



Welcome to the first edition of the SWAAG newsletter; we hope that you like it and find it useful and informative.

With the Big Dig behind us and the HLF reports completed and submitted, life in SWAAG seems to have returned to the gentler pace of two years ago. That is not to say that we did not enjoy the Big Dig; it was in my opinion, and one supported by over 500 people who participated in one way or another, a brilliant project, and one which was well organised and run by Alan Mills and his project team. Well done to everyone, but let's have a rest before the next big project!

In the light of that the trustees have been considering the future and how SWAAG should go forward. Early-on we recognised the importance of efficient and effective communication with members, spread as they are over a wide geographic area. We already have an excellent web site, and will supplement it with a regular newsletter and a Twitter account.

I am delighted that Jane Harrison has very kindly offered to edit the newsletter. Please help her by sending her articles and any points of interest which you think worthy of further circulation. She can be reached at: [jane@swaag.org](mailto:jane@swaag.org). Sue Nicholson has created our Twitter account and has already started to tweet. Thanks to both of you for your help.

You will also see from the diary, shown later in the newsletter, that Sue Nicholson has pulled together an impressive and interesting programme of walks, talks and visits. Please support her and if you have any suggestions do not hesitate to contact her at: [sue@swaag.org](mailto:sue@swaag.org).

Many of you will also no doubt be relieved and delighted to learn that we are going back to the Hagg, and to "proper" archaeology! Philip Bastow and his team have organised what I am sure will be an interesting dig but also one on which there will be opportunities for us to brush up and learn archaeological skills. Andrea Dixon is coordinating the volunteers' side of the dig and if you would like to join in please let her know; no experience is needed and all necessary training will be given. Contact Andrea at: [andrea@swaag.org](mailto:andrea@swaag.org)

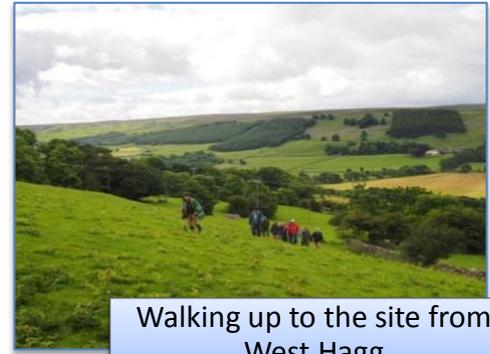
Thanks to everyone for their support and contributions to SWAAG and I look forward to catching up with you at one of the many activities,

David Brooks

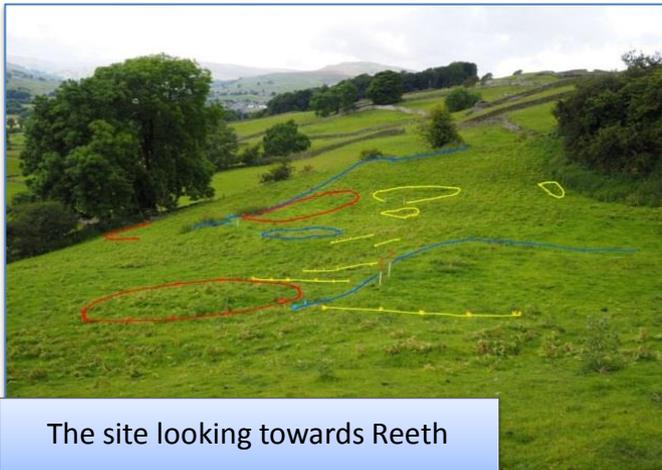
## *Preliminary visit to the Hagg - 2<sup>nd</sup> July*

This visit to The Hagg provided an introduction to the site for new members and helped to refresh the memories of those involved in the previous excavation. Philip Bastow led a walk over the site where flags marked out the key features. Blue flags showed walls, some of which had been excavated, yellow flags showed previously excavated features and red flags delineated areas for future excavation.

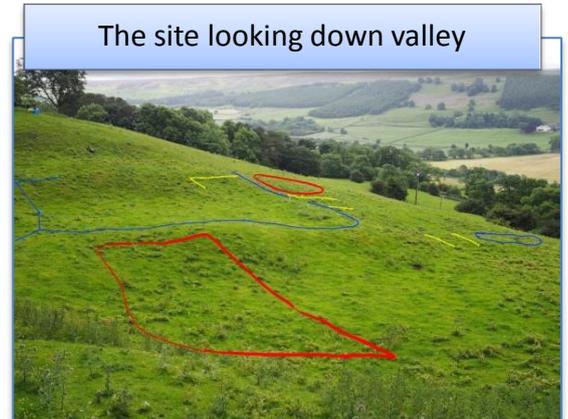
J. H.



Walking up to the site from West Hagg



The site looking towards Reeth



The site looking down valley



Not the warmest of days and shortly afterwards it poured!



The site looking uphill

The report of the previous excavation can be read on the SWAAG website:

<https://www.swaag.org/pdf/2794%20SWAAG%20Hagg%20Farm%20101.pdf>

## *Geophys Surveying - Long Preston*

An important legacy of the Big Dig is the geophys surveying equipment and skills. In addition to our own surveying we have also carried out surveys for the MOD's Operation Nightingale at Marne Barracks and for the Ingleborough Dales Landscape Partnership.

Over the summer, a small team made two visits to Long Preston on the western edges of the Dales, near Settle, where the Long Preston Heritage Group is in the throes of their own Big Dig project. They asked us to survey two sites. The first was a grassed pasture with an interesting mound in the middle; the question is, is the mound geological or is it a barrow of some form? The second site was another grass meadow where there were suspected medieval platforms. At both sites we carried out magnetometry and resistivity surveys and the results showed ridge and furrows, suggesting that the fields had in the past been well ploughed; there are also a few possible features, which we suspect would need to be excavated to decide what they are.



If you are interested in surveying, please let Mike Walton know at: [mike@swaag.org](mailto:mike@swaag.org)

D. B.



### *Birkdale Tarn - 31<sup>st</sup> July*

On the last day of July twelve Swaaggies and their leaders, Tim Laurie and John Russell, finally met to undertake the thrice postponed Birkdale tarn walk. The weather was slightly better than that of the originally proposed dates, although cool and breezy. However, one member had, on hearing there would be a beach, turned up in shorts! First stop the quarry to view, you've guessed it, rocks, and where John explained the process which began the ice age and demonstrated his prowess at modern rock art. Then on to the tarn and a walk along the beach looking for fossils and spotting an abandoned plovers' nest along the way.



After circumnavigating the tarn we reached the dam wall and another quarry, where Tim explained the way in which the quarry had been worked and pointed out a small round structure which he thought had been used by a gamekeeper to hunt a fox. He then showed us a larger ovoid structure among the stone waste. A long debate ensued about whether this was a cell, one of several cells (the others buried), an apprentice's training

task or something else entirely. As normally happens on these occasions, no conclusion was reached.



Time for lunch, followed by a walk across the heather to view the hags, gutters, sykes and layers of the peat formations, during which one member became stuck fast in a bog. She was quickly rescued but, on hearing of her misfortune, her husband was most concerned about the potential loss, asking who would have made his tea!

Mike Walton led a yomp across the heather and peat bogs aided by his GPS, to the site of a Scots Pine tree stump, which Tim believed to be about 6 - 8,000 years old, and had been worked by man. It was then across to the escarpment overlooking Sleddale, and a wonderful view.

Returning to the dam two more members decided to experiment with the process of bog bodies, one up to her waist! A (very soggy for some) walk ensued across the dam wall to view the construction, before returning to the cars and, for some, light refreshments in Keld. A very enjoyable and informative day out, during which we learned that we needed to add water wings to the emergency kit!



A. D.



### *Fremington Edge - 14th August*



The sun shone as we took a leisurely route uphill, pausing to take in features along the way including some derelict miners' cottages and to examine flint and chert artefacts from Ric's collection. John gave an interesting explanation of the geology of Fremington Edge and how the chert beds were formed. Mike talked about the industrial uses of chert and his own work with Jesse Shirley's Mill at the Friends of Etruria Museum in Stoke on Trent. We explored the chert quarry on Fremington Edge and braver souls ascended to Jabz' Cave. Ric told us the story of Jabez Raisbeck who is credited in local

folklore with having built this structure high up on the Edge, complete with "parlour", "kitchen" and "throne" with extensive views of the Dale. Jabez was a printer and newsagent in Reeth in Victorian times and a local character. He was also a poet and is said to have used the site as a writer's retreat. Sceptics may have doubts but anyway it's a fascinating story, a glorious view and we all had a grand day!



S. N.

### *SWAAG members' meetings*

In addition to the outdoor activities there have also been two excellent talks over the summer months. Les and Sue Knight gave a fascinating talk about lichens and how they might be used, with caution, in archaeological and historical dating. There was an opportunity to look at specimens through hand-held lens and microscopes and most of us were amazed at their colour and complexity. Sue and Les kindly led a short guided walk to look at lichens, in Gunnerside, on the following Sunday.

In September Ollie Cooper from Northern Archaeological Associates came to talk to the group about his watching brief when the water pipelines were laid in Swaledale and Wensleydale. Ollie advised on the route the pipelines should take to avoid known archaeological features, as well as those that were subsequently identified as result of surveying and excavation at the time of planning and construction. He pointed out a number of features that he thought might be worthy of future SWAAG investigation.

### *Future dates*

Please see the details of forthcoming events below.

### *The next newsletter*

As this is the first newsletter it has not been possible to cover all the activities that have taken place under the SWAAG 'umbrella' since the conclusion of the Big Dig. October and November look like busy months on the calendar so there should be plenty to include on the next newsletter! If you would like to contribute a photograph or short article about a walk, talk or event please contact me at: [jane@swaag.org](mailto:jane@swaag.org).

Jane Harrison

DATE	TIME	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	DETAILS	CONTACT
06-10-2016	4.15	The Buck Hotel	Local History Group: Manor Court transcriptions only	Meeting for those interested in joining group transcribing Manor Court records.	judith.mills@hotmail.co.uk
07-10-2016 to 16-10-2016	9.30 start each day	The Hagg	Archaeological dig		Andrea@swaag.org

20-10-2016	4.15	The Buck Hotel	Local History Group meeting		Alan Mills
22-10-2016	10.00-12.00	meet at Reeth bus stop	Walk to Maiden Castle led by Peter Denison-Edson	We will explore the "known unknowns" of this enigmatic and iconic Swaledale site and the Geology and Social History of the area. A fairly undemanding route with some beautiful views.	Sue@swaag.org
29-10-2016	All day	Grassington	Roman Society Conference: Romans and Natives in Central Britain	<a href="http://www.romansociety.org/archaeology/conferences.html">http://www.romansociety.org/archaeology/conferences.html</a>	Peter@swaag.org
30-10-2016	10am*-4pm (*nb clocks go back)	Norber Erratics	Exploring Norber Erratics, standing stones, field systems, house platforms	1hr 10 mins from Reeth, B6479 southbound, turn Right 1km after Studfold Meet at the pub at Helwith Bridge for Arcow Quarry and then on to Austwick; park by pub. OS map OL2 Helwith Bridge, Arcow Quarry 809695. Austwick 766685	Sue@swaag.org
01-11-2016	7.00pm	Buck Hotel	Members' meeting	Talks by Sheila Ickringill (researching Crackpot) and Rob Nicholson (Grinton-Fremington Dykes)	Sue@swaag.org
02-11-2016	10.30	Great North Museum (Hancock) Newcastle	Guided tour	We will meet at the entrance of the museum in time to start at 10.30. The tour should take around two hours and costs £4 per person. Entry to the museum is free. We have asked for a "bespoke" tour for SWAAG members with a focus on the extensive exhibits and artefacts relating to Hadrian's Wall. The museum also has an excellent fossil collection and many other points of interest.	Sue@swaag.org
13-11-2016	10am-2pm	Grinton Smelt Mill	A walk to Lemon Ghyll near Cogden Lodge.	War history, smelt mill, Devis Mine, veins and bell pits, evidence of 16th C mining, Bronze Age and Iron Age features. Meet at Grinton Smelt Mill lay-by on Reeth-Leyburn Rd. OS map OL30, grid ref 049959	Sue@swaag.org
09-12-2016		Tennants, Harmby Rd Leyburn	Members' Christmas Dinner	Join us for a delicious Christmas meal in Tennant's private dining room	Shirley@swaledale.org
13-12-2016	7pm	The Buck Hotel Reeth	Members' meeting	TBC	Sue@swaag.org
10-01-2017	7pm	The Buck Hotel Reeth	Members' meeting	TBC	Sue@swaag.org
07-02-2017	7pm	The Buck Hotel, Reeth	Members' meeting	TBC	Sue@swaag.org