

Pont Arc

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This issue edited by the Chairman.

PAULINE CALLS IT A DAY!

Pauline Lockett, our Secretary for a quarter of a century has at last retired. To put things in perspective, Pauline has held this one vital Committee post longer than anyone has held any single post in all the Society's existence. She has been Secretary for more than half our total history, and was Secretary for several years before her replacement was born!

In case this gives a misleading picture, she is still very active and still the vital, alert person we have always known. However, with more domestic duties now falling her way she felt that it was time that someone else shouldered the burden of running the Society and arranging the programme. The occasion of her retirement from the Museum was felt to be appropriate for retirement from the Committee too. We are glad to learn that

Pauline will continue to participate in Society events, but for the first time in twenty five years, as an ordinary member. Accordingly at the last AGM we decided to split her old job, electing Natalie Elsey Secretary, to



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TRIP TO EGYPT,

part two, continued from the last issue of *PontArch*.

by Bob & Peggy Evison.

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 adorned with scenes before Hathor and Mut; the queen honouring her husband, and Ramesses, yet again, being valiant and victorious. In the vestibule and adjoining chambers there are colourful scenes of the goddess and her sacred barque. In the sanctuary there is a weathered statue of a cow, the sacred symbol of Hathor, emerging from the rock

When one looks at these monuments you cannot see how they were cut into pieces to be re-sited 200ft higher than their original location. This was a result of an international effort made by scholars, engineers, architects and photographers from over 30 countries to save what they could from the rising waters of the Lake Nasser. In all twenty three temples were saved. The only modern feature I could see at Abu Simbel were the ventilation slots left at roof level in the halls, and in moments of quiet you can hear the hum of the ventilators. The guide informed us that they used to be allowed to take visitors into the huge concrete dome which was constructed to support the reconstructed monument, this being covered with the loose material described earlier, but this opportunity has now been discontinued.

I bought a video at Abu Simbel Airport that shows the restoration works, from the cutting up of the rock structure, in some cases using hand saws, to the construction of the concrete dome before relocating the monument into its present form, a most impressive operation. The video also shows the works on other temple sites including the Temple of Philae.

It was then the return trip to Aswan to allow a spot of sun-bathing and all before lunch. After lunch we went sailing in a felucca, round Elephantine Island as far as the Aga Khan's Mausoleum to the Aswan Botanical Gardens. Within the lush vegetation there is a varied and colourful bird life, a most welcome and relaxing visit, then it was back to the boat for afternoon tea

Day 5 No early morning start – a leisurely day, after lunch we set sail down the Nile to Kom Ombo

Kom Ombo Situated between Aswan and Edfu, Kom Ombo is the ancient City of Pa-Sobek. The Temple of Sobek and Haroeris, stands on a promontory at a bend in the Nile, where in ancient times sacred crocodiles basked in the sun on the river bank. Although substantially ruined by the changing tides of the river and stonework being robbed for use on other buildings, Kom Ombo is, never the less a stunning site. It is unusual in that, architecturally everything is doubled and perfectly symmetrical along the main axis of the temple. There are twin entrances, twin courts, twin colonnades, twin hypostyle halls, twin sanctuaries and, in keeping with the dual nature of the temple, there was probably a twin priesthood. The left side of the temple was dedicated to Haroeris, or Horus the Elder, the falcon headed sky-god; the right half was dedicated to Sobek, the local crocodile headed-god who was worshipped at Al-Fayourn. The Graeco-Roman structure faces the Nile. The entrance pylons and the outer enclosive walls and part of the court were built by Augustus after 30 BC. The temple proper was actually begun by Ptolemy VI in the early 2nd Century BC, Ptolemy XIII built the outer and inner hypostyle halls; and subsequent Ptolemies and Romans contributed to the relief decoration. South of the main temple is the Roman Chapel of Hathor, dedicated to the wife of Horus, this building is used to store a collection of mummified crocodiles dug up from a nearby animal cemetery

The boat then proceeded to Edfu for an overnight stay. There was entertainment every night of the cruise, but at Edfu it was the Galabia Party. Galabia is an Egyptian style of dress, some of the passengers hired their costumes from the shop on the boat, other had bought them from the river traders at our last visit to Edfu. Peggy and I bought ours from the little shop. They cost £28 for both, English, they won't accept Egyptian money. They are made of cotton, beautifully embroidered in gold. The shop owner dressed and made us up, we looked the gear. We now have fancy dress costumes for future functions

Day 6 Visit to Temple of Horus at Edfu The site of ancient Djeba [Coptic Elbo, Arabic Edfu] was the traditional location of the mythological battle between the gods Horus and Seth; and its sandstone Ptolemaic temple, dedicated to Horus, is the largest and most completely preserved pharaonic, albeit Greek built, temple in Egypt. One of the last great Egyptian attempts at monument building on a grand scale, the structure dominates the West Bank riverside town of Edfu. The town and temple were

established on a rise above the river and thereby escaped the annual inundations by the Nile

Construction of this huge temple complex began under Ptolemy III Euergetes I in 237 BC and was completed nearly 200 years later during the reign of Ptolemy XIII

[Father of Cleopatra] in the first Century BC. In conception and design it follows the traditions of authentic pharaonic architecture, with the same general plan, scale and ornamentation, right down to the Egyptian attire worn by the Greek Kings depicted in the temple. The entrance to the temple is through a massive 120ft high pylon guarded by two huge and splendid falcons, the pylons are decorated with colossal reliefs of Pharaoh Ptolemy XIII pulling the hair of his enemies while Horus and Hathor look on. Beyond the pylon is a courtyard surrounded on three sides by a colonnade of 32 columns covered in reliefs. Before you enter the temple proper you pass through the Hypostyle Hall with its 12 enormous columns, to the left is the Hall of Consecrations where, according to the wall inscriptions, Horus poured sacred water on the King, to the right is the so called library, which features a list of books and a relief of Seshat, the goddess of writing. Once through the Hypostyle Hall there are two antechambers the first of which has 242 steps leading up to the roof and a fantastic view of the Nile. The second chamber which is beautifully decorated with a variety of scenes leads to the sanctuary of Horus, where the falcon, the god and his wife reigned and received offerings. Around the sanctuary there are a number of smaller chambers with fine reliefs and, off the Passage of Victory, a staircase leads down and passes under the outer wall of the temple to the Nilometer. This was the device that measured the river levels of the Nile and enabled the priests to predict the date of inundation's. Down there it smelt that it was now used for other, more basic, purposes.

After lunch the boat began the cruise back to Luxor

Day 7 and 8 Luxor Luxor one of the greatest cities of the ancient world, Thebes [The ancient name for Luxor] grew in importance during the Middle Kingdom and was the political capital of Egypt during much of its New Kingdom period of glory; it was then a religious capital for centuries afterwards. Reference to Thebes – as a legendary if not fabulous place occur in classical literature from Homer and continue throughout medieval literature after the city's true location and identity had been forgotten. The sheer grandeur of Luxor's monumental architecture, and its excellent state of preservation, have made this city one of the greatest tourist attractions in Egypt. Two tremendous temple complexes were established in honour of the gods. Amen, once just a local god, took on the qualities of

Ra, the sun god of Heliopolis, when Thebes became the seat of power, becoming Amun-Ra and rising to a position of ascendancy overall the multifarious gods of Egypt. With his consort Mut and his son Khonsu he formed the Thebian Triad. These temples, the Temple of Karnak and the Temple of Luxor were built over an extensive period of time and can best be understood when the visitor grasps the fact that they were constructed from the inside outwards; the original founder built sanctuaries on spots that had been venerated for centuries, and successive pharaohs added progressively more grandiose court-yards, gateways and other elaboration's

Temple of Karnak Karnak is more than a temple; it is a spectacular complex of sanctuaries, kiosks, pyramids and obelisks, all dedicated to the gods and the greater glory of Egypt's Middle and New Kingdom rulers. Everything here is on a gigantic scale; the site measures about 5000ft by 2600ft, large enough to contain 10 cathedrals. Built, added to, dismantled, restored, enlarged and decorated over a period of nearly 155 years. Karnak was the most important place of worship in all Egypt during the height of Thebian Power and was called "The Most Perfect of Places"

The temple is built on two axes [east west and north south]. The modern entrance on the west is by way of the quay built by Ramesses II that linked the temple to the Temple of Luxor and the Nile. This processional avenue [which is not now complete] is flanked by ram-headed sphinxes leads to the first pylon which is almost 130ft high.

Passing through the first pylon the visitor enters the Great Court, the largest area in the Karnak complex. To the left is the Temple of Seti II, dedicated to the Thebian Triad. The north and south walls of the Court is lined with columns. The south wall is intersected by the Temple of Ramesses III, this has the obligatory scenes of the pharaoh as glorious conqueror. In the centre of the Great Court is the one remaining column of the Kiosk of Taharqa, a 25th century Ethiopian pharaoh

The 2th pylon was originally built by Horemheb, an 18th dynasty general who was the last pharaoh of his dynasty. Ramesses II raised two colossal pink granite statues on either side of this entrance.

Beyond the 2nd pylon is the awesome Great Hypostyle Hall built by Seti I but finished by Ramesses II and dedicated to the god Amun. Covering an area of approximately 1.5 acres and is large enough to contain both St Peter's and St Paul's. The Hall is an unforgettable forest of 134 towering stone papyrus shaped pillars, the central 12 are 70ft high, the remaining 122 are 50ft high. Originally the columns supported a roof with small windows, a few of which remain. The roof and columns still have the

original colours showing. This is truly a magnificent monument, I have never seen it bettered yet on any of our visits round the ancient world – the Great Wall of China pales into insignificance.

Between the 3rd and 4th pylons built by Amenophis III is a narrow court built by Tuthmosis I. Tuthmosis I and II raised two pairs of obelisks in front of the 4th pylon, which was, during their reign, the main entrance into the temple. Only one of the four is still standing, but parts of the others lie in the court.

Beyond the 4th pylon is the oldest preserved part of the complex, its 14 columns suggesting that it was originally a small hypostyle hall. It was constructed by Tuthmosis III in his attempt to hide or eradicate all signs of the reign of his step mother Queen Hatshepsut. In this hall, around the two magnificent obelisks of Hatshepsut the vengeful king built an 82 ft high sandstone structure. The upper shaft of one of the obelisks raised by Hatshepsut to the glory of her father Amun lies on the ground by the Sacred Lake, the other still stands in front of the 5th pylon. It is the tallest obelisk in Egypt, standing over 95ft high and was originally covered in electrum [an alloy of gold and silver]

The 5th pylon was constructed by Tuthmosis I with a little space between it and the now ruined 6th pylon. This latter pylon was one of the smallest built at Karnak and was raised by the son of Tuthmosis II [Hatshepsut's husband and half brother]. In the small vestibule beyond the 6th pylon are two pink granite columns on which the emblems of Egypt are carved in high relief: the Lily of Upper Egypt on the north pillar and the Papyrus of Lower Egypt on the south pillar. Nearby are two huge statues of Amun and his female counter part, Amunet, these date from the reign of Tutankhamun.

East of the foundations of the original Temple of Amun stands the Great Festival Temple of Tuthmosis III. Of the temple's many columns, 20 are unique in Egypt in that they are larger at their peak than their base.

Between the Great Festival Temple and the eastern gate of the enclosure are the ruins of two other structures – a portico built by Tahaqa and a smaller temple built by Tuthmosis III

Against the northern enclosure wall of the Precinct of Amun is the cult Temple of Ptah, started by Tuthmosis III and finished by the Ptolemies. Access to the inner chamber is through a series of fine doorways, which lead you to two of the temple's original statues. The headless figure of Ptah, the creator god of Memphis, is in the middle chapel. To his left is the eerily beautiful bare-breasted and lioness headed black granite statue of his goddess-wife Sekhmet.

The secondary access of the Amun Temple enclosure runs south from the 3rd and 4th pylons. It

is basically a processional way, bounded on the east and west sides by walls, and sectioned off by a number of pylons that create a series of courts. Just beyond the 7th pylon, built by Tuthmosis III, is the Cachette Court, so called because of the thousands of stone and bronze statues discovered there during excavations in 1903. Some of the statues, of Middle Kingdom pharaohs, stand in front of the pylon. Nearby are the remains of two colossal statues of Tuthmosis III.

The well-preserved 8th pylon, built by Hatshepsut, is the oldest part of the north-south axis of the temple. Four of the original six colossi are still standing, the most complete being the one of Amenophis I.

The 9th and 10th pylons were built by Horemheb, who used some of the stones of a demolished temple that had been built to the east by Akhenate to the east of the 7th and 8th pylons is the Sacred Lake, where the priests of Amun purified themselves before performing their ceremonial duties in the temple. On the north-west side of the lake is the top half of Hatshepsut's fallen obelisk, and a large statue of a scarab beetle dedicated to Amenophis III, tour guides tell visitors to walk round the scarab – once for good luck, three times for marriage and seven times for a first child.

There are the remains of about 20 other chapels within the main enclosure. In a fairly good state of repair in the south-west corner is the Temple of Khonsu, the god of the moon and time, and the son of Amun and Mut. The pylon faces Euergetes Gate and the avenue of sphinxes leading to Luxor Temple, and provides access to a small hypostyle hall and ruined sanctuary. The temple was started by Ramesses III, added to by other Ramesseses, Ptolemies and also Hathor and Herihor. Herihor, like Horemheb, had pushed himself through the ranks of the army to claim power, declaring himself not only pharaoh but High Priest of Amun as well.

Nearby is the small, finely decorated Temple of Opet, dedicated to the hippopotamus-goddess Opet, mother of Osiris.

From the 10th pylon is an avenue of sphinxes, which leads to the partly excavated southern enclosure, the Precinct of Mut. The badly ruined Temple of Mut built by Amenophis III and consists of a Sanctuary, a Hypostyle Hall and two courts.

The Temple of Ramesses III stands south-west of the Sacred Lake, throughout the area are granite statues of Sekhmet, with her lioness head crowned by a solar disc. At one time 500 of these statues stood here.

Since the beginning of Egyptology and the deciphering of the hieroglyphics, Karnak has yielded endless fascinating materials to generations of archaeologists. It was, and still is, one of the wonders of the world.

Temple of Luxor The second great monument at Luxor is the Temple of Luxor, built by the New Kingdom Pharaoh Amenophis III, it is a strikingly graceful piece of architecture on the banks of the Nile. The temple is now separated from the Nile by the Al-Corniche Road, the main road that runs parallel to the Nile. The Temple of Luxor was originally joined to the Temple of Karnak by the ceremonial way flanked by sphinxes. Amenophis rededicated the temple of Amun's "Harem of the South" and retained what was left of the original sanctuary built by Tuthmosis III and Hatshepsut 100 years earlier. The temple was added to over the centuries by Tutankhamun, Ramesses II, Alexander the Great and various Romans, At one time the Arabs built a mosque in one of the interior courts on top of the earlier structures, this is still there and used for worship. Excavations have been going on since 1885, and whilst we were there extensive excavations were underway to the east of the 1st Pylon

The temple is entered from the Al-Corniche Road where you proceed along a path which was once part of the avenue of sphinxes until you come to the enormous 1st Pylon. In front of this 80ft high wall are some colossal statues of Ramesses II and a pink granite obelisk. There were originally six statues, four seated and two standing, but only two seated and the western most standing one remain. The obelisk too, was one of a pair, its counter part now stands in Paris. The back of the pylon is decorated with the victorious of Ramesses II, beyond the pylon is the Great Court of Ramesses II, this is surrounded by a double row of columns, more reliefs of his doings and several huge statues. In the western corner of the court is the original Middle Kingdom Temple of the Thebian Triad, and south of this is the 13 Century mosque of Abu al-Haggag.

Beyond the Court of Ramesses 14 papyrus columns form the colonnade of Amenophis III. The walls behind these splendid columns were decorated during the reign of Tutankhamun and celebrate the return to Thebian Orthodoxy following the wayward reign of the previous pharaoh Akhenaten.

The colonnade takes you into the Court of Amenophis III. This was once enclosed on three sides by double rows of towering columns, of which the best preserved, with their architrave's extant, are those on the east and west sides.

The Hypostyle Hall, on the south side of the Court, is the inner room of the temple proper and features four rows of eight columns each. Beyond are the main rooms of the Temple of Amun, the central chamber of which was once stuccoed by the Romans and used as a cult sanctuary. Through this chamber, on either side of which are chapels dedicated to Mut and Khoms, is an offering chapel with four columns.

Interesting inscriptions in the Birth Room, to the eastern side of the chapel shows the mortal Amenophis claimed divine status by coming up with the notion that Amun had visited his mother Muemuia in the guise of his father Tuthmosis IV with the result that he Amenophis III, was actually the god's son [smackings of the birth of Christ and Christian beliefs].

Alexander the Great rebuilt the Barque Shrine which is beyond the Offering Chapel, he added to it, the reliefs showing himself being presented to Amun. The Sanctuary of Amenophis III is the last chamber on the central axis.

Conclusion

This was the last visit of the tour and we returned to M.S. Annie, those of our party who had only come for the cruise were transferred to Luxor Airport for the flight home. From experience these tours are hard work, and you need a holiday to recover, and so as is now our practise we had booked a further 7 days stay in an hotel in Luxor. We were therefore transferred from the boat to the Hotel Sonesta St George to complete our holiday.

The Hotel Sonesta St George had the distinction of opening its doors only days before the 1997 massacre decimated tourism in Luxor. This 224-room hotel with its marble-filled halls provides a 5 star rated accommodation located on the very edge of the Nile. Our last week was supposed to be a period of relaxation, but we did get out to visit the sites in the immediate locale of the hotel: -

Luxor Museum - This great little museum on the Corniche, 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, who 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 site, 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 taxi's, the locals don't seem to treat these vehicles any better than they did the horses.

Hot-Air Balloon – We'd come all this way, so why not. Yet again an early morning start, picked up, by coach at the Hotel and transported a matter 'hundreds of yards to the bank of the Nile in front of the Winter Palace, crossed a number of moored boats, in the semi- darkness to board the ferry which would take us to the west bank. We were provided with dark, thick Egyptian coffee and sweet biscuits, all before sunrise. When we were joined by the pilots we transferred across the Nile. Then by mini-buses to the launch site – the middle of an already cropped sugar cane plantation. To witness the inflation of these huge structures is an experience, but once they are inflated we had to gain entry to the baskets suspended beneath the balloons - not easy. Once aboard the pilot boosts the gas burners, these are just above our heads, the noise and the heat are again an experience, but we started to ascend, just as the sun was rising over the Nile. Once ascending the balloon is by and large governed by the direction of the wind, but the flight path crosses villages and you can see people still in bed on the roofs of the houses. The flight path took us to the edge of the Valley of the Kings, nearly over the Temple of Queen Hatshepsut, the Colossi of Menmon, the Ramesseum and the temple complex of Medinat Habu, the two latter complexes not visited at ground

level, but worthy of another visit.

The balloon then begins its descent. because the sun is behind us you can see the shadow of the balloon on the sand below. On a balloon flight the contrast in the colour of the landscape between vegetation and desert is even more contrasting than when viewed from an aircraft, its green and then its yellow a stark line across the landform. We gradually descended and it became obvious that the pilot intended to land on the back of a truck, thus avoiding the men having to lift the basket back onto the van for transportation back to the launch site. A daunting prospect, but nevertheless achieved, but this meant that the passengers had an even more difficult task to dismount and reach solid ground; it's all in the adventure. Once on the ground we sought refuge at a small native settlement surrounded by palm trees, where we were entertained for breakfast, under the palm trees, and presented with a certificate of our flight. We then transferred back to the Nile crossing, and then to the Hotel, all in time for a second breakfast.

Egypt is an experience, the culture of the ancient sites is not of the culture of the present Arabs, I can't understand where the ancient Egyptians came from, or more importantly, where they went. The science is that of post and lintel as that of the Greeks. There are no arches in ancient Egypt. But none-the-less the sheer volume of sites to visit and the grandeur and extent leaves one amazed. The Egyptians, present day, cannot afford to maintain the monuments and therefore I can only see that the solution is to declare the whole of Egypt as "A World Heritage Site"

A YORKSHIRE ANCIENT LANDSCAPE IN PERIL

The twenty-fourth of July 1978 was a fairly average day to begin with. We had taken off from Netherthorpe airfield on the outskirts of Sheffield in the mid-morning, and headed south into North Nottinghamshire to begin with. For some reason the season was late, and in some areas the cropmarks were only just beginning to show, whereas two years before they were disappearing by the beginning of July.

My pilot was Derrick Riley, a veteran of Bomber Command (he had survived **three** Tours, and was much decorated) and one of the pioneers of archaeological aerial photography. His first published paper on the discipline appeared whilst I was still in nappies, and here I was, verging on middle age and now sitting alongside him in the cramped cockpit of a Cessna 150 shooting film as if I owned shares in

Agfa, Kodak, etc.

From North Notts we crossed into South Yorkshire, and followed the magnesian limestone belt northwards, recording cropmarks as we flew. At some point Derrick deemed it necessary to refuel, so we landed at Leeds Bradford Airport, filled up, and took our sandwiches into the crew lounge. At the side of the smartly dressed commercial aircrew we must have presented quite a sight, but no comments were heard, and after a hurried lunch we took off into an increasing wind.

This time we followed the Vale of York northwards, crossing the various rivers that make their way out of the Dales to join the Ouse as it heads towards the Humber. At one point the violent bumping caused by the wind and the constant

(Continued on page 7)

downdrafts and updrafts made me feel violently sick. I mentioned it to my pilot, who told me that he felt quite ill; I would have to fly the 'plane, and possibly land it. In terror I took over, and within minutes had totally forgotten about feeling sick as I tried to maintain height and heading. At this point Derrick made a full recovery, with the words, "That usually cures airsickness." It had!

Paralleling the A1 to the west, we saw the three Thornborough Henges near West Tanfield. I had a soft spot for this village, for as a family we had camped at the wonderful Sleningsford Watermill there on many occasions. Though the three henges are visible from the ground they cannot be seen as a group except from the air, so the scale of the prehistoric landscape took me by surprise. The cropmark effect was particularly evident on the palaeo-river channels, so I levelled a camera and shot one transparency on Agfachrome 50S Professional. Lifting my second camera, I made two exposures on B/W film. At this distance in time I cannot recall using the National Monuments Record Hasselblad, or either of Derrick's cameras, but he very likely had dozens of pictures of this landscape, and I didn't. We were at about 4000 feet, and within seconds the Hutton Moor Henge came into view, so I shot it in Monochrome only as the colour film had just reached the end. For the remainder of the afternoon we quartered the Dales recording cropmarks, until over Penhill at the head of Wensleydale we totally ran out of film.

The years passed, and so, unfortunately did Derrick (the broadsheets gave him fulsome obituaries). I had forgotten that particular sortie, until the news reached the archaeological community that the three Thornborough Henges were in danger. The land belongs to Tarmac, and they proposed quarrying the gravel from around each henge (they are each scheduled), leaving them as islands in the inevitable lake. This would destroy the complete prehistoric landscape of which they form a part. Would this happen in Wiltshire? Would it happen if you could see all the henges without an aeroplane? I think not.

A pressure group, **The Friends of Thornborough**, was formed, and a day conference was arranged in Northallerton on 27th March 2004 by a colleague of mine. I volunteered to see to the projection and supplied a screen and slide projector.

Whilst preparing for this, I sorted out my old pictures and made duplicate transparencies for the conference main speakers. Unfortunately, there are not many good colour pictures of the area before Tarmac began making real inroads, so my slide, which I used to focus and frame before the conference started, aroused real interest. Needless to say, I have donated the use of all the pictures to Newcastle



University and The Friends in the hope that they will help us stop the desecration and destruction of a unique piece of prehistory. The conference was Chaired by our President who in summing up, publicly thanked this Society (and others) for the loan of equipment used that day.

Sadly, in spite of many eminent archaeologists putting the case for preservation, Tarmac has decided to go ahead and quarry away the complete prehistoric landscape, leaving the henges as islands. The company has employed its own archaeologist to justify this action. His arguments were not well received at the conference mentioned above. Meanwhile The Friends of Thornborough are mounting a campaign to save this unique landscape. Readers are urged to protest publicly and strongly against Tarmac's wilful destruction in the name of profit. More details may be obtained from The Friends Publicity Officer on 01609 777480.

If you are interested in **The Friends of Thornborough**, you can join for nothing, but please make a donation. Their address is: 7, Beech Close, Snape, Bedale, North Yorkshire, DL8 2TP. Why not visit their website? www.friendsofthornborough.org. They meet regularly on the first Thursday of each month in the Methodist Hall, West Tanfield. Supporters are welcome.

HERE COMES THE BLUE BROOM

our new Programme Secretary introduces herself.

The April 2004 AGM of the Pontefract and District Archaeological Society gave Pauline Lockett a grand send off from her duties as Secretary and Programme organiser, a post she had been dedicated to for many years. Now there are two of us to do that job, and for my part, I look forward to researching, planning and overseeing the yearly programme of lectures and excursions. I know I am the new girl on the block, and I'm not even a local, but I have been involved over the past 20 plus years in Cumbria, doing just the same things.

I was a committee member of an archaeology group for 20 years and was responsible for planning and leading one long trip (5-8 days) each year, plus various full and half day local site visits. In 2001 I passed my Blue Badge Guiding qualification - an expensive one year part time course with written and practical exams. (A Blue Badge is an internationally recognised professional guiding qualification). I know this is not a requirement of being a Programme Secretary, but I hope to use some of my skills in route planning, timings, coach guiding etc.

At present, I have a small amount of guided walking work in Cumbria, as well as slide talks. Once I have finalised my work dates for 2005 I can confirm dates and plan the Pontarch excursions. Until then, I can give some ideas of future trips as follows:- "The Other Face of Cumbria" - a three day visit, one day of which we will travel in minibuses, to include -FURNESS ABBEY - second richest Cistercian order house in England - founded 1127; THE VILLAGE OF CARTMEL - with its 12thC Priory church and 14thC Gatehouse, race-course, listed buildings and home to THE STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING!; BARROW DOCK MUSEUM - a spectacular modern facility built over a Victorian Graving Dock; HARDKNOTT ROMAN FORT - set on England's steepest roadpass, and WALLS- the remains of a bathhouse belonging to the fort at Ravenglass; ESKDALE CORN MILL - in working order, a real gem; DUDDON IRON FURNACE - even many locals don't know about this amazingly preserved site!

A two-day visit to FLAG FEN - late Bronze Age Lake Village; WEST STOW - Anglo-Saxon village with reconstructed houses; SUTTON HOO - Anglo-Saxon ship burials, the latter two sites being former playgrounds of our Chairman!! A two-day



Janet as Campus-Director looking after American visitors to Cumbria, 2002.

visit to IRONBRIDGE GORGE - Shropshire's answer to Beamish. Day trips to:- RUFFORD ABBEY and WORKSOP PRIORY, BARNARD CASTLE and EGGLESTONE ABBEY, BEAMISH, BLYTH AND TICKHILL

Also possibly minibus one-day trips to the Peak District prehistoric sites, and the North York Moors ancient tracks and trails. I hope to produce a folder of handouts, especially for the longer trips, so exciting times are ahead for this new broom - watch this space, or call me if you have a passion to visit somewhere special! Tel. 01977 618327

Janet Niepokojszycka

PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS IN THE HERMITAGE

During May of this year, our Hermitage 'staff' arrived one day to prepare the monument for a group of visitors the following day. To their horror, they discovered that the whole Hermitage, including the vestibule, was sealed with tape and a Health & Safety notice was appended.

The very abruptness of the closure caused a near-panic situation, as advertised public openings and private parties (including one of Infirmary staff!) had to be cancelled at very short notice. One lady consultant who had to be refused admission was incandescent with rage! She was, of course, told that the closure was not the fault of the Society. Full Risk-Assessments had been done in the early nineties, but the regulations have changed considerably since then.

After a great deal of correspondence, your Chairman was informed that immediate steps were being taken to supply necessary equipment, and train all involved personnel in safety procedure. PGI Management apologised for the short notice and the disruption, assuring us that new Health and Safety regulations made the immediate closure necessary.

Throughout, both parties have striven to maintain the extremely cordial relations which have always existed between the Society and PGI Management and staff.

The whole Health and Safety setup seems rather involved, especially to those of us who have been going into the Hermitage since the 1950s. What would Ken Gardiner or Alf Ward have said?

Nevertheless, the Society is committed to fulfilling its obligations in this field, as well as in others where Health & Safety rules apply. For example, water-quality analyses were undertaken by our representatives long before the current problems surfaced.

Our representatives recently attended a Health & Safety course, kindly provided by PGI Management, and are now qualified to resume conducting the public around the facility. During this they descended into the Hermitage with the Safety Officer and were surprised to discover that the air in the Well-Chamber is considerably lacking in oxygen.

As a result, new stricter Health & Safety guidelines are now in place, to safeguard both Society personnel and the public. In addition, PGI have installed an extraction system and supplied an instrument to monitor the air. These measures may seem onerous to those of us used to the more informal ways of a previous age; However, they are very necessary in this litigious age and the Committee intends that they be adhered to strictly.

As usual, David Wilcox, Sub-committee Chairman for the Hermitage is co-ordinating responses



The Oratory steps, looking outwards. Recent recommendations by English Heritage suggest the removal of the brick pillar in this chamber.

and actions. Please channel information through him, or Society Chairman Eric Houlder.

The Society wishes to thank everyone who has helped and advised in this trying time, including John Hinchliffe of English Heritage, our President Dr P V Addyman, Janet McNaught, WYASAS, and Tony Tipton, Health & Safety Officer, PGI.

THE COMEBACK OF THE TOWTON ROSE

by Eric Houlder

It is now almost forty years since a group of Society members led by Fred Morris set out to discover whether the famous 'Towton Battlefield Roses' had survived. Even then it was reputedly close to extinction, for part of the legend stated that attempts to transplant or take cuttings would result in failure. The blooms only thrived in soil saturated in blood!

And as if they were
enchanted, not a flower may
be transplanted
From those fatal
precincts, haunted by the
spirits of the slain;
for howe-er the root you
cherish, it shall fade away
and perish,
When removed beyond
the marish of Towtons
gory plain.

Edmund Bogg.

The group of searchers included Terry Carney, Kevin Stubbs, Ruth Glover and the writer. We chose a Sunday in the summer of 1965, a Sunday that subsequently turned out to be extremely wet.

The Battle of Towton was fought on Palm Sunday, March 29th 1461. The Yorkist army led by Edward IV defeated the Lancastrians under the nominal command of Henry VI (the Duke of Somerset really commanded whilst Henry cowered in St Mary's Abbey in York) during an unseasonal blizzard. The details are well known, and need no repetition here. What may, however, come as a surprise to our readers is the legend of the battlefield roses.

By Victorian times, the battlefield was famous for a particular type of wild rose, reputed to have white petals tinged with red. Accounts differ, but they have variously been described as white streaked with red, or white splashed with red.

The famous writer Edmund Bogg in his book *The Old Kingdom of Elmet*, described them as white tinged at the tips with red, and as he is still well-regarded, I tend to believe his description. However, in his book he quotes a number of verses of poetry about the roses. These are interesting in themselves and are worth quoting here, with the proviso that varying degrees of scepticism are necessary to appreciate rather than believe literally the surfeit of poetic license:

There still wild roses
growing,
Frail tokens of the fray,
And the hedgerow green
bears witness
Of Towton field that day.



The original picture described in the text.

Or perhaps:

When the snow that fell that
morning
lay as a type and warning,
All stained and streaked
with crimson, like the roses
white and red,
And filled each thirsty
furrow with its token of the
sorrow
That wailed for many a morrow
through the mansions of the dead.

It is important to remember that in 1965 the simple

photocopy had not been invented, and Bogg's book had not yet been reprinted, so that Fred was going by memory and a few hand-written notes in his search for the surviving roses.

Nevertheless we combed the battlefield with no luck, until close to the *Crooked Billet* we found a rose bush bearing the easily-recognisable blooms deep in a roadside hedge. The rain was so bad that we deemed it dangerous (to the equipment) to try to photograph them *in-situ* so we cut some (unthinkable today, naturally) and carried them across the field to Lead Church where we were able to use flash to photograph them. I used that slide for almost forty years, until it occurred to me to go back and see if the bush had survived.

In May of 2004 I parked on the lay-by that was the main road forty years ago, and to my delight found that bush thriving, with another close by. Modern traffic makes it somewhat dangerous to approach, for the roses are off the lay-by and about sixty metres towards the *Crooked Billet*. However, it was easy enough to dodge the motor bikes and cars, diving on to the verge when necessary, and take some modern pictures, still using film for its archival qualities.



Modern picture of Towton Battlefield Roses, on the very same bush from which we cut our specimens forty years ago. I hope that monochrome reproduction suffices to give an idea of the character of this bloom.

These will replace the original of forty years ago.

Returning to Pontefract, I counted many other bushes bearing the same roses on the approaches to Towton, and on the battlefield itself. It looks as if the dangers of modern traffic, together with modern attitudes to conservation have conspired to save the Towton Rose from extinction.

NEW SYSTEMS & ORIENTAL GUESTS IN THE HERMITAGE.

Following the provision of new risk assessments, warning notices and air-quality monitoring systems, we were able to open the Hermitage on the Sunday of the Liquorice Fair weekend. Then, as a result of a request from Paula McNeil of the Town Centre Management, we had a special opening for the VIP visitors from the confectionary company in Japan on the Monday evening, 12th July.

In spite of language difficulties and large numbers, this was very successful, and in addition

demonstrated at first hand the extreme courtesy of Japanese people. Our new systems worked very efficiently and our team soon became accustomed to working it.

The pictures on page 14 show David Wilcox using the air-quality meter, Bill Booth with guests in the Oratory, and the Japanese businessmen/ woman at our sales table in the vestibule.

Members wishing to assist in the Hermitage should contact David at any Society meeting.

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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CIVIL WAR SIEGE WORK FOUND

Most old Pontefract people will have seen, at some point, the framed copies of the enlarged siege plan which used to hang in pubs around the town. I remember one in *The Hope & Anchor*, seen whilst delivering milk for my grandfather in the forties or fifties. It certainly aroused my interest, whilst the intensive course in local topography supplied free by said grandfather, has been of inestimable value in actually tracing the siege works.

In 1958 I purchased a copy of *The Sieges of Pontefract Castle*, by RHH Holmes, from John, his current descendant, and was able to read of his ancestor's topographical work tracing the siege works which were still extant in the Nineteenth century.

Early morning light, frost and mist certainly helped me to see where ancient digging had left traces, including a trench now built over in Monkhill.

Alf Ward, a Founder-Member, delighted in telling we younger members of a Civil War dugout found on the crest of Baghill by house builders before the war. Research in *The Sieges...* confirmed what I had always assumed, that the hedge lining the present gardens about Baghill Station is the very same hedge which existed there during the sieges, and which was used as shelter by Parliamentary troops. A pupil who lived in one of those houses brought me an iron roundshot dug up in the garden.

An early aerial sortie using Infrared colour film, and with Michael Leach as pilot, showed up an actual siege-fort on Baghill, and we published this both in our own *Pontefract Archaeological Journal* and briefly in YAS and CBA journals.

All this made me and my contemporaries in the Society aware of the Civil War as something not very long since; its traces were less evident than those of the Second World War, but just as real, and of more importance to the town.

Those of us who dug with the West Yorkshire team on Tanners' Row may remember that we excavated a trench with wheel-ruts in it going from the Castle to All Saints, and actually mentioned in Drake's Diary of the sieges. Later, West Yorkshire diggers found this much higher up the hill nearer the East gate of the castle.

With this background, it is hardly surprising that I became rather excited when Steve Coulson (Castle Steve!) rang one morning to tell me that ARCUS had found part of a siege work in the old Arriva Depot at the bottom of Northgate. Loading up my cameras, kept constantly ready for just such eventualities, I rushed to visit the scene. The Young woman in charge allowed me to have a look, and take pictures, which I gratefully did.

The picture below is reproduced with thanks to



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The picture below is reproduced with thanks to ARCUS. It shows the bank of a siegework on its tail-face; the side facing away from the enemy, in this case the castle. I have included sufficient background for readers to place the spot exactly. Reference to any of the siege plans will confirm that this work is easily within range of the keep and Piper Tower, even for the wildly inaccurate muskets then in use. In confirmation, a number of lead shot were recovered by the team.

It was a real privilege to see this relic of the days when Pontefract was the last garrison on mainland Britain to hold out for the King.

With all the development work going on, it is only a matter of time before other siegeworks come to light. Let us hope that they are all as well excavated as this one was.

WINWAEDFIELD ANNIVERSARY THIS NOVEMBER 15th.

655 *Oswiu killed Penda at Winwidfeld, and thirty of the royal kin with him, and some were kings. One of them was Aethelhere, brother of Anna, king of the East Anglians. From the beginning of the world, five thousand eight hundred and fifty years had passed...*

This extract from the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* tells of a great battle that was fought exactly 1350 years ago this November 15th. The apparent discrepancy in the dating is because at that time, years were often regnal years which changed in accordance with coronations rather than true calendar years.

Older readers may have read that the battle of the **Winwaedfield** took place on Whinmoor near Seacroft, Leeds. However, recent research has placed it where the A639 crosses the river Went near Thorpe Audlin. This 're-location' answers some previously awkward questions, not the least of which was that fact that Whinmoor is several miles west of the Roman road 28b/c, which at that period was the only viable route between the Northumbrian capital York and the Mercian border which was somewhere near Bawtry.

The protagonists were Oswy, Christian King of Northumbria, and Penda of Mercia. The latter is today seen as the last of the Pagans, fighting a doomed rearguard action against the new religion. Contemporaries, however, would not see the war in such black and white terms; indeed, many of Penda's allies were Christians themselves, like Aethelhere of East Anglia.

Oswy's capital was York and it is clear that Penda was aiming to attack and destroy the city, hoping to provoke a battle with Oswy. As the old pagan had never lost a battle with the Northumbrians he felt quite confident of the outcome. Oswy, in contrast, would aim to defend each river crossing along the Roman road, namely the Idle at Bawtry, the don at Doncaster and the Aire at Castleford. The Wharfe bridge at Tandcaster would be his final line of defence before falling back on the Roman defences of York.

However, Oswy was badly outnumbered, so he tried to use diplomacy, bribery and Divine intervention to avoid battle if possible. The diplomacy failed, the bribe was apparently accepted but without preventing further enemy advance, so Oswy dedicated a number of estates to God, promised his infant daughter to God too, and prepared for battle.

By this stage, Penda was well into Yorkshire and Oswy finally met him and his allied force just below the *Fox & Hounds* at Thorpe Audlin. Penda advanced down the hill from the site of the present pub and through the ruins of the RB settlement (which we dug there twenty years ago), whilst Oswy defended the north bank.

Against contemporary expert opinion, the Northumbrians won, and the majority of the allied army was massacred in the rising water. Penda and his followers found nameless graves in the fields near Standing Flat Bridge. Interestingly, the fact that Aethelhere's body was never recovered enabled the discoverers of the Sutton Hoo Ship Burial (No.1) to

(continued on page 15)

NEW SYSTEMS & ORIENTAL GUESTS IN THE HERMITAGE, continued from page 11.



(continued from page 13)

speculate that the 'empty grave' was a cenotaph to him. Later work directed by Dr R Bruce-Mitford and Paul Ashbee was able to prove the existence of human remains in the ship and narrow down the dating to 624/5 making its occupant probably Raedwald. A number of P&DAS members took part in that dig, providing a local link between the Wuffingas (The royal house of East Anglia) and Thorpe Audlin.

Amongst the new religious foundations that Oswy dedicated was Whitby Abbey, where only a few years later Oswy chaired the Synod which put England on the Roman Catholic Christian (as opposed to the Celtic Christian) route until Henry VIII's time.

So, our local battle was instrumental in guiding the religious course of the country for almost a millenium.

When the Society dug the site twenty years ago the only identifiable remains were Roman, though intriguing hoof-prints in the shoulder of the road could have been sub-Roman. Sadly, there is no monument to this great victory, just as Wentbridge downstream has little other than an obscure blue plaque to commemorate its most famous inhabitant, Robin Hood.

However, when we visit the *Fox & Hounds* (and have you tried their Wednesday evenings Fish Nights? Two courses and a bottle of wine for two for £15 - amazing value, and massive portions too!) we may permit ourselves a thought about that long ago battle.



Raedwald's Grave at Sutton Hoo during excavation in 1967. This was thought to have been Aethelhere's until the discovery of human remains shortly after this picture was taken by the Chairman. Reproduction Courtesy the late Dr R Bruce-Mitford & the Trustees of the British Museum.

FOUL DEEDS & SUSPICIOUS DEATHS IN PONTEFRACT & CASTLEFORD, by Keith Henson.

WHARNCLIFFE BOOKS, p/b £9-99
ISBN 1 903425 54 9

As Editor of several newsletters, I receive quite a few books for review. Many are passed on to colleagues, but fancying a change in reading matter I kept this one to review myself.

Having committed myself, I looked forward to an enjoyable evening of recent local history, and was disappointed!

This is not a totally bad book. Indeed, with a little careful proof-reading, and competent photography, it would make an excellent light local history book, but in its present state it is definitely **not ready** to achieve print.

The theme is original, and it is fair to say that I have not read any of the stories previously. It is also nice to read about areas one knows as they were over a century ago, or even longer since. However, the

research involved is nullified, and the reader's pleasure is ruined by poor writing which a conscientious proof-reader would have corrected immediately. One example will suffice: 'He found Copley sat against a fence, his chest shot through and loosing considerable amounts of blood.' Colloquialisms like 'sat' instead of 'sitting' may be acceptable (to some) in informal speech, but grate considerably in print, and are repeated frequently in most of the stories. There are too many spelling errors, and in addition, many of the modern photographs display leaning verticals; an amateur failing that should not see print.

Sadly, we cannot recommend this book, much as we would have liked to. Wharncliffe must pay for a proof-reader who understands English.



deal with the minutes and correspondence, and Janet Niepokojczycka as Programme Secretary.

Two presentations were held, a small informal one after the final ordinary meeting of the season, and a grander one after the AGM. Our President, Dr Peter Addyman was unable to preside, and sent sincere apologies, so Vice-President Bill Booth thanked Pauline formally and presented her with the lovely gifts, some of which are illustrated here.

Following the ceremony, everyone proceeded to the back of the room where the Society Ladies had put out a splendid buffet. Our thanks to all who contributed.

Needless to say, we all thank Pauline for the work she has done, and wish her a long and happy retirement. We look forward to seeing her at future meetings and on excursions.

