

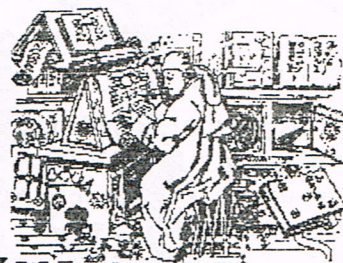
Number 20 April 1992

THE MUSEUM, SALTER ROW, PONTEFRACT WF8 1BA. ☎ 702995 (home)

PONTARCH

Pontefract & District Archaeological Society.

Editor: Eric Houlder, Past-President.



WORK IN CASTLE CHAIN: A PROGRESS REPORT.

by Simon Tomson.

Since work on this Society project started in January, a total of 64 person/hours have been spent on the site over nine Sundays.

Aims: The project set out to 'excavate' and record part of the present cellars on number six, Castle Chain (PontArch 19, January 1992), using a variety of techniques.

Progress: All the ancient walls of the western cellar have been stripped of modern rendering to reveal either the Medieval mortar rendering or bare stonework with characteristic 'wholemeal chocolate-biscuit' mortar. A number of architectural details have been revealed and recorded. These include four blocked medieval windows (three blocked post-1650, and one blocked originally, 13th C.) An intact medieval stone door-frame, plus re-building lines of both medieval and 17th C.date.

All wall elevations have been drawn to a scale of 1:10 in order to reveal accurately the shape and finish of each block, whilst the nature of the medieval mortar is being indicated too. A detailed photographic record is being made as the work progresses whilst 'set-piece' photography is under way of wall faces, details, windows, and door. Video recording of the entire

cellar is soon to take place too.

Currently the 13th/14th century masonry recording is nearly completed and some ground archaeology remains to be done. Trial work has so far located five archaeological layers above the rock-cut floor of the building.

The building's function: It is believed that the sub-structure of the present building formed the southern half of the outer 'main guard' tower, to the west of the castle. This tower would have controlled access across the bridge over the dry moat and then into the castle 'barbican,' (really an outer bailey) via a second tower; both are shown in some detail on the Keirinx (attributed) painting of the castle, now in the Museum, which shows it in remarkable detail during the period 1624-30.

After the Civil War this 'Main Guard' tower was partially demolished in common with the rest of the castle, but re-built on the surviving lower portion in the latter part of the 17th C. The materials used came from the castle. A re-modelling in the 19th C. resulted in the building's present appearance, whilst some internal modifications have taken place since then.

All work has taken place by kind permission of the owners, Mr J and Miss E Love, to whom the team extend their thanks.

Professor W.G.Hoskins.

Emeritus Professor W.G.(Bill) Hoskins died on January 11th. Professor Hoskins dragged English local history from the worst kind of parochial antiquarianism into a serious study worthy of the establishment of a Department at Leicester University. His three main books, *Local History in England*, 1955; *The Making of the English Landscape*, 1959, and *Fieldwork in Local History*, 1967, have become seminal studies. The writer will always remember Professor Hoskins' kindly remarks on the publication of his own handbook of photography for the historian, perhaps not realising that much of his enthusiasm for landscape history and topography had been inspired by the reading of the three books listed above. E.H.

A Short History of the Pontefract & District Archaeological Society: Part One, Origins - the 1950s.

Our Society had its origins in the middle 1950s. When the Society approached its Thirtieth Birthday, the Editor set down his recollections so that the story would not be forgotten. We present that account here, in three parts in successive *PontArchs*. We welcome additions, anecdotes and illustrations to add to this series.

The Society was founded in 1957. For those members (perhaps now in the majority) who do not remember that era, a few words of explanation are necessary. The mid to late 1950s had seen a massive increase in interest in archaeology. This was almost entirely due to the efforts of three people, Paul Johnstone, Sir Mortimer Wheeler, and Professor Glyn Daniel. Johnstone was a producer with BBC Television, and had been given the task of bringing to the small screen a newly conceived panel game called *ANIMAL, VEGETABLE, MINERAL?* in which museums in different parts of Britain challenged the panel to identify objects. Sir Mortimer Wheeler and Glyn Daniel were two of the regular team members. To the surprise of both, the game was an instant success and they became household names. Johnstone followed this up with a series called *BURIED TREASURE* which used the new medium to examine various aspects of archaeology. (Several members were privileged to meet Paul Johnstone and Glyn Daniel on various digs in the sixties, and one actually served on a committee with Sir Mortimer Wheeler during the seventies)

Thus by 1957 there was an increasing interest in the subject, which was reflected in the blossoming of night school classes. Pontefract was just one amongst many small towns in which enthusiasts were getting together to do something themselves instead of just viewing the subject on TV.

The prime movers in our town were Messrs.A.S.(Aif) Ward,

and K.(Ken) Gardiner. Mr. Ward was a member of the Worker's Educational Association, the WEA, and he arranged for the Association, in conjunction with the Department of Extramural Studies of Leeds University, to run a series of classes in basic archaeology. The WEA sent as Tutor, C.V.(Vince) Bellamy.

Vince Bellamy was a happy choice, as beneath a rather stern exterior he was a kindly and patient instructor. Some time after the classes began he confided to several of the students that he too was learning archaeology, and was keeping just in front of them! Nevertheless, he and the colleagues whom he brought from Leeds insisted that everything should be done correctly.

It soon became clear that theoretical instruction was not enough, and Mr. Bellamy began to look around for a site on which to run a trial excavation; a short-term training dig which was destined, eventually, to become the second-longest continuous excavation in the British Isles, outlasted only by Wharram Percy! Thus it was that a party of very amateur archaeologists began to look around the Grange Field, and came to the attention of a group of schoolboys who were flying model aircraft. One of those boys was, in fact, the present writer.

When digging began on the Grange, many local people asked if they could join in. Amongst them were Kevin Stubbs, Terence Carney, Donald C. Lodge, David Ashton, David Hookham, Tom Peacock, David Brookes, Chris. Wells, Eric

Houlder, and Madge Horner. Seeing the activity on the field, the then Vicar of All Saints, the Rev. Haigh, came across and asked some of the 'archaeologists' if they would have a look at the foundations of the church. It was during this work that four of the original class members, Alf Ward, Ken Gardiner, Bill Bo, and Mollie Millward, sitting together on a tomb-chest, determined to form an archaeological society in the town.

They called a public meeting in the Parish Hall of All Saints Church. The response was good so the Society was formed, with Ken Gardiner as its first Secretary. Ken proved to be a good choice, having lots of energy which was needed during these early days. He remained the Secretary until the present writer took over in 1964. Ken left his mark upon the Society in many ways, not the least in being the originator of the society's reputation for activity. The first Treasurer was Frances Ridsdale, and after she married and moved away the office was taken by Dorothy Arundel. Both these efficient ladies ensured that the society's finances were kept on a secure footing in the early, struggling, days.

Until this time, all archaeology in Pontefract had been under the wing of Vince Bellamy and the WEA. Now things were to change. Construction of a new bus station in THE TRINITIES, between Horsefair and Northgate, unearthed human remains, and the new society was called in. A hurried rescue dig was mounted, and the

continued on page three.....



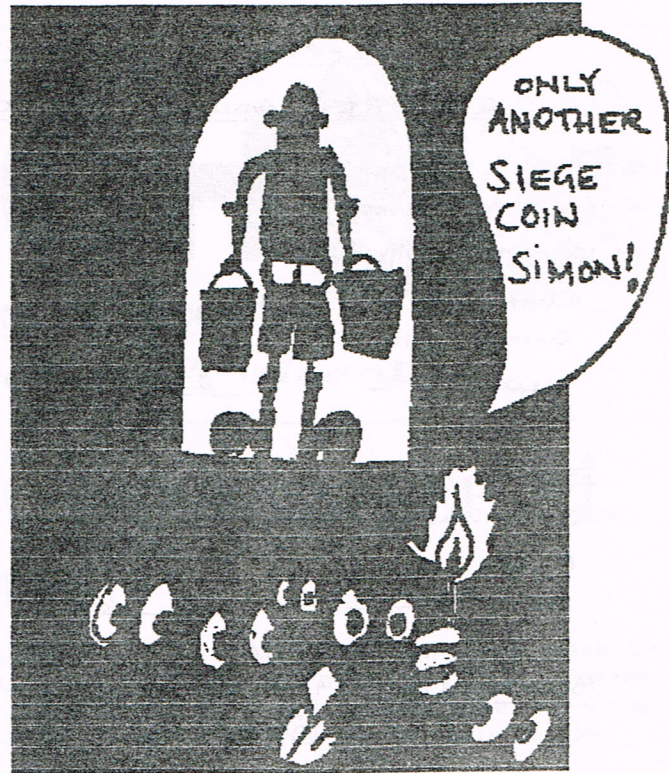
EDITORIAL....

As another digging season approaches, (the Society's 35th!) we present yet another PontArch for your delection. As before, I thank those who have contributed to this issue, and beg everyone else to keep material flowing in. As it is, the comment of one of the Editors whom I sometimes write for (in a Maxwell magazine!) is very relevant, "A letter has flooded in..." I would particularly appreciate a report on the forthcoming Paris trip.

Since the last issue, I have visited several kindred societies in and around Yorkshire. At the Harrogate Group of the YAS I was greeted by our ex-Chairlady Doreen Roberts, who sends her greeting to all old friends. At

Dewsbury I was most impressed by the meeting rooms of the Wheelright Archaeological society, which, though hard to find, forms an ideal HQ for the group, being situated in a disused chapel which is being 'done-up.' The lecture room has an integral screen as well as a grandfather clock! Sheffield and Dist. FHS is a Genealogical society with a membership encompassing a wide range of interests. Moving around these groups certainly enables me to keep a finger on the pulse of amateur archaeology and history in the region.

At long last the Sutton Hoo dig has finished, and true to form the diggers found an intact burial in the final weeks. There are colour pictures in the latest issue of *Current Archaeology*, which the Society subscribes to.



Indiana Holdsworth and the Raiders of The lost PontArch. by Ron Wilson.

members discovered that digging was only one aspect of archaeology. Few photographs were taken, though several in both monochrome and colour by John Holmes are still extant, and no plans were made; instead, finds were marked on a large site-plan supplied by the Borough Engineer. Indeed, by present standards the dig was a fiasco. However, it must be judged by the standards of the day, when only London had any semblance of a rescue team, and by those standards, the society had not done badly for its first attempt. One very interesting find on this site was a skeleton which still had its hair preserved. Again, younger members will find this difficult to believe, but there was no conservation service locally accessible, and the society Secretary had to set about the treatment of the hair himself.

The demolition of a beautiful old house in Horsefair, Micklegate House, showed up another problem which the society had to face. Inside the building were mouldings and

panelling which needed recording, and in desperation the Committee called in a professional photographer. The next important local building to be threatened received rather better treatment. An old house at the bottom of Baghill Lane turned out to have some important details, and these were recorded by several members who in the interval had taught themselves some rudiments of photography and recording.

Some time after this, the society was asked to investigate some moulded stonework which had been discovered at the top of Mill Lane, Nevison. What had been revealed was, in fact, the remains of the Chantry Chapel of St. Thomas, built in memory of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster on the spot where he had been executed. Again no plans were made and few photographs were taken; the only vestige of the site now are some of the moulded stones.

So, by the beginning of 1959 it was becoming evident

that if the society was to function efficiently it must have its own experts in photography, planning and draughtsmanship, and the logistics of excavation. The problem was partially solved from a new and surprising direction. So many young people had joined by this time that there was a demand for a junior section, and the secretary took it upon himself to organise one. Meetings were first held in a local school, and then in his own home. Outside speakers were called upon in areas where Ken himself did not feel confident, and it was in this capacity that the present writer gave his first talk on site photography whilst on vacation from College. More than a few of our juniors have gone on to distinguish themselves in various archaeological fields since then, and the pages of learned journals still at times carry their names.

oOo

to be continued.....

PONTEFRAC T AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 1992

	<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>		<u>£</u>	<u>£</u>
<u>RECEIPTS</u>			<u>PAYMENTS</u>		
<u>Balances</u> b/fwd 1.4.91			<u>Administration</u> :-		
Cash	11 84		Secretary's Expenses	10 00	
Current A/c	833 09		Printing & stationery	69 69	
Deposit A/c	<u>2232 76</u>	3074 69	Postcards	80 06	
			Photographs	<u>37 00</u>	196 75
<u>Sales</u>			<u>Lecture Expenses</u> :-		
Card Bidges & Books	351 52		Room Rent	73 50	
Raffle	56 59		Lecturer Fees	<u>157 86</u>	231 36
Refreshments	<u>1 63</u>	409 74			
<u>Subscriptions</u> 1991/92		287 00	<u>Subscriptions & Insurance</u>		34 25
1992/93			6 00 <u>Donation</u> to Pontefract		
			Health Authority		25 00
<u>Donation</u> :-			<u>Heritage Expenses</u> :-		36 71
Heritage Visits	96 13		<u>Castle Chain</u> Project		16 27
Women's Institute	<u>5 00</u>	101 13	<u>Swales yard</u> "		9 63
<u>Vendor Fees</u>		14 00	<u>Film</u> for Project at		
<u>Theatre Trip</u> Surplus		55 00	Miss E Lore's House		51 70
<u>Bank Interest</u> Received		64 29	<u>Xmas</u> Social		46 62
<u>Excursions</u> 1991/92			<u>Excursions</u> 1992/93		
Income	11509 25		Day Trips	40 -	
Expenditure	<u>10894 00</u>	615 25	Tenby	250 -	
			Egypt	<u>250 -</u>	540 00
			<u>Balances</u> c/fwd 31.3.92		
			Cash	11 84	
			Current A/c	32 92	
			Business Premium A/c	<u>3400 05</u>	3444 81
		<u>£4633 10</u>			<u>£4633 10</u>

Honorary Treasurer A. L. Hawkins Date 3rd April 1992

Honorary Auditor R. P. Lockett Date 3rd April 1992