

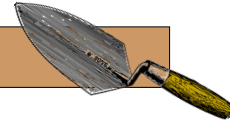


Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



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Group News

This Newsletter concludes another busy year for AppArch - so much so that I'm struggling to find space for all the reports!

Our next meeting, January's "Members" meeting, is of course also our AGM and I enclose an Agenda together with Minutes for last year's meeting. You'll be pleased to hear that there are no plans to increase our membership charges. I enclose a renewal form in the hope that we'll be seeing you again next year.

One thing to note is that we are currently looking for a Publicity Officer as Tony Greenwood is very busy at present and would like to hand over to someone else. If you think you could help, please put your hand up at the AGM.

Finally, may I wish all our readers a very Merry Christmas and Best Wishes for 2014

Martin Joyce

Brackenber 2013

"Why do we volunteer?" - a question I asked myself frequently on a cold, windy and often wet day up on Brackenber this year. I spent only one day at the dig but I have been involved in all the previous digs and fieldwork on the moor so perhaps I can reflect on why we become involved.

There is, of course, the pleasure at the end of the day of sinking into a hot bath and easing the aches in shoulders from sieving heavy wet soil. On the first dig in 2008 it was warm and sunny and the soil easy to sift. That year the bath was required to get rid of the sand in hair, mouth and everywhere!

This year's excavation was planned for what turned out to be a good week of weather in early September, but a number of reasons led to its postponement to October and typical autumn weather. The project formed part of Altogether Archaeology's "Review of the Bronze Age in the North Pennines". Appleby Archaeology members were well

represented among the volunteers who were supervised by professional staff from WA Archaeology. We did, however, miss Martin who, due to the change in date, was not able to spend as much time on site as he (and we) would have liked.

Knowledge of the Bronze Age on the moor has come from previous fieldwork. The Altogether Archaeology evaluation of 2011, on the west side of the moor, revealed an early Bronze Age cremation site and the AppArch excavations in 2008 and 2009 of the Druidical Judgement Seat, to the south east, recovered three Bronze Age flint tools. A series of possible Bronze Age burial sites, about which nothing is known, are recorded running along a ridge between these two sites

The aims for this year were to: "identify and record the surviving barrows at Brackenber Moor (as well as identifying possible new sites) and to obtain information regarding their nature, date and state of preservation." A stone cairn surrounded by kerb boulders was excavated at the final stage of this season's excavation during which a number of flints were recovered proving a Bronze Age date. But you will have to wait for Martin's report at the AGM for more details.



Stone cairn excavated as the final stage of this season's excavation surrounded by a kerb of boulders

The day I was there two wide trenches were already open

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and a further smaller trench was being dug. I spent the day, with other volunteers, on my hands and knees gently scraping away the soil which was then sieved. Repetitive tasks, yes, but you never knew what the next scrape might reveal - perhaps a change in soil colour or the edge of an artefact, and maybe the sieving would find some flints, sherds or seeds. The day I was there nothing was found, but you carry on in the hope that it might be you who makes that all important discovery. A rainbow appeared at one point and we did wonder if we should dig elsewhere and perhaps find gold.

This sense of anticipation and the company of fellow volunteers are the pleasures of fieldwork. Discomforts are quickly forgotten when something significant is found, as I experienced when the collared urn was unearthed in 2011. Every find or lack of evidence adds to our knowledge and it is this seeking for information on our past in a locality we love that keeps us volunteering.

Phyllis Rouston

A Summer visit to Segedunum

Just nine hardy members assembled at Broad Close car park in Appleby on September 15th for the minibus trip to Segedunum Roman Fort in Wallsend. The predicted weather (rain and gales) had arrived, but nobody was downhearted. Purely by accident, the organiser had managed to arrange the trip to coincide with Open Heritage Weekend and consequently free entries to the sites,. However, he remained somewhat concerned because he had also overlooked the minor fact that the Great North Run was taking place on the same day. The prospect of negotiating a way through 53,000 runners, some dressed in wholly inappropriate costume, together with the same number of spectators was not a pleasant one. As it happened, the event was hardly noticeable, at least to us - though I believe that it generates some interest within the running community.

A tour had been booked for the group and Gary the guide duly arrived – in 3rd Century costume. This was not purely for the entertainment of Appleby Archaeology, I must add, but to mark the Heritage Weekend. Under his expert guidance, we explored the site which extends on both sides of the A187. The final short section of Hadrian's Wall runs down to the nearby River Tyne where there had been a wharf. The entrance of this would have been dominated by a monumental statue of the Emperor Hadrian himself. Barges would probably have brought Wall supplies in from Arbeia, a fort across the river in South Shields, where it is thought there would have been a major port. The garrison there included a company of military bargemen from the River Tigris.

The main line of the Wall heading off to Bowness on Solway can be seen adjoining the southwest side of the fort. The Roman engineers still had something to learn here – the original wall collapsed into marshy ground – twice – before being stabilised. A reconstruction of how the Wall may have looked is nearby. The early industrial revolution in Wallsend is apparent a few yards away, where the remains of an 18th century shaft worked coal mine can be seen.



A hearty Roman lunch at the Segedunum Museum

There is little surviving stonework at the fort - hardly surprising as it had once been covered by terraced housing for workers at nearby shipbuilders Swan Hunter. After demolition of the houses in the early 1970's, Newcastle University excavated and stabilised the site. Kerbstones and gravel beds now mark out the sites of the Roman buildings. The museum was opened in 2000, utilising buildings which had belonged to the shipyard.

A major feature of the site is the replica of a bathhouse. This was built prior to the opening of the museum and is based on the buildings at Chesters Fort on the Wall and Vindolanda on the Stanegate. The intention had been to build a fully functioning Roman Bathhouse which would provide both an educational facility and a venue for social events. Quite what kind of events would be held in a Roman bath house was not entirely clear, but the building apparently provided Tyne & Wear Museums with useful income for several years. Enormous care had been taken to follow Roman building methods including, for example, the detail of wall and floor finishing. The whole building was heated by hypocaust but, unfortunately, some crucial aspects of the build method had been forgotten in the intervening 2000 years. The building suffered numerous technical failures and consequently no longer func-

tions fully as a working bath house

For any members who have not been to Segedunum, I would really recommend it. The timeline of the site is beautifully illustrated by animated graphics – on a video screen at the top of the observation tower (from where there is a magnificent view of the site) and on a huge projection screen in the gallery. You see the fort grow and decay before your very eyes!

Having had our lunch (excellent café on site) and an examination of the goods on offer in the gift shop, we re-entered the bus and headed off to Binchester or, to give it the Roman name, Vinovia. On the way there, we encountered a veritable deluge but just as we arrived, the sky started to clear and out came the sun.

Again, entry fees were waived and we were just in time to catch the last few minutes of a tour given by Dr David Mason, the County Archaeologist for Durham.

Vinovia is a huge site but, so far, only a few small areas have been excavated, many of which are not open for viewing. However, the visible standing remains include a remarkably well preserved bathhouse, this time wholly authentic. This alone is worth the price of admission - should you visit on a day when you have to pay.

Back in Appleby in time for tea, the small but select company declared that the day had been very enjoyable, although the organiser's own pleasure was somewhat tempered by the discovery of a flat tyre on his car!

Richard Stevens

The Crosby Garrett Helmet

The Crosby Garrett Helmet is on display at Tullie House at the moment and I strongly recommend you take a trip to Carlisle to see it - it's super!

You have to pay, of course, but it's only a fiver and for just another fiver you get a large, well-produced colour brochure which features a few of our old chums – Dot Broughton of the Portable Antiquity Scheme and our very own Tricia Shaw caught my eye. Should frocks be your thing, an exhibition of Norman Hartnell clothing in the adjoining gallery is thrown in for free.

The Helmet is beautifully displayed in a darkened room. I expected to be disappointed so spent the first five minutes carefully avoiding it while I took in the information posted round the walls. When I finally decided to take a peek I was stunned. It is a tremendous work of art. The ambiguous, blank expression on the mask is chilling and quite unforgettable. The workmanship and detail are superb.

There's archaeology here too, though you've got to look in the brochure to find it. I'd got the impression that the helmet had simply turned up in the middle of a large, empty field. Not so. The field is full of banks and ditches. Excavation established that the site appears to have been a focus of occupation throughout the prehistoric period and into the Roman era. The finds location was associated with Roman pottery and two coins from the AD330s. We would probably say "Romano-British farmstead".



Crosby Garrett Roman Helmet

It'll cost you a lot more if you have to follow it to London when it transfers to the British Museum in January. After that, you may never have the opportunity to see it again. Act now!

Martin Joyce

Field-Walking Report : 2012

We spent quite a lot of time field-walking in the Brackenber area last year. Martin Railton has now been through all the finds and catalogued them.

Four fields were completed and, in total, we found 22 lithics. These included a possible Mesolithic chert blade, a Bronze Age thumbnail scraper, a Bronze Age flint core, a partial blade and lots of flakes. A large piece of good-quality flint was also found which is further evidence of tool manufacture. Martin will be plotting all the pieces on a map of the area in due course. There has been no evidence of any Roman or medieval finds so far, probably

because medieval settlement was focused on Appleby and the villages. Also, Brackenber was still unenclosed moorland in the medieval period. However there are many post-medieval ceramics, including a lot of 18th and 19th century material including clay pipes (see table below):

| Field No | C18 th and C19 th | Pipe Stems | Pipe Bowls |
|----------|---|------------|------------|
| 1 | 43 | 62 | 9 |
| 2 | 25 | 26 | 3 |
| 3 | 24 | 12 | 1 |
| 4 | 24 | 4 | 1 |

Lake District National Park Conference 2013

Traditionally the LDNPA Conference always starts with gloomy predictions of further cuts in the archaeologists' budgets. This year, as the Chairman delivered the usual grim tidings, it seemed that 2014 was to be no exception. But, suddenly, there was also a new note of confidence - nay, of optimism. Yes, over a third of the money had gone, and further cuts were in the pipeline but, magically, more archaeology seemed to be happening than ever.

How could this be? Well it seems that grant-aiding bodies such as the National Lottery are queuing up to fund well-targeted and well-managed projects, particularly those which reflect Community interests and which engage volunteer labour. Consequently this year's Conference programme was probably the most interesting that I can recall. It seems that a lot of our neighbours have been learning a lot about archaeology and having a lot of fun in the process.

There was no particular theme to this year's conference but we heard much about Romans in the Lake District with excellent presentations on the the vicus settlements at Ravensglass and Papcastle. Peter Matthiessen of the Duddon Valley Local History Group also gave an excellent talk on Viking Long Houses and Warren Allison of CATHMS showed us some hair-raising slides illustrating their mine-access-restoration work.

A couple of new fashions were also evident. Suddenly you're nobody unless you have a camera-equipped quadcopter to produce your surveys - rectified photogrammetry is the buzzword. Also you need to be producing mini-films of your excavation work. Don't worry - I'm sure you'll catch up quickly once you've just worked out where to plug in all the various cables.

Martin Joyce

Winter Lectures

AGM and Members evening

Tue 14th Jan
(Please note 7.00pm start for AGM)

Ron Lyon : The development of the iron furnace - from Bloomery to Blast furnace and beyond

Harry Hawkins : West Stow Saxon Village, Suffolk - an interesting reconstruction and example of experimental archaeology

Discovering Derventio: The latest excavations at Papcastle. .

Tue 11th Feb

Mark Graham (Grampus Heritage & Training)

Prehistoric features on Fylingdales Moor, North Yorkshire - Moorland surveys and the parallels with Cumbria. .

Tue 11th Mar

Blaise Vynier

