

PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



PontArc

Third Series. Number 48. Spring 2009

WATERLOO CONTROVERSY

Back in 1965, the Society was fortunate to have Harry Battye as a member. For those unlucky enough not to have known Harry, it should be said that he was a 'one off,' a real individual. Basically a historian with an interest in landscape history and archaeology, Harry's enthusiasm was infectious.

One day in 1965 he turned up on my doorstep with the news that he had discovered the resting place of the Waterloo Monument. At that time all that I knew about it was that it had been erected shortly after Waterloo (1815) by a local worthy who wished to commemorate his son who had been killed in the battle. I knew also that it had been demolished during the construction of the Chequerfield estate shortly after the last war.

That morning I grabbed my camera and was taken by Harry to a yard off Churchbalk Lane, where the stone goblet and its plinth were resting amongst piles of junk. I quickly took a picture which lay forgotten and unused in my files until someone claimed to have rediscovered it in the *Pontefract & Castleford Express*.

At this point I scanned the picture, and also the photograph of the anonymous painting of the monument, also in my files. I sent these to the paper with a description of how Harry really did find the monument's top. According to the 'finders,' they had contacted a 'local historians' group.'



The anonymous painting of the complete monument. Harry was instrumental in having the remains placed in the grounds of the retirement home on the Circle.

At this point I checked with the Pontefract Local History Society, and with The Friends of Pontefract Castle, these being the only reputable 'historians' groups besides ourselves. No enquiries had been made to either, begging the question, whom did these people consult? Of course, this little mystery hides the true problem, that being the fact that this Society is no longer automatically consulted. It could be said that with the West Yorkshire Archaeological Advisory Service just a 'phone call away, many of the consultancy functions of P&DAS have been removed. If this is the case, why was WYAAS not consulted?

With these factors in mind your Committee has initiated a series of actions to raise the Society's profile. Please help us by seizing any opportunity to mention the Society to non-members. In the meantime, a picture of the monument's goblet and plinth, and one of Harry himself are shown here.

oOo

BOOK REVIEWS

Azincourt.

Bernard Cornwell.

Harper-Collins, £18-99.

Azincourt is of course the proper name of the village near where the famous battle of Agincourt was fought in October 1415. Apparently, in Medieval French the letter 'z' was pronounced much as we pronounce the letter 'g'.

Having spent several days and nights on the battlefield, your reviewer obtained this novel at the first opportunity. Sadly it was not soon enough to be able to review it 'in situ,' but shortly afterwards whilst the topography was still fresh in mind.

For two summers running your reviewer has explored the field of Agincourt, and even slept on the spot where the Duke of York died - probably of a coronary as there was no mark on his body, and he was notably overweight.

The book is intensely enjoyable, with lots of authentic period detail. It follows an English archer from becoming an outlaw (for striking a priest) to France as a mercenary, and later as one of Henry V's archers.

There are one or two inaccuracies, but as these mistakes are often repeated by more reputable historians than Cornwell, he can perhaps be excused. One of them is the attribution of victory to SS Crispin and Crispinian. In actual fact, Henry gave the credit to SS John of Beverley and Bridlington. That is why, on his honeymoon tour he left his bride in Pontefract and went on pilgrimage to the two shrines.

For those wishing to absorb history with much period detail and a thrilling plot, this is highly recommended. Please note that the price is also fictitious. It was available on Amazon for about half this sum!

Bloody Old Britain.

Kitty Hauser,

Granta, £16-99.

This book is subtitled: *OGS Crawford and the Archaeology of Modern Life.*

Frankly, I was disappointed, hoping to find out much more about Crawford, who invented archaeological aerial photography and was

a mentor to many of our earliest members.

For a book about a photographer, the images are spoiled by being reproduced on ordinary paper, and too often far too small.

The personal details are too rarely included. It is known that Crawford was a solitary character who preferred to work alone, but far too little was said about this or about the reasons for it.

He was also well-known as a cat person, but nothing is said about this either.

Much is made of his Marxism, in an age before the atrocities of Stalin were known. Like all sensible people he abandoned these beliefs when the truth became known.

I hoped that Hauser would fill me in on his personal life, but perhaps insufficient evidence survives to expound on this at length. Much was lost when his office was blitzed, including much personal information.

Again, the price is very optimistic for the book trade, as this was also available from Amazon at huge discount.



EDITORIAL

Much has happened since our last issue. Perhaps the most important in this context is the upgrading of the editorial computers. For the first time since the acquisition of the Amstrad twenty-four years ago, I feel that I am now at the cutting edge of technology again. This means that I am using windows Vista rather than Windows 3.1.

One thing has not changed, and that is the paucity of submitted material. Please, send articles, news items and pictures to me. For submission formats, see the usual box of requirements.

One day last spring, the telephone rang. Mrs Editor informed me that Michael Wood was on the 'phone. "Where have I heard that name before?" she asked just before she was knocked down in the rush.

It turned out that Michael (yes, it really **was** that one) was researching something local and needed aerial pictures to prove a point. The ones in question were taken thirty odd years ago when member Michael Leach and your Editor shot some of the first infrared colour pictures ever taken in an archaeological civilian context. Until his paper is published I cannot divulge the nature of the research, but it certainly galvanised me to start scanning some quite old pictures.

A comment that he made caused me to re-evaluate my impressions of him, gained entirely from television and his books. I mentioned Barnsdale Bar, and followed by saying, "Of course, you will not know it." "Yes I do," he replied. "I worked in Doncaster for several years."

The past year has been a Dark Ages year in the Editorial household, quite apart from the Michael Wood input. In the summer I was lucky enough to see an advanced copy of Tony Wilmott's report on the Booths dig of a quarter century ago - yes! Again I cannot divulge too much, but it seems that Pontefract was a Saxon minster site.

Discussing all this with Dr Sam Newton, a Harley-Davison-riding historian, I was reminded that this is the Seventieth Anniversary of the discovery of the Sutton Hoo Ship. In view of the Society's connection with the site I described the pictures of the final days of the dig there, and was promptly roped in to deliver a Dayschool in Mrs Pretty's house in early June.

Member Tony Wilmott is not only a very important archaeologist with English Heritage, but Editor of *Research News*. The latest issue is almost completely taken up with the work on Silbury Hill in Wiltshire, and was necessitated by the partial collapse of the top of the mound. What has this to do with *PontArc*, you

may ask? In fact three of our members participated in the '60s dig there, and another current member was asked by Richard Atkinson to supervise the work on the area that has now fallen in. Unable to go, his place was taken by another member, Ken Wilson. Ken and his wife Peggy sent out 'Silbury Christmas Cards;' the front of one is shown below..



Our lead article mentions the problems of maintaining a high profile, or failing to, in this case. One of the solutions is to promote our website as the automatic place where anyone would go to for information.

Our Webmaster is Jane Hawkins and she has been busy over the years keeping up the quality and the information. She will shortly be updating it with the next programme, so please visit it to keep up with events in your Society.

Elizabeth Love has recently been appointed to coordinate visits to the town, Castle and Hermitage. If anyone contacts you as a member to arrange a visit, please refer them to Elizabeth, whose details will be on the back of the next Programme/Membership card. Sadly, we have lost a stalwart and knowledgeable member, Jane Dawson recently. A full appreciation will be found elsewhere in this issue.

Finally, may I draw your attention to the missing item on the current card:

THE HISTORY OF HARDCASTLE CRAGS AND GIBSON MILL, By Trevor Moody,

On April 17th 2009 beginning, as usual, at 7-15pm.

AN ACCIDENT AT FERRYBRIDGE

The Times, Feb 23rd 1826.

OVERTURN OF THE ROCKINGHAM COACH – [from the *Leeds Patriot*] – we announced in our last number that the above-mentioned coach was overturned at Ferrybridge on Wednesday the 8th instant, and though we then said that no lives were lost, we have since been informed that a Mr Samuel Bailey, a druggist at Snaith, and an outside passenger, died on Friday, the 10th instant, in consequence of the injuries he received.

A Coroner's inquest was held on the body on Saturday, and the first witness called was Ann Ward. She said that, in consequence of the death of Samuel Bailey, by the overturning of the Rockingham coach, she was sent for to lay out and examine the body. The only marks or bruises she found were on the left shoulder and arm, down to the fingers, which were much swollen; and the body down to the short ribs, on the same side, was much discoloured.

Esther Taylor, wife of the keeper of the toll-gate at Ferrybridge, disposed that when the Rockingham passed through the gate, she thought the pace was quicker than usual. She went to the door to look at it, just after it had passed, and when she came in sight it was in the act of overturning. The horses, for anything witness observed to the contrary, were quite steady. William Carter, a grocer at Ferrybridge, was looking through his shop-window at the time the coach passed – it was going at a great rate, the leaders were galloping, but the wheel-horses were not.

Robert Thwaites, a surgeon of Brotherton, was in his house at Ferrybridge when he heard a great crash, and on coming near the turnpike gate, he observed the coach overturned, and several of the passengers seemed to be much injured. He administered what relief he could at the instant, and on the removal of the deceased to The Greyhound, he found there was a dislocation of the left shoulder, which he reduced, and soon afterwards the arm began to swell; he then ordered leaches to be applied, and on the removal of his patient to bed, great irritability came on. Witness administered a small quantity of laudanum, which rendered the deceased more composed.

On visiting him the next morning, he found him considerably worse, and so great was the delirium produced that it required two men to keep him in bed. In course of conversation with the deceased he had learnt from him that he had been in the habit of taking opium, and from this custom witness was of the opinion the irritability of his body was so much increased, as to render him very unfit to resist the effect of the accidental bruises he had sustained.

Isaac Clegg, horsekeeper to The Rockingham, was in attendance when the coach arrived from Doncaster. He put four horses to it. The offside leader was a young mare, and very *fickle*. They all started well, and continued so as long as he saw them. Mr. Lee, coach-proprietor, said that William Settle, the coachman, was a sober good-tempered man, and had been in his service four years as post-boy and coachman. His parents, who are respectable, he had known for 40 years. The Jury returned a verdict of "Manslaughter" against Settle, the coachman, for the transfer of whom to York Castle, to abide the issue of his trial, the Coroner signed his warrant. Mr. Lee offered bail to the amount of 1,000L. For the coachman, but this not being aailable offence, the Coroner could not accept the offer.



THE GREYHOUND INN, FERRYBRIDGE.

We thought that members would enjoy reading this, a reminder of the hazards of coach travel. The picture is from Thomas Bradley's The Old Coaching Days in Yorkshire, 1889.

Editor's note. The *Rockingham* was one of the best known of the stage coaches. It ran from 1781 until 1841, pretty well the whole of the coaching era, from London to Leeds. It was so popular that its proprietors also ran branch services under the same name, one from Leeds to Bradford Skipton and Halifax, and another from Leeds to York and Hull.

If members would like to know more of the coaching days, please ask the Editor for more similar articles.

THE PREHISTORY OF A SUPERMARKET CHAIN

The recent death of Peter Asquith, co-founder of ASDA, led to numerous reminiscences. Memory took me back to the days immediately after the war when, with a stranger the whole family moved from Ferrybridge to Pontefract. The stranger, was of course my father who had been abroad in the RAF (with a spell on assignment in the Fleet Air Arm too) for pretty well the whole duration. I knew that he had had at least one leave, for my brother was born in 1942, and father later reminisced about hitching a lift home and back from the Middle East in a variety of allied aircraft.

Our first house was in Bond Street, and quite coincidentally, a hundred yards from Asquith's Butchers shop on Bondgate. My father was a partner in a local garage, but later took on grandfather's dairy business, which we initially ran from the Bond Street house.

Mr Asquith the butcher was a larger than life hearty sort of man, though not physically big, and because of the fact that both ran local businesses the families got on well. He laughed when we related how father had stopped regular thefts of orange drink by doctoring a bottle with a large dose of laxative and leaving it in a prominent position. Imagine that today? We would have to fill in numerous risk assessments, and chance being sued into the bargain! But it worked, probably spectacularly too judging by the dose.

Peter, his son lived across the road from us in Bond Street, but long before this he had worked as a milk-boy for Grandfather.

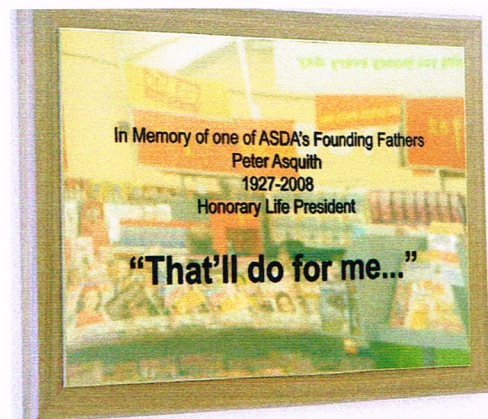
I left there when I married, but Mr Asquith remained in his shop until he retired. Peter opened one of the first supermarkets *The Queens*, in nearby Castleford in the early sixties, but for some reason never opened a branch of Asda in Pontefract until just before his death. Following a 'makeover' of the Pontefract store a commemorative plaque was placed in the foyer.

Having to go to Aldi one Sunday morning I decided to take my camera and record the places where the Asda originator came from. To my surprise there were no blue plaques in evidence, and time had changed almost everything, not always for the better. There is a large prominent bus-stop immediately outside Asquith's shop, now a private house, whilst the houses on Bond Street, not surprisingly, have been modernised and are now certainly much more 'des res' than they were just after the war.

Shouldn't the original business be commemorated with a plaque, though?



From this (above), to this (below). Surely there should be a blue plaque on the original shop.



MEMBERS' MISCELLANY

CASTLEFORD & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

In the United Reformed Church Hall, Back Bank St.

21st April. **The Tom Puddings' Farewell**, Eileen & Goff Sherburn.

19th May. **The Transatlantic Connection**. John Henderson.

16th June. **Coaching Memories; stage coaches along the Great North Roads**. Eric Houlder.

21st July. **A Manly Race**. Anne Batchelor.

15th September. **Looking for my Granddad in France**. Gordon Claughton.

20th October. **The Story of the Black Dyke Mills Band**. John Clay.

17th November. **Liquorice - everything you have ever wanted to know**. Richard Van Riel.

1st December. **AGM**. Members only

All meetings begin at 7-30pm. There is wheelchair access and everyone is welcome.

PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

In Pontefract Museum

March 7th. **Where in Pontefract?** Norman Dale.

April 4th. **AGM**. Followed by **The Church of England in Pontefract**. Hubert Pickard.

Meetings begin at 2-00 pm.

Please note that a new programme begins in October.

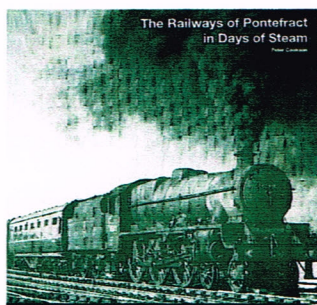
We include these details for the convenience of members. Please note, however, that the P&DAS cannot be held responsible for changes in other groups' programmes.

Members wishing to find out more details of the societies here are urged to contact the relevant secretaries:

Castleford: Miss M Lound.

Pontefract: Miss E Love.

Both are also members of P&DAS and are usually present at our meetings.



Pontefract Groups Together is an umbrella organisation which represents all voluntary groups in Pontefract, including of course P&DAS. Its latest publication is the superb *The Railways of Pontefract in Days of Steam*, by our own Peter Cookson. Peter deserves congratulations for this excellent book. As he is the leading expert in the field, it is difficult to find someone to review his book, and the present writer can only commend it strongly to all, whether interested in railways or not. Wearing the Editorial photographic hat, the editor recommends this to photographers too, for Peter has been shooting railways for well over fifty years. His skill with PhotoShop in bringing out the best in these old images is to be commended too. Highly recommended.



May we remind members that if they were paid up during 2007/8, and did not collect their copy of our commemorative book on the history of the Society, then they should ask the Secretary/Treasurer for their copy.

Fully illustrated, largely in colour, the book details the beginnings on a tomb-chest in All Saints' Churchyard, and goes on to discuss the work and activities of members until the final dig of the fifty years, that of the world's first bird-watching hide, now on a golf course in Wakefield.

In between, the Society has collected two national awards and has as members some of the country's leading archaeologists, from our President Dr Peter Addyman to Tony Wilmott of English Heritage.

Jo Heron, Hon Secretary of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society informs me that the YAS has obtained the remaindered copies of Derrick Riley's *Yorkshire's Past from the Air*, 1988. These are being sold (given really!) at £5 per copy. If you would like a copy, please contact Jo at YAS HQ, *Claremont*, Clarendon Road, Leeds preferably on Saturday mornings.

JANE DAWSON 1953-2008

Jane was a private person, who did not feel comfortable being photographed, so the photograph, right, showing her helping John Hudson to bring about the miracle of turning two lumps of clay, handled by young archaeologists, into *salt ladies*, was taken while she listened to the woes of some of the would be sculptors. In a way this picture shows Jane's caring nature, quietly listening, always willing to help, never waiting to be asked, and always reassuring people as they tried to be dextrous in areas where they lacked knowledge and skill. Jane and I first met at Woodhall where she was finds



assistant to the archaeological team, working from a shed which you had to be careful when approaching as Jane regularly hurled pot washing water into the undergrowth from the doorway. A proud Mum of twins, Paul and Anthony, who became members of Pontefract YAC, she soon offered to help run the group, where she not only showed meticulous research skills in planning meetings on ancestry, Medieval life and cookery through the ages, she shared her knowledge with our YACs, by taking them in to the library and setting them on the road to discovery.

My friend Jane came to work as a secretary at Pinderfields Hospital where, we often shared lunch breaks discussing tapestry and beadwork, knitting and reading, in between putting the world to rights. The recreation of the Queens tapestries at Stirling Castle were on Jane's wish list of things to do and see, but instead she had to make do with photographs, postcards and descriptions of how the work was being carried out, as her illness placed many constraints upon her daily life.

I like to think of Jane sitting in her sunny front room in the company of her cats while listening to one of her favourite pieces of classical music and stitching one of her own design pieces of cross stitch; happy with life and never railing at what we might perceive as life's injustices.

My friend Jane!

This appreciation and picture by Dr Janet McNaught.

Our Programme Secretary has added the following: Jane was a lady of many and varied interests, from equestrianism, via embroidery, cross-stitch, beadwork and gardening to the re-enactment group La Guard Imperiale. She was courageous and stoical about her illness, and always a good listener.

Janet Niepokojczycka.

Finally, may I as Editor and Chairman extend my condolences and those of the Society, to her sons, Paul and Anthony.

PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Application for membership/Renewal Please delete accordingly. 2009/10
Subscription rates (please circle): Student/OAP £5-00. Adult £6-00. Family £10-00.



Name.....(Please print)

Address.....

..... Postcode.....

Telephone (including full dialling code):.....

Mobile..... Email.....

I would/would not (delete as appropriate) like to be included on the fieldwork register.

Membership No.
Office use only.

Please forward with the appropriate remittance to the Treasurer, Mr R Evison, 55 Hardwick Rd., PONTEFRACT, WF8 3QY. Please enclose a stamped, addressed envelope for the return of your membership card.

PONTEFRACT & DISTRICT ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

PROGRAMME 2009-10

All meetings are held in the Lecture Room of Pontefract Museum at 7-15 prompt. None-members are admitted at a cost of £2 per meeting.

April 17th. **The History of Hardcastle Crags & Gibson Mill.** Trevor Moody.

April 24th. **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING.** Members only.

NEW SEASON

October 16th. **Britain's Roman Amphitheatres.** Tony Wilmott.

November 20th. **Potions & Lotions; medicine & make-up in the 16th and 17th centuries.** Muriel Tucker.

December 18th. **Tunisia – land of mosaics.** Simon Tomson.

January 15th. **THE DON LODGE MEMORIAL LECTURE.**
Dark Age Routes through Pontefract. Eric Houlder.

February 19th. **Lincoln from Roman Times to the 21st Century.** Tony Burkitt.

March 19th. **Lead Mining and Smelting in the Grassington Area.** Brian Mason.

April 16th. **Through Glass Brightly – English Stained Glass Windows.** Margaret Curry.

April 23rd. **Annual General Meeting.** Members only.

HERMITAGE OPENINGS.

The hermitage is open from 2-00pm until 4-00pm. Visitors are asked to meet outside the Southgate entrance of the Pontefract General Infirmary (adjacent to the blue plaque). All prospective visitors are requested to wear stout shoes and carry a reliable torch. Conditions apply, and it may be necessary to refuse admittance or even close the Hermitage.

16th May 2009.

13th June 2009.

11th July 2009.

1st August 2009 (Yorkshire Day). 22nd August.

12th September 2009.

The Society often hosts distinguished visitors in the Hermitage. Here Mick Aston of Time Team is shown around my David Wilcox.



The Society is constrained by both Health and Safety regulations, and insurance conditions. Persons having mobility problems should check with the Hermitage Team Leader (01977 707728) before travelling. Parties should book with the Society Visits Co-ordinator. Details on the Society website.

SOCIETY CONTACTS

Chair: 01977 702995. Email:
erichoulder@yahoo.com
Secretary/Treasurer: 01977 798264
Programme: 01977 618327

Field Director: 01977 618327
Hermitage: 01977 707728
Visits Co-ordinator: 01977 792128
Webmaster: jane.hawkins@virgin.net