



Newsletter: Issue 3 – April 2017

Although the days have been short and the weather cold, SWAAG members have still been busy in the first quarter of the year, so there's plenty to report in this newsletter. The coming months are likely to be even busier, with a full calendar of events and in July a return to dig at The Hagg.

Annual General Meeting

On the 14th of March we held our 2017 AGM; thank you to all those who attended this short, but important, meeting. The agenda included the 2016 Trustees' Annual Report and accounts, which was adopted by the meeting, and the election of trustees to the board. Shirley Gale and Philip Bastow were re-elected for a further term, and Rod Flint was elected for his first term.

The AGM also marked the resignation of Peter Denison-Edson from the board. Peter was instrumental in the formation of SWAAG in 2009 and has, since that time, been the chairman, a board member and a key driving force behind the development and growth of SWAAG to its present shape and success. The meeting unanimously expressed their thanks to Peter and wished him well.

The trustees for SWAAG are now David Brooks (Chairman), Rob Nicholson (Secretary), Mike Keenan (Treasurer), Andrea Dixon, Sue Nicholson, Mike Walton, Shirley Gale, Philip Bastow and Rod Flint. If you have an issue you feel ought to be considered by the trustees, please do not hesitate to contact anyone of us.

The Trustees Annual Report is available on the SWAAG web site.

Dave Brooks

Surveying

In 2016 the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership launched a programme of community and heritage projects under the title Stories in Stone, funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Two archaeological projects are the investigation of Thorns, a long-deserted hamlet near Ribbleshead and Southercales, a deserted medieval settlement near Chapel-le-Dale. David Johnson, the project manager for the two projects invited SWAAG to carry out geophysical and GPS surveys.



The survey of Thorns was completed in early 2016 and the report is available on the SWAAG website. The survey of Southerscales had to wait for the vegetation to go down but was completed in March of this year; the report is yet to be finished but it will be on the website soon.

Southerscales presented us with new challenges; the site was a grassed plateau underlain with limestone and with areas of limestone outcrops. That and the nature of the enclosures made walking the site in defined grids very difficult. We therefore chose to use the gradiometer in a manual scanning mode (much like a metal detector) and to walk the some of the smaller enclosures seeking so-called hot spots, which were marked with pegs and their positions located with GPS. We did have help on this survey from the local residents - a flock of sheep and 5 inquisitive but very friendly Belted Galloways!



Our next surveying exercise is likely to be towards the middle of the year for the National Park. They have suggested that, subject to receiving the necessary permissions, SWAAG might like to undertake a geophysical survey of Bainbridge village green, as part of the National Park's planned Bainbridge Big Dig. If you are interested in learning about surveying and taking part in such exercises please let me know. Dave Brooks dave@swaag.org

Pot-washing!

This winter SWAAG members have been going to PreConstruct Archaeology's office, in Durham, where they have been helping to process the bags of finds from the site of an old pottery. Some lovely patterns and styles of post-medieval pottery, pieces of kiln furniture and clay tobacco pipes have been discovered below the mud. It's been an opportunity to work alongside very knowledgeable professionals. It's been great fun, with good company and of course, Flora's flapjack!



S. N.

Wallwatch

For the last two years, SWAAG members have been taking part in a monitoring project on Hadrian's Wall called "Wallwatch". As a SWAAG activity this has always been well attended and regular Wallwatchers have enjoyed returning twice a year to monitor our section of the wall around Chesters Fort.

Sadly the scheme now seems to have run into funding difficulties and is suspended for the time being. In view of this I am hoping to organise an independent SWAAG visit to the Wall later this year.

S. N.



Apedale Walk

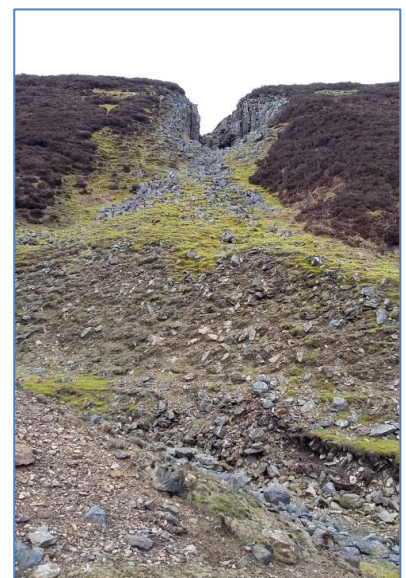


Ignoring a forecast for heavy rain, over twenty members met with Alan Mills for a walk up Apedale. Although the valley is currently uninhabited, it has a long history of lead mining, going back to before the Norman Conquest. Our walk took us along the track, marked on the 1:25,000 maps as 'Apedale Road', whilst Alan pointed out the various features of industrial archaeology on either side.

The various stages in the lead extraction process were evident. There were remains of collapsed vertical mine shafts, marked by circular piles of debris, as well as well-preserved entrances or 'portals' into the now derelict 'horizontal' levels. Along the skyline we saw a number of vertical gaps or 'stopes', from where the rocks had been completely stripped along the line of a vein. Water was sometimes used to flush away overlying material along a vein; a process known as 'hushing'. There were the remains of a dam constructed for this purpose, as well as the 'leats', which were dug to channel the water.



Once extracted, the lead had to be separated from the other materials. This was done at first by hand and later by machine. One of the later sites we looked at had the remains of a waterwheel, which by the 19th century would have been steam-driven. Once dressed, the lead was then smelted. The



oldest site we visited was a bale site, which has been radiocarbon dated to between 970 - 1010AD. Bales sites were where lead was smelted on a wind-blown hearth, usually on an exposed hillside. As technology developed these were replaced by purpose-built smelt mills, the remains of which can be seen along the valley floor.

It was a fascinating walk and the rain never arrived, even if it seemed to be pouring down over in Wensleydale! For those who would like to read more about the subject, Alan has written a booklet 'Mining and Miners in Swaledale & Arkengarthdale'.

J. H.



Research

Many SWAAG members have been busy over the last months doing their own research, whether out in the field, looking at documents or sitting in front of a computer.



Here a gallant gentleman, Ric, throws his wellies across the stream to help a lady member keep her feet dry. Needless to say he's the only one who ends up with wet feet!

At the Local History Group meeting in March, Jocelyn reported that her work into health and sickness in Upper Swaledale and Arkengarthdale was now complete. It can be read on the local history blog – see below for details.

Three members reported on the progress of their current research. Sue Nicholson, as a part of her research into schools in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale, talked about clothing clubs, which were set up in Victorian times, to assist poor families. Richard Hunt spoke about his project into dating vernacular architecture and Perry Gardner showed how he used Lidar and existing field surveys to identify field patterns around Swale Hall and suggested the existence of a possible pit alignment, linking the ends of the Dykes.

The next meeting of the group will be held on 15th June 2017, at 4.15pm in The Buck Hotel, Reeth. More information about local history can be found at: www.swaledalelocalhistoryblog.wordpress.com

SWAAG members' meetings

At the beginning of January, Jenny Proctor, regional manager of Pre-Construct Archaeology, spoke about the archaeological excavations that preceded the construction of the Bedale to Leeming Bar bypass. A large ditched enclosure, in the line of the road corridor, had been previously identified from aerial photographs but the existence of a Roman villa, approximately one kilometre to the north east, was only discovered following geophysical surveying, prior to the road construction. The Iron Age enclosure showed a long sequence of occupation, the last phase of which included the building of a double-ditched trackway. Finds suggest it was a mainly pastoral economy, supplemented by hunting and some arable farming. There was also metal working on the site, together with the production of artefacts from bone and horn. Two crouched inhumations were also found within one of the later ditches.

Only a small section of the Roman villa has been excavated. It was a winged-corridor building which, given the substantial foundations, was probably two storeys high. The excavation of a small room, on the north-west of the villa, revealed the remains of a hypocaust heating system. As with the enclosure, the remains and artefacts discovered suggest that the villa was the centre of a thriving mixed-farming economy. The people that lived there, around the third and fourth century AD, regularly traded and/or bartered with others across the region. One might speculate that the occupants could have been the direct descendants of the farmers from the ditched enclosure.

If you would like to know more, there is a useful archaeological leaflet which can be downloaded from North Yorkshire County Council's web page on the Bedale, Aiskew and Leeming Bar bypass.



In February Emma Watson spoke about the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age monuments of Northern England. Emma, who is a member of SWAAG, is currently working towards her PhD, at Durham University. She began her talk by asking SWAAG members to complete a questionnaire, to establish their knowledge of prehistoric sites and landscapes within the local area. A number of us struggled to do this! Emma explained this wasn't surprising given the under-representation of Northern England in archaeological literature.



Although some better known sites, such as the Thornborough Henges, the Druid's Altar a 'four poster' stone circle at Bordley (shown above) or the Gamelands stone circle at Orton (shown left) might be of equal significance and importance to monuments in the South, they are rarely mentioned. Others, such as the Lune Head stone circle, near Brough (shown below right) and the Gunnerkeld concentric circles, near Shap (shown below left) are often little known or unrecognised by either academics or the general public.

Too many sites within our region are shrouded in vegetation and suffer from neglect, damage and destruction.

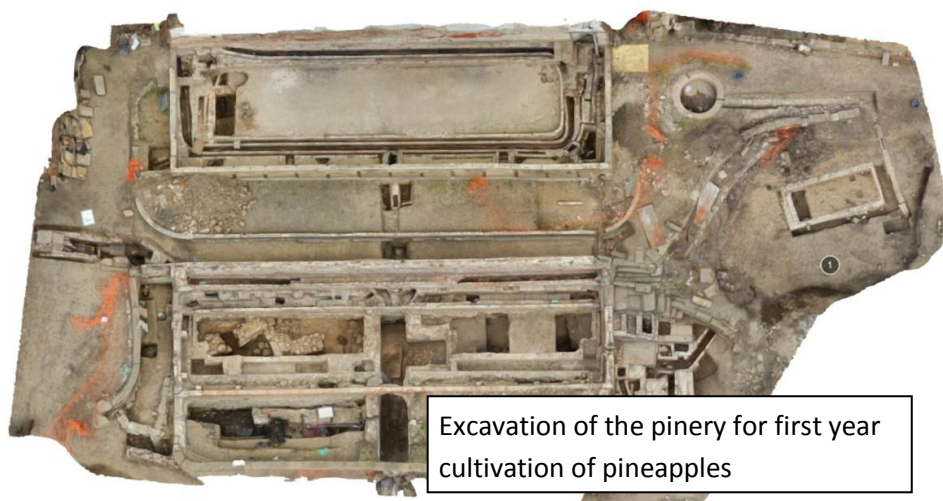
In total Emma has identified over 160 prehistoric sites, in the North of England, which she is putting into a gazetteer. The way forward might be for local communities to 'adopt' a monument, so that its condition could be regularly monitored and farmers approached and encouraged to assist with its preservation. The profile of sites could be raised through signposting and information boards.



Emma has offered to lead a members' walk around some of the prehistoric sites around Shap, in Cumbria, in May.

In March SWAAG member Stephen Eastmead spoke to the group about four excavations he had

recently worked on. The first was on a section of Roman road, near Hexham, the second was at Binchester Roman fort and the third and fourth were at Auckland Castle. Stephen's amazing composite 3D photograph shows the fascinating 'pinery-vinery' excavated in the gardens of Auckland Castle. Most members



Excavation of the pinery for first year cultivation of pineapples

were unaware that pineapples were grown in Britain, during the eighteenth century! Cultivation took three years from cutting to maturity and the fruit commanded a high price, being used for displays as well as the table. The far from tropical climate necessitated the use of hothouses, heated by a complicated system of furnaces and flues. For those who wish to know more there is a fascinating article on pineapple cultivation in Britain, by Johanna Lausen-Higgins, on the Building Conservation website.



Excavation of the curtain wall, round tower and south range at Auckland

Stephen suggests that anyone who wishes to gain experience in excavating different periods and geographical sites could look at the websites of 'The Architectural and Archaeological Society of Durham and Northumberland (AASDN)' and 'Altogether Archaeology'.

Future dates

Please see the details of forthcoming events below.

The next newsletter

The aim is to issue the newsletter roughly every quarter, so the next one will be issued in July. The newsletter relies on contributions from members, so if you would like to contribute a photograph or short article about a walk, talk or event please contact me at: jane@swaag.org. Future events, of interest to members, could also be publicised.

Jane Harrison

DATE(s)	TIME	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	DETAILS	CONTACT
09-04-2017	start 10am, finish 2-3pm	Arkengarthdale	Walk: Car park on side of Tan Hill road labelled Clay Intake Nook.OL30 map grid ref 011 017	John Russell will lead a walk to look at bale sites, flint working sites, Romano-British field system, peat and loess deposits, lime kilns and Foregill mines. Several 'guest speakers'!	Sue@swaag.org
11-04-2017	7pm	Buck Hotel, Reeth	Members' Meeting (NB non-members should reserve a free ticket by emailing Sue@swaag)	Talk by Dr Janet Montgomery who is a leading expert on isotope analysis and its use in archaeological dating techniques.	Sue@swaag.org

28-04-2017	10.30-11.30	Helmsley	Guided Tour of the English Heritage Archaeology Store	Leave Helmsley market place heading East (Pickering/Scarborough) on the A170. On the town outskirts just before the speed limit 40mph signs turn right into Riccal Drive. Follow Riccal Drive, after Storey Close, turn right. The Archaeology Store is 200 yards on your left within a fenced and gated enclosure. It is the right hand building of the two within the compound.	Sue@swaag.org
06-05-2017	tbc		Walk	SWAAG member and professional archaeologist Emma Watson will lead a walk to look at Neolithic sites in Swaledale	Sue@swaag.org
09-05-2017	7pm	The Buck Hotel, Reeth	Members' meeting and talk	SWAAG member Rod Flint will talk about the Harrying of the North, which followed the Norman invasion of 1066 and his new book based in 11th century Swaledale.	Sue@swaag.org
13-06-2017	7pm	The Buck Hotel, Reeth	Members' meeting	Discussion about upcoming dig on the Hagg, followed by John Russell on Fossils	Sue@swaag.org
30-06-2017		Queen's Head, Finghall	Members' social	Dinner	Shirley@swaag.org
11-07-2017	7pm	The Buck Hotel, Reeth	Members' meeting; informal social	This will be during the Hagg dig. Meet for a pint and an informal chat at The Buck. A chance for non-diggers to catch up with news from the dig site. Expect some interesting finds and a lot of speculation.	
05-07-2017 to 19-07-2017	all day	The Hagg	SWAAG archaeological dig		andrea@swaag.org