

Pont Arc

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PONTEFRACT
& DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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This issue edited by the Chairman.

MILESTONE MAN

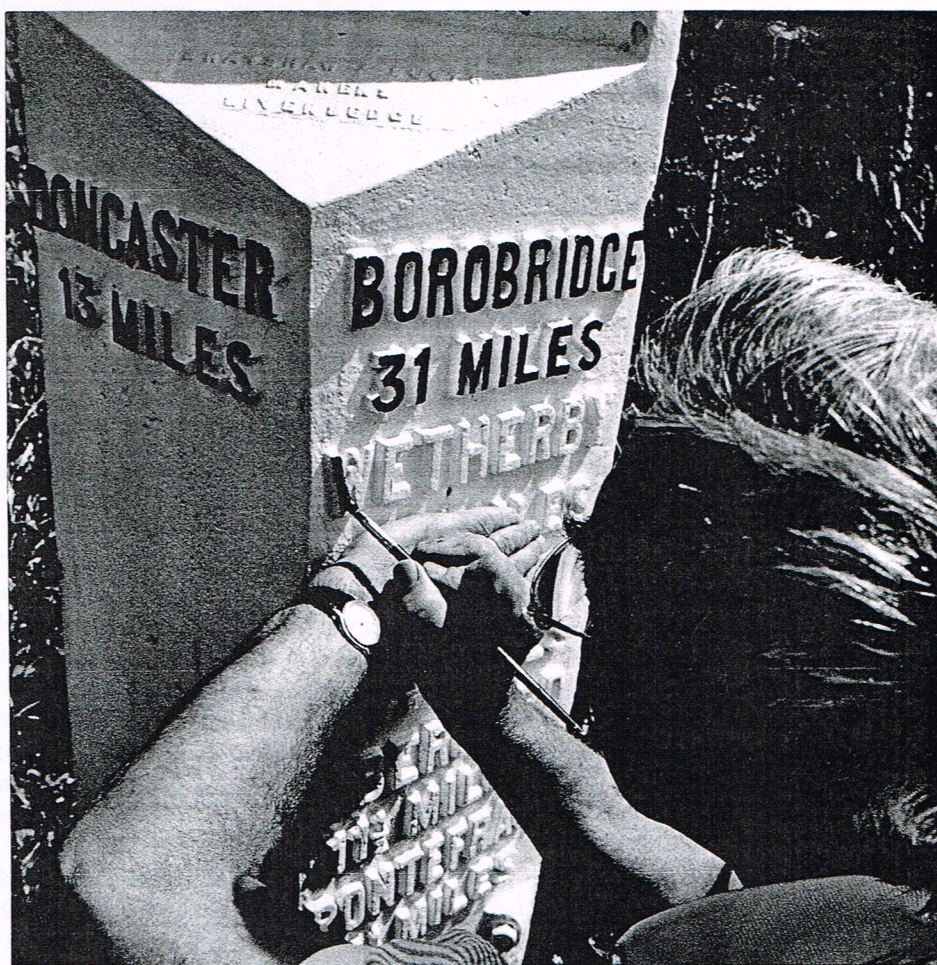
Our front cover this issue celebrates one of the Society's unsung heroes. Brian Tyson has been one of our stalwarts for many years, but few members, on viewing the beautifully painted turnpike milestones in and around Pontefract, realise that the periodic cleaning and painting is done by Brian, with help from other, unsung activists.

The milestones date from the turnpike era, before the coming of the railways. Each is a composite, with a cast iron face bolted on to a shaped stone. Though we like to think that they have remained *in-situ* since they were erected, it is important to remember that they were placed in storage throughout the Second World War and re-erected afterwards.

Brian's work involves gardening to clear the bases of weeds and undergrowth, wire-brushing to remove flakes of old paint, rust, moss, etc, and priming. Once primed, he coats the whole iron face in glossy white, and when this is dry he laboriously paints over the lettering in black.

There are no short cuts in this work, for adequate time must be allowed for drying, and he has very many stones to 'service.'

Your Editor caught up with Brian and David Wilcox on a rainy afternoon in Wentbridge cutting. The stone there (halfway down on the right, heading south) is partially broken, and seems to attract litter as well as weeds and undergrowth.



Later in the year, Brian telephoned to say that he would be finishing the stone south of the East Hardwick Road railway bridge. It was a lovely summer afternoon with blue sky and drifting white clouds, only marred by the battery in one of the Editor's cameras dying. (They always die at critical moments, don't they?) However, Brian continued painting, with traffic swishing past, and finally the battery was changed and the above picture taken. The

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shot on this page shows Brian with David Wilcox working on the stone in Wentbridge cutting. The Society, and everyone interested in heritage in its broader aspects have reason to be indebted to Brian and David, and everyone else who undertakes this sort of valuable work.



NEWS FROM COMMITTEE

The best summer since the 1970s, and we were not active in the field, except of course for the Young Archaeologists. Our main activity was a follow-up dig to trace Roman Road 28b north of the railway embankment near Hundhill Lane. The farmers were agreeable; indeed, it was their idea, but red tape had to be surmounted, and the needed permission did not come through in time.

Purchase of New Equipment

To avoid this happening again, and to give the Society another string to its bow, your Committee has taken the decision to purchase a TR/CIA Resistivity Meter. As two of the Committee are CIA members, and our Chairman is indeed on the CIA Committee, the Society receives a substantial discount on this machine. In the past we have used machines belonging to individual members, whom we thank, especially David Hedges. However, the situation was not ideal both for the Society and David.

The TR/CIA meter has been recognised within the archaeological community as the best available at any price, and includes a built-in plotter making it unnecessary for us to manually note each reading.

Indeed, the software allows us an instant view of the underground features on a laptop screen, and even a printout if we have a printer in the field with us. Committee has produced a viability study on the purchase, which members may see on request.

Thus, we can undertake surveys on most sites with only the landowner's permission.

Training Courses

For some time Committee has been concerned that too few members have the expertise to use the new hardware, including the audio-visual equipment purchased with the Heritage Lottery Fund Grant. Accordingly, we are planning a series of training evenings in our usual room, when members will receive instruction in using the resistivity meter, the video camera, and the slide and overhead projectors.

The Hermitage Video

This is substantially complete, and only awaits the final soundtrack being added. The Society owes thanks to Jim and Rae whose professional expertise has produced an excellent and informative video, which will be used both in the Museum and in the Hermitage.

A CRUISE ON THE NILE

by Peggy & Bob Evison.

Editor's note. This article had superb pictures, but we were unable to use them for technical reasons.

Introduction

Members of the Society visited Egypt in 1992, starting at Cairo visiting the pyramids and then flying to Luxor to see the Valley of the Kings. Peggy and I enjoyed this visit and had always had it in mind to complete the tour. Accordingly last year, in August, we flew from Manchester to Luxor and then cruised up the Nile to Aswan.

Day 1 Flew from Manchester at 8.30am on Bank Holiday Monday 27 August 2001 to Luxor, a flight of 5 hours 45 minutes. Met at the airport by the tour representative and taken by coach to board MS Annie. We had taken the opportunity of booking accommodation with a lounge, bedroom and bathroom. The boat was very well appointed with a swimming pool, sun-decks, lounge and a marvellous restaurant.

Day 2 All sight-seeing visits start early morning; seeing the sunrise is an experience. Our first was to the West Bank of the Nile to the Valley of the Kings. In 1992 we crossed the Nile on a ferry, but a bridge has now been built so we went by coach. The Nile Valley was an area of intense land building and ground movement in distant geological history. Over the millennia fluctuating sea levels meant that the Mediterranean Sea repeatedly invaded low lying land and covered much of what is now Egypt as far south as Aswan. This led to the laying down of three successive sedimentary rock formations known to geologists as Dakhla Chalk, Esna Shale and Thebian Limestone. It is mainly the last two levels which are visible in the Valley of the Kings, the Limestone being about 1000ft thick to where it eventually merges into the Shales which are 60ft thick and below the Limestone. Most of the tombs are in the Limestone, but some such as that of Sethos I, where the upper part of the chambers were cut through the Thebian Limestone and the lower parts excavated from the underlying Esna Shales. In all more than 60 tombs have been excavated in the Valley, although not all belong to pharaohs. Each tomb is numbered in the order of discovery, but not all are open to the public, many are closed for renovation.

The Valley of the Kings once called the "Gates of the Kings" or the "Place of Truth", the canyon now known as the Valley of the Kings is at once a place of death – for nothing grows on the steep cliffs – and a majestic domain befitting the mighty kings who once lay there in great stone sarcophagi, awaiting immortality. The isolated valley, behind Deir al-Bahri is dominated by the natural pyramid-shaped mountain peak of Al-Qurn [the Horn].

It consists of two branches, the east and west

valleys, with the former containing most of the royal burial sites. All the tombs followed a similar design, deviating only because of structural difficulties or the length of time spent on their construction. The longer the reign of the pharaoh, the larger and more magnificent the tomb. The tombs were designed to resemble the underworld, with a long, inclined rock-hewn corridor descending into either an antechamber or a series of sometime pillared halls, and ending in the burial chamber. Once the tomb was cut its decoration was started; this dealt almost exclusively with the afterlife and the pharaoh's existence in it. The colourful paintings and reliefs are extracts from ancient theological compositions or "books", and were incorporated in the tombs to assist the pharaoh into the next life. Texts were taken from the "Book of Amduat - the book of him who is in the netherworld; the Book of Gates", which chartered the king's course through the underworld; and the "Book of the Litany of Ra", believed to be the words spoken by Ra, the sun-god, on his own journey through the caverns of death. The worshippers of Amun or Amun-Ra [the fusion of the two deities and the kings of the gods] believed that the Valley of the Kings was traversed each night by Ra, and it was the aim of those who had been buried to secure passage on Ra's sacred barque.

The entrance fee to the Valley of the Kings and Queens includes visits to two tombs in the Kings and one tomb in the Queens. We chose to visit the tombs of Rameses VI and that of Amenophis II, I can't remember which Queen we visited, but we paid extra to visit the tomb of Tutankhamun and that of Ramesses II's Queen Nefertari in Queens

The coach dropped us at the gates to the valley and the visitors have to run the gauntlet of the traders trying to convince you that their wares are the best and cheapest in Egypt. Once through the gates we were left in peace. When we visited in 1992 we had to walk up the valley to the tombs, but now there are two trains that transport the visitors to the start of the tombs.

Tomb of Ramesses VI [KV9]

The first tomb we visited was that of Ramesses VI a 20th dynasty pharaoh. This tomb has been known since antiquity and was originally built for Ramesses V but usurped by his successor. The tomb extends 270 ft into the mountain. The passageway is decorated with scenes of the Book of the Dead, and the Book of Caverns and the complete text of the Book of Gates. The passage is unique in having a horizontal roof combined with a sloping floor. The burial chamber itself is not completely finished, evidenced also by the

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lack of any subsidiary rooms. The burial chamber originally contained the remains of both the pharaohs, but these were removed in antiquity, but both were re-discovered in 1898 contained in Tomb KV35. (see later notes.)

Although well preserved, the coloured sunk reliefs are stylistically those of the previous 19th dynasty. The burial chamber has a beautiful and an unusual ceiling and features the Goddess Nut twice, stretched across the morning and evening sky.

It is understood that Jean-Francois Champollion, the man acknowledged as being the main person to break the code of the hieroglyphics, lived in this tomb during his stay in this part of Egypt.

Tomb of Amenophis II [KV35] Discovered in 1898 by Victor Loret, this is one of the deepest structures in the valley, this tomb has more than 90 steps that takes you down to a modern gangway built over a deep pit designed to protect the inner and lower chambers from thieves.

Stars cover the entire ceiling in the huge burial chamber and the walls feature, as if on a giant painted scroll, the entire text of the Book of Amdual. This was indeed the formal resting place of Amenophis II, for although thieves did manage to make off with everything of value, they did no damage to the interior and left the king himself undisturbed. When excavated in 1898 a total of 13 mummies were found including that of Amenophis II lying in situ in his sarcophagus, a garland of flowers still round his neck. Nine of the other mummies, hidden by priests were also of royal blood, including those of Tuthmosis IV, Seti II, Anenhatep III and his Queen Tiy and the remains of Ramesses V and VI.

This tomb, because of its depth, is exceedingly hot and humid and one is advised to take, and drink, lots of water.

Tomb of Tutankhamun [KV 62] Discovered on 4 November 1922 by Howard Carter and Lord Caernarvon; the story behind this celebrated discovery of this, the most famous tomb in the Valley of the Kings, and the fabulous treasure it contained, far outshines its actual appearance, making it dubious whether it warrants the extra charge one has to pay to make the visit.

Tutankhamun's tomb is neither large nor impressive and bears all the marks of a rather hasty completion and inglorious burial. The tomb is small and for the most part undecorated. Three small chambers were crammed with furniture, statues, chariots, musical instruments, weapons, boxes, jars and food, all of which are in the Cairo Museum [We visited this in 1992 and saw the treasure]. Only the outermost coffin of gilded wood still lies within the carved granite sarcophagus in the burial chamber of this tomb, the walls of which are decorated with text from the Book of the Dead.

The greatest find since that of the tomb of Tutankhamun was made in May 1995 by the American archaeologist Kent Weeks, when he announced the discovery of the largest tomb so far found in Egypt. This tomb is the burial place of the Sons of Ramesses II one of Egypt's most prolific pharaohs, both in terms of offspring and monuments. Ramesses II ascended the throne in 1290 BC and reigned for 67 years and sired more than 100 children, and he was over 90 years of age when he died. Excavations by an American University continue each year and it is estimated that works will continue for another 10 years, because the tomb is structurally faulted, before it is in a condition to be opened to the public.

There are two impressions that spring to mind when visiting the Valley of the Kings. Firstly the treasure which was left in Tutankhamun's Tomb is extraordinary for a fairly insignificant boy-king, one can but surmise at the immense wealth that must have been included in the treasure for Seti I or Ramesses II. Secondly the immense effort that went into creating these monuments is almost beyond belief and when one sees that the size of the sarcophagus appears to be larger than the tunnels through which they had to pass, this is particularly relevant to the Tomb of Amenophis II.

Valley of the Queens . There are at least 75 tombs in Biban al-Harim, the Valley of the Queens. They belonged to queens of the 19th and 20th dynasties and other members of the royal families, including princesses and the Rammessid princes. Only 5 tombs are open to the public, including that of Queen Nefertari. I can't remember the name of the Queen whose tomb we visited as part of the fee to enter the Valley. It was not particularly impressive when likened to the Tombs in Kings. We were advised to visit the Tomb of Queen Nefertari wife of Pharaoh Ramesses II.

Tomb of Queen Nefertari [KV 66] Hailed as the finest tomb in the Thebian necropolis and in all Egypt – the tomb of Nefertari was first opened to the public in November 1995. Nefertari was one of the five wives of Ramesses II . the New Kingdom pharaoh who was known for his colossal monuments of self-celebration. However, the tomb he created for his favourite queen is a shrine to her beauty and, without doubt, an exquisite labour of love. Every inch of the walls in the tomb's three chambers and connecting corridors is adorned with colourful scenes of Nefertari in the company of gods and associated text from the "Book of the Dead". Nefertari was known as the "Most beautiful of them" is depicted wearing a divinely transparent white gown and a golden head dress featuring two long feathers extending from the back of a vulture. The ceiling of the tomb is festooned with

golden stars. Some of the best scenes in the tomb are in the side room, which is to the right at the bottom of the first set of stairs. In one panel the queen is shown with her arms outstretched next to the mummified body of Osiris. At the top of the second staircase, which leads to the burial chamber, is another of the tomb's highlights- Nefertari offering two bowls of milk to Hathor, the goddess of pleasure and love.

Like most tombs in the Valley of the Kings, this one had been plundered by the time it was discovered by archaeologists. Only a few fragments of the queen's pink granite sarcophagus remained.

The Colossi of Menmon. The so called Colossi of Menmon are great statues carved from single blocks of stone depicting Amenophis III. They stood at the entrance to the king's mortuary temple in western Thebes and are now virtually all that remains of the great monument. These Colossi functioned on several levels. Stationed along the temple approaches and on processional areas they certainly acted in a protective role, but they also showed the inseparable relationship of the king with the gods at a level of the divine. The skill involved in the construction of these behemoths is impressive. Whilst the bodies were carved from one block, with the statue body joined to the base at the feet. It is expected that the statues would have been quarried in a recumbent position and raised like obelisks and carved on site.

Temple of Queen Hatshepsut Called by the Egyptians "Sacred of Sacred", Hatshepsut's terraced rock temple at Deir al-Bahri is one of the most impressive monuments of western Thebes. The temple consists of broad, rising terraces and courts leading to an inner temple built against and into the cliff face itself. The temple not only echoes the lines of the surrounding cliffs in its design but fuses so effectively with them that it seems a natural extension of its setting.

It is known that the construction of the temple took 15 years to complete, and modern studies have shown that it underwent a number of substantial modifications in that time. In the completed structure the approach to the temple was along a sphinx-lined causeway some 37ft wide, which led up from the Nile to a series of pylons which have now gone. Hatshepsut recorded that she built the temple as a "Garden for my father Amun."

Sadly because her reign was unorthodox and there were tensions between her and her erstwhile step son, Tuthmosis III, the temple suffered much destruction and mutilation during Tuthmosis III's reign. In fact at other temples at Thebes Tuthmosis III had all references to Queen Hatshepsut removed from obelisks, monuments and temple friezes.

Western Thebes holds the remains of some 36 temples in varying degrees of preservation and dating from Archaic times to the Graeco- Roman

Period. One of the most impressive is the mortuary temple of Ramesses II, began in the second year of his reign and took 20 years to complete. Another great monument in this area not usually included on the tourist's itinerary is the site Medinat Habu. This is second in size only to the Great Temple at Karnak; again we only saw this from the air. We were to over-fly these sites in the second week of our visit when we took a flight in a hot air balloon.

In the late morning we returned to Luxor and boarded MS Annie, had lunch then proceeded with our cruise up the Nile. Sitting on the sun-deck it is leisurely progress on the waterway watching the scenery of the Nile Valley pass you by. The Nile is a very wide river and is very busy, but with surprisingly relatively little commercial traffic, the vast majority big cruise ships. At times there would be up to a dozen boats in line astern. This shows how the important tourism industry is to the Egyptian economic.

In late evening we berthed in the middle of the river at Edfu; this is where the locks are on the river. We were to pass through these locks at 4.30am the next morning. The local traders came out to the cruise ships in small boats selling all manners of goods; it is amazing how adroit they are at getting the goods to customers, no mean feat as the Nile Boats are very high out of the water and the tourists all stand on the upper sun decks. The traders throw the goods up in plastic bags, negotiate a price then recover either the goods or the agreed monies. There were a fair number of cruise ships and traders resulting in a lot of banter and the noise is quite something.

All the cruise ships are lit up and to see about 30 of these huge vessels, with music playing so the river scene and atmosphere is rather remarkable.

Day 3 – Aswan. Another early morning start, first to visit the unfinished obelisk. In this granite quarry lies the obelisk that was being carved out of the rock, and one sees the form and the trenches that were being carved round the object. It is almost finished in its roughed out state, it only had to be prized out of the surrounding strata, and one wonders how this was achieved. These efforts either cracked the obelisk or revealed a natural fracture, but it was abandoned. It is clear that a great deal of effort had been expended on the work and no doubt frustration when the workers had their bonus stopped. But it is a huge piece of work seeing the obelisk laid down and the mind boggles as to how they transported its like to its ultimate destination. It is understood that the monument was finally finished when it had been raised at its final position.

We then proceeded to see the high dam at Aswan, a project started by the Americans but finished by the Russians in 1972 after some diplomatic fall out. There are two dams at Aswan, the smaller one built by the British, completed in 1902 but

increased in height in the 1920s and 1930s. the impounding of water by the high dam created Lake Nasser, the world's largest artificial lake covering some 13000 acres with a length of some 320 miles. The creation of the lake caused flooding problems for many monuments, some described later. The taking of photographs was not allowed on the high dam. The trip culminates with a visit to the monument erected by the Russians to commemorate the joint venture. This is a very impressive modernistic structure, a little out of character with the ancient monuments visited.

Visit to the Temple of Philae The island of Philae, famous for centuries for its rich heritage of temples, now lies submerged beneath the waters of Lake Nasser to the south of Aswan. Thankfully, however, when the high dam was in the planning stages in 1960 the island temples were dismantled and reconstructed on higher terrain on nearby Agilkia Island, this was prepared and landscaped to look like the original Philae.

Access to the reconstructed temple site is by means of a fleet of small boats, each boat laden with tourists but each having its itinerant trader badgering the tourists to acquire necklaces and scarabs.

The oldest part of Philae dates from the 4th Century BC, but most of the existing structures were built by the Ptolemies and the Romans up to the 3rd Century AD. The early Christians also made modifications transforming the hypostyle hall into a chapel, building other chapels and defacing the pagan reliefs. These people also carved many Christian crosses throughout the monument.

Day 4 free day in Aswan . This was the day when we had an option. Peggy and I decided that as we had come all this way we would take advantage of the optional excursion to visit the saved Temple of Abu Simbel. Since the recent trouble from the Arab fundamentalists the option to make the journey by coach was not available, and the only way to travel was by air. This again was an early start, 2-25am, as I recall. We collected our packed breakfasts, proceeded by coach to Aswan Airport and boarded a BAC 111; one of our party stated that the aircraft was at least 35 years old. It was crewed entirely by Russians. The hostesses were the most beautiful girls I have seen. Boarded a coach at Abu Simbel Airport and reached the site to see the sun rise over Lake Nasser, and we weren't the first people there.

The Monument of Abu Simbel. As we approached the monument from the back, it was a little disappointing. One approaches what looks like a colliery spoil heap; no attempt has been made to landscape the area. But as the party travels round the monument you are treated to the full magnificence of the four statues each more than 65 feet high. Originally carved out of the mountain on the very edge of the West Bank of the Nile between 1290 and

1224 BC, The temples were dedicated to the gods Ra, Harakhty, Amun and Flak and of course to the deified pharaoh Ramesses II himself. The colossal four statues of Ramesses II seated on his throne addressing the River Nile, it was designed as a show of strength, an awesome great quartered sentinel watching over any boats sailing into the pharaoh's land from the south. Historically one of the four heads broke off from the natural rock; this historic break has not been repaired in the reconstruction. The monument is as it was when rediscovered in 1813 by the Swiss explorer John Lewis Burckhardt. Each statue is accompanied by smaller, though much larger than life-size, statues of the King's mother Queen Turfa, his wife Queen Nefertari and some of his children. From the great temples forecourt, a short flight of steps leads up to the terrace in front of the massive rock cut façade, which is about 100ft high and 115ft wide. Above the entrance to the Great Hypostyle Hall, between the central throned colossi is the figure of the falcon-headed sun-god Ra-Harakhty. Unfortunately, the sun-god has been subjected to the trials of time and now lacks part of a leg and foot.

The roof of the hall is supported by eight columns, each fronted by a 33ft high statue of Ramesses II; the roof is decorated with vultures representing Osiris and the reliefs on the walls depict the pharaoh in various battles, trampling over his enemies, and victorious as usual. In the next hall, the four column vestibule, Ramesses and Nefertari are shown in front of the gods and the solar barques that carry the dead to the underworld.

The innermost chamber is the Sacred Sanctuary, where the four gods of the Great Temple sit on their thrones carved into the back wall and wait for the dawn. The temple is aligned in such a way that on 22 February and 22 October every year [speculated to be the coronation and birth of Ramesses II] the first rays of the rising sun reach across the Nile and penetrate into the temple, the rays move through the hypostyle hall, through the vestibule and into the sanctuary where they illuminate the figures of Ra-Harakhly, Ramesses II and Amun. Ptah to the left is never illuminated. Before the temples were moved this phenomenon occurred one day earlier.

Temple of Nefertari. To the north of the main temple is a smaller, but yet impressive monument which was built in honour of Ramesses II's favourite wife Nefertari and the goddess Hathor, the deity most associated with queenship in ancient Egypt. This rock cut temple of Hathor is fronted by six massive standing figures, about 35ft high. Four represent Ramesses II and the other two represent Nefertari, these are flanked by smaller figures of princes and princesses. Inside, the six pillars of the hypostyle hall are crowned with Hathor capitals and its walls. About half way between the Luxor and Karnak temples has

a small, but well-chosen collection of relics from the Thebian Temples and necropolis. The displays include pottery, jewellery, furniture statues and stelae. The worst problem in this building is to resist the constant pressure from the locals, whom I am not sure are official guides, to take advantage of their available torches to inspect objects in dark corners.

Mummification Museum – Down the steps just opposite the Miana Palace Hotel on the Corniche is the Mummification Museum. Although small, its well-represented displays tell you everything you ever wanted to know about mummies and mummification. The well preserved mummy of a 21st dynasty official, Maserharti, as well as a host of mummified animals are on display. A number of artefacts that were considered to be essential to the mummy's journey to the after life are also on display, as well as some

picturesque painted coffins.

Brooke Hospital for Animals – Although not really a tourist sight, the hospital, part of a world-wide UK network of clinics aiming to provide at least minimum care for animals, especially those put to work. While we were there the vets were treating some horses with horrific injuries; we were advised that these had been caused by the animals fighting. The horse drawn Hantours are still a significant presence on the streets of Luxor, but I don't think there are as many as when we visited in 1992 and the horses are in better condition. There are now many more taxis; the locals don't seem to treat these vehicles any better than they did the horses.

To be continued....

TONY ROBINSON IN PONTEFRACT

Members should by now have seen the documentary: *Fact or Fiction: Robin Hood*, which went out on Channel Four on October 18th. For those who missed it, the general thesis was that the outlaw of the legend was a follower of Thomas of Lancaster and was outlawed at Pontefract in 1322. Nothing new here, for a comprehensive article on this appeared in an earlier newsletter, and Harry Batty, our late distinguished member, was a major proponent of this theory.

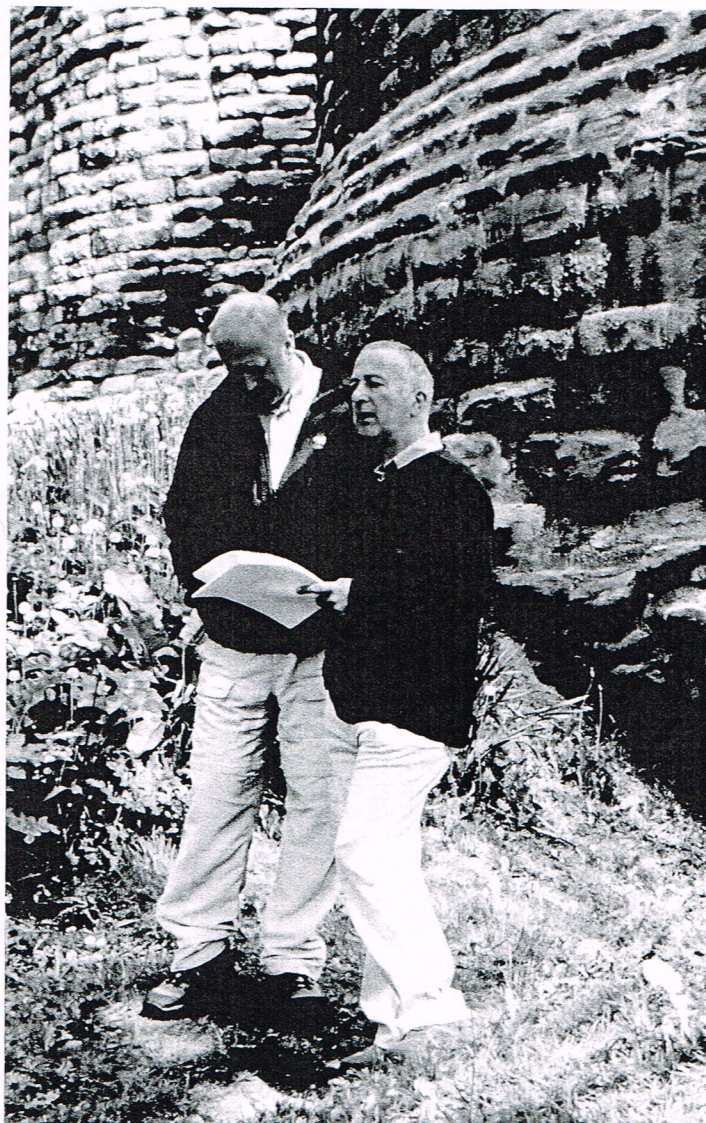
However, it is good that the real history has received a national airing though it will take many centuries to eradicate the false Sherwood connection from popular consciousness.

The programme was filmed in Pontefract and Wentbridge during May of last year. Tony spent a morning in the Castle, where your Editor met him and discussed the programme. He borrowed the editorial pen to correct his script; this will become a collector's item in the future!

Later, the crew moved on to Wentbridge where we ate in the *Bluebell*, before filming the sequences on the old road and near the Sayles.

More sequences were shot at Robin Hood's Well on the old Great North Road, as well as in Sherwood and Kirklees.

Our picture (right) shows Tony with his producer, David Willcocks, discussing the next take.



OUR VICE-PRESIDENT'S SECRET LIFE!

Stunning revelations from our reporter.



Bill Booth, Founder-Member and Vice President has a secret life. Each December he may be seen furtively donning strange red garments and disappearing into an artificial cave!

Before readers start worrying about Bill, let us make it clear that for a number of years Bill has been the official Pontefract Santa, a role for which his entirely genuine white beard, and his age (he is no Spring Chicken [or should we say 'turkey' in this context!] but still incredibly active, as members of this Society and the Pantomime Society will testify) superbly qualify him.

Bill's adventures also feature in the *I Remember* article in this issue (page 9), for he was the writer's companion in emptying the lead coffin forty five years ago.

Well Done, Bill, and keep it up! We will tell some of your other adventures in another issue.

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST POET

Past President Ken Wilson.

A few older members may remember Honey, the kitten which Ken and Peggy Wilson adopted on their travels around Britain in the caravan. Fewer still will have seen this poem actually in print, but it has appeared in *Current Archaeology*, *Independent Archaeology*, and one of Ken's anthologies.

Back in the sixties when Ken was our President, we had little idea that he was already a published poet. At that time his poetry was largely concerned with his life in the Royal Navy during the war.

The most well known of the works from this period was *Zig Zag*, a poem about convoy escort work in the North Atlantic and around the North Cape. *Zig Zag* once appeared on a GCSE English exam paper and received wider notice. Ken was so good that several of his poems are lodged in the Imperial War Museum, London.

Following retirement to Alderney in the Channel Isles, he continued writing and publishing his poems. These were often featured in the Channel Isles Eistedfods and frequently won awards.

Over the page, we reproduce two other poems with the kind permission of Peggy, his widow.

Ken died in 1989, and his poems are at last beginning to receive the wider notice which they deserve.

An Archaeological Cat.

**Our Honey was no common farmyard cat,
She qualified as an aristocrat.**

**A cat most proud, and beautiful to see,
And so well trained in archaeology.**

**She never mixed potsherds on a tray,
Or sat on baulks to bar a barrow's way;
And if she saw a mouse so fat and big,
It was taboo to chase it round the dig.**

**In tent or caravan she was at home,
And round the fields at night she used to roam.**

**But with the dawn outside the tent she'd sit
And for her breakfast wait, when stove was lit.
On to the dig her way she would make,
To tell us when it was time to break
And make the tea, or stop work for a meal;
And when dusk came she to the site would steal**

**To warn us that the working day was done,
The time had come to play with Honey Bun.
Alas, at Silbury Hill she met her end,
No more our tent from farm dogs to defend.
Around the land she travelled far and wide;
Now peacefully she lies, well stratified.**

Ken seen below at the St Richard's Priory site under PGI, October 1963.



**THE PASSIONATE
ARCHAEOLOGIST TO HIS LOVE.**
Come dig with me and be my
love,
And we will lots of theories
prove;
On hill, in valley, dale and field
We'll find out what each site
will yield.

And we will scrape among the
rocks,

Where Bronze Age man once
fed his flocks,
In Roman cities, by whose
walls
Melodious birds now make
their calls.

We'll camp beside an ancient
cot,
And stick together bits of pot,
Or work beside some murky
becks
While freezing rain runs down
our necks.

We'll dig in sun, in sleet and
rain
And Neolithic data gain;
In anoraks against the cold
We'll scratch for flints and dig
for gold.

With frozen hands and muddy
knees
We'll trench our way from
Thames to Tees;
If you can cook on Primus
stove,
Then dig with me and be my
love.

And when there's nothing else
to date
In sleeping-bag we'll love and
mate.
If these delights thy mind may
move,
Then dig with me and be my
love.

*Apologies to Christopher
Marlowe, 'The Passionate
Shepherd to his Love.'*

THE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S LASS REPLIES.

What makes you think I'd me
your love
And all those doubtful
pleasures prove,
With rheumatism in my knees
To dig in sleet while fingers
freeze?

And do you think I have the will
To scrape away half Silbury
Hill,
Or on a frosty day to sit
In some old Roman refuse pit?

Why ever should I give a jot
For Neolithic sherds of pot,
Or single out with loving care
And mark your bits of Samian
Ware?

But I confess I'd be content
To share with you your humble
tent,
And in a sleeping-bag to lie
Watching the racing clouds go
by.

Such thoughts, I own, do me
console,
I'd even hold your ranging
pole;
I'll cook your meals on
pressure stove,
And dig with you and be your
love.

*Based on 'Her Reply,' by Sir
Walter Raleigh.*

I REMEMBER,

A nostalgic look at days gone by, illustrated by Ron Wilson.

I remember a time before 'contexts' were invented. When stratification was far more important than any other aspect of the dig, even the plans. I remember when we did not do risk assessments before each campaign, before flash-jackets and helmets became *de rigueur*, and when we dug skeletons without benefit of masks and gloves.

I remember when ablutions meant standing in a washing-up bowl in a damp tent trying to remove the sweat. We grovelled before local volunteers, especially those with

luxurious bathrooms, hoping for an invitation 'to coffee.' If the invitation was not forthcoming, there was always Army Stores salt-water soap on a shingle beach or mud spit, if we were digging a coastal site.

I remember a time after wartime powdered milk was discontinued, but before the modern variety came on to the market in the mid-sixties. This was also before coolboxes, so someone with transport was always deputed to go and collect the milk for tea breaks. I remember collecting water from a clear

(Continued on page 10)





stream, and making tea with it. Days later, we walked upstream and discovered its source in a cess-pit. Nobody died.

I remember Elsans. The worst thing about them was the fact that they had to be regularly emptied, usually by someone on the most ignored duty list on the site. I remember the uncomfortable realisation (always in the dark!!) that the last person on this duty

had 'forgotten.' The popular story then current, of someone retching and syphoning out the Elsan is probably apocryphal! As a supervisor I remember the free drinks arriving on my table in the pub when I was trying to compile the duty rota, and how nice everyone could be until they saw their names on the list.

I remember digging down eighteen feet (six metres) without shoring, helmets etc., with barrow-runs on the three foot baulks all around. On one occasion, a loaded barrow fell on to a volunteer below, gouging a deep cut diagonally across his back; luckily this was his only injury, and after stitching in the local infirmary he was back on site later the same day. I

remember digging out medieval drains towards a beck which was known to be polluted; I spent six weeks in isolation, nearly died, and did not sue anyone! How naive we were then?

I remember digging a medieval plague-pit without gloves or mask. Lunch was Marmite

sandwiches, eaten in the pit to save time. There were no hand-washing facilities. On the same site a colleague and I emptied a lead coffin; we ended up plastered with whitish oxide, which we washed off in the disgusting urban beck nearby. I see him regularly still, and neither of us is the worse for our experience.

I remember piling seven or eight people into one car each morning, and the smell on the return trip! Younger volunteers lived on baked beans, so it was probably a good job that most people smoked, or the site hut would have quickly become uninhabitable! In those days the smokers stayed inside.

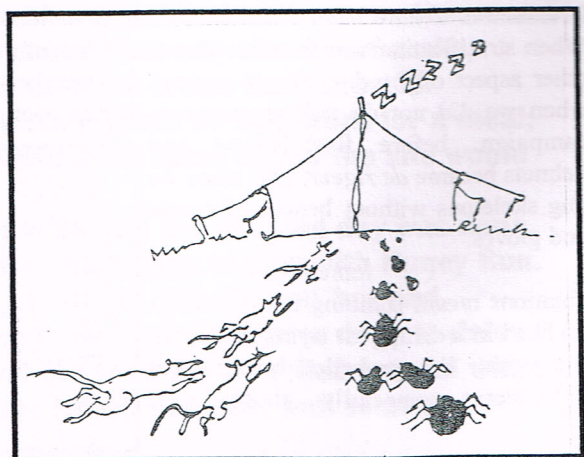
I remember camping in the corner of a Northamptonshire potato field; idyllic until the farmer sprayed the crop and the spiders all took refuge in the tent with us. The same farmer asked us to fumigate his storage silos. I remember being the

last down, behind someone who was scared of ladders, and consequently very slow-moving! I choked for days, but it cured my cold. One evening in a pub (where else!) we met the real Mr JC Bamford, the man who invented the famous yellow workhorse. Speaking of personalities, I remember digging with the person who really did sit on a metal grid-peg and ended up in hospital with a punctured colon, so that one at least is not apocryphal.

I remember meeting Basil Brown, the man who discovered **that** ship; my over-riding impression was of how short and slight he was. I also met Charles Phillips who dug the same ship so masterly, and he was a really big man. I remember too, Paul Johnstone, who invented television archaeology. He died shortly after I met him, and archaeology lost one of its best publicists. I remember too, Honey, the famous archaeological cat, who was immortalised in poetry.

I remember living on a council tip in Suffolk. One morning, hearing a rustle inside the tent awning I peeped out and saw a bambi with its snout in our rubbish box. The following morning, hearing the same rustling I woke my wife, who peered out and found an army of rats all over the awning! I remember one evening when the zip failed on the same tent, fastening my long-suffering wife inside. It was our anniversary, and we had a table booked at a restaurant in Ipswich; we were late, and the tent never fastened properly again.

I remember seeing a (new) volunteer accidentally fall into a recently-excavated grave; he ended up lying alongside a long-dead monk, and when he realised this he demolished the skeleton in



his haste to escape. We never saw him again!

Unfortunately, I also remember other things like the friend who was killed when a JCB passed too close to the deep trench he was working in. I remember too the girl who died; one summer she was on site with us, the next she was gone. Did her fondness for walking around in bare feet and ignoring rain, even in city streets, contribute to her demise, we wondered?

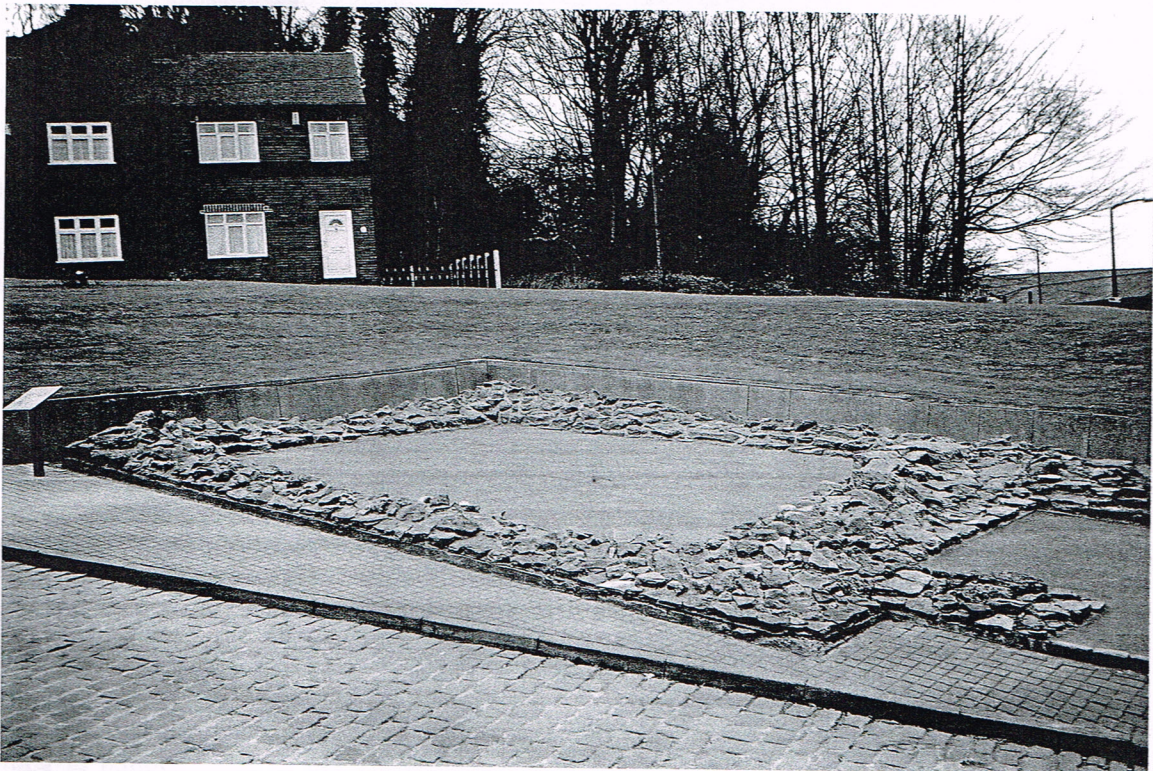
I wonder just how many of our later ailments were the delayed result of those risks? Is my asthma at least partially a consequence of the fungicide exposure in that grain silo? I am pretty certain that my creaky knees are the result of kneeling and trowelling without a padded kneeler, and my hearing was

undoubtedly damaged by sticking my unprotected head out of an aeroplane in company with Derrick Riley in the seventies. Knowing that, I would do it again for the experience of flying with one of the 'greats.'

No, I never scoff at risk-assessments, masks and gloves, flash jackets and helmets. Yes, its great to remember the early, naive, days of our calling, but we must be mature enough to realise that taking risks is foolish, and accidents are largely avoidable. Archaeology, like most professions, has matured and there is no place left for the risk-taker. This applies even more so to the voluntary sector.

But, in spite of everything, didn't we enjoy ourselves?

YOUNG ARCHAEOLOGISTS' PAGE



The Anglo Saxon chapel all neat and tidy.

This year, we decided to try and bring some semblance of order to the Anglo Saxon Chapel. After a great deal of discussion with the Museum Service it was agreed, that when the Young Archaeologists families and senior society members had completed the weeding, rubbish removal and general tidying up, the WMDC would drop two builders' bags of red gravel by the site. The same evening saw several members of the senior society shovelling and raking gravel over the site whilst I supervised and

occasionally swept up.

The site now looks much better, needs not nearly as much weeding, and is more noticeable to passers-by. Next year we hope to carry out a few more improvements to the site, in cooperation with the Sites & Monuments Officer and the WMDC Museums Service, so watch this site!

Early on Easter morning a service is held on this, the earliest recorded location of a Christian church in Pontefract, with details advertised in the

continued on page 12

local paper.

Field walking has taken us into a new field this year, on the left of Marlpit Lane as you proceed towards Darrington from Pontefract. We were given permission by the farmer to walk part of the field just as the potato crop was beginning to show, so we took great care not to cross the rows and cause any

damage, as many of the PYACs' legs are quite short.

The greatest number of finds so far recorded from this exercise are clay pipe stems and flints of various colours and types. This field is vast in size, so if the farmer agrees, we will take four further field-walking samples to give an unbiased assessment of the finds assemblage.

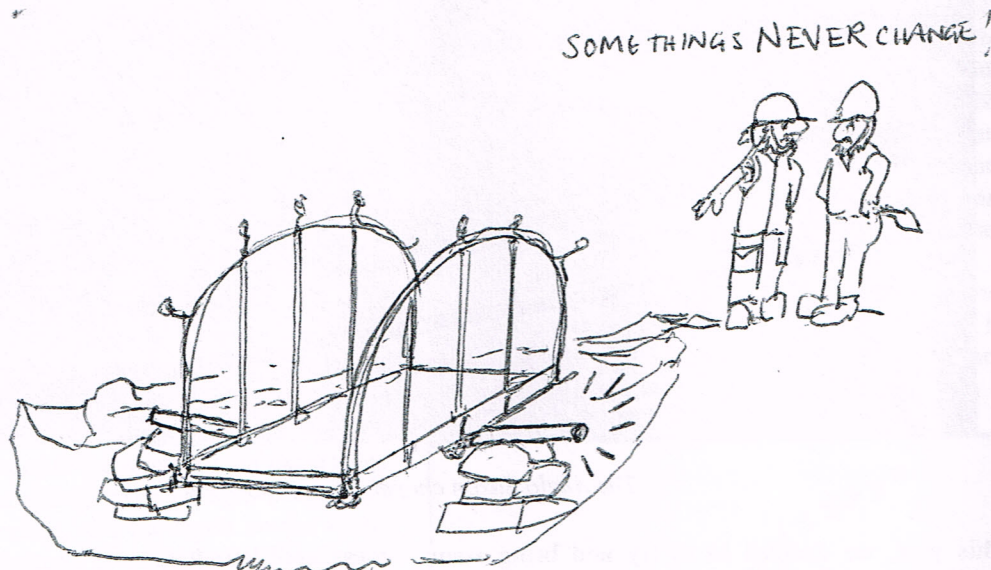
LATEST NEWS

Literally hours before this edition went to the printers we heard from The Stewardship Commission regarding our proposed work on Mr & Mrs Buckley's land north of the railway embankment along Hundhill Lane. Readers will remember that this is in fact the continuation of the Roman road 28b which we investigated in the summer of 2002. A site meeting is being arranged, and all being well we should begin work in the Spring. Members on the fieldwork list will, of course, be informed.

The rumours that a chariot burial has been discovered along the line of the new A1 close to Taythes Lane still continue. Whether the rumours reflect the truth or not, we cannot say at this stage. If

true, this will be the furthest west that such a burial has been found so far, and the only one in West Yorkshire. Aerial pictures should show a square ditch cropmark, but presumably had this been visible then the contracting archaeologists would have been able to build extra time into the contract. It brings to mind the cropmark of a circular ring-ditch discovered by our Chairman flying with Michael Leach in the mid 1970s, and only the other side of the M62.

However, the news prompted our official artist Ron Wilson to put pencil to paper and produce the cartoon reproduced below. We hope you enjoy it, and indeed, the rest of this issue.



This Newsletter is published by THE PONTEFRAC T & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, and Edited by Eric Houlder. Submissions should be sent to him at 31 Fairview, Carleton, PONTEFRAC T, WF8 3NT, UK., enclosing a SAE if you wish your text, disc(s) and/or pictures to be returned. In the absence of a SAE it will be assumed that items may be disposed of. All items published are copyright the author, and may not be reproduced, (except for review, of course,) without permission of the Editor who will seek the author's permission. Opinions, letters and articles published do not necessarily represent the views of the P&DAS unless this is stated categorically.

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