



*Staffordshire Archaeological
and Historical Society*



NEWSLETTER SEPTEMBER 2013

Web: www.sahs.uk.net

Issue No 114

email: sahs@sahs.uk.net



BLAST FROM THE PAST

At The Guildhall, Lichfield on Friday, November 1st 2013 at 8.00pm.

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Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society Registered Charity No. 500586

Presidents Address

Welcome to the Society's 2013-14 season! Once again we can look forward to a varied programme of Friday evening meetings, together with a range of additional activities and special events. We are particularly looking forward to our collaboration with Lichfield Arts and would like to draw members' attention to the planned concert at the Guild Hall on November 1st given by the medieval music group. 'Blast from the Past'. Your committee have been giving renewed attention to looking at how we can further promote interest in the Society and enhance the benefits to our members, and have been encouraged in this task by the flow of new members and visitors to our meeting last season. This will remain a key item on our agenda over the coming year.

Looking further afield, the customary mix of change and challenge lies ahead for the world of archaeology and heritage. At a regional level, some members may be aware of the apparent threat to Old Oswestry Hillfort (Hen Dinas) in Shropshire from damaging development. HOOOH (Hands off Old Oswestry Hillfort) have argued that one of the UK's largest and best-preserved Iron Age hillforts will be compromised if Shropshire Council goes ahead with housing development within the vicinity of the monument and have therefore promoted a petition to oppose the project.

Nationally, we await the impact and possible implications of the government's announcement that it is planning to facilitate the transition of English Heritage into a self-financing charity responsible for the management of the historic properties that make up the National Heritage Collection. Under the scheme the 420 properties will remain in public ownership but English Heritage would be licensed to manage them by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, the statutory body that currently governs all the activities of English Heritage.

The statutory planning and heritage protection arm of English Heritage is to be recast as the National Heritage Protection Service as a separate entity.

In the world of local societies, such as our own, we can expect interesting debate arising from a discussion paper published by the Council for British Archaeology on the future role of such organisations. The importance of local societies in British archaeology in the past cannot be doubted; the challenge is to ensure that we are able to continue to play a key role in the future. Following on from a Forum discussion, the CBA is now promoting a wider consultation. The CBA website presents case studies and a discussion paper, setting out a number of proposals for moving forward on some of the initiatives identified at the forum, and a response form, designed to gather information from local societies on their future plans, their advocacy and campaigning work, the partnerships, publications, use of digital media, work with young people, research and fieldwork. Your committee will actively monitor this initiative and report back to members on any future developments.

Members of the Committee would like to thank you for your continued support; we look forward to seeing you at the coming meetings, and hope you enjoy them as much as we do.

John Hunt.
President, Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society.

MEETINGS FOR THE NEW SEASON 2013-14

All Meetings are held at St Marys Heritage Centre, Market Square, Lichfield starting at 8.00pm (excluding the AGM) except on 1st November which is at the Guildhall and requires separate application for tickets.

Visitors are most welcome, £3.00 entry. Membership forms are always available at the Meetings.

4TH October Prof. Richard Cust Discovering Charles 1

Richard Cust is Professor of early modern history at Birmingham University, specialising in the political and cultural history of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century England. This is a return for Richard Cust and, tonight we will learn more of Charles 1 adding to the political life of Charles 1 at the previous talk some years ago.

18th October Alex Dziegiel Boscobel House

Alex, the Curator at Boscobel will tonight takes through the history of the House with its Estate together with its place within local and national history.

1st November Blast From The Past

A history of music over the past 500 years or so together with musical instruments of the period. This exciting event will be held at the Guildhall and is in partnership with Lichfield Arts (see application for tickets attached to letter at the back).

8th November Dr. Simon Davies Early Neolithic Longhouses

After a career in software development, Simon returned to university to gain a BA, MPhil and finally a PhD in archaeology, specialising in landscape archaeology of the British Neolithic and digital modelling. Since then Simon has done freelance research as well as working in museums. Simon continues to be interested in the Neolithic as well as currently researching Tudor/Jacobean landscapes of Birmingham, and working on a 3D digital museum tour tool.

The talk tonight centres upon these enigmatic structures that appeared near the start of the British Neolithic (from around 3800BC) and are now being found in moderate numbers. We look at their structures, the finds associated with them and, unlike many studies, their relationships with the surrounding landscapes, in an attempt to understand their meaning to the people of that time. Farmhouses, storage barns, tribal meeting places, religious centres....numerous explanations have been given for them, but perhaps their real importance is what they tell us about how we study archaeology today.

15th November Dr. Clive Waddington Fin Cop – A hilltop at War

Clive was previously a Lecturer in Archaeology at Newcastle University and has excavated and published widely on all periods of English history. More recently he has been running Archaeological Research Services which he set up 2004. Fin Cop was an excavation he directed in partnership with the Longstone History Society which resulted in unexpected discoveries which has challenged some recent thinking on hill forts and this is the subject of our talk this evening.

29th November

Emma-Jayne Hopla

Drowned Landscapes

Emma is a Quaternary Palynologist at Birmingham University with a particular interest in prehistory and human impact on early Holocene Environments. The talk tonight will take us into the research and results devoted to the Pre inundation of the Southern North Sea or Doggerland as it has become to be known by.

6th December 2013

The Annual General Meeting at 7.30pm followed by:

Matthew Morris

The King Under the Car Park

The search for the last known resting place of King Richard III is the subject of the talk tonight and will cover all aspects of the site project work followed by the scientific analysis and the DNA results.

Matthew is an Archaeologist with University of Leicester Archaeological Service (ULAS).

21st February 2014

Robin Mathams and David Barrett

The Trent Valley Railway

Robin and David are both railway enthusiasts and will tonight present to us a talk covering the history of the Trent Valley Railway, the proposed routes and the political intrigue that was associated with it.

7th March 2014

Dr. William Purkis

Hunting for Relics on the First Crusade

William Purkis is a historian of Medieval Religious culture (c1600-c1300) with particular interests in crusading, pilgrimage and monasticism. This is the subject of the talk this evening

William is Lecturer at Birmingham University.

21st March 2014

Prof. David Mattingly

The Garamantes of the Libya Sahara

A Lost civilisation beyond the Roman Frontier.

David Mattingly is Professor of Roman Archaeology at Leicester University.

The talk tonight is about the Garamantes the important people of the Sahara Desert and extends from the Fazzan Project and is beyond the boundaries of the Roman Empire within the Sahara Heartlands.

4th April 2014

Dr. Turi King

Genetics and Peopling of Britain

Turi King is a Research Fellow and Project Leader of The Impact of Diasporas also she is a Lecturer in Genetics and Archaeology at Leicester University.

The talk tonight will be about Genetics and their impact on the making of Britain.

11th April 2014

Paul Ford

The Zeppelin Raid over Walsall of 1916

This talk is the one postponed from last season due to Paul's illness. It will be one of a several talks related to World War 1 during the next season of talks.

Paul is Archivist at Walsall History Centre.

2nd May 2014

Steve Dean

Staffordshire Update

Steve is returning this season to present an update on the Archaeological happenings within Staffordshire during the last couple of years together with an update on the latest finds from The Hammerwich Hoard.

TIN TABERNACLES

Following Brian Bull's article in the last issue of the Newsletter, there is another one in Aldridge. Originally a Bethesda Primitive Methodist Chapel built in 1890, it was flourishing in 1895 and reports of Sunday School Prize givings appear in the local paper.

By the 1950s it was a crisp factory. It is still there but I do not know what it functions as now.

90% of New Zealand house roofs are made of corrugated iron, usually brightly painted. It was shipped out as ballast in boats which returned to the UK with wool and frozen lamb.

Betty Fox

TRANSACTIONS.....HERE.....THERE.....AND EVERYWHERE

Members living in Lichfield will be familiar with the 'madaboutthemercury' feature in the Mercury which includes photographs of readers with their copy of the newspaper in far flung parts of the world. The Society's Transactions get about too and although I am not suggesting that travellers take their Transactions with them, members may be reassured to learn that copies are available across the continents.

The Society currently has 49 institutional subscribers across the Old World, New World and Antipodes. Local subscribers include Lichfield, Tamworth, Cannock, Burton-upon-Trent, Stafford and Sutton Coldfield libraries, together with other libraries and more specialist collections in the West Midlands. Eleven British universities subscribe including Oxford and others in northern England, the Midlands, London and Cardiff. English Heritage subscribes, as does the Society of Antiquaries of London and a number of specialist libraries.

Subscribers in Europe include the Kulturhistorisk Museum in Oslo and the Romanish-Germanische Kommission in Frankfurt.

What is perhaps more surprising is that ten copies are despatched to the USA: one copy goes to the Library of Congress and others are sent to Harvard, Cornell, Stanford, and Michigan State University and the Universities of California and Wisconsin, and two copies to specialist libraries. Other destinations for Transactions include the University of Adelaide in Australia and the Royal Ontario Museum Library in Canada (University of Toronto).

In addition, legal deposit copies are sent to the British Library, the National Libraries of Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and also the Bodleian and Cambridge University Libraries.

It is a measure of the Society's success that its publications are valued by such a range of prestigious institutions and we should rightly feel proud of the part the Society plays in promoting archaeology through its Transactions, thereby ensuring that knowledge about developments in our area reaches the widest possible audience.

A huge amount of work is involved in the publication of the Transactions and the Society would like to thank the editor, Nigel Tringham, for his commitment and dedication over almost 30 years. The first volume of Transactions that Nigel edited was XXIV for 1982-83 which was published in 1984 and the most recent volume published in 2013 was XLVI. No doubt all readers have immediately worked out that this means that Nigel has edited a total of 23 volumes and hopefully we have many more to look forward to over the coming years.

Susan Lupton

A CHANGE TO PERSONNEL ON YOUR COMMITTEE

Your long serving Hon Membership Secretary Betty Fox has decided to call it a day, but only amazingly after some 31 years highly distinguished service in post. She'll be greatly missed, although she's not actually going very far so to speak, remaining a Vice President and Member of Committee, as a wise old head and who in fact wishes to continue in charge of much of the Society's ancient and valuable paper archive records, as 'Honorary Archivist'. We are in gratitude for Betty's undoubted and invaluable contribution to the running of the Society since the early 1980s, and there's yet more from her to come! Thank you indeed Betty! Happy retirement – not!

You do have a new Hon Membership Secretary though - we are pleased to confirm that Susan Lupton has succeeded to the role vacated by Betty and we wish Susan every success – does Susan realise what she's taken on?!

KB

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Will Members please note that as from 1st September 2013 the annual rates of Subscription to the Society changed to: Joint £30.00, Individual £20.00, Student/Unemployed £15.00.

Keith Billington

MEMBERS NOTICES

Congratulations to Lucy & Clive Smith on the occasion of their Golden Wedding in April 2013
Clive and Lucy regularly attend meetings during the season

OBITUARIES

It is with regret that the Committee note the death of Major Beedle in February 2013
He was a long term loyal member of the Society who regularly attended lectures until a few years ago
We send the Society's condolences to his family
Diana Wilkes 31 Jul 13

The Society is sorry to record the death of a very long standing member, Maureen Piper, who died in March of this year aged 91. She lived in Longdon and for many years organised a Local History Fair which ran over a weekend. Much of the content was devoted to the village itself but she also concentrated on the Marquis of Anglesey, his involvement in the Peninsula Wars and his estates.
For many years she supported her disabled daughter Katie. She will be greatly missed as a dedicated local historian. BF

“COME 'ERE - THERE'S MORE!” THE SHENSTONE PROJECT – FURTHER WORK

I suppose this piece could be best described, as the trailer to a larger picture which in cinema speak, is the big feature that is ‘coming soon’. The piece itself should have preceded the pieces that appeared in the last newsletter but I did not make my suggested order of publishing known to the Editor – so it is my fault that it is out of sequence. But do on any account get too excited - and here goes.

Notwithstanding, the amount of effort put in by the team and the work that went into the Shenstone Survey in its various guises, culminating in the publication in 2009, I have been giving the survey further thought and consider there is really more to be had as it were.

The Shenstone Parish Tithe Apportionment 1838 (referred onward as the Award) was transcribed to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format and it seems sacrilege to let the valuable data languish on a computer hard drive only accessed intermittently if at all, or even languish on a now mislaid memory stick! As far as I am concerned neither of those situations exist! Although we did try, the Award itself proved impossible to photograph to enable us to achieve a decent and usable image as the volume would not lie flat enough without being dismembered. You can image what sort of consternation that would have created with the Records Office staff if we had suggested that course of action – we might have been shown the door!! The few images we did get are not really good enough to be seen in public. In the original Award there are also the Tithe Values and in hindsight perhaps we should have included these values in our transcription exercise. Still if there is time it may be possible to complete this omission.

The upshot of all this is, I decided to take a closer look at the Award and idly thumbing through a hard copy established that there were a few areas that would benefit from further examination making better use of the available data as a result. The consequence of this, at some point during the coming months and appearing in the newsletter there will be pieces based on this retrospective delving into the gathered data from the Award plus a few other resources.

This idle thumbing initially led me to commence extracting the *field names* data that again in hindsight I consider we should really have incorporated as an exercise in the original survey published back in 2009. So working on the principle of ‘better late than never’ I am working through the Award mainly to initially produce a comprehensive list of the names. Additionally the meanings of the field names will be looked at in the general context of field names and also within the Shenstone parochial context which may differ to the more widely accepted meanings that appear in the books written by *John Field*. This particular exercise may progress slowly and get published in small bites but watch this space anyway.

Other subjects coming under scrutiny using the Award along with Local Trades/Commercial Directories and National Census data include a couple on property ownership as to me it appeared from the Award there were some interesting and even odd connections. Additionally a survey of a selection of residents (pin in the list method of selection!) will be followed as far as possible through the census records 1841 to 1911 to observe how particular families fared and moved around Shenstone Parish. We will have to see how far we get with that one, as one particular family name thus far selected, some names have been entered in the census record incorrectly – not by the enumerator but by the drones at National Records transcribing data from written image to digital computer record. However we will overcome and these insights might again be published in small bites.

In light of the Tithe and Apportionment I also considered whether we are we all familiar with the concept of Tithe as to what is included what is excluded and so on. The upshot is hopefully there will be a piece about this at some later date. Again this is further work related to the Shenstone Survey and the *Roger Kain* and *Hugh Prince* books on the subject have been invaluable.

The first piece as a result of these excursions actually appeared in the last newsletter but rest assured during the coming months there will be more on the way to bore the socks off you.

Right, that is it for this piece, so have you got your shoes ready for the socks to come off!

Brian Bull

A SOCIAL EVENING FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Lichfield Arts, in Association with Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society

present

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Performing A BRIEF HISTORY OF MUSIC

At The Guildhall, Lichfield on Friday, November 1st 2013 at 8.00pm.

SAHS Members £11.00 – Non-members £13.00



'Blast from the Past' are the acclaimed musicians CHRIS GREEN (voice, mandocello, guitar, accordion) and SOPHIE MATTHEWS (voice, English bagpipes, shawm, rauschpfeife, flute, sax and recorders). They regularly work for English Heritage and the National Trust, as well as performing in castles and cathedrals throughout Britain. This show is built on the success of their costumed theatre shows and reflects their shared love of history.

Starting with the vigour of the Medieval Period, the evening moves through the intricacy of the Renaissance, the musical grandeur of the Baroque to the pomp and bombast of the Victorians. In two sets of music, courtly dance tunes, Tudor drinking songs and ballads of highwayman and sailors will be performed with a wicked and infectious sense of humour, reminiscent of Blackadder and 1066 and All That.

A vibrant and magical evening is guaranteed in this fun and fast moving show that presents a vivid picture of our musical DNA.

See separate application letter on page 21 for ticket sale details.

2013 Excavations at the Roman Fort site at Senhouse, Maryport, Cumbria



In late August we were able to visit Cumbria and spend some time at this increasingly important Roman site at Maryport. Maryport lies on the coast in the north –west of Cumbria. It is the site of a major fort on the southern extension of the Hadrian wall defence line.

Maryport is believed to be the main Roman port to supply all the forts on the western section of Hadrian's Wall. It is connected by a series of small forts through to the western end of Hadrian's Wall near Carlisle. The land belonged to the Senhouse family since the 16th Century. The site was first excavated in the 1880, when the fort was unearthed and a 'temple site' was exposed by Mr Joseph Robinson. Later, a gunnery drill hall was built between the fort and the cliff edge and was converted to the Senhouse Museum in 1990 which houses most of the finds and many Altars from the Senhouse Collection. Recently a reconstruction of a watch tower has been erected with views all over the surrounding country and coast line.

The collection was started in 1590 by John Senhouse who started to collect inscribed stones from the Roman fort and civilian town lying along the coastal ridge. Most of the artefacts excavated during the last five centuries are now housed either in the British Museum, the Tullie Museum in Carlisle or in the Senhouse Museum. The site was designated as a scheduled area and a geophysics survey was undertaken in 2003/4. This showed a large area outside the fort was covered in the remains of buildings, roads and many other mysterious shapes. Many military altar stones have been found over the years, giving a good picture of the military establishment at the fort. Replicas of some of the altar stones now in the British Museum are also in the museum. The exciting find of a previously unknown altar stone from last year's excavation is on special display in the on- site museum this year (for more information see http://www.senhousemuseum.co.uk/023_CA259-maryport_SC.pdf). (2271).

Following the geophysics survey archaeologists, the Museum Trust and the Hadrian's Wall Trust raised funds to dig in the fields surrounding the previously excavated fort site with more discoveries being made to prove that a substantial Roman settlement or vicus on the scale perhaps of



Vindolanda awaits just below the field surfaces. The picture above shows the site relative to the coast line looking north towards Hadrian's Wall. Starting in 2011, an annual excavation has been undertaken to examine a possible temple site as part of a five year project by University of Newcastle which started in 2011. Further excavation has taken place this year confirming that what has been found is the most north western classical temple (possibly Christian) in the Roman world. In previous years the Roman altars, previously thought to be revered, were found to have been reused in post holes, as part of the foundations for building of a large timber building probably in the 5th Century, having been moved from their original position. Similarly many Roman building stones,



characteristically of red sandstone, can be recognised in the walls and houses of the modern town.

This year a second excavation has been started. Called 'The Roman Settlement Project' it is due to a philanthropist Mr Christian Levett. The dig at Maryport is led by Stephen Rowland and John Zant of Oxford Archaeology North. The aim is to examine part of the Roman settlement during August and September, with a similar dig in 2014.

The Roman site was well robbed out of its building materials. Luckily, the fields were mainly pastures for sheep so the foundations of the settlement remain in place to be carefully excavated. One of the site supervisors in charge this year is the very enthusiastic Dr. David Maron of Oxford Archaeology North. We were lucky enough to be in a party being shown the in progress of the dig in great detail. Some finds were happened as we were watching. If you look closely in the above picture you will see signs of the 'invasion of the killer sheep'! A big flock had been released into the fields in the last two days and were proving very troublesome. We were told that the diggers were waiting for some crowd barriers to be delivered which had been delayed because they had all been in use at a nearby pop Festival!

Map of the Excavation Site



The area being excavated in this first phase is the third strip of a row of 4 dwellings fronting onto the main road going north out of the fort. You can see the blue outline of the site of interest and the red lines separating each habitation. The extent of the settlement can be seen from the geophysics survey done in 2004/5. It shows buildings spreading to the west down to the cliff edge, eastward to the modern houses and northwards for 500m from the fort.

The front of our house is the third one from the fort. The road out of the fort runs just outside the front step. The road surface can be clearly seen in the pictures below. First impressions possibly indicate a shop with working area behind. Remaining foundations indicate a wall of about 70-100 cm. This would possibly indicate that the building was at least two stories. This would be similar to those we saw earlier this year in Pompeii. Stretching out behind the shop front is the living accommodation. Beyond that, going on down the plot towards the coastal cliff is the "garden", showing unexcavated features such as animal pens, rubbish pits etc. When we were asked "what is archaeology?" a passing excavator muttered loudly

"rubbish!" (Discuss!).





The previous day the machine digger had been in and extended the cleared area right to the edge of the plot. The diggers had just started cleaning back on the new area. Dave Maron said they had found a ditch and several possible waste pits which he pointed out to us.

It was good to see the meticulous detail and care taken not to miss a thing. We were shown examples of finds for that day including the base of a Samian ware pot with an inscription on. He explained about the importance of Samian ware and that an expert could probably tell us which factory it came from! None of us could make out the letters however. A pot rim had also been just found.



Good archaeologists will always opt to dig out a rubbish pit if given a choice, said David Maron. Many small pins and other useful household items are found in them as well as the usual animal bones. Even cess pits contain lots of "lost items together with the important faeces from which details of diet can be obtained. A wooden piece of debris is being carbon dated to get a more accurate date for when this settlement of Alauna flourished.

The other pictures show Dave Maron standing by the floor area of the house and the other shows him adjacent to the wide wall displaying one of the days finds.



Well worth a visit if you are in Cumbria.

Jean and Paul Norris.

SHENSTONE PROJECT- Additional work

Victorian Farmers are Guilty of Hedge Removal!!

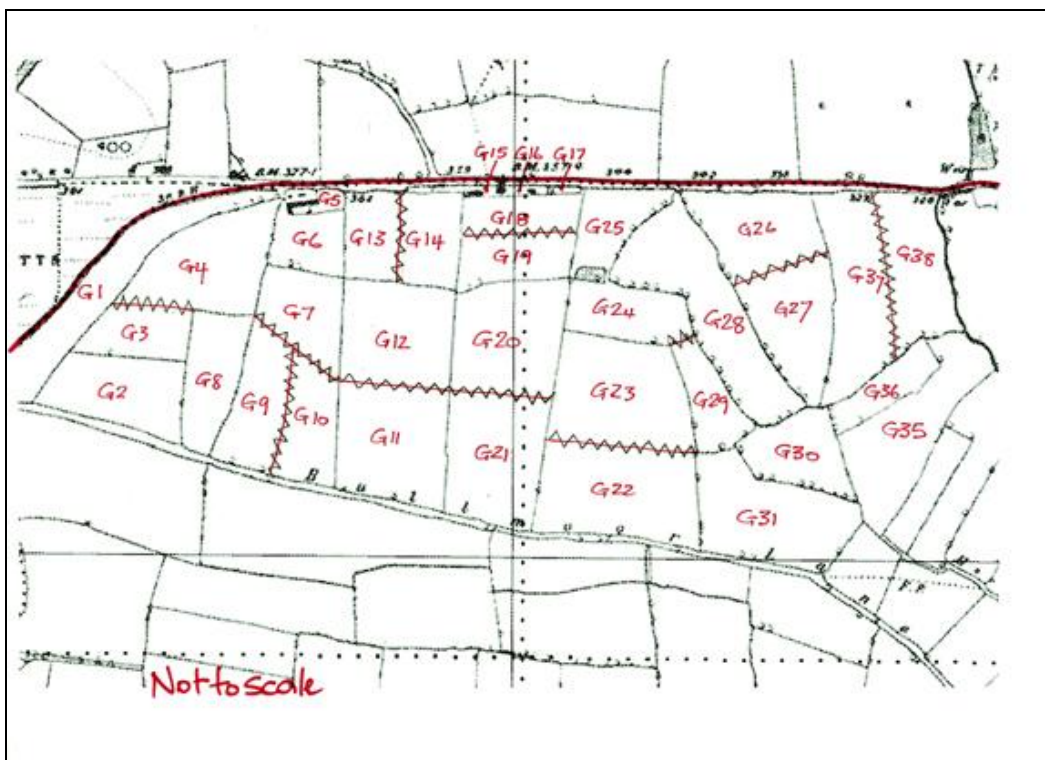
This is just a short piece – a bit of light relief if you like but loosely related to the Shenstone project extra curricula work that I am currently working on.

The subject is merely being aired to show that even the Victorians were guilty of hedge removals. It came to light when I was looking at the 'Leasow' fields. If you look at the map that we used which is from the late 19th century, the earliest available and then compare it with the Tithe map of 1838/9 there are differences. So far I have only looked at the Chesterfield sub parish and it just happens that these fields were in a single block. I have noticed other instances of these occurrences throughout the Shenstone parish which I will collect up and record as I go through.

It just tells us that hedge removal is not a phenomenon of the 20th century or even the 21st century for that matter although because of the ever larger pieces of machinery it is something that has maybe accelerated in the latter. Have you seen the size of some tractors let alone combine harvesters in use today!

Anyway I thought it worthy of airing – are the socks off yet?

The map below shows with zigzags the field boundaries and hedges that have been removed, sometime between the Tithe map (1838/9) and our map (1880ish). We presume this was to make the fields marginally more economic to cultivate. The fields identified are recorded as under the plough.



However, we are not done, looking at the more recent map depicted below, you will observe that a number of other hedges etc., having been removed in the 20th century, although even more recently, built about ten years ago the M6 Toll Road has further devastated the field pattern.



It is interesting to note a new boundary hedge is shown on the map above!

Well that is it for this wander off the beaten track.

Brian Bull

Minton Tile Floor Reveal, St George's Hall, Liverpool

Recently restored at a cost of £27 million, St George's Hall is well worth a visit. Described as the greatest neo-classical building in Europe, the Hall was built in the mid-19th century to provide a venue for the city's music festivals and courts. It would have featured prominently in any contemporary list of largest/firsts: the ceiling of the Great Hall was the largest of its kind, as was the Minton tiled floor and the organ (7,737 pipes), and it was the first air conditioned public building. The building was completed in 1855 at a cost of more than £300,000.

The Hall, including the old courts and holding cells, is open to the public and visitors can also join guided tours. The best time to visit is in August when the Minton Floor is revealed for two weeks or so; it takes four days to remove the protective wood panels and a further four days to replace them. The floor was covered over in 1886 and only revealed for view six times throughout the 20th century. Only recently has the floor been on show as an annual event. The floor is in near-perfect condition and it is easy to see from the surrounding walkway how it would have deteriorated had it not been covered. The floor consists of over 30,000 tiles which were manufactured by Minton, Hollins and Co of Stoke on Trent. The design of the floor consists of three large circles surrounded by smaller circles with the Royal Coat of Arms, the Star of St George, the Rose, the Thistle and Shamrock, surrounded by classical ornamentation and symbolic maritime figures. The floor is viewed from the surrounding walkway and from a viewing gallery above; on specific tours visitors are provided with special slippers in which to walk on the floor and view details more closely.

A visit to St George's Hall can readily be combined with the nearby Walker Art Gallery and/or the World Museum which has an interesting archaeology collection and a planetarium (free).

Admission to St George's Hall is free although there is a small charge for tours and to view the floor. More details are available on the website www.stgeorgesliverpool.co.uk

Susan Lupton

Chemical forensics confirm French wine had early roots

Ancient jars hold residue of 2,500-year-old vintage.

[Mark Peplow](#) Nature News 3 June 2013



A press found in southern France appears similar to the one depicted in this winemaking scene — from a sixth century BC Athenian vase recovered from the Etruscan site of Vulci, Italy — suggesting that it, too, was used for pressing grapes.

(Benjamin Luley/P. Neckermann/Martin von Wagner Museum, University of Würzburg)

France is renowned for its mastery of winemaking, but when did the country begin its love affair with the vine? A chemical analysis of archaeological artefacts finds evidence that wine was being produced in the south of France by the fifth century BC.

“It’s the earliest evidence we have of winemaking by the Gauls,” says Patrick McGovern, a biomolecular archaeologist at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, who led the study.

Winemaking originated in the Middle East more than 8,000 years ago, spreading to Egypt by 3000 BC and then to the now-Greek island of Crete by 2200 BC. A thousand years later, Greek and Phoenician merchants had begun shipping wine throughout the Mediterranean region, each in their own distinctively shaped jars called amphorae. By 600 BC, the Etruscans of central Italy were trading their wine along the French Mediterranean coast. Around the same time, wine-loving Greeks established a colony at Massalia (present-day Marseilles, France).

A team led by McGovern has now investigated items from the ancient coastal town of Lattara, one of the best-preserved Iron Age sites in France, located about 125 kilometres west of Marseilles. Using a battery of chemical techniques, including mass spectrometry and infrared spectroscopy, the researchers analysed residues inside Etruscan and Massaliote amphorae that had been retrieved from excavations in Lattara’s merchant quarters.



This pressing platform from the Gallic town of Lattara, in southern France, bore traces of tartaric acid — a clue that it was used for winemaking. Grape remains were found near the fifth century BC artefact.

(Michel Py, l'Unité de Fouilles et de Recherches Archéologiques de Lattes)

The team found tartaric acid, which occurs in grapes, in all of the jars — strong evidence that they once contained wine. The analyses also revealed the characteristic fingerprints of pine resin, as well as herbs such as rosemary and basil, which may have served as flavourings or preservatives, or added to give the wine medicinal properties.

A limestone platform (see above), dated to about 425–400 BC, also carried tartaric acid residues. Archaeologists had once thought that it may have been used for pressing olives, but the platform looks remarkably similar to a grape press depicted on a contemporaneous piece of Greek pottery (see picture at the beginning).

Grape seeds and skins were also found scattered nearby. “The combination of botanical and chemical evidence makes a pretty tight argument” that wine was being produced at Lattara, says McGovern.

“There’s been a lot of hypothesizing about shipping wine across the Mediterranean,” he adds. “But it’s never been shown chemically.” The study is published today in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*¹.

Bottoms up

Archaeologists already knew that the people of Massalia had been distributing local wine in their own amphorae since about 550 BC, says Michael Dietler, an archaeologist at the University of Chicago in Illinois. Dietler has worked at the Lattara site and studied winemaking during this period. “This chemical analysis adds another line of evidence — it’s helpful, but not revolutionary,” he says. Although no wine presses have been found at Massalia, Dietler thinks that it is only a matter of time before one turns up.

Dietler concedes that some amphorae could have held olive oil or fish paste, but says that jars found at Lattara had typically been coated with pitch to help seal the ceramic. This indicates that they were used for carrying wine, he says, because the pitch would have dissolved in oil and tainted its flavour. Oil amphorae generally had a very different shape, he adds.

“By and large, archaeologists make a lot of assumptions about what was transported,” says Brendan Foley, a maritime archaeologist at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts, who has studied DNA residues in amphorae. “That’s why this paper is interesting — it’s hard data.”

Reference.

McGovern, P. E. *et al.* Proc. Natl Acad. Sci. USA. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1216126110> (2013).

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THE BAGSEAL

It all started on a sunny afternoon a few weeks ago when we (my wife and I) had custody of our grandson for the day.

We decided, or rather Oscar decided, that we should go for a walk. So off we set and rather than following the public footpath across the field as we would normally do we went round the access tracks where planting had not taken place. This considerably extended the walk! I now need to tell you where we were at the time – We were at the house our son owns on Lichfield Road, Burntwood. Since purchase of the house in 2006 the cropping in the field to the rear of the house has been, wheat, barley, rape seed and field beans which were all 'direct drilled' sown (that is not requiring the land to be ploughed) but this year the crop is potatoes. So the field (some 60 acres) was ploughed – took two long work days. Then the sowing operation took place. It was more like an invasion but again come two days – all done!

On our way to the brook we looked at and examined badger, rabbit and hare tracks along with fox tracks and watched the antics of the butterflies whilst I was also looking for anything that looked alien to the location. Lots of ceramic sherds, pieces of clay pipes, and a pig bone (found by Oscar and insisted on keeping! It is somewhat elderly - front leg trotter to elbow – right side) and more particularly a bagseal (SK 074085).

A bagseal - Not a devastatingly exciting find but a small piece of agricultural history and I suggest unusual or at least unusual to actually find one in the field - And before you ask no I did not know it was a bagseal at the time. All I know it was heavy for its size which gave it away as lead and there is wording etc on it.

Google or Bing search required on return to home!

Right now a bit more description – It is small at 22mm in diameter. Both faces have a raised circle border. On one face is impressed a plough (single furrow horse drawn) and an inscription around and inside the circle border – REGISTERED (above) and TRADEMARK (below). The other face has PROCTOR & RYLAND in three lines across the centre with an inscription around the border MANURE MANFRS (above) and SALTNEY CHESTER (Below). The images will show all.

Bing provided the following information - Proctor and Ryland originated in Birmingham and moved to Saltney in Chester during 1856 to open a bone manure works on the riverside. Edward Webb and Sons a seed merchant from Stourbridge eventually took over Proctor and Ryland in 1894. Edward Webb is maybe better known as 'Webbs Seeds'

When I Binged the name Proctor and Ryland I was surprised to see any response at all but more surprisingly from what you might call an obscure website bagseals.org which has been set up for all lovers of Sigillography and Sphragistics.



Once the potatoes are harvested and subject to weather I shall be out there doing some more field walking to see what there is of interest scattered about the field as the harvester will lift and turn the soil over again. I will report back with my progress and finds.

Brian Bull

Walk around Castle Ring and Beaudesert

On a very hot day in July a group of members assembled for a walk around Castle Ring and Beaudesert guided by David Wilkinson. Castle Ring is an Iron Age hill top fort, one of the few in Staffordshire, well known but little excavated. It is large with multiple ramparts and ditches and whilst the fort is open grassland it is surrounded by pine plantations so the views are only occasional ones through gaps in the trees. The photograph shows us examining the foundations of a possible medieval hunting lodge within the perimeter of the fort. We then walked through the Beaudesert Scout Camp to the site of the Elizabethan Mansion, once the Palace of the Bishop of Lichfield and later the mansion of the Marquess of Anglesey. First abandoned by the Marquess in the 1930s most of the mansion has been demolished but the ruins remain as do traces of the once elegant pleasure grounds. We could also see the area designed by Humphrey Repton to improve the view to the north from the house but only partly implemented. After a refreshing ice cream in the camp shop those with some remaining energy walked down the Redbrook Valley to the site of the Nun's Well - a supposed site of a 12th century Nunnery, now almost lost having never been excavated or properly surveyed as far as I can tell. A pleasant afternoon but we should have done this walk in the Spring before vegetation grew to disguise the height and depth of the Castle Ring defences. A great sense of achievement was felt by all of us for surviving the walk in the great heat.

Richard Totty



Forthcoming exhibitions at the British Museum

The British Museum has announced details of two exhibitions that are likely to be of interest to members especially as it is easy to get to London by train from Lichfield, Tamworth and Stafford.

Beyond El Dorado: power and gold in ancient Colombia

Organised with Museo del Oro, Bogota

17 October 2013 to 23 March 2014

This exhibition explores the rich and diverse cultures of Colombia before the arrival of the Spanish in the 16th century and features more than 300 astonishing objects made from gold and other precious metals from the Museo del Oro (over 200 items) and from the British Museum's own collection. The exhibition uncovers the fascinating truth behind some of the myths associated with the legend of El Dorado – the golden one. Gold had great symbolic meaning in pre-Hispanic Colombia and the items on display show a level of complex craftsmanship that marries art and skill and show the differences in techniques and designs across the region. Having recently visited the Museo del Oro, I cannot wait to see items from their fabulous collection in London - indeed, the Museo itself is well worth a trip to Colombia! Access the site: www.britishmuseum.org/whats_on/exhibitions/beyond_el_dorado to book tickets and to see images of some of the items on display.

The Vikings

March – June 2014

This major exhibition will explore developments in Scandinavian Society in the Viking age and a network of cultural contacts spanning four continents. Ships were central to the Viking expansion and at the heart of the exhibition lies a 37-metre-long Viking warship. This is the largest Viking ship found to date and has been conserved especially for this exhibition where it will be on display for the first time. Tickets will go on sale in autumn 2013. This exhibition comes to London from Copenhagen.

This information was obtained using information from the British Museum website and emails

Susan Lupton.

**STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY
APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP 2013/14**

Membership fees: Individual £20, Joint £30, Student/Unemployed £15

Title.....

Names(s).....

Address.....

Postcode

Email

Phone.....

I agree to allow the Society to contact me/us by email and telephone.

I/we enclose £..... for my/our subscription for the year 2013/14 for Individual / Joint / Student / Unemployed.

Signed

Date

Please send to Ms S Lupton, 71 Birchwood Road, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS14 9UN

Note: Direct Payments can be made using the PayPal system on the Web site.



GIFT AID DECLARATION

TO: STAFFORDSHIRE ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Choosing to Gift Aid the Subscription or donations you make to the SAHS will allow the Society, which enjoys Charitable status, to reclaim from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs the basic rate of Income Tax paid on the amount of those subscriptions or donations without any cost to you, the Member. It is only necessary to fill the form in once.

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Declaration:

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I would like the Staffordshire Archaeological & Historical Society (SAHS) to treat as Gift Aid all Subscriptions and Donations I make from the Date of this Declaration.

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Please return to the Honorary Treasurer, Keith Billington, 4 Gainsbrook Crescent, Norton Canes, Cannock. WS11 9TN or by hand to me at a Meeting.

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A SOCIAL EVENING FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

Lichfield Arts, in Association with Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society

present

BLAST FROM THE PAST

Performing A BRIEF HISTORY OF MUSIC

At The Guildhall, Lichfield on Friday, November 1st 2013 at 8.00pm.

SAHS Members £11.00 – Non-members £13.00

'Blast from the Past' are acclaimed musicians CHRIS GREEN (voice, mandocello, guitar, accordion) and SOPHIE MATTHEWS (voice, English bagpipes, shawm, rauschpfeife, flute, sax and recorders). They regularly work for English Heritage and the National Trust, as well as performing in castles and cathedrals throughout Britain. This show is built on the success of their costumed theatre shows and reflects their shared love of history.

Starting with the vigour of the Medieval Period, the evening moves through the intricacy of the Renaissance, the musical grandeur of the Baroque to the pomp and bombast of the Victorians. In two sets of music, courtly dance tunes, Tudor drinking songs and ballads of highwayman and sailors will be performed with a wicked and infectious sense of humour, reminiscent of Blackadder and 1066 and All That.

A vibrant and magical evening is guaranteed in this fun and fast moving show that presents a vivid picture of our musical DNA.

Tickets for Members of SAHS are £11.00 (Non-members £13.00). They are available from:

SAHS Concert Tickets c/o Mr. Peter Evans, 'Drunemeton', 18, Newhall Crescent, Heath Hayes

Cannock WS11 7ZD

Tickets can be collected at SAHS lectures in October (where they will also be on sale) or by return of post if a stamped addressed envelope is included. (We do not charge a booking fee).

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BLAST FROM THE PAST / A BRIEF HISTORY OF MUSIC

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST 2013 at 8.00pm in THE GUILDHALL, LICHFIELD

I wish to purchase the following tickets: SAHS Members:@ £11.00

Non-Members.....@ £13.00

I enclose a cheque for £..... Made payable to the Society

I enclose an s.a.e. ☐

I will collect the tickets during an October lecture ☐

Name.....Tel. No.....

e-mail.....

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