

PONTEFRACT AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
NEWS LETTER, MAY, 1958

The search for the underground chapel at Darrington began this month. By kind permission of the owner of Darrington Hall, Mrs. Scott, we were able to enter the well on ropes, and Mr. Holmes was able to take some photographs. The water in the well is pure and it was almost possible to see down to the very bottom. The water surface is 15 feet below the entrance hole in the lawn and is supplied from a drain entering through an underground chamber off the side of the well. A tunnel leading off may prove interesting if it can be safely excavated. Is this the Chapel of the legend? No! but who knows where the tunnel may lead. Wanted—-one volunteer able to crawl up a drain 28 inches high and nine inches wide.

It is now certain that your Secretary will be spending one of his holiday days as a prisoner in the Dungeon. The Council have given permission to carry out the experiment which will probably take place on Saturday, 14th June.

A number of trips to places of interest have been discussed by the Committee, and the first is planned during August. We thought that members might like to visit the excavations at Kirkstall Abbey. A visit to Skipton Castle is being arranged for late August or early September, details of these trips will be circulated to members as soon as possible.

How to get an aerial photograph without an aeroplane? Visitors to St. John's Priory thought that a circus had come to town when a ladder was erected with the aid of ropes over the excavations and various members climbed to take photographs. What would Sir Mortimer say?

Is the Great North Road between Barnsdale Bar and Hook Moor really the "Great North Road"? That is the Roman Road--or does it run via Pontefract? Just another problem for our Society to investigate. There is evidence of a Roman Road just below the Barracks Hill on the Purston side and another on the line of Cobbler Quarry Lane, crossing the Knottingly Road just below the three arched bridge. We hope to look more closely into both later on.

Even more skeletons! Three in one stone coffin at St. John's just inside the Chapter House, and more turned up by the mechanical digger at Trinity Street. In one part the builders have found a mass of mixed bones which must have been dug up and reburied in the past. This should settle the minds of those who say that we should not have disturbed the dead with our excavations.

A further effort has been made to get the All Saints excavations straightened out. The Committee asked the Secretary to write again and ask for a reply to a letter sent in February. We hope to settle the future of the relics entrusted to us by Mr. Haigh before he left.

A new theory on the nature of King Richard's death was put forward on "Double Your Money" by Plantagenet Somerset Fry the other day. Mr. Fry believes and informed Hughie Green and the viewers in no uncertain terms that Richard II committed suicide, so now we've had the lot--Stabbed, starved, tortured. Ah well, if Richard's Ghost turns up while I'm spending my day in the dungeon, I will certainly mention the matter.

A number of new members have been enrolled this month, and as the membership is now becoming so great, an Assistant Secretary is needed. Your Committee elected Mr. W. Booth to this post as Mr. Gardiner is going on a three month training course in June.

The special rate for Junior Members (7/6 per year) has been extended to all members under eighteen, and we are to have membership cards which will be issued to paid up members as soon as they are ready.

Several members have enquired about the proposed training class. As soon as we have sufficient names full details will be included in the letter.

It has been suggested that those of our members who are interested may like to form a photographic section. Photography is an interesting subject, and it becomes even more interesting when applied to Archaeology. What about it you camera enthusiasts? Mr. John Holmes would like to borrow any negatives any of you may have to make lantern slides showing the work of the Society. He would prefer the film to be in a continuous strip, but if it has been cut into single negatives he can still use it.