

THE PONTEFRACT AND DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

NUMBER 40, SPRING 2001, FIRST ISSUE OF THE NEW CENTURY.
SPECIAL MILLENNIAL ISSUE. SOCIETY SUCCESSES.



Chairman/Field-Director Eric receiving the Pitt Rivers Trophy from HRH Prince Hassan of Jordan. BAA.

An occasional newsletter, published by
**THE PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL
SOCIETY.**

Editor: Eric Houlder, Chairman/Field Director

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EDITORIAL

The past year has been an unprecedented one for the Society; so much so that your Committee felt it appropriate to produce a special issue of *PontArc* highlighting the achievements and events of 2000 AD. These include the honouring of our President Dr Peter Addyman with the CBE, The winning of the Pitt Rivers Award, incidently the top honour for voluntary work in the British Archaeological Awards, a **Highly Commended Certificate** for the Society's efforts to save the foundations of New Hall, and a **Highly Commended Certificate** for YAC member Natalie Elsey in the **Young Archaeologist of the Year Award**.

Before we discovered that the Society had reached the finals in these categories, it had already been decided to hold a special symposium on October 14th 2000, to bring

together the directors of the major excavations in Pontefract. Chaired by our President, the event was a major success (reported upon elsewhere in this issue). Needless to say thanks go out to all who contributed in any way.

During the Symposium, we were able to report on the success of our application for a grant from the **Awards for All Millennium Festival Fund**, a total of £3824 pounds. This will provide much needed hardware.

Finally, readers may have noticed the Editor's reluctance in the past to use pictures with himself on them, for very obvious reasons! However, the presentation to the Society of archaeology's top award for unpaid excavation was felt to allow an exception to this rule.

EH

THE BRITISH ARCHAEOLOGICAL AWARDS 2000.

On November 16th 2000, the roads and railway lines to Edinburgh were crammed with members travelling to attend the awards in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle. The rail journey was not easy because of restrictions caused by the recent Hatfield disaster, but we all made it

in time. The following photographs illustrate this, a great day for the Society. Picture credits are: BAA; official. ST; Simon Tomson. EH; Eric Houlder. JB; John Buglass. PVA; Our President.



Simon, and Dan (front) Bob and Janet behind, waiting for the ceremony to begin. EH.



Janet McNaught receiving the Young Archaeologist of the Year runner-up award for Natalie Elsey. EH



John Buglass, Director of the St Aidan's Project holding the Pitt Rivers Award winners' trophy. EH



Left to right: Eric, Dan and John on Edinburgh Waverley station following the ceremony. ST.

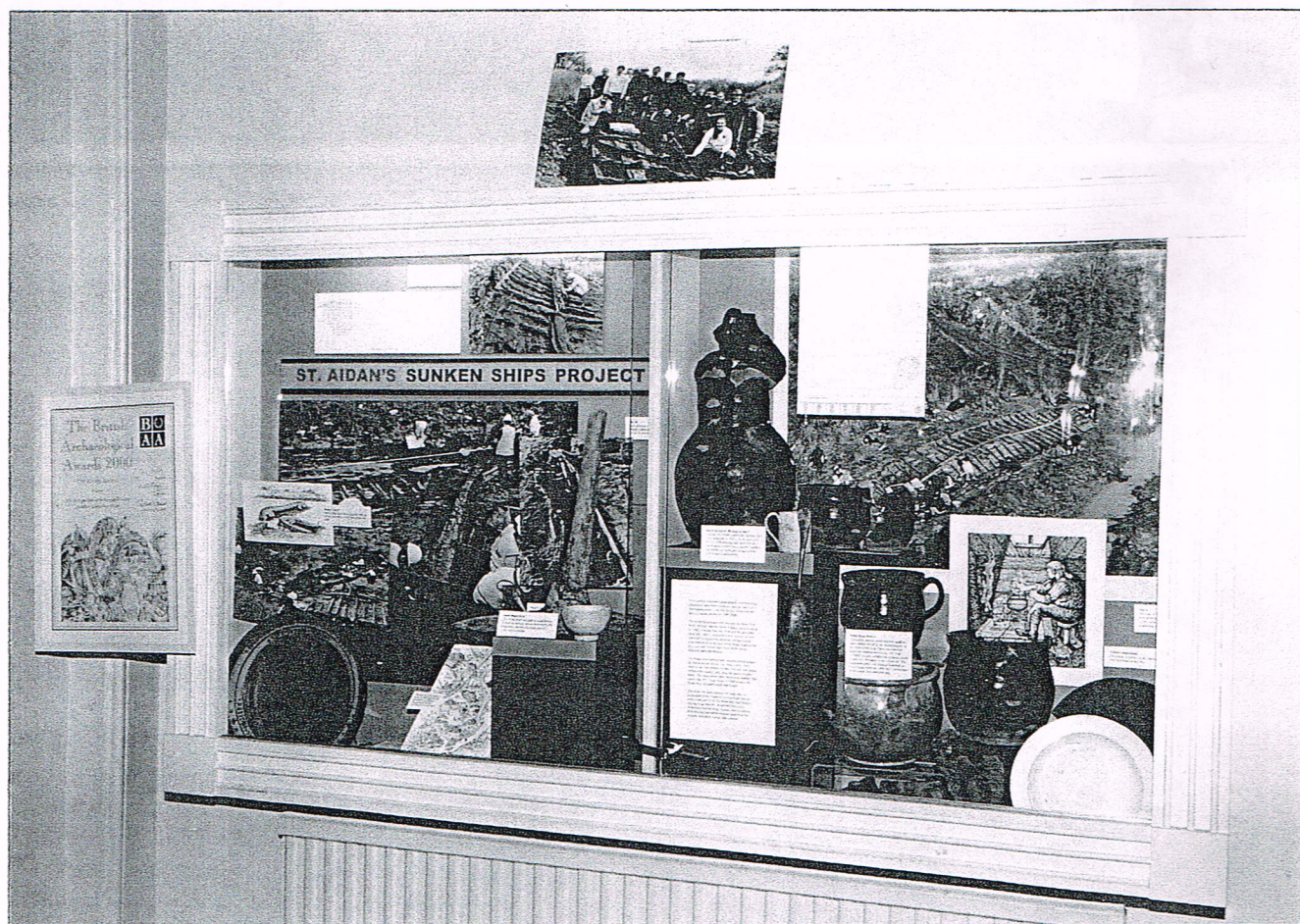
SAINT AIDAN'S PROJECT UP-DATE

It does seem a long time since the end of the dig, which we briefly featured in the last issue. Since then things have continued to progress. The John Wheelright Society made us a grant of a thousand pounds towards publication costs, whilst the trustees of the Robert Kiln Trust also gave us a thousand pounds with the Pitt Rivers Award. In total we now have close to £3000 in the St Aidan's publication account, and work is going ahead with the specialist reports.

Before we knew that we were finalists in the BAA, Pam

Judkins of Wakefield Museums asked if we could supply the materials for a single case display on the project, for Wakefield Museum. Your Field Director filled his car and transported finds, plans and photographs gingerly to Wakefield. Geoff Leathley made a superb job of the display, which he has recently moved to the entrance display in Pontefract Museum where it is currently attracting much attention. Following receipt of the award, both the plaque and certificate joined the display.

Geoff's excellent work in creating an interesting display in the entrance hall of Wakefield Museum. EH.



THE MILLENNIUM SYMPOSIUM

Trying to sum up in one day the contributions to local knowledge of history, archaeology and the P&DAS was a major brief for even a millennium symposium. Looking back on October 14th it is clear that the speakers achieved it. On arrival, members and friends were directed to parking places by Vice-President Bill Booth who set the tone, for it is clear that everyone from President downwards 'mucked-in,' to use an apposite Yorkshire expression. Many of us had been in All Saints new Parish Hall for well over an hour before the start time setting out chairs, setting up the two projectors, setting out displays, preparing food etc.

We began on time, expertly chaired by our President, and all the speakers (listed in the last edition of *PontArc*) managed to keep to schedule. Only one contributor, David Heslop, had had to give backward and his place was filled by the Field Director, whose errors and omissions were

ignored by the assembled experts.

Lunch was served by the ladies whose efficiency was breathtaking. There were displays to see, and old friends to speak to. The afternoon session passed too quickly, and finally it was time for the raffle draw. In anticipation of a full house, the Committee had commissioned John Hudson the well-known potter to make a large posset or loving-cup, suitably lettered. This was won by member Mrs Koutsikopoulos, who received it from President Peter Addyman.

Our thanks to everyone, on whatever side of the speakers' table, for a memorable occasion. Especial thanks to our President, who actually flew home from Ireland to chair the symposium, (and flew back the same evening) and to Richard Van Riel who loaned us the Museum's *Carousel* projector.



LEFT: Purchasing raffle tickets. PVA.

ABOVE: Tony Wilmott, who directed us in the Tanner's Row and Booths digs of the 1980s. Tony is now a very important archaeologist and is responsible for the discovery of the sub-Roman or Arthurian phase at Birdoswald. PVA.



Mrs Koutsikopoulos receiving the posset from President Peter Addyman. EH.

BELOW: Looking across the front of the hall. PVA.



RIGHT: L to R. Simon Tomson, John Buglass and David Hedges compare notes. All three have directed digs for the Society. PVA.



NEWS VIEWS AND REVIEWS

At the beginning of the Millennium Symposium members were informed that the Society had received an award of £3824 from the Millennium Festival Awards for All fund. This was a direct result of our changing our rules to conform to the required criteria. We thank Anne Hawkins, our Hon. Auditor for steering the paperwork to a successful conclusion, and member Stephen Twist, whose professional expertise was invaluable in re-drafting the rules. Most of the hardware specified in the grant schedule has now been purchased, and members will be able to see it in action (though not all at once!) shortly.

On the subject of hardware, a friend of your Chairman and like him a Past-President of Pontefract Camera Club, had acquired (quite legally) a number of items from a local factory that was closing down its in-house AV unit. One is a brand new Hanimex slide projector still in its plastic wrapping. This he donated to our Young Archaeologists' Club. Another was a Journal cabinet for the storage of slides - thousands of them! He donated this to the main Society. In view of the rapid progress of digital imaging, at least one member has expressed the opinion that an archival slide-storage cabinet is something of an anachronism. However, it must be remembered that transparencies and negatives have a much longer life than any current or even projected digital storage medium, so that it is fine to digitise pictures, but keep the bit of film with the original on; it will be needed, if only for re-scanning onto more up-to-date media. The lesson of the so-called Domesday Disc of 1986 is worth remembering.

Those lovely images, including several of our Society in

action, were supposed to last nine hundred years like the original model. Today, barely fifteen years later they are irretrievable; lost in fact because the technology is incompatible with current systems.

Members may have noticed the scaffolding around the towers of All Saints and Saint Giles' churches. The restorers discovered some inscriptions in the lead on the roof of St Giles' dating in some cases back to the eighteenth century. Some were actual footprints, signed and dated by the men who re-lead the tower at that time. Others may be clergy. Your F/D was commissioned to produce photographs of the lead, and copies have been presented to the museum.

At the time of writing two members are particularly pleased with themselves for their contributions to the recently-published book *Blood Red Roses: The Archaeology of a Mass Grave from the Battle of Towton, AD1461*, Oxbow Books, £30. The Channel Four documentary of the same title won the Documentary of the Year Award in the BAA, and now the book looks set fair to become a local best-seller.

The recent epidemic of Foot & mouth Disease is curtailing archaeology. A contact in a big urban unit predicts that little or no work will be done on rural sites this year, and that many archaeologists on short-term contracts will be in serious trouble. Our hearts go out to them, and to friends at the Wood Hall Archaeological Trust who are now seeking employment as a result of the Trust having to curtail its activities.

THE SOCIETY CONSTITUTION.

1. The society shall be called The Pontefract and District Archaeological Society, hereafter to be referred to as 'The Society,' and shall be affiliated to The Yorkshire Archaeological Society and The Council for British Archaeology.
2. The objects of The Society shall be to foster and promote the study of archaeology and its contribution to history, especially but not exclusively in and around Pontefract.
3. The Society shall organise field surveys, excavations, lectures, visits and conferences. It shall educate and train members in archaeological techniques, and publish the results of its researches for the benefit of schools, higher education, and the general public.
4. Membership of The Society shall be open to any person completing a membership application and paying the current annual subscription fee, as determined by the Annual General Meeting. All members shall be admitted to all normal Society functions free of charge. However, functions shall not take place under The Society's name without prior approval of The Committee. Members working on Society projects shall at all times remain within the direction of the person appointed by The Committee as Director. Members not doing so shall be subject to disciplinary proceedings, and if the offence be repeated, to termination of membership. The Society shall not be held responsible for any loss or injury incurred by members participating in Society activities. Participation is entirely at members' own risk.
5. The financial year shall begin, and subscriptions shall become due on the First day of April each year. Membership

shall be deemed lapsed if outstanding fees remain unpaid three calendar months after the AGM.

6. The affairs of The Society shall be controlled by a Committee comprising The President, Vice-President, Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, Field-Director and several Committee Members, their number to be determined by the AGM.

All officers and members of the Committee with the exception of the President and Vice-President, shall be elected at the AGM from and by the members of The Society on a democratic basis for a period of one year, but may be re-elected to the same office or another office the following year. The offices of President and Vice-President shall be determined by the Committee and confirmed by the AGM, to be held for life or until resignation.

7. The Committee shall meet at least once per calendar month. A Quorum shall be six members. In the absence of the President, Vice-President or Chairman, the Committee shall elect a Chairman from one of their number.

The duties of the Committee shall be:

To control the affairs of the Society; to keep accurate accounts of The Society's finances through the Treasurer. These should be available for reasonable inspection by members and be audited before, and available at, the AGM; to maintain a bank account in The Society's name requiring at least two named and unrelated senior officers to sign each cheque; to make decisions on the basis of a simple majority vote, the Chair to be entitled to an additional casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

8. Reasonable reimbursement shall be made to officers and Committee members for expenses incurred in organising Society activities.
9. The AGM shall be held within two weeks of the end of April each year. The Treasurer will present audited accounts, the Chairman will report on the years activities, and officers and Committee members (with the exception of the President and Vice-President) shall be elected with a simple majority vote.
10. Proposed changes to The Society's Constitution must be notified to the Committee in writing at least four weeks prior to the AGM, and include signed statements by proposer and seconder. Proposed amendments will be voted upon at the AGM and determined by a simple majority.
11. In the event that The Society's membership falls below ten, the Committee shall wind up its affairs, donating remaining funds equally to The Council for British Archaeology (Yorkshire Region) and The Yorkshire Archaeological Society, or to such organisations as may succeed or incorporate them or either of them. Books, photographs, equipment documentation and other artefacts will be passed against detailed written receipt to The Yorkshire Archaeological Society or such organisation as may succeed and incorporate it.
12. By resolution of two thirds of the membership of the Society at any Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting convened by the Society, the members may require that any dispute arising in relation to the Constitution or the functioning of the Committee will be referred to mediation by a mediator appointed by The Council for British Archaeology (Yorkshire Region).

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