

PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT
ARCHÆOLOGICAL SOCIETY

NEWS LETTER



NOVEMBER 1958

Holmes, Printer, Pontefract—Telephone 3699

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Would anyone like a Hot Cross Bun? Before you decide we should warn you that it is approximately 104 years old! It was given to the Society, via the Secretary, by Mr. J.W. Fleam, of the Saltwell Park Museum, Gateshead. According to Mr. Fleam, the bun was sent to a soldier in the Crimean War, but as the Postal service in those days was not up to the present standard by the time the bun reached the poor man it was too hard to eat so he popped it in his pack and evidently forgot about it. However, on his return out came the bun, which became a sort of war relic, and it has been handed down till it reached Mr. Fleam. Now it will end its days in the Castle Museum.

Quite a number of members enjoyed a Lecture by Mr. K. Wilson, of Skipton, on "Heraldry and its uses in Local History." Though the lecturer made no claim to being an expert, we feel that we know a lot more about Heraldry now than we did before. For instance, we can now look at the arms on the House in Castle Chain and say at once that it is the arms of an eldest son whose father was still living—because of the "Label" on the top of the Arms. We can also tell the difference between a Lion Rampant and a Lion Passant. We are looking forward to hearing Mr. Wilson again in November when he will give an illustrated lecture on "Digs in the Outer Hebrides."

A general meeting was held on Friday, September 26th, in the Library, and several new faces were seen. It was decided amongst other things to sound out the ground for forming a Junior section, and to have a further course of lectures this winter if support is forthcoming. It was also mentioned that members could attend the classes at The Senior Boys' School each Tuesday if they wished. There is to be an annual General Meeting next April.

As an experiment we are including an extra four pages in this edition of the News Letter. We should like your comments. To keep this size three things are necessary—a good circulation, a small payment, and most important of all an Editor (or Editress). It is too much to ask the Secretary to collect and edit the copy each time ready for the printer.

of a hand, only with seven fingers, each finger ending in a golden flower. The funeral cloak and two large golden ear-rings were also found in very good condition. There were also the remains of over fifty men and women who had been killed in order to serve the Queen in the next world.

Many of the relics found during these digs may be seen to-day in the British Museum. Since these first excavations much more work has been done and far more is now known.

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HOUSEHOLD HINT

If your coins are needing cleaning try a little "H.P." Sauce! Just smear the coin with sauce, leave for about five minutes, then wipe off. You'll be surprised at the result. Wash in warm soapy water afterwards. This is not recommended for best silver.

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"HORSEFAIR, STREET OF MANY CHANGES"

Horsefair, more correctly named Micklegate or Middlegate, has seen many changes in the last twenty years or so. Even the writer can remember the old school on the site of the new bus station, the Alms houses in Trinity Street, and the pump just at the corner. One by one most of the old houses have gone and now only two of the older houses remain, No. 5 Horsefair and Micklegate House, opposite. Of these two No. 5 is the elder and still has many interesting features. There is a coat of arms over the stairs though you cannot see it. You can still see evidence of the spiral staircase. In the four large front rooms there are some very beautiful oak panels which for a time were covered with more than seven thicknesses of wallpaper and canvas. Out in the yard you can see the Wall Oven arch, and in the wash house there is a large solid stone table, and under it, a well. In the cellar is a trapdoor with a filled-in passage leading to—we haven't the faintest idea.

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PHOTO SECTION

Some members have been asking about the Photographic Section. We did ask you some time ago for names of members interested but so far we have only one and we cannot form a group with one can we? So if you are interested your name please.

LOCAL NEWS

The Secretary has received a letter from the Producer of the television programme "I've got a Secret" and all being well Mr. Gardiner, and possibly Mr. Booth, will appear in the next series, to try and beat the panel with the Secret of the Prisoner in the Dungeon. A detailed report is now available to members giving information about the experiment. Mr. K. Evans has kindly made several copies, and anyone who would like one should please contact the Secretary.

Excavations have been made in the field alongside the Ferrybridge Road above the Grange Field during August. Trenches were put in down to solid rock near where the body with arrow was found, but apart from a few modern sheards, nothing else was discovered.



Meetings are to be held on the following Saturdays, at 7 p.m. in the Public Library:

November 1st, "Outer Hebrides" Mr. K. Wilson (slides).

December 6th, "English Castles" (slides).

January 17th, 1959. St. John's Priory Excavations (slides)

The Annual General Meeting is to be April 24th (Friday)



Several members have asked about the instruction classes mentioned earlier. A few names have been given in, but we need more. We must have a complete list as it is hoped to give out drawings to the students. The class will deal with practical Archaeology, but this time will go into more detail. We hope to cover the proposed work in the Castle.



SMALL ADS.

FOR SALE. Ross Ensign Camera and Tripod in first class condition. First £10 or near offer secures. Has been used with success on Archaeological photography. Apply Secretary **FREE!** Receipts given free in exchange for membership fees. Apply Treasurer. Several more are expected, but have not yet been paid.

IF you have anything for sale or want anything, please use the News Letter.

WANTED. Articles of interest for inclusion in the News Letter

ODD SPOT

Did you know that the expression "Put t' wood in t' 'ole" has quite an interesting background? In the old stone dwellings the "door" consisted of merely a piece of wood, or a skin covered frame, which was placed in the hole in the wall to keep out unwelcome guests, and of course, the weather. Hence—put the wood in the hole.



THE CASTLE

"There's a breathless hush in the close to-night." That is more or less the position regarding the Castle Museum at the moment. The Secretary has had in interview with the Assistant Borough Engineer, and the A.B.E. has been to the Museum and discussed several points with some of our members. The new layout and designs for the cases were talked over, and we feel that at last things are beginning to move in the right direction. We are to experiment to find out the best form for the new lighting, and Mr. K. Evans is to give an estimate of cost. We are also to experiment with the layout of the cases. The suggestions will then be placed before the Corporation Committee for their approval or otherwise.

For a long time now visitors to the Castle have not been able to see the collection of stones in the Kitchen (rose garden)—The weeds have provided an effective covering. Now, thanks to the efforts of an un-named, unpaid, unofficial gardener, the weeds have gone and many interesting stones are visible. There are also two types of Mason's marks to be seen on the window mullions. They are of the addition sign type.

The Duchy of Lancaster have been informed of the latest damage to the Castle. Tree roots have pushed down more stones from the structure of the Keep and the wall near the Chapel. The ovens have also been damaged this year.

The other day one of the gardeners at the Castle was quite surprised to see a car drive right up to the Bandstand. He went to investigate and the lady driver got out and asked sweetly "Is there a Castle round here?" The gardener replied "This is the Castle, Madam." After a moment's pause the lady said "Oh," got back in the car and drove off!

The Corporation gave their consent to parties of visitors visiting the Magazine during Shopping Week, October 18th to 25th. All visitors descended at their own risk and only when the weather was fit, but even so quite a few were shown the Magazine.

It is hoped to have volunteer guides present at the weekends, but more volunteers would be welcomed by the Secretary.

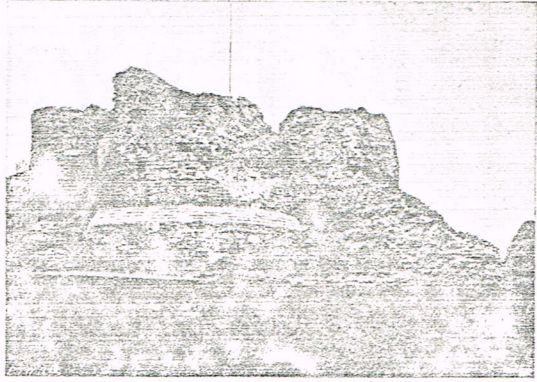
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UR OF THE CHALDEES

The site of the city of Ur lies not far from the supposed site of the Garden of Eden, near the rivers Tigris and Euphrates. The Temos, or sacred district of the City, was found to be the most interesting. Surmounting this district was the temple of the Moon God. It was to this spot that the daily offerings were brought—the priests being supposed to feed the moon God and Goddess each day. Here also was the gate of Justice with a little distance away, strangely enough, the City Museum. Nabonidus, son of King Nebuchadnezzar, is supposed to have founded the city, and when he built the palace of Gig-par-ku for his daughter, he made one room into a museum, and we are told that the museum was well laid out with all the objects correctly and neatly displayed.

During the excavations carried out by the British Museum and the Museum of the University of Pennsylvania some years ago, some very interesting relics were found. We thought readers might like to be reminded of them. One of the more interesting features of the excavations was the Royal Tombs. The first one entered was that of King Mes-Kalom Dug. The excavators found that the tomb had been plundered, and there was no trace of the King's body. But, surprisingly enough, they did find traces of a chariot, a harp overlaid with gold, vases and jars, many of which were also overlaid with gold. If, as it appears, the robbers could not bother with these, one wonders what riches they did remove.

The tomb of Queen Shub-ad, the King's Consort, was also found and here the excavators were more fortunate, as the remains of the Queen were still there. Over the head was a beautiful head-dress made of gold ribbon. This had been worn over a wig and some of the hair of the wig was still there. On top of the head-dress was a large golden ornament in the shape



Shall we ever see the Castle like this again?