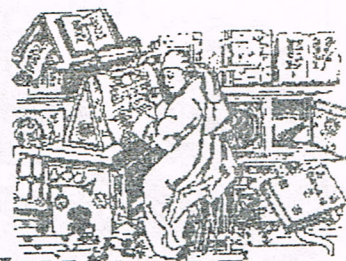


# PONTARCH



Pontefract & District Archaeological Society.

*Editor: Eric Houlder, Past-President.*

## MURAL TOURIFICATIONS. (i.e. The Hadrian's Wall Trip!)

The Hadrian's Wall trip on June 15th was a great success according to all who commented afterwards. One of the problems inherent in visiting a monument 73½ miles long is in choosing which part to see, in view of the fact that many of the party had visited the area on previous occasions.

Our plan was to visit Brunton turret, Chesters, Carrawburgh, Housesteads, Carvoran, and Birdoswald.

Early the rain which threatened throughout the day held off until we reached Birdoswald.

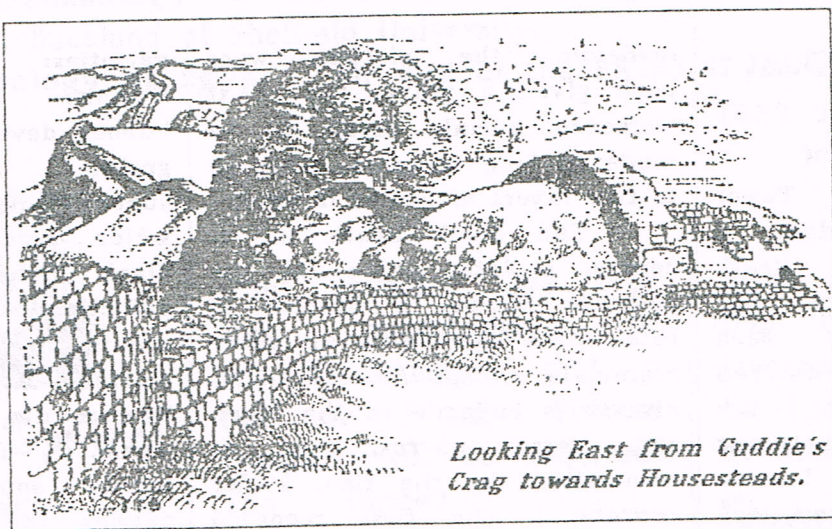
On arrival at Brunton we carefully negotiated the environmental hazards in the field to see the best-preserved turret on the Wall. From here we moved on to Chollerford, crossing the North Tyne and attempting to enter Chesters, where we were turned away because of a funtion there that day. On, up

Walwick Hill, passing the newly-excavated Blackcarts stretch on the right, around limestone corner viewing the vallum to the left, and on to Carrawburgh.

The Mithraeum here is one of the jewels of the Wall, whilst the nearby Coventina's Well always merits a visit and a small votive offering.

us noted a strange phenomenon; the hill has become steeper since we first visited it in the sixties! We viewed the main buildings, especially the beautifully-preserved latrine (see diagram), and some fitter members set off to walk along the Wall westward to see the milecastle and Cuddy's Crag.

The weather broke whilst we were in the Roman Army Museum at Carvoran, but not before David's party had seen Walltown Crags and returned under cover. We had arranged to meet Tony Wilmott, excavator of Tanner's Row and The Booths, at Birdoswald, but were nearly prevented from doing so by a low bridge.

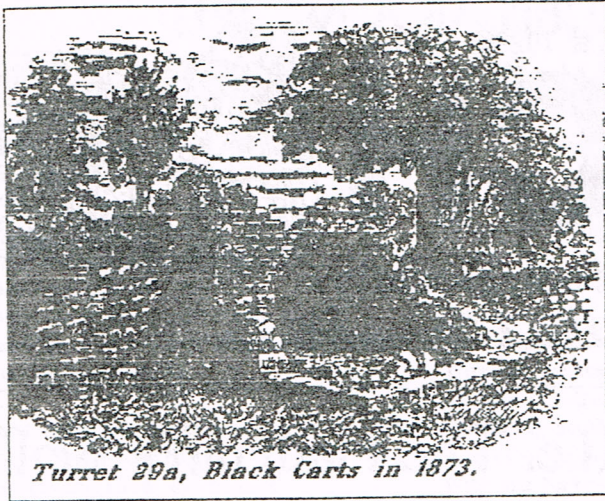


*Looking East from Cuddie's Crag towards Housesteads.*

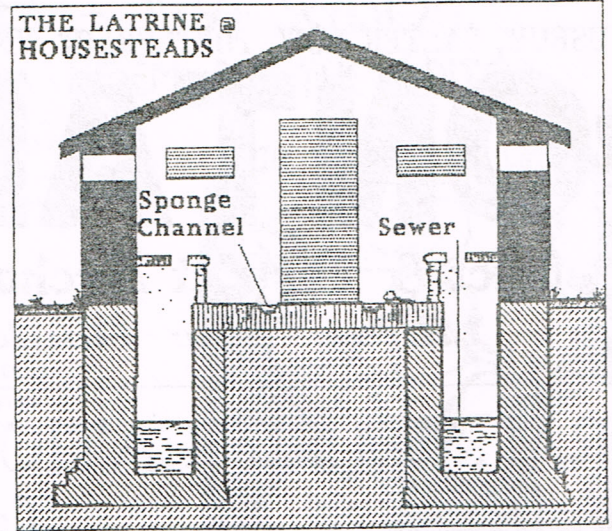
Wandering back across the fort, we were intriuged to see carved stonework, and two of our party picked up RB shards from the surface.

At Housesteads some of

Tony had a lot to say, and the new visitor-centre in one of the farm buildings kept us out of the rain for some time. When it eased we ventured forth to see the amazing west gate, and hear of



Turret 29a, Black Carts in 1873.



his exciting discoveries, in which the family McNaught participated. Tony's work will form a complete new chapter in the story of the Wall, and also in the history of the Dark Ages. Refined excavation techniques have proved continued use of two granaries well into the latter period, so

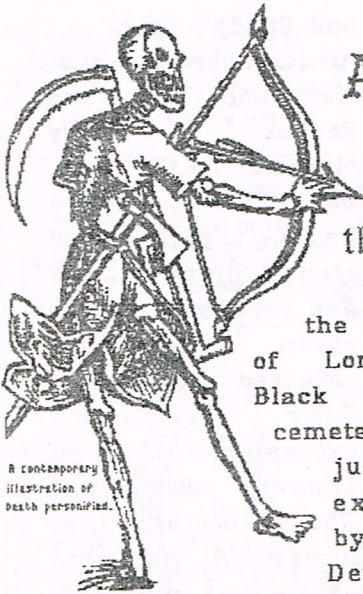
that Birdoswald is set to become the Wroxeter of the North. Tony's account was so interesting that most of us got a soaking willingly to hear him carry on.

As an encore he led us along the Wall eastward, pointing out building-inscriptions, as far as Harrow's

Scar Milecastle from where saw the Willowford Bridge abutment far below.

The tour had to end here, as the driver was running out of hours, so we bade our fairwells and left for the long haul home.

## A Black Death Cemetery in London; special report.



A contemporary illustration of death personified.

Just to the east of

the Tower of London, a Black Death cemetery has just been excavated by the Department of Greater London Archaeology. The cemetery was beneath a monastic house founded by Edward III in 1349.

The remains of 672 individuals were recovered from the area investigated, but the graves extended well outside this. Apparently, in the early stages of the

epidemic, the victims were each given a grave, but as it worsened burials began to be made in long trenches, with up to five layers of bodies in each.

The Black Death is, of course, a later name for the *Bubonic Plague*, a disease of rats which spreads to all other mammals except horses. The disease is endemic in the black rat, *rattus rattus*, and is transmitted by the flea, *pulex irritans*. The first recorded epidemic was probably Justinian's Plague of the Fifth century. The 1348-9 epidemic was perhaps the worst on record, whilst the 1665 one was the last to affect Britain with any magnitude.

The disease has three

varieties:

**Bubonic Plague**, in which buboes develop in armpits and groin, accompanied subcutaneous haemorrhaging which produces the purplish-black blotches that give the affliction its name. Death occurs in about five days; mortality about 55%.

**Pneumonic Plague** is rather worse. The victims cough bloody sputum which itself carries the bacillus. Death occurs in three days; mortality 95-100%

**Septicaemic Plague** is the worst, but luckily is very rare. A rash forms within hours of the infection and death follows within a day; mortality is 100%

## Coming Soon: Programme details and a request.

For many years the Society has attempted to encourage interest in its activities by allowing interested members of the public to attend its meetings free. Nearly always this has resulted in the person eventually joining us. Sometimes it has enabled students to hear eminent speakers whom they would

normally be unable to approach.

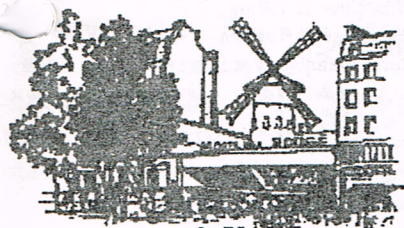
We have been able to do this largely because our meeting room has been heavily subsidised by the local authority. Now, however, the authority is under pressure, and though it still subsidises us (and other cultural organisations) it has been

forced to increase the charge for the room.

This in turn has forced your Committee to charge non-members a fee of £1 to attend each meeting. Committee regrets that this is necessary, but points out that this is a small price to pay in order to hear the eminent persons on our programme.

### THE WINTER PROGRAMME.

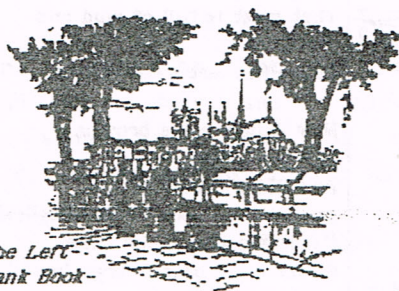
- October 25th. Roman York; New discoveries. Patrick Ottway of the YAT.  
November 22nd. Treasures in Glass. Peter Gibson of the YGT.  
December 20th. Medieval Monasteries in Yorkshire. David Heslop, Newcastle.  
January 17th. Local Stage Coach Memories. Eric Houlder of the PADAS.  
February 21st. Medieval Quarrying in the Pontefract Area. Steve Moorhouse.  
March 20th. Archaeology & Environment Changes on the North Atlantic Islands. Dr Paul Buckland of Sheffield University.  
April 24th. Archaeology of Egypt. Mr Bird of the PADAS. *The AGM will follow this Talk.*



### Paris in the Spring!

Our Secretary is currently arranging a five day (four night) trip to Paris, to take place in early April next year, 1992. Anyone interested should contact her at the Museum (address on the

front cover). We take this opportunity to remind members that a full or British Visitors Passport will be required. The former



*The Left Bank Book-sellers, with Notre Dame Across the Seine.*

takes several weeks from the Passport office in Liverpool. The latter can be had over the counter at main Post Offices.

### Future Programme

The Secretary will be pleased to consider ideas for meetings, speakers, and excursions. She would also like some feed-back on the current past programmes.

# THE WOOD HALL BLUES - 1991 SEASON.

## CARTOONS BY RON WILSON. POEM BY THE EDITOR.

National Power and North Yorkshire  
By the Nine Gods they swore,  
That Wood Hall moated manor  
should stay undug no more.  
By the Nine Gods they swore it  
And named a starting day  
And bade their messengers ride forth  
East and West and South and North  
To summon their array.

East and West and South and North  
The messengers ride fast,  
And tower and town and hamlet  
Have heard the trumpet blast.  
Shame on the excavator  
Who lingers in the pub,  
When Brian and his minions  
Are cooking cottage grub.

From University Departments  
From California's sunny clime,  
Where apples pears and peaches  
Are growing all the time.  
From Hellas' fabled olive groves  
Hard by the wine-dark sea.  
And from the land of pizza-pie  
That's known as Italy.

To camp around the cottage  
and sample Wood Hall fare.  
To sup too much in *Tap & Spile*,  
And purchase Tesco's ware.

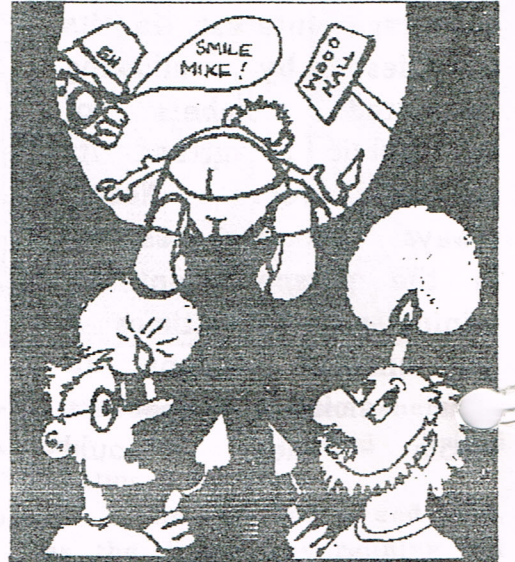
To dig through stone and concrete  
in spite of weary groans  
To scrape dry sand in twenty-one  
In search of piglet bones.

To sweat o'er heavy barrows  
And swing the mighty pick.  
Pursuing moated farmstead  
Through contests thin and thick.  
To plan the Georgian farmyard  
Recording each inflection,  
And even helping Eric  
With his forty-foot tower.

The harvest of small finds  
This year young men shall seek.  
This year young maids in briefest shorts  
Shall brave the horse-flies sleek.  
And in the moat of Wood Hall  
Knee-deep in peaty crap  
Shall recover shoes and wagon-parts  
And Michael Wood's boxer-shorts.

Of all the mighty diggers  
That Viv & Simon sought,  
Few could match the T-shirts  
of the brethren called McNaught.  
But halfway into August  
Robert disappeared up north,  
In search of Roman Legions,  
Beyond the Solway Firth.

IN THE WELL AT WOODHALL.



"IT MUST BE GETTING LATE RON".....  
"YES DAVE. THE MOONS COME OUT."

We never meant you harm,  
Not knowing that our own Wood Hall  
Was the model for *Animal Farm*.

Now Michael's hangover is ended  
and the Elsan's full of *Elsanol*.  
And Simon's taking estimates  
For the removal of his cap.  
Alistair his tank is filling,  
And Vicky's waved Tar-ra.  
The season's nearly over  
We've all to travel far.

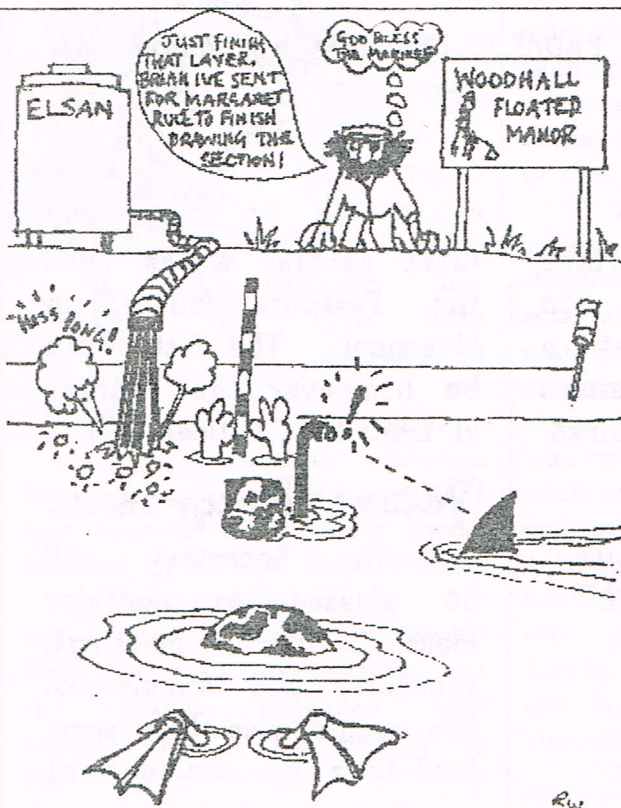
Goodbye courteous Brian,  
Farewell Simon dear,  
If we can't find a better dig,  
We'll all be back next year!  
To boast of past successes,  
And to have a quiet gloat  
Remembering the day that Kerry ate  
The bones down in the moat.

With apologies to Lord Macaulay, Mollie  
Cotton, and the Maiden Castle team led by  
(Sir) Mortimer Wheeler.

The faithful hound called Kerry  
Paces around the site,  
Leaving organic samples  
Next seasons coprolites.  
But Pat's got the kettles boiling,  
More notorious Wood Hall tea.  
There's banishment to all who  
who say  
It's just like Kerry's meat.

Vivienne and Simon  
Held a council by the gate.  
Short time there was ye well  
may guess  
For musing or debate.  
Out spake Viv directly:  
"Kerry you dozy dog,  
Be quick get out of that.  
That moat is full of mud and  
stuff,  
As well as last years crap!"

Now John's noble brow is  
farrowed, (sic)  
And Chloe rarely smiles.  
The context book for twenty-one  
Reads like the *Piglet Files*.  
Please come back George Orwell,



RW