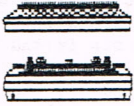


# Pont - Arch

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

Number Six.

Autumn 1988



From  
The Editor's  
Desk

Because of the printing deadlines, (yes; even such a humble sheet as *Pont-Arch* does have deadlines!) this is being written in the early days of July, a few days before the Sutton Hoo trip. The summer has been pretty appalling so far, but there is still time for it to brighten up.

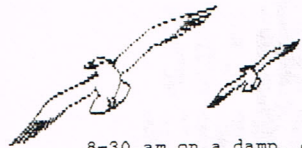
The Womersley dig got off the ground in a blaze of publicity, and we wish the site and its people all the best for the (hopefully, long!) future.

Last year, as we kept reminding you, was the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Society. At that time, the Committee asked your Editor to write a short history of the Society. Originally it was planned to publish this privately, but costs etc militated against it. Now, however, there is good news. By re-writing the piece in a more popular style, including some colour and B/W photographs, some

copies of our recent reports, Newsletters, etc., the history has been accepted by the new archaeological magazine, *British Archaeology*, for inclusion in the issue which will appear about the beginning of September.

Many members have had problems getting hold of this journal, but recently, Chess Sales in Ropergate (Maiden & Kemp's to our older members!) have managed to obtain the last three issues for your Editor. If you still have difficulty, write to: Milberg Publishing, Bell House, 3a, New St., LEDBURY, HR8 2DX, enclosing £2 and requesting issue Number 9. OR you could take out a years subscription for only £12. The magazine is good, and deserves our support.

My thanks to the anonymous member(s) who responded to my calls for material. The report on the Bruges excursion appears below.



# VISIT TO BRUGES...



what a large number of participants.

8-30 am on a damp, chilly morning at Pontefract Bus Station. The bus was late but our spirits were high as we looked forward to the Society's first excursion across the Channel.

9-00 am and at last we were ready for off, but first a detour to collect one passenger's medication. Then on for a forgotten passport, and a tour round south Yorkshire to join the A1, and then on for our first stop for morning coffee at Fortes; a very welcome break. Then on again, via the Dartford Tunnel to Rochester and our first sight of the beautiful Medway river guarded by the square turrets of Rochester castle.

So much history surrounds Rochester, and there has been so much made of the Dickens association to attract and interest the tourist. Several members arrived at the cathedral at the same time and were very fortunate to be taken around by a guide, who pointed out many irregularities in the construction of the building and related a comprehensive history. (They also have a nice tea room, complete with home-made scones and cakes).

From Rochester, on to Margate, and the Bickham Hall Hotel. Our second visit here, and what a cheerful and friendly welcome awaited us. Saturday AM. After a very nice breakfast, ready to catch the 9-00 sailing from Ramsgate to Dunkirk. Lots of talk and banter on the bus. (The return will be much quieter!) Cold, windy, rain with some sleet, but fortunately a relatively calm crossing though very crowded, due to the P&O strike at Dover.

Through France to Bruges, and we're still looking for those blue cows which the driver assured us were fact and not fiction.

Bruges is a gem of a city! A guided tour of the canals, buildings, and landing-stages decorated with baskets of flowers. It was *British Week*, with Union Jacks much in evidence, and two Guardsmen (members of the Bath Theatre Company). One with a musket, and the other carrying a 'Ghetto Blaster' around the Square. Mass was being celebrated at the cathedral, and then again in the Church of Our Lady, and

Time to wander back to the bus park, via the back streets and squares of the city. A convenient cafe provided us with a most welcome drink before setting off back to the ferry. The driver and courier took us around Dunkirk, which had all been re-built since the war.

The ferry was comfortable on the return trip; the gourmets partook of the *Smorgasbord*, whilst the remainder patronised the Self-Service! However nearly all visited the Duty Free! We appeared to be the only foot passengers, so it was inevitable that two members were stopped by the customs! ..No excesses were reported.

Back at Bickham Hall a Naval re-union was taking place, and a few stalwarts found enough energy to join in the festivities.

Sunday; a journey through Kent to visit Ightham Manor. Although a lot of clearing-up had been done, the devastation of the horrific October storms was still very much in evidence. Although seen on the TV news, the actual sight was shattering. For miles the path of the wind could be followed, and where the trees weren't up-rooted, the tops had been blown off.

Ightham Manor is a moated house built in 1340, though there have been additions up to 1520. Much of the original remains, and it has been in almost continuous occupation since its erection. The Woodland Walk is more like a dell since the October storms.

Homeward bound, we called at Saffron Walden for a stroll around the historic town with its fine timber-framed buildings and examples of pargetting. Once more on our way, and the navigator mis-read the map and we were heading back towards London. By the time we got back on the right road, we had passed a field of sheep four times. (Did you count them?) Arrived back in Pontefract Bus Station at 9-30pm only an hour behind schedule.

We are not journalists, nor Graduates of the English language, but feel that the Editor puts so much thought and time into producing the NEWSLETTER that this contribution would be useful. (You bet!! Ed.) To the Committee who arrange these excursions so efficiently, "Thank You!"

The Travellers.

# SUTTON HOO, and the Pontefract Arch. Soc.

It may come as something of a surprise to some members to learn that twenty years ago several other members of this Society took part in the excavations at Sutton Hoo. For those who did not participate in the coach trip there on July 16th, it should be explained that Sutton Hoo is the most famous, and, arguably, the most important archaeological site in Britain, for the light that it is casting on the origins of English society and kingship. The site itself is on a scarp overlooking the River Deben, just across from Woodbridge. Here, in 1939 Basil Brown discovered the 89' ship which contained the royal burial deposit of Raedwald, who died in 625AD.

The dig came to a hurried close with the onset of war in September 1939. The outline of the ship, perfect in every detail, was covered in turves and left; meanwhile, the army used the heath for live-ammunition practice causing some damage to the ship and its surroundings. When the war ended, twenty years were spent in conserving the treasures, and then plans were made to continue the work by uncovering the ship and making new plans, followed by a plaster-cast. Phosphate tests to detect the presence or otherwise of a body were also planned. Finally, the area beneath the mound on either side of the ship was to be investigated.

Direction of the dig was by Dr. R. Bruce-Mitford of the British Museum, and direction of the work on the mound was by Paul Ashbee, well-known barrow digger.

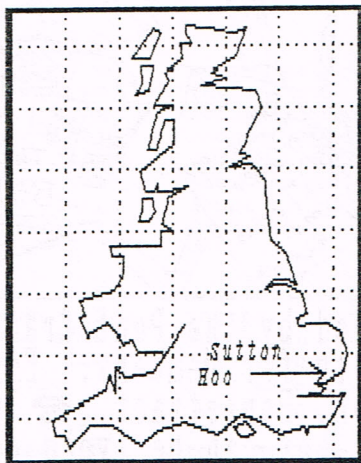
During the spring of 1967, several members of the P&DAS received letters on British Museum notepaper, asking them if they would like to dig at Sutton Hoo that summer. During the first season, Terry Carney, Kevin Stubbs, Don Lodge, Eric & Joan Houlder, and Ken and Peggy Wilson took part. The following season, 1968, the Wilsons and Kevin Stubbs dropped out, and the original team was supplemented by Derek & Anne Thorpe, and Fred Morris. For 1968, Eric Houlder was the supervisor in charge of the north east quadrant of the barrow. Here it was, that Don Lodge discovered plough-grooving in the soil beneath the barrow make-up.

Accommodation was in tents, but in the walled orchard of the Wood Hall Hotel in nearby Shottisham. Life in the orchard was comfortable, for each evening food was brought from the hotel kitchen into a large marquee in the centre of the camp!

Life for the diggers changed in 1969. The hotel no longer wanted the diggers nearby, and so we camped in a more exposed paddock at *Four Winds*, close to a golf course. That season, Terry Carney who had been a super-

visor on the opposite quadrant to Eric, was now in charge of drawing, and Eric took over the whole south side of the barrow.

By the end of the 1969 season, the ship-mound had been dug away, and the next season was devoted to planning the prehistoric village under the ship-burial.



# Society Personalities, NUMBER 2. THE EDITOR



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# Thorpe Audlin 1987

DURING September and October 1987, the Pontefract & District Archaeological Society organised another season of work on the site at Thorpe Audlin, three miles south of Pontefract. In previous seasons, the Roman road 28b has been sectioned, and traces of metallurgical activity excavated and recorded.

The site chosen for 1987 was originally shown as a large rectangular cropmark on an aerial photograph. The society aimed to section the ditch which caused the cropmark. This would, hopefully, elucidate the purpose of the ditch, and also with luck provide some dating material. In addition, it would give new and younger members experience of digging deep sections and recording them.

As usual in archaeology, the work was not as straight

forward or predictable as envisaged. The cropmark ditch was indeed sectioned; it proved to be 10 metres wide and nearly two metres deep, but what the aerial picture did not show was another ditch beneath it and on a different alignment, a palisade trench, and an area of cobbling! Two 'recent' land drains cutting across the section complicated matters, but also helped to provide access to the deepest part of the ditch.

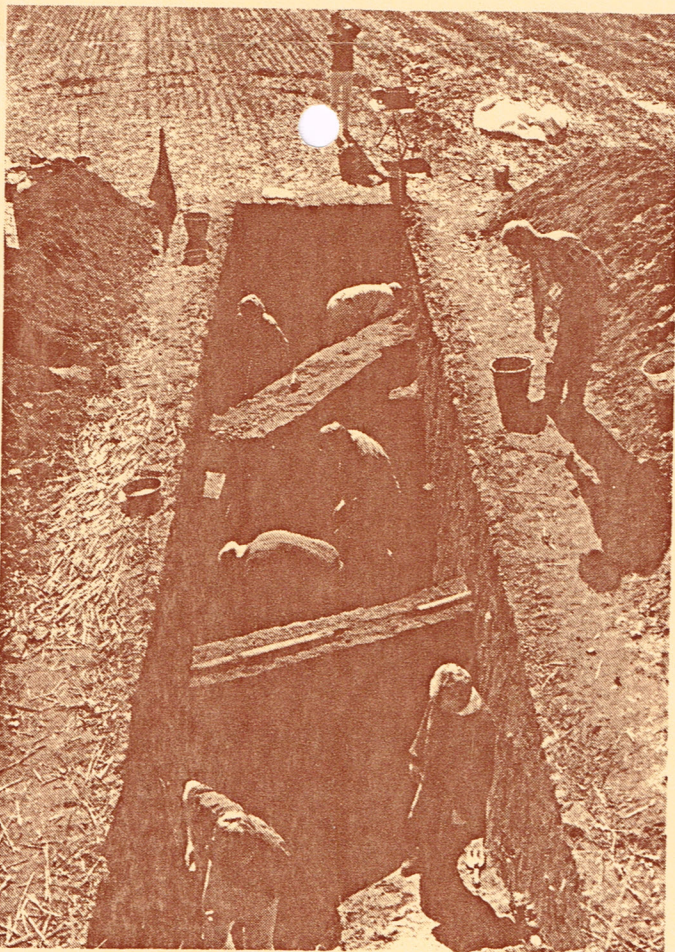
The report is currently in preparation by the Director, Eric Houlder, and the Assistant Director, David Hedges.

The photographs show the site being excavated, pictured from a photo-tower erected for us by the farmer out of bales! and some of the members drawing sections.

**E. Houlder, site Director**



Drawing the section of a late or Sub-Roman ditch.



The site from the Tower before cleaning.

The page from *British Archaeology*, reporting the latest season of the Thorpe Audlin dig.

If you would like a copy of this issue, follow the instruction in the Editorial, but ask for issue Number six.

**Sites.** Glyn Daniel and P. Dunn. *Excavations at Maiden Sutton, 1967*. Constable 1987. (£14.95).  
**Oxford the Buried City.** T. Dark. *Dark Age Sculpture*. J. Hassell. Oxford Archaeological Unit, 1987. (£2.70).  
**The British Celts and their Gods under Rome.** Graham Webster. Batsford, 1986. (£14.95).  
**Excavations at Maiden Sutton, 1967.** Glyn Daniel and P. Dunn. Constable 1987. (£14.95).  
**Dark Age Sculpture.** J. T. Dark. Oxford Archaeological Unit, 1987. (£2.70).  
**The British Celts and their Gods under Rome.** Graham Webster. Batsford, 1986. (£14.95).  
**Antiquities of Scotland.** Close-Brooks and R. B. K. Steven. National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. (£2.95).  
**Archaeology and Planning.** Council of Europe, 1987. (£4.30).