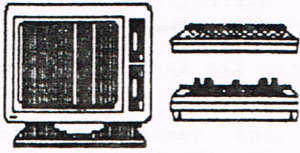


Pont-Arch

An Occasional Newsletter
for Members of the
PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number Five.

Summer 1988



From
The Editor's
Desk

The Editor respectfully announces the launch of

his book, entitled, *RECORDING THE PAST: A Photographer's Handbook*. On March 19th, he travelled to Leicester from Baghill Station, arriving in plenty of time for the beginning of the AGM and Annual Conference of the British Association for Local History. This is held in the New Walk Museum, the first time that the conference has been held outside London.

Amongst the speakers were Professor Charles Phythian-Adams of the Department of Local History of Leicester University, Dr. Joan Thirsk, President of BALH, Alan McWhirr, radio archaeology presenter, Susan and Robert Howard, publishers of *LOCAL HISTORY* magazine, and your editor himself, somewhat nervous in being numbered amongst such distinguished company, but determined to uphold the honour of the P&DAS.

Professor Phythian-Adams began the conference, after which the delegates split into small groups to attend the workshops on various aspects of Local History; your Editor was Chairing the one on photography and illustration. Just prior to the commencement of the workshops, the first batch of *Handbooks* arrived from the printers and immediately went on sale on the *Local History* stand.

Though our Society is primarily devoted to archaeology, there is a strong local history interest amongst the members; indeed, archaeology is local history, and the local historian who neglects the results of archaeology is likely to make the sort of mistakes which we have seen in print of late. Therefore, the Editor had no feeling of guilt in advocating archaeological techniques of photography to his audience of historians. A review of the *Handbook* will appear from an independent pen, probably in the next issue.

Earlier, on Saturday February 6th, your Editor in company with Messrs. Evison, Barratt, and Hedges, had attended the Annual Symposium of CBA (4) in the Dept of Engineering at Leeds University. In spite of the somewhat cramped accomodation - the result of a recent fire - the symposium was a success. It always seems a shame that so few members attend such gatherings, which keep amateurs like ourselves in contact with what is happening in archaeology. Not only does one get to hear some of the best speakers, but the different groups nearly always have bookstalls so that there is the opportunity to catch up with the latest reading too.

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FORTHCOMING EXCURSION

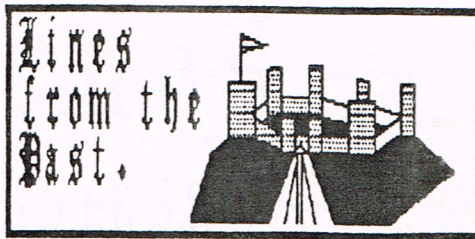


Plans are already well-advanced for a coach outing to the site of the Sutton Hoo Ship Burials. We are going on Saturday, July 16th, and will be hosted by the SUTTON HOO SOCIETY, of which your Editor is a member. So far, we intend to arrive during the late morning, and after a meal cross the estuary of the river Deben in a replica Saxon boat called *The Saxon Clog*. We then walk up to the site and are shown around by guides from the SHS.

Having visited the site two years ago, the Editor can assure members that everything can safely be left to the SHS, which has a well-oiled system for taking people around the site, from the 1938-9 discoveries to the latest *Sandmen*, which are of course the impressions of sacrificial victims, carefully excavated, and preserved on site. They even have a small sales hut with booklets, postcards, etc. on sale.

We shall leave the site by the old route, along a sandy lane which is well-known to older society members who travelled it daily twenty years and more ago during the last excavations. Finally, we shall try to spend some time in Woodbridge.

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Few current members realise how much work was done by the Society in the past. This is partly because our members have usually relied upon specialist publications, and partly because until recently there has not been much public interest in what we have achieved. This short feature is intended to remedy that situation, by bringing to you short meaningful extracts from past *Newsletters* and *Journals*. Our first extract, courtesy of Mr. John Holmes who printed the original and gave your Editor a copy, is from the April 1958 issue of our *Newsletter*.

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 amongst 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.

The style indicates that this was written by Ken Gardiner, our first Secretary. For younger members, the Trinities Hospital site was originally one of Pontefract's collegiate foundations and was situated where the Clinic now stands opposite the bus station.

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A Holiday in PROVENCE

VISITING ROMAN NIMES.

Last summer we were camping west of Avignon and north of Nimes. The whole area is renowned for its Roman remains, most of them in an excellent state of preservation. Indeed, this is one of the reasons why we were camping there!

As an amateur fascinated by Roman health & Hygiene, the great Pont du Garde aqueduct was of particular interest to me, and so on the first convenient day the whole family climbed into the car and headed for Nimes. The aqueduct itself is a few miles north and west of the town, and is now surrounded by cafes and souvenir stalls. However, these intrude very little as most of them are situated in the woodland, which also hides the extensive car parking facilities.

For those unfamiliar with France it will, perhaps, come as a surprise to learn that we had no difficulty in finding a good parking spot. The Provencal climate being what it is, it is essential to park in the shade if you wish to use the car again before night! Our only problem was to decide just which spot in the shade would be best. Finally, we chose a place overlooking the River Garde and the aqueduct, and settled down to a picnic of bread, cheese, and wine.

After a decent interval we then went to explore the Pont. This was an experience which no Roman enthusiast should miss. We spent all afternoon wandering around it, even crossing in the speculum, or water-channel. Thirteen year old Mark actually walked across on the top of this, but the rest of us chickened out, for obvious reasons!

After taking hundreds of photographs, we returned to the car, and drove leisurely back into Uzès

where the shops were of course still open until well into the evening, as they are in the more laid-back Mediterranean world.

On another day we visited Nimes itself. After parking close to the tourist office we collected maps and leaflets and found that just outside was the Maison Carre, the best preserved Roman temple in the world. Here we purchased a family admission ticket which gave substantial reductions off the entry to this and other monuments.

The famous Roman amphitheatre is at the opposite end of the town to the Maison Carre so we drove across Nimes and found a space on an underground car park. After lunching at a pavement cafe opposite the Augustan Gate, we approached the great amphitheatre, to find that though open, it was decked out for a bull-fight. This somewhat added to the atmosphere which we soaked up for most of the rest of the afternoon.

The whole area is steeped in history, and well worth a visit. The camping sites are usually better class and much less crowded than on the coast, and the whole *ambience* of Provence is open to you.



The copy-date for each issue of PONT-ARCH means that the first issue of this new bi-monthly magazine to reach these regions just missed being included in the comprehensive list in the last issue.

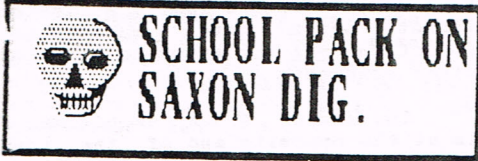
This magazine seems to be more amateur-orientated than the others in print, and at present appears to concentrate on work done around the Welsh Borders; this could be because the magazine is based in the region.

Your Editor sent (more in hope than expectation!) a couple of photographs and a short report on the recent Thorpe Audlin dig.

He is reliably informed by the two members who have managed to get hold of copies that a report on our dig fills the last page, complete with photographs.

It is to be hoped that the magazine solves its distribution problems soon; it is too good to fail simply because people cannot get hold of it.

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Since Tony Wilmott and his helpers finished with the Saxon Chapel site, work on the skeletons has quietly been going on in the *Calvin Wells Laboratory for Skeletal Research*, at Bradford University. The final report is close to publication, and will provide some surprises for local people. This sample of nearly two hundred individuals can be closely dated between the seventh and the tenth

centuries, and unlike other groups it was apparently covered over with earth. The result is the survival of even the shallowly-buried infants; an unusual occurrence.

Already, Mick Nolan, the seconded History Teacher for WMDC has been preparing a school work unit based on the skeletons and the chapel. This is currently being typeset and should be available for schools to purchase soon after this appears.

Thus, the results of archaeology will become accessible to our children within two years of the close of the dig. Having helped with the graphics and the illustrations of the Unit, the editor can thoroughly recommend it to teacher members. Please buy it, and make a point of asking for more of the same kind of teaching materials. WMDC Education Dept. is doing something really worthwhile in enabling a history teacher to have time to produce such units, and should be commended.

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