

# PONTARC

Pontefract & District Archaeological Society

## SPECIAL LOCKDOWN ISSUE, OCTOBER 2020

Dear Members,

We on the Committee have felt for some time that we should be in touch with you to fill you in on the latest news, of which there is very little. Obviously fieldwork has had to be curtailed, and much research also. However, we fully intend to continue everything once restrictions are lifted. With luck we shall meet again physically in January 2021. Until then, stay well, and enjoy our programme via Zoom.

### THE NEW PROGRAMME BEGINNING SEPTEMBER 2020

**Please be aware that meetings are subject to cancellation at short notice in the current situation**

All meetings are held in the Central Methodist Church, Newgate, Pontefract WF8 1NB, unless when otherwise noted, and commence at **7-15 prompt**. There is usually adequate parking on site. Non-members are welcome at a charge of £3 on the door.

#### 2020

- September 18<sup>th</sup> Dr Steve Sherlock,,  
**STRETHOUSE (North Yorkshire coast) BEFORE THE SAXONS. [Held on Zoom.](#)**
- October 16<sup>th</sup> Barbara Phipps,  
**CHARLES WATERTON, WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE? [Held on Zoom.](#)**
- November 20<sup>th</sup> Chris Helme,  
**A POSTCARD FROM THE PAST – THE RISE AND FALL OF THE SUNNYVALE PLEASURE GARDENS, HIPPERHOLME. [To be held on Zoom.](#)**
- December 4<sup>th</sup> Janet Niepokojczycka, Society Programme Secretary,  
Note change of lecture: **BONNIE PRINCE CHARLIE. [To be held on Zoom.](#)**

#### 2021

- The Distinguished Past Members Memorial Lecture.**
- January 15<sup>th</sup> Eric Houlder, Society Chairman  
**SIXTY THREE YEARS PHOTOGRAPHING ARCHAEOLOGY: SITES, SITUATIONS, PERSONALITIES, AND PICTURES. [Probably to be held on Zoom.](#)**
- February 19<sup>th</sup> Kenneth Brookes,  
**THE MAURICE DOBSON MUSEUM & HERITAGE CENTRE, DARFIELD.**
- March 19<sup>th</sup> Jane Abramson,,  
**KIRKSTALL ABBEY; A VIRTUAL TOUR.**
- April 16<sup>th</sup> Glennis Whyte,  
**THE HOUSE BUILT ON LOVE AND CHOCOLATE; GODDARDS (Nat Trust) IN YORK. [Followed by the AGM, the latter for members only.](#)**

# THE GLOVER PICTURE

How an important local image was rescued and restored

by Eric Houlder, Chairman of PontArc, Editorial Advisor to *Heritage Photography*,  
Past Chair of CBA Yorkshire.



*The Glover Picture, as restored.*

Commonly acknowledged as the best surviving photograph of liquorice harvesting, the Glover Picture as it is now known, has a chequered history and indeed almost did not survive its re-discovery.

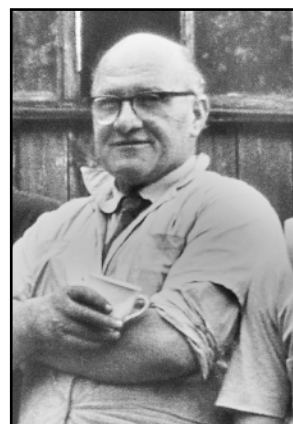
Its story begins in the late Nineteenth or early Twentieth century when the land to the left of Bluebell Steps was a market garden and orchard owned by the Glover family. One of its members was a keen photographer using the then popular glass plates in a hand or stand camera, like the one illustrated. He had a large wooden hut built as a darkroom and store, in which he developed and printed his images, one of which depicted liquorice harvesting. The plates were stored in vertical racks, and probably included other priceless records like the picture in question.

Following his death, the hut was used as a garden shed, and the occupier began scrubbing the photographic emulsion off the plates to use them to build cold-frames! By the early 1960s, the land had been



*Typical outfit of the early C20th.*

purchased as the site of a new infirmary. PontArc, hearing of this, sought and gained permission to mount an exploratory excavation under its then President, Kenneth Wilson of the Kirkstall Abbey House Museum. The report on this dig (August, September, October 1963) is still available at [www.pontarc.org](http://www.pontarc.org), but indeed



*Fred Morris in 1963*

has little bearing on this story, except that the archaeologists used the hut as a shelter and for making the obligatory tea. One of them, Fred Morris, a well respected member, began to hold the surviving plates up to the light and decided that one in particular deserved more attention. He took it home, spent a lot of time delicately cleaning it, and finally brought it to the attention of the writer who by this time had set up his own darkroom. It should be mentioned that at the close of the dig, the entire site including the shed and its contents were bulldozed.

The plate was far too large to fit in any modern enlarger, so a 'contact print' was made by placing it upon a sheet of Photo paper and exposing it to light. After development and fixing, this was then carefully copied to produce a negative which would fit in an enlarger. Fred then took the enlargement and the original plate; both disappeared following his death in the 1970s.

However, the modern negative survived in the writer's negative file, though the original's exposure to light over half a century had bleached the top of the image until it was almost transparent. Recently, that 1965 negative was scanned and worked upon in *Affinity Photo*, the latest processing software. The result is published here for the first time. The writer gladly acknowledges the original photographer's skill, and the foresight and care of the late Fred Morris.





*Local artist Rachel List achieved a degree of national acclaim over her Lock Down Murals. This is perhaps the most evocative one, on the gable at the bottom of Gillygate. We wonder how long it will survive as a reminder of the times we have recently passed through?*



# FIFTY YEARS AGO

In 1970, the Civic Trust, as it was then called, invited Sir John Betjeman, the famous poet to visit the town and speak at a dinner in the Town Hall.

Before the event, he was shown around the town by Allan Blaza of the Civic Society, and Harry Battye of PontArc. Harry asked our current Chairman, then our Hon. Secretary to accompany them, but he was unable to obtain time off work.

Sir John showed enormous interest in everything he was shown, and we recommend members attend Allan Blaza's talk on the subject of Civic Society distinguished Guests, when societies are at last able to resume their normal activities.

In the meantime we show the picture of (right to left) Allan, Sir John, and Harry in the famous liquorice fields now the location of the Fire Station.



*Pontefract & Castleford Express picture, © JPI Media.*



# Some Observations On The Horse Through Time At Nostell Priory

By Janet Niepokojczycka, Programme Secretary.



*Nostell from the parkland. The stables are just off the picture to the left of the trees.*

I became a volunteer at Nostell priory a few years ago, after resigning as a tour guide. My role at Nostell is called a *Day Maker* and I am based in the stables courtyard, welcoming visitors, answering questions, pointing out the cafe, shop and loos and generally keeping a watchful eye.

Last year my 'boss' Alice asked whether I would be interested in leading some Stable Tours. Yes please - as a lover of all things equine I jumped at the chance! I acquainted myself with the stable tours led by Jim, a most knowledgeable and long standing volunteer. However, I needed information if I was to lead such a tour. I assumed there would be an archive or collection of information at Nostell but this did not seem to be the case. By pure chance I discovered the Nostell archive is held at the History Centre at Wake-

field. Many visits and hours were spent ordering and then studying the maps, letters and documents. I was hooked!

I had decided to do my Stables Tour in a different way, broadening the context, so I came up with - *The Horse at Nostell, from medieval to present day* which on tour days the National Trust advertised as *A Gallop Through Time*. The horse has certainly played a part in the story of Nostell - motorised transport and machinery are relative newcomers and for centuries it was four hooves that kept things moving. Nostell is fortunate in having much of its stabling around the courtyard intact, along with the Riding House (for schooling and exercising) on the south side of the quadrangle. However, I started my tours out on the grassy vista in front of the house where we tried to imagine a scene from 1120





and the building of the Priory. Stone, wood, lead, glass and food stuffs, are just some of the items that would need to be brought in.

Once up and running the Nostell owned granges (farms) and coal pits would need transport. The Prior would attend meetings and receive visitors and pilgrims all using equines. Cardinal Wolsey visited in 1530 for instance. Somewhere amongst the monastic layout must have been stabling - at Thornholme Priory, Scunthorpe, excavations revealed stables adjoining the outer gatehouse. At Nostell no plan seems to exist of the monastery itself - we only know what came later, from the 1600's.

After the Dissolution (in Nostell's case 1540), the site passed through various families including the Gargraves, who created a deer park in 1604 and whose house was made using three ranges from the Priory buildings and named Nostell Hall on early maps. A stable yard is shown to the south of this hall with an entrance out onto the Doncaster-Wakefield

road. The Winn family arrived on the scene in 1654 and over the centuries they altered and rebuilt the new house and stables created with successive Winns spending more and more money. Riding, carriage and race horses all had their place here.

Much more recently, race horses were housed in the stables, the last one departing in the 1970's. In 2012 the National Trust spent £8.5 million on the courtyard restoration and currently there are big plans to move the shop and cafe, the latter into the Riding House. However, the onset of COVID 19 has meant no volunteers at Nostell, and some staff furloughed and only recently are areas slowly opening up. Finally, one or two facts and figures re. the horse at Nostell:- in 1727 Sir Rowland Winn paid £8 10 shillings to hire a coach and 6 horses for 5 days: in 1880 prices were - 5 year old mare = £40, 9 year old gelding = £45, saddle = 5-6 guineas, horse shoes = 1 shilling per foot!



*Top.*

*The stables from the front.*

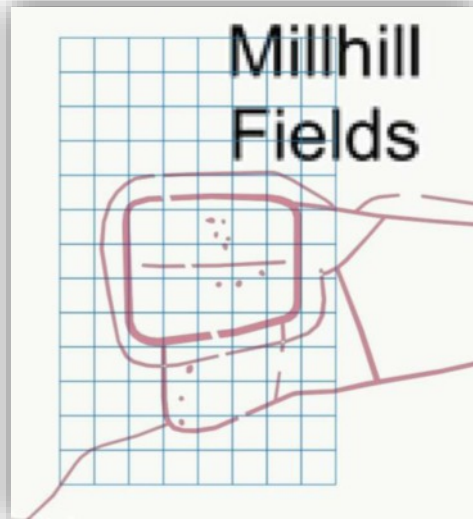
*Bottom.*

*The stables courtyard during the Covid 19 lockdown.*

## PontArc Fieldwork – Recent Investigations and Future Proposals

### Phil Jones – Field Director

PontArc resumed practical fieldwork in 2017 with some fieldwalking over a suspected Romano-British cropmark on land at Darrington owned by longstanding member Alastair Wilson.

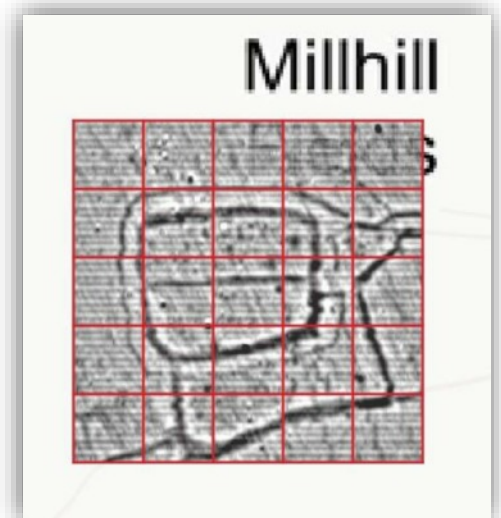


Millhill field was the first to be made available by the farmer, in late 2017. PontArc members set out and fieldwalked a 130 x 80m grid divided into 10m squares over the rectangular double ditch cropmark area.

Finds were many and varied, and they took a while to sort, count and record. They ranged from modern glass and pottery to definite Roman artefacts, including a 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Century “Melon” bead. The eastern side of the squarish inner ditch was most productive in terms of older pottery and glass, and also burnt material, cobbles and quartz pebbles. Pieces of haematite were well scattered over the entire area, but again they were found in greater quantity on the line of the eastern ditch. Haematite is not naturally occurring in the area and therefore may have been brought in as a source of iron for smelting.

Millhill field was next available to us in August 2018, and this time with support from members of the newly formed Cropmark Research Archaeology Group (Yorkshire), or CRAGY, geophysical surveying was carried out on the same cropmark.

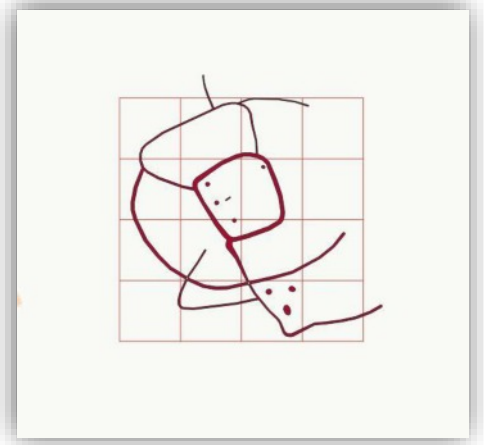
South Leeds Archaeology (SLA) and Sheffield University helped us get both earth resistance and magnetic gradiometer surveys done whilst the field was in stubble. The magnetometry results from 25 x 20m squares are shown opposite. The geophysics conclusively confirmed the cropmark layout and have given us targets for future excavation.



A couple of test pits were opened away from the main cropmark in October 2018, to check the depth of topsoil and the geology at measured high and low resistance areas. All material removed was sieved and weighed whilst the activity was timed, so future decisions on machine or hand digging will be better informed. SLA members again helped out.

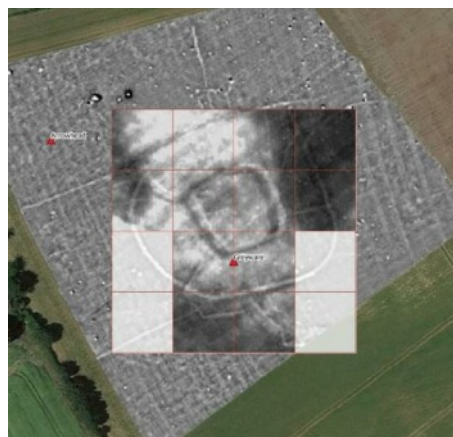


The next opportunity for fieldwork came in September 2019, still at Darrington, but in Spital Gap field. Another intriguing cropmark area was surveyed and gridded out by 16 x 30m squares for an earth resistance geophysical survey. This was time consuming for the few PontArc and SLA members involved – it took four days to get 12 x 30 m squares done.



Cragy member, Mike Haken of the Roman Roads Research Association, kindly offered to bring his expensive wheeled gradiometer array over to the site for a magnetometry survey, and we were glad to accept. Mike and 2-3 PontArc/SLA members got the cropmark and a large surrounding area surveyed in just one day, even though ground conditions were difficult. The results – opposite - were again impressive.

A couple of interesting surface finds were picked up during the resistivity survey – a late-Neolithic or Bronze Age flint arrowhead and a piece of Roman greyware pottery with good rim and profile detail. Their find positions are shown in the combined geophysics results opposite. We were hoping to follow up the geophysics with more systematic fieldwalking – after ploughing, harrowing and drilling – but bad weather scuppered the farmer's and therefore our plans.



As ever, farming schedules will dictate when we can next have access to the fields. We then have weather conditions and members availability to consider before fieldwork can be arranged. There are of course other complications at the moment too. Millhill field currently has a cereal crop which will be harvested late summer, so optimistically, that will be the first Darrington site to be available for further investigation. We have also been kindly granted access to land with more circular cropmarks at Purston. The field there has a cereal crop too, so it will probably have the same window of opportunity as Millhill, but at least it is another site option. The first activity there will be geophysics. South Leeds Archaeology are also hopeful of doing some excavation on an old colliery site near Birstall when current coronavirus restrictions are lifted, and are likely to offer a few PontArc members the chance to contribute there. Keep an eye on the PontArc website and your email account for updates. A more detailed summary of the recent Darrington fieldwork is also available in pdf format on the PontArc website.

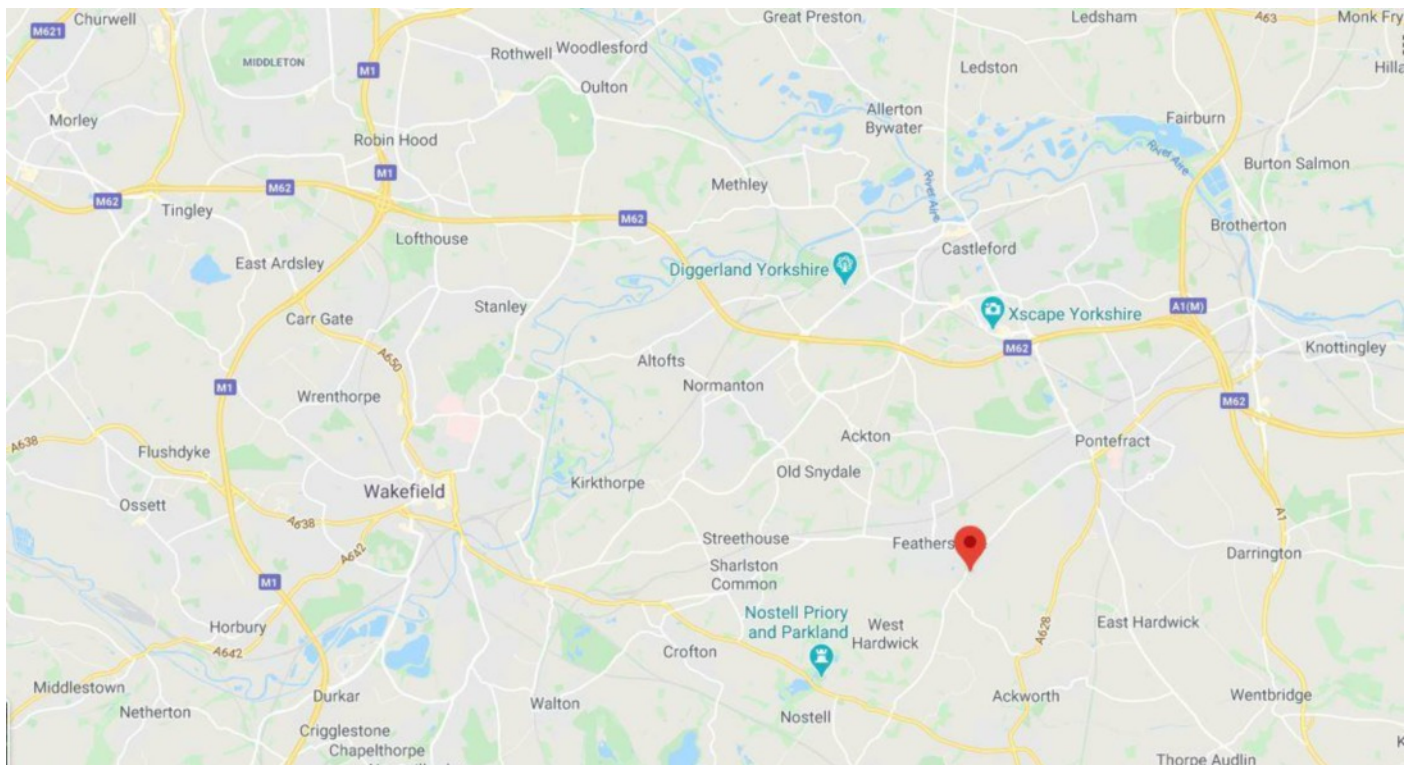


## A Circular Walk Around a Future Fieldwork Site at Purston Jaglin - by Phil Jones

A circular walk around a future cropmark research fieldwork site near Purston and Featherstone may be of interest to members of PontArc, SLA and CRAG(Y). It is featured as a health walk on Wakefield Council's website – their downloadable pdf file is copied here, along with a few photos I've taken en route and some background on the cropmarked fields.

The majority of the walk is surprisingly rural and scenic, and takes in Ackworth Plague Stone. However, it is not recommended for, or following wet weather, as the path along Little Lane beside the beck can get very boggy. On the plus side - if you're lucky and have timed your walk well, you may find the fish and chip shop open near the suggested parking spot – nice!

A wide area map courtesy of Google is given below. The red marker shows the approximate starting point of the walk on the Purston-Ackworth B6428 road. Coming from the north, you are likely to access it from the Wakefield-Pontefract A645 road.

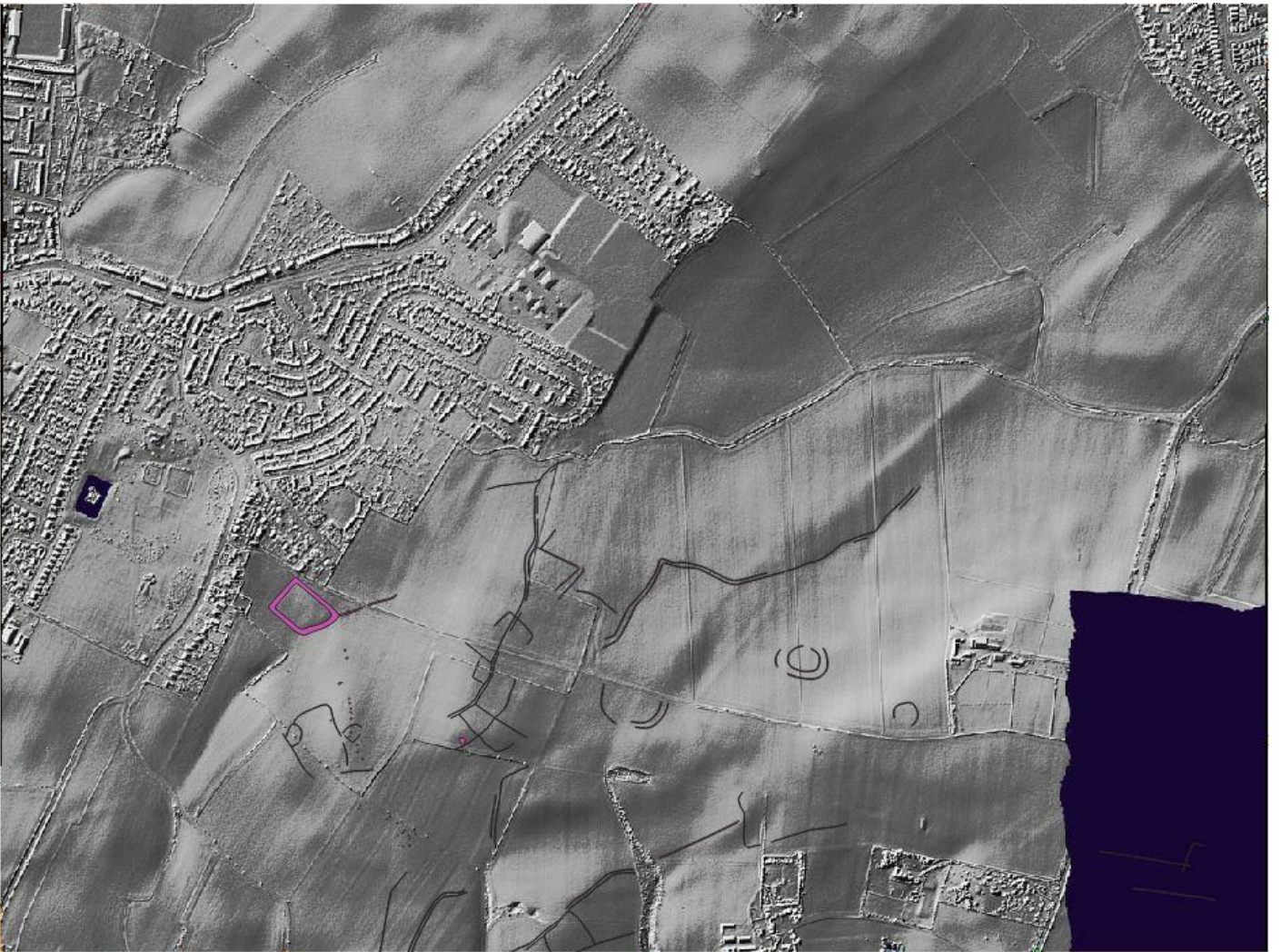


A close-up map of the area overlaid by an aerial image showing cropmark positions follows. The field that CRAG(Y), PontArc and SLA are interested in (and have been given access to) shows as brown in the aerial image and is in the centre of the described circular walk. The field contains circular cropmarks and a trackway that are thought to be of Romano-British origin, but they may be of earlier date. Our investigations, including fieldwalking, geophysics and eventual excavation will hopefully date the cropmarks more accurately.

A circular cropmark to the south of our field appears to have been truncated by a trackway - Old Coach Road - along which you'll walk if you follow the route. We'll try to find the continuation of this cropmark to the north in our field by using geophysics.

Two lighter brown features also show in the aerial image of our field. The very clear linear one is modern and shows the route used to erect new power pylons. There is a fainter one running SW-NE and continuing towards Pontefract. It also shows in Lidar imagery – could it be a Roman Road? Roman sites just to the east of the A628 at Hundhill are known. If it is a Roman Road, it did not seem to respect the truncated circular cropmark - was a road deliberately driven through it?







The circular walk description is now copied here, though you can download it (and others) directly as a pdf from Wakefield Council's website - the link for this walk/leaflet is here:

[https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/Longer%20Walks/Walks\\_Leaflet\\_27\\_Featherstone.pdf#search=walks%20leaflet](https://www.wakefield.gov.uk/Longer%20Walks/Walks_Leaflet_27_Featherstone.pdf#search=walks%20leaflet)

Wakefield District Health Walks

27

## Featherstone

Purston Park to Castle Syke Hill

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Licence No. LA 100019574 2008

Allow 75 minutes

A moderately difficult, circular walk, part on bridle path, part on roadside pavement, and part on fieldside footpath.

4.5 km / 2.8 miles

Services **144, 146** and **177** (Castleford to Pontefract) and services **180** and **181** (Normanton circulars) operate via Station Lane. Services **145, 149** and **150** operate along Wakefield Road between Wakefield and Pontefract.

- 1** Park in Purston Park Car Park.
- 2** Walk along the park boundary and cross the road at Purston Lodge. Follow the Old Coach Road up to the top of Castle Syke Hill - fine panoramic views in all directions.
- 3** Emerge onto Pontefract Road (A628), turn right and walk a short distance to the Water Tower - here you will find the famous Ackworth Plague Stone. Retrace your steps to the end of Coach Road and walk on the roadside pavement to the bottom of Castle Syke Hill.
- 4** Turn left onto a fieldside footpath (Little Lane) and walk to the junction with Houndhill Lane.
- 5** Continue walking forward on Little Lane (path becomes narrower and at times quite overgrown). A stone path is evident in places. The Path eventually joins Leatham Park Road.

P.T.O

## 5 - continued

Turn left and follow this road to the junction with Wentbridge Road.



Purston Lodge  
(See Waymarker 2)



Water Tower  
& Plague Stone  
(See Waymarker 3)



Little Lane -  
Houndhill Lane Junction  
(See Waymarker 4)



Little Lane End  
(See Waymarker 5)

IUVENCUS  
Walk Designers

NHS



**wakefield**  
City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council



# Health Notes

Try to walk for 30 minutes every day

**Remember walking can:**



Make you feel good



Give you more energy



Help you sleep better



Help you reduce stress



Keep your heart strong



Reduce blood pressure



Help manage your weight



Improve your life expectancy

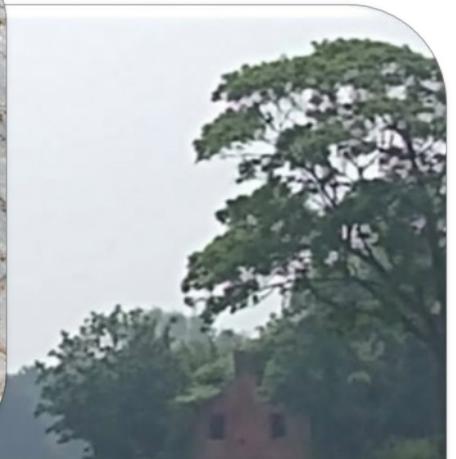
Wakefield Healthy Transport Project is working to encourage people to carry out more of their journeys on foot or by cycle to improve the environment and their health.

**i** Tel: 01924 306089

**M** Metroline: 0113 245 76 76  
METRO Web: [www.wymetro.com](http://www.wymetro.com)



I include below some photos taken from along Old Coach Road at different times of the year, and one of Ackworth Plague Stone, for which I have also done a 3D model, viewable on my (Pontarc Phil) Sketchfab page here: <https://skfb.ly/6RUZr>



# HOW TO ACCESS OUR ZOOM LECTURES

The easiest way to enjoy our programme is to join Zoom. To do this, access your browser and search for Zoom. Open it and follow the instructions to join. It is free.

When you receive the meeting link from our Web Master, (Jane) make sure that you do not delete it.

On the evening of the talk, open the email with the link and note the meeting ID and its access code. Both are multi-digit.

Open Zoom at about 6-45pm and click on **Join Meeting**. A box appears and you will be asked for the meeting id and access code. Fill these in and continue. Another box will appear telling you that the host will eventually admit you.

Now wait until the host admits you to the virtual lecture hall.

All should be fine, but some members do have problems with their sound and vision. If either or both

are absent, bring your cursor down to the base of the Zoom window. A tool bar appears, and you must look for a microphone symbol and a video camera symbol. If either has a diagonal line through it you must click on the symbol to switch it off/on as required.

If the sound is still absent, it means that your computer sound is off. Ensure that this is changed to on at a suitable volume. There may also be a red mute/unmute symbol in your portrait box on screen. This also works by clicking on it.

During the meeting, the host will mute all the participants' sound until time for questions at the end.

Also during the lecture, it may be that the audience mini-screens partially obscure the slides. Look at the top of the Zoom screen and you should find an option to reduce the images. This is often red. Click on this and select 50%, which is fine for most slides.