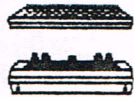
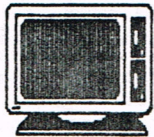


PontArch

An Occasional News Letter
For Members of The
PONTFRACT & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY.
Number Three. Autumn/Winter 1987.



*From the
Editor's
Desk.*

Readers will, I hope, notice an improvement in style, layout, and content in this, our third *PontArch* of the new series.

There are two reasons for this. The most obvious reason is the acquisition of a Desktop Publishing system, of which more later. The other reason is the increase in contributions from members. Both innovations should make this newsletter more readable and brighter in appearance.

There is an interesting story behind the computer software used to produce the newsletter. Several months ago, your Editor entered a competition in the computer magazine, *Computing with the Amstrad PCW*. On returning from his holiday in France there was a letter on the doormat informing him that he had won a copy of *DESKTOP PUBLISHER*. This is a package which enables the owner of a (relatively)

simple computer like the editorial PCW 8256 to produce professional style newsletters and other publications. Any defects in the present issue must be laid firmly at the door of the Editor who has not yet fully mastered the somewhat complex operation of the system.

Congratulations to Robert McNaught and Michael Holdsworth for winning prizes in the West Yorks. Archaeology Service Young Archaeologists Competition. Both were runners up. Does anyone know who came first?

Many thanks to Janet McNaught, Robert McNaught (The drawing & cartoon) and Michael Holdsworth for contributing to this issue. There is still a need for more, so all you silent members out there, please get out your pens and pencils. Who knows? We might manage a letters page if enough people write in. E.H

APPLETREE CLOSE EXCAVATIONS, PONTEFRACT.

by M.A. Holdsworth,
Member and volunteer.

The site was originally discovered in 1976 by aerial photography (actually by your Editor flying as photographer with Derrick Riley!) which showed dark lines of cropmarks which turned out to be ditches.

We think that it may have been a site dating from the late Iron Age until the Fourth century. It comprised a D-shaped enclosure in which traces of industrial activity were found.

The discovery of many hearths and ovens indicates that activities which were thought to be a fire-risk were kept well away from the settlement area.

Several lines of post-holes show where buildings once stood; these may have been sheds or workshops associated with the hearths and ovens.

A large quantity of Roman pottery has been found in recent weeks. As well as household wares including grey-ware, there was Samian (Terra Sigillata), colour-coated Nene Valley ware, and mortaria, which were used for grinding herbs and spices.

A few fragments of large Spanish amphorae (used to contain and transport wine or olive-oil) show that a small site like this was still part of a vast Roman trading network which stretched to the Mediterranean and beyond!

After post-excavation work has been done, we shall know a lot more about life in this area during the Roman period.

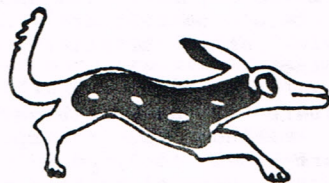
OTHER MAJOR FINDS.

There were three other major finds:-

The upper and lower parts of a *bee-hive quern* which was used for grinding corn. I found a crucible, which was used for pouring liquid metal; there were bronze traces on it, so it may have been used for making bronze tools for hacking out post-holes in the natural bedrock. The last major find was ten hobnails from a boot, without the leather in contact because of soil-erosion. Bone finds were really crumbly and mainly belonged to cattle-type animals, though there was some cremated bone too. M.A.H.

**Birdoswald,
(CAMBOGLANNA)**

**By Janet
McNaught**



Enamelled Dog-Brooch, C2nd.

First built as a cavalry fort, it was altered in the second century to an infantry fort for the 1st Cohort of Tungrians, and by the third century was garrisoned by Hadrian's own First Cohort of Dacians.

Until May of this year, the site had not been extensively excavated, although its presence was well documented. The fort, now under the ownership of Cumbria County Council, was privately owned; even now the farmer does his rounds of the dig and sometimes of an evening settles himself beside the large fireplace in the farmhouse kitchen, having said not a word to the resident diggers.

This August, we took up the offer of a weeks digging at Birdoswald. The granaries, of which there were two, each of 30m x 8m were the focus of this years dig. When we arrived they were both at varying levels of excavation.

When we arrived they were both at varying levels of excavation. In some areas the flags of the granary floors were still atop the sleeper walls, whilst in other places they had caved in or been removed in earlier centuries to construct farm buildings in the surrounding area. The width of the supporting walls vouched for the sturdiness of the structures they were carrying.

Between the granaries run passage-ways, and even a robber-trench, in the side of which were imbedded the bones of what appeared to be a human foot. Along with about 20 other people, including Australians, Canadians, Germans, and Wee Charlie (a Scot) we were allotted a metre-square (they seemed to have an endless supply of white string!) to trowel; excepting myself, and I was given a four metre square to mattock and shovel (I wonder why?), to remove fallen rubble before getting down to the serious business of crawling backwards and trowelling away the various layers.

The quiet was only broken by the sound of the Royal Mail/fruit/grocery vans which were all good excuses for a stretching of the legs even if we didn't need any supplies or expect any post; or the unrepeatable words when another midge hit its target.

Andreas, the German giant, had a finds rate that was second to none! a glass ring, metal brooch, nails, coins, etc. It was rumoured at the barrow-run (point for all the latest scandal) that he had a contact in Gilnd who supplied him with suitable artifacts in return for free ale.

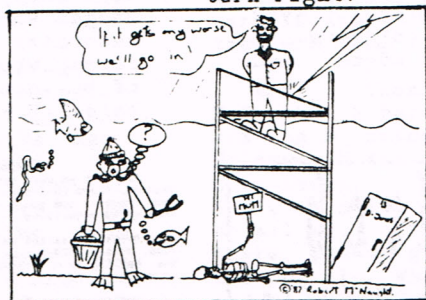
The dig was not straight-forward, as at one point the Victorians had constructed an earth closet, and at another point where the ditch of the ha-ha ran alongside the northern wall of the granary, it had sprung a leak leaving feet of black slimey goo for removal! Highlight of the day occurred when a large wallstone was accidentally dropped into the hole soaking the reluctant bailers, and leaving them looking like tar-babies.

Not only were the granaries uncovered, but beneath the southern one were signs of an earlier floor, and at the eastern entrance the step had been laid on top of an earlier step. Above this same granary there were tentative signs of a later building, ie Dark Age. There is a definite pattern of post-holes, one of which had been excavated before we left. It was about fifteen inches in circumference and an arms length in depth.

Many a lunch-break was spent removing Americans from the farmhouse, as they were convinced that this was THE fort, and not the encircling wall and large hole in the ground which we kept pointing out to them.

Having been bitten by midges, soaked to the skin, and shrouded in mist, all in the middle of August, I am now harbouring a secret admiration for our Roman conquerers who stuck it out for the best part of four centuries.

Yes!, we are off back next summer, midge-repellant at the ready. Why don't you come and visit us -- it's north of Carlisle and turn right.



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THORPE AUDLIN'S ELUSIVE ROMAN VILLA.

Does any member know anything about the history of Thorpe Audlin?...It appears that from time to time bits of Roman Pottery have been unearthed, and even flints,...it would seem that this area has been in occupation for quite a long time. Extract from NEWSLETTER, May 1959.

During two weekends in September, a small excavation was mounted by the Society in Thorpe Audlin. The aim was twofold:-

- a) To section the ditch of a quadrilateral enclosure seen on an air-photograph.
- b) To give members experience digging deep sections, and recording them.

After considerable field-walking, led by David Hedges, and a precise survey supervised by Bob Evison, a ten metre by two metre trench was laid out to cut part of the ditch at right angles. Work began on Saturday, Sept. 19th, and continued with one break for rain until 5-45pm on Sunday Sept. 27th.

At an early stage, two modern land-drains were encountered crossing the area at different angles and depths. These were left on pillars following the normal practise. Soon, the sloping edges of a massive ditch were encountered, one at each end of the dig. From this point work concentrated on removing the layers of fill, and recording the finds removed from these. Every effort was made to maintain the best standards of excavation, the moist clayey soil assisting the diggers to maintain vertical edges and sharp angles.

During the final weekend it became clear that the ditch was much deeper than first anticipated; over six feet from present ground level! Much of the fill consisted of stiff blue clay which turned out to be the secondary silt. In this and the primary silt beneath it, the finds were fragments of late Roman pottery, roof-tiles, (both tegulae and imbratae) hypocaust flue-tile fragments, coal and fragments of a Rhineland lava quern. Interestingly, a much smaller and earlier ditch (which does not show on the air-photos) was found to cross the site almost at right-angles to the main ditch.

This latter appears to have been cut in Late Roman or even Sub-Roman times, after the demolition or destruction of the 'villa.'

When the finds and their position in the section have been fully analysed we may have a better idea of where the 'villa' was. These details will have to wait for the full report which is in preparation. Meanwhile, thanks to all who took part especially to David Hedges who bore the brunt of the recording, and Mr. Lister the farmer who went to the trouble of building us a fototower from bales! E.Houlder. Director.

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EDITORIAL REQUIREMENTS.

Now that we once again have a Newsletter circulating amongst members, there is a desperate need for news, articles, cartoons, and even drawings and poems. These notes are for the guidance of members wishing to contribute.

Written material is best submitted directly on computer-disc (CP8, 3^{1/2} disc, PCV format.) The disc will of course be returned after use. Failing this, typescript is the next best format. Handwriting is suitable only for the shortest contributions.

Artists please bear in mind the reduction which your work will be submitted to in order to make it fit our columns. Keep drawings and cartoons bold and simple, and use thick, dense black lines.

All submitted material should be about society members, society activities, or society personalities. Please include your name in a form in which it can be easily read!

Material can be left at the Museum, or posted to the Editor, 31, Pairview, Carlisle, Pontefract, WF9 3BT.