 2000*

In this lecture the speaker discussed the part played by the linear earthworks in the landscape history of the Yorkshire Wolds. The earthworks still remain enigmatic despite some 150 years of research. There are three contexts in which these earthworks need to be understood: the first is by comparison with similar monuments in other parts of the country, the second is by a review of other activities in East Yorkshire during the period of the earthworks' construction, the third is by a consideration of the local past. It was on the latter that Chris Fenton-Thomas proposed to concentrate in his lecture.

When Chris embarked on his research (which was to involve neither fieldwalking nor excavation) he realised that it was unsatisfactory to consider the earthworks in isolation. Firstly they have consistently been reused – as field and township boundaries, even as roads. Secondly, it is clear that the earthworks have been constructed at different times, some in the later part of prehistory, some in the Romano-British period and others, probably, as late as the Middle Ages. Thirdly, the survival in a recognisable form into the modern landscape is dependent on recent landscape history. The time frame used to study these monuments is therefore between the Late Bronze Age and Doomsday.

Three recurring themes formed the basis of the speaker's thesis: firstly, the modification and manipulation of the earthworks at many times from prehistory onward; secondly, cyclical changes in the character of the area over the 2000-year period, sometimes being closely managed and sometimes more open to access; thirdly, the different landscape and archaeology of the Wolds

compared with the surrounding low-lying land. This has made him think about the nature of the Wolds today, which can be perceived in different ways. While many people see it as a treeless, dreary place, others see it as an uplifting, free place. It is not just the height above sea level that differentiates the Wolds from its surrounds; it is more a consequence of the recent usage that has moulded its character in the 150 years between the late-17th and the 19th century. In antiquity, however, the Wolds was a very different place for the people who lived and worked there.

The first people to try to understand the linear earthworks (in our historical period, at any rate) were the antiquaries, including the Reverend Mortimer and the Reverend Cole. The lesser-known Cole was the vicar of Wetwang and tried to trace the extent of the earthworks. The Reverend Wiltshire dug and recorded a cross-section of a double dyke. By 1890 it was already realised that many of the earthworks were being destroyed by the agricultural practices of the time: and if it were so in the 19th century, then it must be more so today, with increasingly intensive agriculture. It is only in places such as Thixendale where the slope is too steep for ploughing, or within plantations, that the earthworks survive. However, many earthworks on the Wolds show up well from the air as cropmarks and some are shown on early maps; the speaker illustrated this by a map of 1744 which showed the dykes around Huggate.

An obvious characteristic of the earthworks is their size and length. Chris Fenton-Thomas suggested that the time and effort required for their construction is as great as for any monument in the country. Almost as obvious is the problem of dating them. Even if the ditches were excavated, you would be fortunate to find any artefacts at all and even more fortunate to find something of the date of construction, as items could be washed in to the ditches or be connected to the earthworks' reuse. It was Mortimer who found perhaps the best piece of dating evidence — a pit dug into one of the banks and found to contain Late Bronze Age metalworking moulds, indicating that the earthwork could be no later than that date. More recently Terry Manby, while working at Thwing, found Late Bronze Age pottery at the bottom of pits in one of the earthworks. However, other earthworks appear to be later in date, with one cutting through Iron Age square barrows. Herman Rahm suggested that most were constructed late in the Roman period, though he was mainly concerned with those in the northern Wolds. (Rodney Mackey interjected that he found Roman material in an earthwork ditch running through the Swaythorpe site) The speaker believes that most date to the Late Bronze Age, a belief supported by similar dates for linear earthworks in other parts of the country. Don Spratt had also suggested that most of the North Yorkshire examples are Late Bronze Age. In the Middle and Late Bronze Age there was a significant change in the landscape as some of it was being enclosed. This period could be viewed as a threshold between an open, ceremonial landscape and a landscape of increased agricultural use.

The speaker asked if the Yorkshire Wolds were subject to such a marked landscape change or was it a more gradual evolution. Are the relationships of linear earthworks with earlier features deliberate? The topography of the Wolds is very characteristic: the western edge is quite steep but the overall slope is to the east, cut by steep dry valleys that gradually open out to the east. The raised ground is often enclosed and defined by earthworks following the lines of the dry valleys. In many places the structure of the earthworks (single, double or triple) mimics the topography. There are three ways in which the earthworks respect the lay of the land, resulting in three types of earthwork. Those which fit into the first category run for long distances, broadly following the watersheds. These are the largest earthworks and may have as many as three ditches, whereas the second type are smaller, have only one ditch and follow the lines of the dry valleys, positioned about two thirds of the way up the slope. They often look like hollow-ways but are, in fact, cut ditches. The third type of earthwork run only a short distance but are elaborate constructions of a series of banks and ditches, often associated with the necks of land between the heads of dry valleys; for example, the well-known Huggate Dykes have six banks and ditches. These relationships suggest that the earthworks are paying respect to the importance of topographical features. At the point where Bessindale splits there is a meeting of linear earthworks and a series of banks and ditches which the speaker suggested are marking the importance of the place. So not only are the linear earthworks respecting the topography, they are changing their form, so the builders are acknowledging the importance of the places.

Chris Fenton-Thomas also considered the way in which the earthworks relate to trackways. He showed two long early trackways which find their way across the Wolds without changing altitude more than necessary. If these were early trackways it has been suggested that one at least was part of a long distance routeway, providing access to sources of flint on the east coast, for instance.

A third aspect of the earlier landscape which the linear earthworks appear to respect are round barrows. This phenomenon is not restricted to East Yorkshire. Don Spratt suggested that the round barrows were boundary markers. Are the barrows just sighting markers or have they retained their original significance? There are examples of a ditch going through a barrow and also of a ditch going around. Mortimer used this to date the earthworks as later than the barrow: others have suggested that this illustrates a lack of respect for the barrows when they have ceased to have meaning. Alternatively, it could be that the barrows were being used to lend credibility i.e. drawing on existing features to confer legitimacy on the new system of enclosure.

The final aspect of the landscape for consideration in relation to linear earthworks is that of water sources. The only running water on the Wolds in recent times has been the intermittent Gypsey Race and springs surfacing at the base of the western slope of the Wolds. In the 19th

century, dewponds were dug to provide a standing water supply. Recent research has suggested that the water table is much lower at the present time than formerly. Many villages have ponds today which have been assumed to be artificial, but place-name evidence (eg Fimber, Sledmere) suggests that some may have existed long ago and could be natural, not man-made. Examples exist at Burdale, Sledmere (now dry) Fridaythorpe and Fimber, and the linear ditches seem to be respecting many of these ponds. It is perhaps significant that it is on the central Wolds where the earthworks respect the ponds – and it is here that there are no springs to provide water. Some earthworks lead to springs on the western edge of the Wolds, prompting Terry Manby to suggest that this indicates control of access to the springs.

In summing up, the speaker debated what insights into the Late Neolithic-Early Bronze Age have been provided by this landscape research. He concluded that the way in which the linear earthworks relate to the landscape of the past suggests that the change from the prehistoric to the Bronze Age may not have been as radical as previously thought; the new order was perhaps more sympathetic with the traditions of the past.

The Mesolithic landscape around Lake Flixton, North Yorkshire

Tim Schadla-Hall 16 Feb 2000

Tim Schadla-Hall introduced his lecture by summarising its content in terms of a reappraisal of the Star Carr site and its relationship to Lake Flixton and the Early Mesolithic. The climate of about 10,000 BP and a little later was undergoing a period of warming changes in sea-level. Lake Flixton was fed by water from the Wolds, which was held up by moraine-like sediment at the western end. (Tim mentioned that we have good Mesolithic finds in our area, such as the famous bone harpoon given by Morfitt to Tom Sheppard of Hull Museum – although the latter declared that it must be a forgery).

Star Carr was excavated over three seasons in the 1940s by Graham Clark, who was hoping to find a Magelomosian site. Clark announced that he had found an Early Mesolithic site and claimed to have completely excavated it, finding a large amount of material, including a lot of worked bone. In the 1980s, Tim dug a small trench near Hartfield River, close to Clark's excavation, retrieving 35 pieces of antler. He also discovered a plank platform on the edge of the reed swamp. With a date of 8000 BC, these are the oldest worked planks in the world and indicate occupancy of the site for more than one season. This demonstrates that Star Carr was greater in extent than envisaged by Clark; in its quantity of bone points, perforated stone beads, red deer antlers and antler frontlets, it is probably unique.

The site was fieldwalked in order to obtain a more accurate estimate of its extent, which turned out to be approximately nine times the area identified by Clark. Covering some 1000 acres, it is the largest Early Mesolithic site in Britain. Pollen analysis suggests that there were two phases of intense activity associated with burning, one close to the time of the platform, and one about 100 years later. However, it must be noted that the evidence was taken from only a small area. Star Carr has been the subject of repeated reinterpretation. Graham Clark's interpretation of the finds from his excavation was that occupation of the site was seasonal: hunter-gatherers would spend the winter by the lake and follow the red deer onto the moors during the summer. Rowley-Conway, on the other hand, came to an almost opposite conclusion: that the shed antlers indicate that the occupiers were there in the summer.

Tim Schadla-Hall came to work at Seamer Carr in the 1970s as a result of the siting of a Council rubbish tip. He excavated a large area near the edge of the lake, in addition to a number of 2m squares around the perimeter. Evidence for both Mesolithic and Late Palaeolithic activity was found. Occupation seems to have been relatively short-term, with evidence for campfires. The good survival of Late Palaeolithic flint work and clear stratigraphy has enabled this to be identified as the earliest Upper Palaeolithic site so far north in Britain.

It was hoped and expected that bone and worked bone would be found in a similar quantity as at Star Carr, but this was not so. Only one bone point and one antler were found in ten season's digging and, although large numbers of pieces of bone were found and, indeed, bone preservation was good, the bone was much smaller than at Star Carr. The flint assemblage showed that flint was obtained from more than one source and that flint-knapping took place *in situ*. As a result of the detailed method used on the site for recording flints, it has been possible to conjoin large numbers of flints. It has even proved possible to put together flints which were tested and rejected. The speaker suggested that the Seamer site was used mainly for knapping flint and producing tools and not for the same activities as Star Carr.

Brushwood platforms were found at both Star Carr and Seamer Carr, but distinguishing between woodworking by man and by beavers is problematic.

There is now a wider concern than in the past with the interpretation of evidence within the wider landscape rather than the narrower focus of specific sites; for this reason the lake itself has provided a subject for research. This began with a study of the lake edge, which revealed that human activity was correlated with sandy areas rather than areas of clay soil, and also with dry areas within the lake area itself. It was realised that much more detail was required in the pollen diagrams, achievable by taking sample cores at more frequent intervals. The researchers have now demonstrated that at some of the sites there was controlled burning, which would have encouraged fresh growth of vegetation, tempting animals to the lake edge to graze. A picture is emerging of a landscape which was being manipulated and occupied sporadically (though the Star Carr site was used differently).

At Barry's Island (named after a local farmer), at the eastern and of the lake, bone tools and Early Mesolithic flints were found in a sand layer. It was only when the results from pollen analysis and radiocarbon arrived that it was discovered that the material was redeposited by a stream, some 500m from its original site and ca.1500 years later.

At No-Name Hill in the middle of the lake an extensive survey was carried out by auger over five years, with the eventual reward of an Early Mesolithic site.

Another discovery was made by a farmworker while muck-spreading; this site proved to be the first dry-land Early Mesolithic site.

The programme of augering included many, many samples to find the lake edge. Work at the site – which has covered 20 years – has also included fieldwalking large areas, but nowhere has anything like Star Carr been found. It was the lake that was important – like a huge larder – and the focus of activity. Star Carr was certainly different; Tim Schadla-Hall suggested that its position, overlooking the exit of the lake where the water flowed out, led to it being used as a ceremonial site.

'Roman Woman' by Lindsay Allason-Jones.

A Book Review by Ruth Halkon

"Senovara remembered the first time she had witnessed the ceremony, just a few weeks after she had married Quintus Flavius Candidus... She had never seen so many soldiers gathered in one place before and had thought the brightly polished metal of their helmets and cuirasses, and the bright scarlet of their tunics, a glorious sight. Her new husband had looked so proud and so at home on the military parade ground. Looking back she realised that that the day had been a turning point in her life; the moment when she had finally understood that she had married, not a childhood friend as most of the other girls in her tribe had done, but a man who had been a Roman legionary and that, as a result, she had become part of a new way of life..."

'Roman Woman' is about daily life in Hadrian's Britain. It concentrates on Senovara, by birth a member of the Parisi tribe of what is now East Yorkshire, her husband Quintus, a retired Roman Legionary and their children Lucius and Ertola, who live in Eboracum (York). The book takes us through a year of festivals, fun and all the work that has to be done on a typical day. It gives detailed information about various subjects such as household management and costume in a clear and interesting way. It is divided into twelve chapters, one per month, but instead of using the English months the author used the Latin ones. Each chapter tells of the events that happen to Senovara during that month.

The book deals with many aspects of Roman life. For example: Senovara is very proud about her latrina (toilet) because many houses did not have one although her grandma, who was born in a roundhouse, thinks they are new-fangled! There are many different races of people in and around the fort from all over the empire, as well as people from outside.

The climax is Quintus making boots for the Legate, and the Legate wearing them to the chariot races. Other important events are buying the slave, Armea, going to stay at the farm. Senovara was born at because of the summer fever in Eboracum, the eclipse and Ertola learning to talk. The farm is loosely based on an ERAS/Durham University dig at Shiptonthorpe.
I really enjoyed this book and recommend it to history fans, and others not so keen, who are 11 and over.
Roman Woman -Everyday Life in Hadrian's Britain
Lindsay Allason-Jones

Published by Michael O'Mara Books ltd
ISBN 1-85479-528-7
£14.99

(*Ed.* Lindsay Allason Jones is Director of Archaeological Museums at the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne - a leading expert on Roman artefacts and other aspects of Roman life - She spoke to ERAS about Women in the Roman North). Ruth Halkon (11) attends St Mary's College, Hull - she got the book for Christmas!

Hands-on archaeology at Hull and East Riding Museum

(more than a night on the tiles)

Have you ever envied the professional archaeologists who get to touch the exciting bits and pieces that come out of the ground – such as the little tesserae that make up those wonderful mosaics from Roman villas? If so, the following few paragraphs from Martin Foreman are for you.

The Hull and East Riding Museum has the best suite of Roman mosaics to be seen in a charge-free museum in Britain. Occupying galleries opened in the 1970s, Hull's mosaics come from 4th-century villas at Brantingham and Rudston, East Yorkshire; and from Horkstow, North Lincolnshire. They show a fascinating blend of Romanised high culture and untutored Celtic tradition, casting light on the tastes of a native ruling class at the north-west frontier of Empire. They come from a time seen by some as a golden age of villa life, by others as a fading twilight before the Romans left and the lights went out.

The refurbishment of our Roman displays forms a central element of Hull's Museum Quarter development. Extensive scenic work will present Romanised life in the East Riding, with a determined attempt to challenge traditional views of the period. For too long our corner of Roman Britain has been populated by Welsh-speaking Yorkshiremen administered by Italians in skirts. We also intend to seize this opportunity to display a mass of finds which have languished unseen for the last half-century. The mosaics, as before, will remain at the heart of new displays.

The passage of time since the 1970s has, however, lessened the lustre of our mosaics. Coatings originally applied to protect and brighten them would not be applied so generously today, and dust has quietly gathered between and over the countless *tesserae* – the brick and stone cubes making up these splendid designs. The bright colours once held to be a hallmark of the 'Petuaria school' of mosaic-making have dimmed. The problem is most marked for mosaics laid flat. They cannot now be polished by the regular passage of sandals, and the price of slaves is prohibitive!

We have commissioned the British Museum to assess the current state of the mosaics, and to set out a scheme of works for their cleaning. The British Museum once had the Horkstow mosaic, which came here when we were able to offer space for its complete display 'close to home'. We very much hope they will be able to recommend a low-tech – if labour intensive – approach to this vital work. And, if they agree, we would like to offer a role in the job to Society members.

This is a rare opportunity to enjoy a hands-on encounter with some of the region's most notable treasures. It also promises to be a satisfying task; unlike much archaeological work, the results will be immediately visible, both to those involved and to the public at large. It is sometimes easy to think of a museum as the place where finds go to die, rather than where they are curated and presented. With your help, we hope to change all that.

By happy chance, the Heritage Lottery Fund also look to spend money to involve young people with the active care of our heritage. Opportunities for fieldwork are few. However, this project offers local youngsters a unique opportunity to touch and present Britain's favourite period of ancient history, and to contribute to Hull's cultural Renaissance at the same time. The Society has a long-term duty to encourage the next generation of would-be members. We invite today's ERAS members to consider this commitment. Whether you can help in supervising enthusiastic youngsters, or would rather appreciate the soothing scritch of toothbrush on *tesserae* in solitary peace, we hope to hear from you very soon.

By the way; did we say 'countless *tesserae*'?. At the end of this job, we may actually know how many we have! If you think you can help in any way, pleases contact:

Martin Foreman, via the Hull and East Riding Museum in Hull's High Street, or, if you prefer, via Kate Dennett or any member of the ERAS Committee. We await your call.

THE UNIVERSITY OF HULL
DEPARTMENT OF ADULT EDUCATION
and
THE KINGSTON-UPON-HULL MUSEUMS

SIX PUBLIC LECTURES
with Illustrations and Discussion
on

ARCHAEOLOGY:

'DIGGING UP THE PAST'

at
THE VICTORIA GALLERIES, CITY HALL (Carr Lane Entrance), HULL
(by kind permission of the Kingston upon Hull Corporation Property and Bridges Committee)
Weekly on WEDNESDAYS at 7-30 p.m.

Opening Meeting: WEDNESDAY, 21st SEPTEMBER, 1960.

21st SEPTEMBER: THE ANTIQUITY AND EVOLUTION OF MAN
Dr. GLYN DANIEL, M.A., F.S.A.,
University Lecturer in Archaeology, and Fellow of St. John's College,
The University of Cambridge,
author of 'A Hundred Years of Archaeology,' 'The Pre-historic Chamber Tombs of England and Wales,' etc.
Chairman: Mr. John Bartlett, M.A., F.S.A., F.M.A.,
Director, Kingston upon Hull Museums.

28th SEPTEMBER: EXCAVATIONS AT JERICHO AND THE BEGINNINGS OF CIVILISATION IN THE NEAR EAST
Dr. KATHLEEN M. KENYON, C.B.E., M.A., F.B.A., F.S.A.,
Lecturer in Palestinian Archaeology, University of London,
Institute of Archaeology,
author of 'Digging up Jericho,' etc.
Chairman: Dr. Brynmor Jones, Sc.D., F.R.I.C.,
Vice-Chancellor, The University of Hull.

5th OCTOBER: THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS
Professor F. F. BRUCE, M.A., D.D.,
Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis,
The University of Manchester,
author of 'Second Thoughts on the Dead Sea Scrolls,' 'The Dawn of Christianity,' etc.
Chairman: The Reverend John Tinsley, M.A., B.D.,
Department of Theology, The University of Hull.

*12th OCTOBER (at the Guildhall!) AIR PHOTOGRAPHY AND ARCHAEOLOGY
Dr. J. K. S. ST. JOSEPH, M.A.,
Curator in Aerial Photography,
and Librarian, Selwyn College,
The University of Cambridge.
Chairman: Professor A. G. Dickens, M.A., F.R.Hist.S.,
Pro-Vice-Chancellor and G. F. Grant Professor of History,
The University of Hull.

19th OCTOBER A TASK FORCE OF THE ROMAN INVASION, ON HOD HILL, DORSET
Professor IAN A. RICHMOND, C.B.E., M.A., F.S.A., F.B.A.,
Professor of the Archaeology of the Roman Empire,
Oxford University,
author of 'City Wall of Imperial Rome,' 'Roman Britain,' etc.
Chairman: Professor M. M. Gillies, M.A., Ph.D.,
Department of Classics, The University of Hull.

26th OCTOBER: THE DESERTED MEDIEVAL VILLAGE OF WHARRAM PERCY
Professor MAURICE W. BERESFORD, M.A.,
Professor of Economic History,
The University of Leeds,
author of 'Lost Villages of England,' etc.
Chairman; Mr. F. W. Brooks, M.A., F.S.A., F.R.Hist.S.,
Reader in Medieval History, The University of Hull.

* The meeting on 12th October will be held in the Reception Room of the Guildhall.

Tickets for the series: 5/- (Students 2/-) Single Lecture: 1/-
(Lecture, 12th October: Free)

Tickets on application to: The Department of Adult Education, 195 Cottingham Road, Hull (Telephone: 18960), or at the door.

(A Course open to all interested, has been arranged on 'British Archaeology and an Introduction to the Problems of Local Research,' at the University, beginning Wednesday, 2nd November, 1960, at 7-30 p.m.

This is the programme for that series of public lectures in 1960 that led the formation of the East Riding Archaeological Society

Dates for your Diary

Wed 18 April AGM (7pm) followed by lecture: Venta Silurum: Caerwent – investigating a Roman town booklets, photos and wine afterwards

Sat 28 April day visit to two great castles and two parish churches of South Yorkshire at Tickhill and Conisburgh. A chance to visit Tickhill Castle, which is not normally open to the public. Organised by CBA Yorkshire, fee £20 adults £16 children, (payable to CBA Yorkshire, include SAE) price includes entrance fees, lunch and coach from Doncaster railway station (and buffet on platform for early arrivals there).

For info and booking,:Pam Bates, hon sec, Smithfold barn, Chapel Road, Hayfield, High Peak, Derbyshire SK22 2JF tel: 10663 745503, email: pambates@hotmail.com

Sun 13 May Millennium Walk around the Fulneck Moravian Settlement with Ruth Strong
Organised by YAS fee £6, including tea

Contact Janet Teague, 23 Clarendon Road Leeds LS2 9NZ
Booking closes 13 April

Sat 2 June 6th Annual Conference of the Humber Wetlands Project
Wetland Heritage of the Lincolnshire Marsh,an archaeological survry
Fee: £17.50, including tea, coffee, buffet lunch and a copy of the 6th annual report

Cheques payable to the University of Exeter, and sent to the Centre for Wetland Research@Hull, Sammon House, Bowlalley Lane, HULL HU1 1XR
Venue: University of Lincolnshire and Humberside, Brayford Pool, coffee and registration 9.30am

Sat 9 June day school: Archaeology in West Yorkshire
Fee: £10 (lunch not included) payable to Wakefield MDC
Venue: Leeds Metropolitan university, Beckett Park Campus, Churchwood Ave, LEEDS

Further info from: Linda Birch tel: 01132 2898248

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Ed: many thanks to all who have kindly allowed me to reproduce their photographs or drawings here and to whom any copyright belongs – and apologies for any for which there is no information in my files. Identification of the queried sites would be gratefully received!