



Appleby Archaeology Newsletter



Volume 18 Issue 2

Summer 2015



Group News

Our programme of Summer Walks is now well under way and you can read a report on the first walk - our visit to *Musgrave Church Field* - overleaf. Next month we have our trip to *Binchester*. If you weren't able to receive our secretary, Richard Stevens', email on this, details are as follows:

"The tour takes about 90 mins (that's including the displayed remains of the commandant's residence as well as the newly excavated areas). £3 admission. Drinks only available on site. Packed lunch or local pub may be appropriate.

Approx 50 miles from Appleby A66- -A67- A688- A696 Parking available.

Please let Phyl know a) if you are coming b) if you can offer a lift and c) if you need a lift

Email phyl@rouston.plus.com or Telephone 017683 53463 as soon as possible please.

Phyl will then try to match up those that need transport with those offering a lift and contact the individuals. (If you have already made such arrangements please let her know)

It may be possible, for those who wish, to go on to Escomb Saxon Church."

June also sees the launch of our Appleby-in-Westmorland project and you are all cordially invited to the *Members' Launch Night* which will now take place on Tuesday 16th June 2015 at 7.30. Please see the next column for full details of the launch night and the first two field projects that Martin Railton has organised.

Best wishes,

Martin Joyce



Appleby-in-Westmorland Research Project

Members' Launch Night: Tuesday 16th June 2015

Appleby Archaeology Group's new research project will be launched at Centre 67 on Tuesday 16th June at 7:30pm. There will be a presentation on the background to the project, and the project research themes will be introduced. These are focused on successive periods of the town's history.

There will be an opportunity at the meeting to sign up to some of the initial surveys, which have been organised to coincide with the 2015 Festival of Archaeology, organised by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA). Please see overleaf for details of individual survey projects:.



Modern Geophysics in action : wa-archaeology.com

Following the initial presentation there will be an opportunity to discuss the project over tea and coffee. All attendees are then welcome to participate in the washing and identification of finds from our first field walking session on the edge of the town. This produced our first medieval pottery. All are welcome to participate in the finds washing, which will include the opportunity to identify and date pottery from various periods.

If you wish to be kept informed of the fieldwork activities, or to sign up for an event, please send your email address and telephone number to Martin Railton.

m.railton@cadrus.co.uk

Upcoming events are as follows:

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Earth Resistance survey of King George V Playing Field: 4th/5th July 2015

The playing field next to Centre 67 on Chapel Street is believed to have been the location of the original Appleby School. We will be undertaken an earth resistance survey to try to locate the medieval school and look for any other evidence for early activity. We will be working in small groups to survey the field.

Geophysical survey of Castrigg Roman Fortlet: 18th/19th July 2015

We will be surveying the remains of the Roman fortlet and signal station that lie on the Roman Road north of Appleby. This will be undertaken in small groups using gradiometers, for which training will be provided. If you wish to have a go with the instruments you will need to bring clothes and wellingtons/shoes which have no metal zips or fasteners etc as the instruments are very sensitive!

We will be undertaking further field walking in the coming months.

Martin Railton

Musgrave Church-Field Walk

Is it bad planning that our spring evening walk so often takes place on a cool blustery and showery evening? Something for your committee to look at!

Members, however, were not deterred and eighteen of us enjoyed an informative evening. We gathered in the restored tithe barn for a short introduction from Mike Lea who spoke to us at our AGM on Musgrave Tithe Barn and Church Field.

Then, guided by Mike, we walked around Church Field starting at the site of the bridge that had been swept away in the "great flood" of 1822 and then made our way towards the handsome Musgrave Bridge built in 1825. Sadly this had made the flooding of Church Field worse and ultimately St Theobald's church was moved to higher ground in 1845 and the rectory was demolished in 1884.

As we walked, Mike pointed out features and Martin Railton was able to help us understand those that had been identified on the surveys of 2014. The foot print of the rectory has been marked out making the site clearer. A magnificent old walnut tree which is thought to be the one in pictures of the rectory was admired.

We returned to the barn with time to inspect the restoration work before enjoying a welcome warm drink as we watched a demonstration on the properties of lime by Tim Wells. This nearly stole the show as the problems of damp in old houses were highlighted and the properties of lime mortar were explained. Many of those present were able to identify with what Tim was saying and there was a certain delay in moving on to the church as he fielded a number of questions.

Joy Thompson then took us across to St Theobald's Church. It is one of just two churches in the country with that dedication though it is a common dedication in Normandy. The present church is Victorian but its origins may be pre Norman, with dedication changing when the land was given to the Normans after the conquest. Joy told us of the history and pointed out several features including the carved heads on the roof beam corbels. The present church is simple, quiet and restful, and is a focus within the community possibly best known for the Rush Bearing Ceremony in July.

The different activities of the evening were very much enjoyed and our thanks were conveyed to everyone involved.

Phyl Rouston



The Musgrave Church Field site - photo courtesy Musgrave Church Field Trust

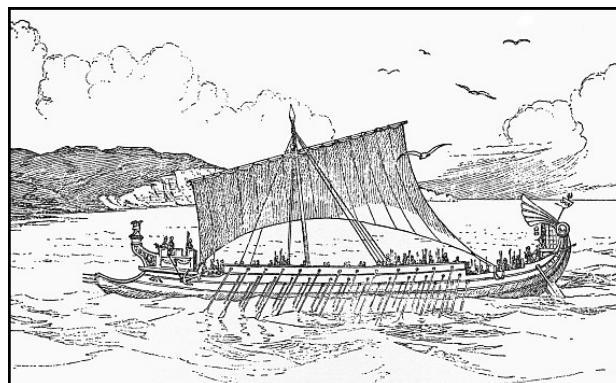
The Roman Navy

For their final talk of the winter season, the Appleby Archaeology Group invited Dr David Mason, Principal Archaeologist of Durham County Council, to speak on the subject of the Roman Navy. Dr Mason is the author of an excellent book on the subject and kept his capacity audience engrossed as he described the part played by the naval arm of the Roman Military machine and, in particular, their activities around the British coasts.

Dr Mason began by detailing his sources, beginning with the usual suspect for visual evidence - Trajan's Column. This remarkable sculpture shows a number of scenes from Trajan's Dacian campaign and depicts some of the types of vessels used. The major seagoing vessels were the triremes and biremes, based on earlier Greek ships, both of which came in warship and troop transport variations. Warships were easily identifiable by the huge wooden ram, encased in bronze, mounted at the prow. A typical trireme would be 200ft long with a 35ft beam and a complement of 180 rowers. River boats were shallow drafted biremes and the remainder of the Fleet would have been made up of barges of various sizes. The home bases of the Navy were at Ravenna & Misenum.

Trading between Britain and Continental Europe had been carried on for many centuries before the Romans showed up in force under Julius Caesar in 55BC, so maritime venturing was nothing new. However, nothing could have prepared native Britons for the arrival of Caesar's fleet, which consisted of almost 100 transports conveying around 12,000 men, together with accompanying warships. In turn, Caesar was clearly unprepared for the vagaries of the weather in the Channel and he was forced to retreat to Gaul. The following year, his force was even larger and better prepared, with almost 1,000 vessels in total conveying 30,000 men and associated materiel. Once again, the weather took a hand & for various reasons, no further military interventions were seen for another 90 years.

In 43AD, the commander of the invasion fleet, Aulus Plautius took an altogether more serious approach, bringing with him some 1,100 vessels of various types, including 200 or 300 warships. These carried some 40,000 soldiers, several thousand slaves, up to 10,000 pack mules, tents, an estimated 3,500 tons of grain, other supplies and probably, for good measure, a cargo of elephants! The conquest of Britain proceeded apace, with the establishing of the first Provincial Capital at Colchester being assisted from the sea and thence via the River Colne. This combination of land and naval forces became the pattern for the entire conquest of the island during the next three decades. In our own area, the Lake District proved to be a difficult obstacle to the Roman advance and early military sites were constructed on river estuaries to facilitate replenishment by sea. These included Ravenglass, Maryport, Kirkbride and, probably, Burrow Walls.



A Roman Trireme off Dover - courtesy gutenburg.org

Once Rome had been established in Britain, a recognisably 'British' Fleet, or, more accurately, the 'Fleet of the British Ocean' or Classis Britannica, began to make an appearance. The earliest classical mention comes from around 70AD and the Fleet was headquartered not in Britain but in Boulogne. Roofing tiles, which were often made under military auspices and stamped CLBR have been found, exclusively in the south of England, and must indicate that some temporary detachments at least were based in Britain. Possible locations include Dover and Lympne, in Kent and also Pevensey, in Sussex.

Following the expeditions into Scotland in the late 1st & early 2nd century and the construction of the Hadrianic & Antonine Walls, which was again supported from the sea, the work of the Fleet began to evolve. Naval patrols continued around the coasts and transportation of materiel by sea into the military zone north of the Ribble would also have continued. However, there is no evidence for the Classis Britannica as such in the north of Britain and it is possible that these activities were carried out by the Legions using vessels under their own command, assisted by detachments of marines. There would have been regular ferrying of troops and officials between Britain and Gaul and provision of transport for natural resources from Britain to the Empire, including iron from the Weald and copper, lead and tin from further afield.

Dr Mason explained that, together with the occasional offensive operation every 30 - 40 years, these were the regular duties of the British Fleet until the mid 3rd century, when coastal raiding and piracy began to increase. This coincided with changes which were made to coastal installations in the southeast when some forts, including those associated with the Fleet, were rebuilt to a square plan – an intermediate phase prior to the so-called Saxon Shore forts. Excavation has revealed that these were more like fortified supply dumps than classical military forts. In the first part of the 4th century, more shore forts were built, at Cardiff and Lancaster.

By the end of the 4th century, much of the Roman military presence had been withdrawn from Britain to defend the empire elsewhere. By this time, there were few if any naval patrols. Instead, observation and signal stations were constructed along the coasts of North Wales and East

Yorkshire - the directions from which threats continued to come. These stations would have been in contact with military reinforcements inland using the well established Roman semaphore signalling system.

Dr Mason concluded his talk by describing the final demise of Roman Naval power in the seas around Britain and how this fired the starting gun for the mass immigration of Saxons in the early 5th century.

Richard Stevens

A Secular side to Iona

Say the word "Iona" and what immediately comes to mind is St Columba's arrival from Ireland, the Abbey, the establishment of the Nunnery of the Order of the Black Nuns and maybe the Hermit's Cell. These religious and spiritual sites are surely the ones best known to visitors.

But there is another interesting site - albeit much more recent and less attractive to look at.

Whilst on Iona recently, my husband and I located an old marble quarry with some impressive industrial remains. Situated in a steep-sided open gully running towards low coastal cliffs is a collection of several huge pieces of machinery -for anyone interested in industrial archaeology it is well worth the hike and the search to find it.



*Machinery remains at Iona Marble Quarry
Photo courtesy www.isle-of-iona.net*

Apparently the machinery was second-hand, coming from a mine in mainland central Scotland. Although now rusting (much has been recently coated to help preserve it a bit) I managed to find the name of "Fielding and Platt" on a Producer Gas Engine. These would normally have used charcoal with a limited air supply to power a piston, however local information seems to suggest coal may have been used here.

"Fielding and Platt" of Gloucester, produced this type of machinery in the 1800s, though they were in operation until about 40 years ago.

There is also the name of "G Anderson" of Arbroath on a cutting frame of similar date.

There was a tiny reservoir above the quarry to provide water for the steam engine. An abandoned litter of blocks ready-cut for shaping is on the coastal side of the quarry, and nearby is a natural "jetty" where a small boat carrying coke/charcoal for the engines would have unloaded and from where the dressed marble would have been taken away.

The quarry fell into disuse just after the First World war and the machinery simply left there. It's a splendid location - with probably one of the best views I have ever seen from a quarry!

Carol Dougherty

Summer Visits

**Launch night:
Appleby-in-Westmorland Research Project**

Tuesday 16th June at 7.30

See front page for details

A day trip to Roman Binchester

Saturday 20th June

A guided tour of the spectacular remains being revealed by the latest season of excavation at Binchester Roman Fort. Our tour guide will be Mr David Mason (see Roman Navy talk on page 3).

The tour is likely to cost around £3. See front page for further details.

Earth Resistance survey of King George V playing field:

Appleby-in-Westmorland Research Project

Sat/Sun 4th/5th July

See page 2 or details

**Geophysical survey of Castrigg Roman Fortlet:
Appleby-in-Westmorland Research Project**

Sat/Sun 18th/19th July

See page 2 for details

