

PONTEFRAC T AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
NEWS LETTER, APRIL, 1958

Things happen so quickly these days that it is difficult to keep a news letter of this sort up to date. The ink was hardly dry on the last letter before at least one of the items was out of date, namely the news concerning the Castle Museum. The very day the letter came off the press it was reported in "The Express" that the Council had allowed a grant of £250 for new show cases and heating, etc., but as yet we have no information direct from the Corporation.

March has been a month of hectic digging. The Trinity site has caused us quite a lot of work, however your Secretary spent three enjoyable "rest" days on the site, and found among other things, a complete skeleton, female, between 17 and 30 years old at death, and buried somewhere around 1600. The bones were a mere six inches below a tiled floor composed of eight inch square tiles dated about 1300. A coin with the word "Elizabeth" on it was found at the left wrist. Mr. Bellamy has dated the coin for us and says that it is an Irish Penny dated 1601. Other remarkable features were a coil of hair beneath the back of the skull and a wall (of which only the bottom course remained) which was built over the neck so close to the chin that the head had been placed to one side. The bones lay in a hole made in solid rock.

We have at last been able to conduct two parties of girls from the High School round the Castle. In spite of the extreme cold the girls enjoyed their visit very much indeed and showed keen interest in our plans for the future.

We were rather disappointed at the small number of members who attended the lecture by Mr. Bellamy on the 22nd, but we feel that great difficulty was experienced by members in locating the Girl Guides' Headquarters, however, those of us who were able to go along, spent an interesting two hours considering the future dig at St. John's.

A very interesting item has been added to our collection, a Neolithic Axe head, this will probably be added to the Castle Museum (when the museum is finally fit for such interesting relics). It was found in use as a doorstep!

A number of members have asked if it would be possible to hold another series of lectures on practical Archaeology, so we shall arrange for this in the coming Autumn. We feel that members will be too busy digging through the summer to attend such classes, but interested members are asked to give their names to the Secretary.

More skeletons! This time at St. John's. The Society went to the rescue when it was reported that human remains were turning up very near the surface. One skeleton was reported to have an arrow in the ribs. Your Secretary will be preparing detailed reports on this and the Trinity site, and this will be available to members shortly.

An idea that started as a joke may shortly become a reality. What were the feelings of the prisoners in the Castle Dungeons? Especially one confined in darkness and solitude. In order to find out, to a small extent, the dungeons will once again contain a victim--to wit one Secretary! It was to have been for one night, but (not because of ghosts or other unwelcome guests) it will be a daytime sentence. This will enable members to either witness the "execution" or visit the prisoner AFTER he has served his time.

It appears that some of our members are experiencing difficulty in obtaining whisks. Our usual supplier tells me that there is some shortage as they are imported from Japan, but every effort is being made to obtain a supply. Meanwhile you may try a soft handbrush or a three inch paintbrush.

Our treasurer will welcome the Annual Subscription which is now due.

THE SECRETARY
THE SOCIETY OF ANTI-QUARIES
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