



Welcome to the second SWAAG newsletter. Much has happened in the last three months and 2017 promises to be an equally busy year.

Wall Watch Project



North of us sits Hadrian's Wall, a World Heritage Site. Building began in AD122 at the instigation of the Emperor Hadrian and it runs some 73 miles across England starting at Walls End near Newcastle and ending at Bowness-on-Solway.

In 2014, the Tyne and Wear Museums established a project, using volunteers, to monitor the condition of the wall, its forts, towers, etc. along its total length. The initial phase of the project is for three years. SWAAG volunteered to take part and was allocated Chesters Fort and the adjacent bridge abutments,

together with two sections of the wall to the east of the fort.

For the past two years members of SWAAG have carried out a twice yearly survey; one at the start of the tourist season and the other at the end before winter sets in. The fort, wall and the associated wall ditch and vallum are monitored for any physical deterioration and for things such as growth of vegetation in the stone work, erosion and the growth of trees and scrub in the ditches, which in the longer terms may lead to deterioration. Each visit is written up and a report sent to the project coordinators. It is pleasing to note that "our" sections are in pretty good condition and that where we have noted problems some of them at least seem to be receiving some attention.

The day out to the wall is very enjoyable. We work in teams each focusing on a specific area and meet up at the end in Chesters for refreshments, the chocolate cake is highly recommended! Subject to time and weather some of us have taken the opportunity to visit the Fort in greater detail and to



visit the excellent museum at Chesters; on the last trip we visited the Roman town at Corbridge.

The surveys are coordinated by Sue Nicholson and the next will take place in 2017 in the April/May period. If you would like to join us please let Sue or me know, although we will circulate details nearer the time. No prior knowledge is necessary, just common sense, but it is a great way to see a section of the wall, to learn a little more about the Romans and to enjoy a pleasant walk in good company.

D.B.

The Hagg 7th – 15th October (see later report)



For lots more photographs see:

<https://sbd.swaag.org/#!album-99>

Maiden Castle walk - 22nd October



Guided by Peter Denison Edson we left a very busy Reeth marketplace and headed towards the Swing Bridge. First stop was Back Lane to view our destination, where Peter pointed out the (possible) long barrow to the west of Maiden Castle. After crossing the Swing Bridge and making our way across what had once been a glacial lake, we climbed slowly up onto Harkerside, bypassing Maiden Castle to first explore the (possible) Neolithic long barrow (also

known as a short long barrow!).

Then back to Maiden Castle, from which there were some wonderful views, including the field systems around Reeth. Peter distributed plans of the area and gave an interesting account of the findings of previous geophysics and research, including a hut circle and kist grave within the enclosure.



After viewing the impressive ditches, embankments and entrance we navigated the boulders of the fallen entrance walls to walk along the entrance avenue towards the (possible) Bronze age round barrow, which had been previously “excavated” in a futile hunt for treasure.

A.D.

Norber Erratics walk - 30th October

This was one of John Russell’s entertaining and amazingly informative walks, which started at Helwith Bridge, in Ribblesdale. John began by drawing an amusing analogy between the geology we were about to see and the Morecambe and Wise Christmas show in which Eric, playing the piano, told an exasperated Andre Previn, ‘I’m playing all the right notes – but not necessarily in the right order’! Armed with our fieldwork notes we then set off to our first site. This was at Arcow Quarry which, for health and safety reasons, we had to admire from some distance still standing on the road. At this location the rocks were in the right order, with the younger Carboniferous Limestone overlying the nearly vertical older Silurian Greywackes.

We then drove off to look for the same rocks in the wrong order. These we found on the fells above Austwick - the famous Norber Erratics - which the geographers and geologists amongst us



fondly remembered from a famous photograph in Arthur Holmes’ classic ‘Physical Geology’. These huge boulders of Greywacke sit precariously on top of little limestone pedestals. They were scooped up from nearby Crummack Dale by an offshoot glacier from the main Ribblesdale ice sheet. Their exact mode of formation has been fiercely debated since Victorian times. One of the most recent papers about them was published by Dr. Helen Goldie, a SWAAG member.

Our day was not limited to studying the geological landscape. John also told us about the history of the village of Austwick, Ric pointed out the possible house platforms and barrows and Les and Sue identified the lichens. Some of us had an equally interesting journey home – chasing a stray foxhound, visiting an Alpine rock garden and admiring a very buoyant art installation literally on Semer Water.

J.H.



Hancock Museum visit - 2nd November

When SWAAG joined the Wallwatch project two years ago, monitoring sections of Hadrian's Wall twice a year, some of us wanted to find out more about this amazing structure. The free, online course developed by Newcastle University was an entertaining and informative introduction to the subject:

<https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/hadrians-wall>



Much of the off-site video material was filmed at the Hancock Museum where the most of the ground floor is dedicated to Hadrian's Wall and this was the focus of our guided tour led by Keeper of Archaeology, Andrew Parkin.

We were treated to a dazzling two hour sprint beginning with the Paleolithic, through some exquisite Bronze Age flints and tools, a brief visit to the Iron Age and then on into the Roman Gallery. Here we were

introduced to Andrew's favourite exhibits, notably the stone inscription taken from Milecastle 38 on the Wall which proves that it was indeed built in the reign of Emperor Hadrian by the Second Augustan Legion:

<http://www.nu-digitalheritage.com/hadrians-wall/Stone/Inscription/building-stone/milecastle-38-dedication-stone>

We saw altars dedicated to Roman and Celtic gods, a reconstructed Temple of Mithras, poignant memorials to legionaries, wives and children and some wonderfully naive carvings of classical deities. There is even a scale model of the Wall in its entirety occupying the whole length of the gallery.

In the Egyptian section we pondered the mortal remains of two mummified citizens before passing through the Judgement of Ma'at into what might have been the Field of Reeds but actually turned out to be the slightly wobbly gallery of Greek pottery. Then we finished up outdoors, gazing upon an immense stone covered in prehistoric rock art.

There are excellent photographs of the day's visit (including the one above) on the SWAAG website which were taken by Jane Towler.

<https://sbd.swaag.org/#!album-102>

If you have not yet discovered the joys of this lovely museum I would heartily recommend it. It's open most days and entry is free.

<https://greatnorthmuseum.org.uk/visit-us>

S.N.

Grinton Smelt Mill walk - 13th November



On Remembrance Sunday 2016 around twenty SWAAG members set out in good weather and spirits for the ascent of Lemon Gill via Cogden Gill and the Grinton How lead smelting mill.

Using his superb drawings as a visual aid, John Russell told us about a geological fault line which runs through limestone rocks in Cogden Gill, its formation involving earthquakes, and a Chinese invention of AD 132 which gave early warning of earthquakes and assisted in locating their epicentres.

With an introduction to its history (1710-1889) from David Brooks, we had a look at the inside of the smelt mill and the remains of its workings and structure including some 15m long trusses. John directed us towards the Northern Mine Research Society Monograph no. 51 for further historical background on the ownership of the mill and mining rights. The smelt mill, flue, fuel store and associated earthworks were designated as a scheduled ancient monument in 1974. The smelt mill is the best preserved in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The buildings are believed to have been used as munitions stores during World War II and one of our party found a used detonator from WWII ordnance lying in the heather in Glead Gill.



We observed a minute's silence and remembrance within the mill walls.

Onwards and upwards to the source of the regular water supply needed for the mill, a spring at the point where limestone sits over shale rock. We were also told about the Devis Hole Mine cave system. Again the geological principles of the formation of these features were illustrated by John.

We studied a copse of fairly recently planted alder trees and John described some of the qualities of their timber including tolerance to damp, usefulness in dyeing and (the root boles) being a source of fine charcoal for use in gunpowder.

Tim Laurie explained "carrs" (woodland communities) and how they are influenced by the local geology, where to look for ancient surviving woodland in Swaledale and Wensleydale and an important difference in the natural history of the two dales, i.e. yew woodland can be found in Swaledale but there is none in Wensleydale. Ewe or YOU - DON'T EAT YEW!

We reached a boundary stone, marked 'ED' and maybe 'IS' below. Time didn't allow for a closer inspection of the old lead workings along the Stork vein but that's for another day. Thanks to John, Dave and Tim and apologies to them for any inaccuracies in the above account of a very interesting walk.

S.I.

PCA Pottery Workshop - 5th December



On 5th December, a group of members were treated to an excellent pottery workshop by Eniko Hudak at PCA, Durham. Eniko is a Roman Pottery specialist who trained with James Gerrard at Newcastle University.

We discussed the different styles of pottery from the utilitarian (mortaria, amphorae) to the highly decorative (samian, black burnished ware, etc.) and handled some stunning examples from the PCA collection. We talked about the development of Roman trade routes and how that affected the type of pottery in use, including the impact Hadrian's Wall had on the prevalence of certain styles locally. We also learned how to trace and transfer a decorative design using graphite powder.

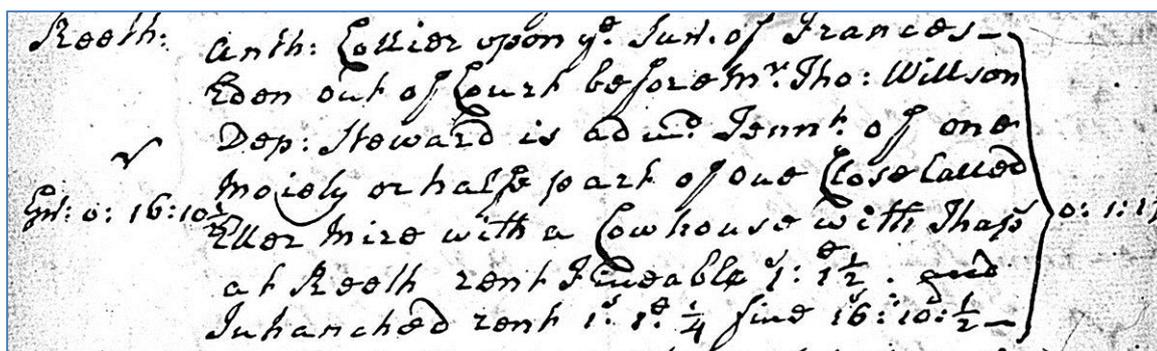
Eniko gave us a lively, entertaining presentation which reflected her enthusiasm and expert knowledge. We are hoping to organise a second workshop in the Spring for those who were unable to attend this time. There is already a waiting list!

S.N.

Swaledale & Arkengarthdale Local History Group (LHG)

The local history group grew out of the interest in local history stimulated by the Big Dig. The LHG is an informal group and, although it is a sub-group of SWAAG, participation is not restricted to SWAAG members; all are welcome. The group meets every couple of months in The Buck, Reeth. The next meeting is 4.15pm, Thursday 12th January 2017.

The LHG provides a forum for people to report on their research and discuss with others. Often someone in the group either knows the answer to a problem or knows someone who does! Current research topics include field names (Will), medical matters (Jocelyn), roads (Peter), medieval tax (Alan), local schools (Sue). In addition the group, having completed the transcription of the tithe records, is continuing Tim Bagenal's work of transcribing the Muker & Healaugh Manor Court records. The latter show land transfers in the copyhold system from the 17th Century onwards. Books A-E are now on the SWAAG website; we are currently working on book F.



Example from Book F- 1755

There is a website for the group at www.swaledalelocalhistoryblog.wordpress.com which includes a contact page.

The Big Dig twitter feed @SwaleDig is also used to publish items of historical or archaeological interest.

If you have an interest in local history, or are doing your own research, do come along and join us.

Judith Mills

SWAAG members' meetings

There have been two members' meetings since the last newsletter. In November Sheila Ickringill, reported on her research into the evolution of the buildings in Crackpot, which had rapidly expanded into an investigation into the social history of the hamlet. She had used resources including books, pamphlets, visits to NYCRO, genealogical websites and the Garth family day books, which recorded the daily events of the male family members. The hamlet now has 13 inhabitants, whereas the 1841 census recorded a population of 263.

Rob Nicholson followed this with a report on the two phases of excavation on the Grinton-Fremington dykes. The report is now available on the SWAAG website:

<https://www.swaag.org/pdf/SBDD15%20Report%20PDF.pdf>

In December Philip Bastow reported on the excavation of the evaluation trenches, at the Hagg, in October. Six trenches were dug across the site with a view to informing decisions as to where more detailed and extensive excavations might take place in the summer. Participants, regardless of experience, were given the opportunity to be involved with all aspects of archaeology and a professional archaeologist was on hand to provide support. As well as stone embankments, two areas of flagstones were uncovered together with a small amount of pottery.

In the coming months we plan to carry out geophys and landscape surveys before the main excavation in mid-July.

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 April. 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	TIME	LOCATION	ACTIVITY	DETAILS	CONTACT
10-01-2017	7pm	The Buck Hotel Reeth	Members' meeting	Jenny Proctor of Pre-Construct Archaeology will update us about the Roman Villa at Aiskew	Sue@swaag.org
12-01-2017	4.15pm	Buck Hotel, Reeth	Local History Group	Further details on swaledalelocalhistoryblog.wordpress.com	
07-02-2017	7pm	The Buck Hotel, Reeth	Members' meeting	Emma Watson will speak about Neolithic sites	Sue@swaag.org
05-03-2017	10am - 2pm approx.	Apedale	Walk: meet 10am junction Apedale Rd and Grinton-Redmire Rd SE 04197 94040 Aiming to finish around 2pm	Alan Mills will lead a walk to look at Lead Mining in general: veins, shafts, levels, crushing mill etc., and early medieval mining in particular. Also an early (970-1010 AD) bale site and associated workings.	Sue@swaag.org

14-03-2017	7pm	Buck hotel, Reeth	Members' meeting	Stephen Eastmead will give a talk about 3 archaeological digs including Auckland Castle: "From Romans to Pineapples"	Sue@swaag.org
11-04-2017	7pm	Buck Hotel, Reeth	Members' Meeting	Talk by Dr Janet Montgomery who is a leading expert on isotope analysis and its use in archaeological dating techniques.	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