

A Merry Christmas to
all our readers!

PONTARCH



Pontefract & District Archaeological Society

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

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The Wood Hall Moated Farm Project; Excavations 1990.

This is the short annual report issued by the Wood Hall Moated Farm Project. It is reproduced with the permission of the Excavation Director, David Heslop, and the Project Director, Vivienne M. Metcalf.

Work in 1990 has continued to explore the 3-acre moated platform to assist in planning the future excavation programme, anticipated to continue for a further seven years.

Three areas to the north of the modern farm were trenched, and found to contain little archaeological evidence, confirming suspicions that the main area of medieval occupation was a broad strip across the centre of the site.

The Georgian farmhouse has been exposed and recorded, including wells to the front and rear of the kitchen. The house had thick limestone walls which stood without foundation on the earthen floors. Four main rooms were reached from a rear passage running along the length of the building. A later addition at the east end contained a sunken floored 'cool room.'

A further trench examined the garden to the front of the house, where the moat had been filled in. Now overgrown, the garden had a large lawn edged with flower-beds, and was used for garden-parties, jubilee-fetes and midsummer glees

between the wars, when Mr. Tyler, Lord Rosse's land agent, held the farm.

Beneath the garden soil were several drains and the remains of earlier buildings on the site. The preceding farmhouse had been demolished and the material used for the partial infilling and levelling of the moat, and to create a rubble raft for the later building. The limestone rubble also contained a large quantity of mid-eighteenth century pottery and glassware, much of very good quality, and waterlogged leather, including two shoes.

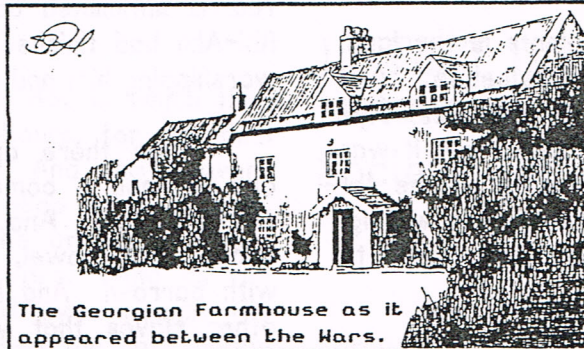
To the east of this, nearer the moat causeway, stands the wall of an earlier, possibly medieval structure which will be excavated in a future season. It may relate to the manorial hall or the causeway gatehouse, if such existed.

A section excavated across the moat in the garden area yielded plant and animal remains, kept in a state of preservation in waterlogged deposits dating from the medieval period and later.

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The project address is:

Field Study Centre, Gale Common Cottage, Gale Common Ash Disposal Site, Cobcroft Lane, Cridling Stubbs, North Yorkshire, WF11 0BB



The Georgian Farmhouse as it appeared between the Wars.

The Chronicles of Whum-Ursli, being an extract from the BOOK OF HES-LOP, Chapt.1, Verses 1 to 20.

Readers may have heard about the Dead Sea Scrolls, early Biblical texts found in caves near the Dead Sea. Now, a major new discovery is published here for the first time. There is some controversy about the provenance of the find, but it seems that the scrolls were discovered torn into small squares and hanging from a nail in a room in *The Tap and Spile*. Interpretations vary on the nature of the script, but the room seemed to be named G#N#S, as far as can be determined. After much careful reconstruction, we present the scrolls here, hoping that readers will forgive the hasty transcription.

In those days there were giants in the land, and the greatest of these was C.Eejeebee. And C.Eejeebee sought a place for his mistress, Fly-ash, to lie in, and he saw Gale Common, and it was fair. But Fly-ash grew great, waxing on the fat of the land, and she spake unto C.Eejeebee saying, "Lord, I grow great, and need more land wherin to spread."

So C.Eejeebee strode about and sought a new dwelling for his demanding mistress. And his eye fell on Wood Hall, which being close unto Gale Common was pleasing to his eye, and he sought to buy it for Fly-ash. But the overlord of the whole domain, Nycc decreed that Wood Hall must be dug before Fly-ash overlay the land, so that it came to pass in these days that C.Eejeebee promised many shekels to Nycc, for the digging thereof.

And Nycc sought about for slaves, and there came unto him one *Hes-Lop*, a mighty slave-driver who gathered about him a band of slaves and fair handmaidens. And Hes-Lop took his tablets and inscribed thereon *The Wood Hall Vocabulary*, in which dwelt not words like 'early finish' 'Bank Holiday,' and 'knock off now.' And when the slaves and handmaidens heard this there

was much weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

And in the third year of the domination of Hes-Lop, there was a drought in the land; the sun waxed exceeding hot, the land sweltered, and the slaves faltered, crying, "Water, water, for the love of Allah." Then there came unto them many of the handmaidens successively, who quoth, "Wilt thou have tea or coffee?" But though the sacred brew refreshed the slaves, it could not reach the heart of the site, and verily the trowels struck sparks from the earth. Then Hes-Lop made offerings to the god Tal-Lor-Wud-Rho, who hearing the lamentations sent a great chariot bearing water.

And there came a day when the slaves and handmaidens went in fear and trembling, for there strode amongst them one *Lorr-ens*, bearing the fearful unfinished context sheets. And only Ayd-Rhi-Ahn had finished his sheet, and all fell down, worshipping him and giving praise.

Then there appeared amongst the slaves one Mik-ael, a comely youth somewhat past his sell-by date. And Mik-ael strove mightily with spade and trowel, and somewhat less mightily with barrow. And it came to the notice of the other slaves that Mik-ael was receiving tablets from The Wen-Dhi, a prophet of the god Sher-Lo, and he dwelt in the street called Phee-Seas ever after.

And it came to pass, that there were great mutterings and lamentations amongst the handmaidens; "Woe is us," they quoth, "For in the precinct of the God no handmaiden is entrusted with the putting up and the taking down of the great tower."

And there came a decree, saying that graven images should be made of all the site; and the images should be from the Tower. Then the slaves laboured mightily night and day, the handmaidens bewailing their lack of involvement, and the tower grew higher until Lo, it almost brushed the sky. And Hes-Lop decreed that it

was high enough, and took his whip to drive the graven-image-maker (an aged veteran from the days of Wea-Lhur) to the very summit thereof. And Woe, no welcome shadow came across the face of the sun in spite of the lamentations and the sacrifices of the slaves and handmaidens. And the graven-image-maker called upon his gods Co-dahc, Phu-Jhy, and Il-Phed, made sacrifices, waved his charm, (called Me-Tur) and it came to pass that the images were made.

And with the passing days many were the lamentations, except on those called Thers-daiz, for on these days did appear a mighty goddess in a chariot called Vol-voh, bearing gifts to all slaves and handmaidens. These gifts being called echs, and redeemable at the temple of Ba-nhk.

And in the latter days there appeared on the site a wizened warrior, one Bry-Ahn, seeking succour and a bed in the cottage. And Hes-Lop took pity on him, and showed him the ways of archaeology, so that he could walk in the paths of righteousness, and avoid dwelling in the street called Phee-Seas.

Then there drew nigh the day in which they would be delivered of their labours, for the final images were to be graven. And the heavens opened, and the springs of the deep were unbound, and it rained for ages, tho the oracle of Phor-Kast had prophesied only showers. And as the appointed hour approached, all eyes sought the ariot of the graver, for when the last image was graven, it had been prophesied would come the time of sacred meditation called Paa-ti.

And so it happened, and they were freed of their torment, until the call should come again.

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When did the Vikings Land?

by Janet McNaught.

How many of us tried to look knowledgeable when Peter Addyman posed the question?

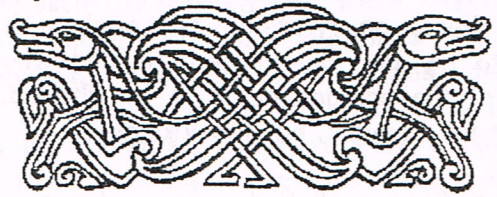
I knew that they came after the Romans, was it also after the Saxons? Not only later than the Saxons and their probable defeat by Arthur,

but later than the Sutton Hoo Ship Burials.

My knowledge of historical sequences is often limited by having been taught predominantly Scottish History, with little acknowledgement of English History, excepting where unions of, or claims to the monarchy appeared in later history.

The Romans didn't like us a lot as we didn't fight in a military manner, so weren't inclined to stay long. The Vikings preferred our northernmost isles (which now I come to think of it were not part of our curriculum either) and places like Whithorn; south west Scotland, which may well have been a stopping off point on their route to Ireland.

How much more difficult it must be to place events in chronological order now that mainly modern and political history is taught in schools and colleges.



LATEST DISCOVERIES IN YORK: lecture by Peter Addyman to the Society, 19th October 1990.

Report by Janet McNaught.

The variety, quality, and quantity of archaeology in York, reaching from South of the Ouse to East of the Fosse, seems limitless. Does one have to ask permission to dig the garden?

In the Museum Gardens, where stand the Multangular Tower and Yorkshire Museum, even a tree-planting ceremony calls for permission of the Ancient Monuments Dept. and the expertise of an archaeologist, so great is the wealth of hidden history on this site.

On to Coffee House Yard, where a medieval hall belonging to the Augustinian Priory of Nostell, is almost completely restored. In use from the 14th to the 20th centuries, this once three-storied building was, over the centuries reduced to two, many of the missing timbers being re-discovered as strengthening beams under the floors, and so were able to be replaced in their correct

positions. The fourth side of the yard is filled by a more modern building which is about to be turned into a seventeenth century coffee-house in which to rest awhile and decide, 'Where next?'

Into Parliament Street, and *Radio Rentals*, formerly *Granada Television*, where until the underpinning was completed, customers had to walk on a camber to pay their dues. The building was situated astride the Roman fortress wall and was sinking either side where the foundations were set into accumulated Viking rubbish, now a lovely fine garden compost. This did nothing for the foundations, but beautifully preserved the facing-stones of the wall which stands approximately two metres high.

Across the river Ouse we entered the Colonia/Civil settlement, which was only allowed to exist under the authority and by permission of the military. Here, on riverside approaches, it was possible to try and determine how and when the positions of the bridges came to be altered. No, it was not the Romans, but the Vikings.

Many fine small-finds were shown. Styli with various depictions of carved hands; these were used to write on waxed tablets. A small boxwood-edged book consisting of miniature wax tablets containing the poetry of an unrecorded eleventh century bard, which is at the moment in the hands of the conservationists who are trying to separate the individual tablets without significant damage.

Wooden coffins in their entirety in the waterlogged conditions within the flood-levels of the river. Also sandals, sections of tents, a water main (!) and fine oil-lamps of the Roman period.

Many sites have only been dug over a short period, where due to pressure from the builders waiting to take over the site and doubtless, made worse due to ever-rising costs and building deadlines, this search for our past is but a minor consideration, even irritation in their schedule. Nor is this a modern feeling, as testified when publicity surrounded the discovery of a 'temple', and a man came forward to tell of the silence requested and kept, when he bored about thirty holes through a mosaic floor where the present Co-op, now thirty years old, is standing. (Ed. note. Some of us dug in York the year before

this incident!) A fine site to contemplate when in years to come it becomes derelict.

Leaving the Minster by way of Petergate, Little Petergate, Straight across the square into Colliergate, then turn left into St. Saviourgate, and there it is: the A R C, the new home of Andrew 'Bones' Jones.

The *Archaeological Resource Centre* is well worth a visit for us grown-ups, if only they would not let all those inquisitive children in and actually let them touch things! Seriously, from the commencement where an audio-visual presentation gives the background of A.R.C.'s work in conjunction with the Trust, to leaving by way of the glass-fronted workplaces, it is well worth a visit. Finds can be sorted, medieval lock-picking tried, weaving and shoe-making accomplished. Modern computer-graphics, mapping and cataloguing are available to try. It all helps give an insight into the magnitude of the task of correlating and recording our past.

P.S. I didn't know that archaeologists wore red sweat-shirts, pressed grey trousers and shiny shoes! I've spent years acquiring holey jumpers, jeans minus knees and parts best not mentioned, and not forgetting boots that crush finds to a depth of three feet due to accumulated mud of sites past.

Postscript!

We hope that members had no difficulty in adjusting to the change of venue for the Pete Addyman lecture; we put posters all over the town (and all around) and even had a notice in the *Pontefract & Castleford Express*. The success of the evening was largely due to the efforts of many people, and organisations. We must particularly thank Mr.M.Haigh, President of the Pontefract Camera Club, for the loan of the large portable screen which undoubtedly made the illustrations a success.

After his lecture, Mr.Addyman was taken to *The Wentbridge House Hotel* for a meal, during which he complimented the Society on its arrangements.

There is no *Editorial* in this issue due entirely to lack of space. Those of you who prefer *PontArch* like this please send in lots of copy so that we can keep it this way!

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