

PONTARCH

Pontefract & District Archaeological Society:



Editor: Eric Houlder, Past President, c/o The Museum, Salter Row,
Pontefract ☎ 702995. (Home)

EDITORIAL.

Welcome to the first edition of the new style *PontArch*. This is number twelve of the new series, and an appropriate issue in which to make the big changes which, hopefully, you see now!

A number of things have happened since our last issue, including the completion of the work in Swales' Yard, the initiation and completion of the work on the Cornmarket frontage buildings, the 'opening' of the Saxon chapel in the Booths, and the launching of the new book on Pontefract Castle by the Unit.

Members will be gratified to learn that the Society has been awarded £100 from the Lloyds' Bank fund for Archaeology, for its work on Swales' Yard. This will be put towards the not inconsiderable costs of publication.

Unfortunately, one of our members had to have

his membership withdrawn for archaeologically unprofessional conduct. In spite of the comments in a local newspaper, the only damage done was to the (already shaky) historical reputation of the said member.

We have at last managed to book Peter Addeyman, Director of the **York Archaeological Trust**, for our Autumn lecture season. The last time he came to us was in about 1972, when Doreen Roberts, the then chairman, recalled that they began their archaeological careers at about the same time. Peter is an international figure today, and few local societies have the stature or the confidence to invite him. Your Committee is investigating the possibility of booking a larger room for his talk, but you will be kept informed. Unless notified otherwise, the talk will take place in our usual room.

There is (as usual!) an interesting story behind the production of this edition of

PontArch. As you may, or may not know, your Editor does the occasional review, of books or computer-software, for various journals. One of the 'perks' of reviewers is to keep the item, though I doubt if this applies to the motoring reviewers! In the current case, he was asked to review *MICROdesign2*, the very best desktop publishing package for 8-bit computers. Needless to say the request was acceded to, and from now on *PontArch* will be clearer and more professional in appearance as a result!

This of course introduces the usual Editorial moan! Firstly though, thanks to those of you who have contributed material. However, we still need articles, letters, drawings, cartoons, and in fact anything which will amuse, educate, or enlighten members. Naturally we prefer the material in 256k format on 3" disc, for we can now typeset directly from ASCII files. *Wordstar*, *Protext*,

and *Locoscript*2. However, do not be put off by this; everything is welcome, though the Editor does reserve the right to edit material to make it fit our house-style.

Finally, is anyone interested in exploring local sites on their bikes? A number of members are cyclists, including the Editor, and if there is enough support we can arrange some rides. Write to the Editor if interested.

KEEPING WARM WITH THE LAYER SYSTEM.

by W.J.Houlder.

I'm writing this at the wrong time of year, April. With summer ahead we end up working in little more than T-shirt, shorts, and shoes. Archaeologists like many other outdoor people can end up on a windy site in the depths of a quite vile winter. The layer system is ideal for these conditions.

It works, as its name implies, by providing a series of layers of clothing. Air trapped between the layers and in the fabric gives insulation. Adjustment of personal temperature is simple: if you are cold add a layer; if too warm, remove one.

The system begins at

your skin with a base or *thermal* layer. The term *thermal* has been mis-used of late by sales people to whom honesty and truth are strangers. As I understand it, the garments in the base-layer consist of: socks, trousers (long-johns), vest (long and short-sleeved), gloves and balaclava. All are available in a variety of natural and synthetic fibres such as silk, wool, cotton, viscose, polyester, chlorofibre, etc. All are designed to hug the skin and pass perspiration from it to the next layer out. The efficacy of such garments is demonstrated by the fact that fell-runners are frequently to be seen wearing thermals under shorts and vest in sub-zero temperatures.

Next, is either the outer-layer, i.e. trousers, or an intermediate or *mid-layer* of clothing, e.g. a shirt. In colder climates a mid-layer resembling a track-suit is a frequent item of clothing. This functions in much the same way as the base-layer, trapping a layer of dry air whilst passing sweat and other damp to the adjacent outer layer.

A sweater, or its more modern substitute in the form of a fibre-pile or fleece jacket usually forms the outer layer. In wet and/or windy conditions another non-

insulating *shell* layer may be required to prevent water, an excellent conductor of heat, or wind taking or *wicking* your warmth away. Today, most shell garments are made of nylon or other synthetics, but tightly woven cotton fabrics (*Ventile* being the best) can be as effective.

What applies to the body also applies to the head, hands, and feet. Though the items concerned may be more difficult to obtain, proper hat, gloves, and socks/shoes/boots are vital. All potential gaps must be covered by overlapping layers of clothing, but not too tight. Tightness restricts the available volume of insulating air. At ankles and waist there is usually sufficient clothing to allow an adequate overlap. Gaps usually occur at wrists and neck. Fortunately two items termed *wristovers* and *headovers*, comprising simple tubes of fabric in appropriate diameters fill this gap.

I would advise against the wearing of training shoes, particularly the suede/fabric type, in winter. The majority are intended for use in strenuous activity and are designed to ventilate heat and sweat rapidly. The best footwear for

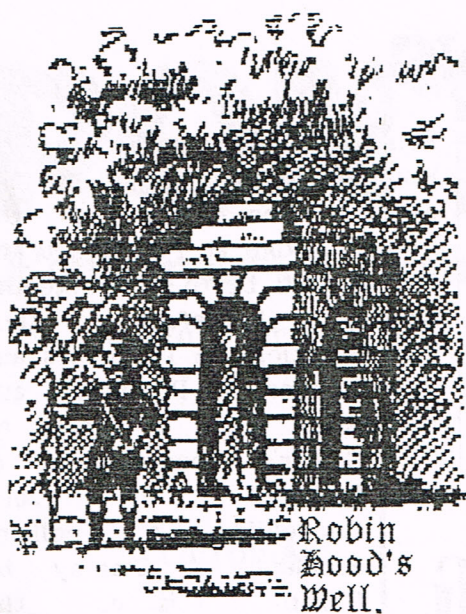
Local Outlaw Identified by Professor Holt.

A Book Review by the Editor.

Robin Hood. J.C.Holt.

Thames & Hudson.

ISBN 0 500 25109 6



KEEPING WARM, *Cont. from Page 2.*

winter is boots, preferably leather. On the head a hat or cap is to be preferred, the *Famous Army Stores* on Beastfair supplying a very useful nylon quilted one with fur-fabric folding ear-flaps. At the same store are *anglers' mitts*, a combination of fingerless mittens and conventional ones in acrylic fibre. Worn over thermal gloves they can provide sufficient dexterity for rowelling or photography, whilst having a built-in finger-warmer available. Shell garments in the form of nylon overmitts are available for the hands.

Get your clothing right, and there are few conditions in which work outdoors is impossible. The layer system can be applied everywhere, in all activities, and to everyone.

oOo

The eagerly-awaited second edition of Professor Holt's definitive book on our local outlaw at last appeared earlier this year. In layout and content it reflects the first edition almost exactly, having chapters on:

The Legend; Who was Robin Hood?; The original Robin Hood; The Physical Setting; The Audience, and The Later Tradition. There is a Prologue, a Postscript, Notes, and Notes on the sources and Reading. This an academic book, not recommended to those who find *The Times* heavy going.

Sadly for Pontefract, Professor Holt has laid to rest once and for all the theory that the original Robin Hood was a tenant of the Manor of Wakefield, outlawed at Pontefract in 1322 after the Earl of Lancaster's rebellion. This theory has always rested on shaky ground, depending on a series of circumstances and missing records. He cast doubt on it in the first edition, and in the second produces evidence to suggest that the original outlaw lived much earlier. His Robin Hood was a fugitive from the York Assizes in 1225. Carefully arranging the few early references into chronological order:

we seem to have the shadowy outline of a biography: Robin active in the 1190s, an outlaw in 1225, dead in 1247, an interval exactly matching his twenty two years in the greenwood in the Geste; then a figure of legend by 1262.

However, this area does not have to give up Robin Hood. In both editions, Holt is quite adamant that the earliest adventures of the outlaw take place in *Barnsdale*. This is the area today known more commonly as **Brocodale**. Until the 1960s the Great North Road plunged into the valley at Wentbridge and laboriously climbed out again. Indeed, portions of the original road survive as the entrance to some new houses just above the Wentbridge House Hotel. The area of the bridge formed a bottleneck through which travellers had to pass, an ideal ambush point. Things have changed little and with an edition of *The Little Geste of Robyn Hood*, one can trace the topography of the outlaws. The Nottingham connection is later, and quite spurious!

We thoroughly recommend this book.

oOo

OLD WEST RIDING.

Old West Riding is a magazine of articles on local history which appears once a year. It was established nearly ten years ago by Dr. George Redmonds, Cyril Pearce, Peter Watkins and Jennifer Stead, as a publishing outlet for amateur and professional alike, and it is pleasing that many of our articles have been written by members of WEA classes.

Our aim was, and is, to fill the gap between **The Dalesman**, and the **Yorkshire Archaeological Journal**, which hopefully, we do, our articles both ranging between and embracing the two extremes: where else under one magazine title would you find the following? e.g.

'mi father could play lots of instruments... they'd put his pints on t'pinner until when he played off th'end o' t'pinner they went wom: ee fell off o' t'buffet. (from an article on *laiking neets*); an account by the dialect expert Stanley Ellis of how dialect is very much alive and changing all the time; the story of 'Gas and Water Socialism' - how the growth of Municipal authorities from the 1820s by challenging the free enterprise ethos, laid the foundations of today's mixed economy; how urine was used in a multitude of astonishing ways, industrial, domestic, and personal; an in-

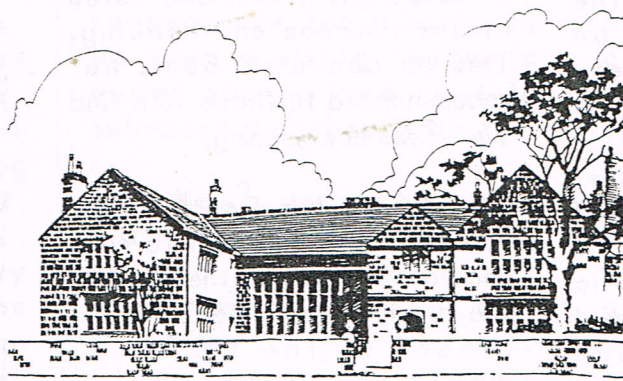
depth analysis of Jacobism and unrest between 1799-1803; an account of Yorkshire's 'Royd' surnames. Other articles cover mining, the woollen industry, railways, canals, emigration, enclosures, poverty, Friendly Societies, architectural, gardening, and family history.

Pontefract Liquorice, Eric Houlder's two articles on the exact whereabouts of the Broken Bridge at Pontefract and on Life and Death in Nineteenth Century Pontefract, Anne Senor's article on Pit-ponies and their keepers in Pontefract and Sharlestone pits, a note on Collier's Compensation at Rothwell, by John Goodchild, a colliery accident at Stanley by Gillian Briscoe, the Featherstone Massacre Peter Smith, and many others.

If you have suitable material which would illustrate some aspect of life in our area, please do send it for consideration. We are happy to print photographs, drawings, maps and extracts from letters and diaries, besides articles. **Old West Riding** is not commercial - we try to sell enough copies to cover expenses, and we depend on subscriptions. A subscription costs £2.50 from **Old West Riding Books**, 5, Knotty Lane, Lepton, HUDDERSFIELD HD8 0ND. Telephone either 0484 603646, or 0532 755858. Back-numbers please enclose £1.50 inclusive of p.& p.

We would welcome your subscriptions, queries, suggestions, or contributions.

LOCAL HISTORY PUBLICATIONS **OLD WEST RIDING**



OAKWELL HALL

A COLLECTION OF ORIGINAL ARTICLES

edited by Cyril Pearce

Published by
OLD WEST RIDING BOOKS, HUDDERSFIELD HD8 0ND

Medical, political, and military history, sports and pastimes, crimes and scandals, education, agricultural and food history, Methodism and oral history, place-names, surnames, etc.

Of particular interest to readers of **PontArch**, may be Gillian Homan's article on