

ERAS News

EAST RIDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY, No. 103 MARCH. 2025



Peter Halkon excavating a Medieval Sarcophagus at Nunburnholme

Photo: Colin Parr

AGM ~ Bone Puzzle ~ Pocklington District Heritage Trust ~ Katerina Velentza ~ Field Studies ~ Nunburnholme Medieval Sarcophagus ~ Hull's Crushing Mills ~ Book Pages ~

Contents

<i>Local News</i>	3
<i>Field Studies News</i>	4
<i>Halkon Brings the House Down</i>	5
<i>Book Pages (recommendations and forthcoming)</i>	6
<i>Answer to the Summer Bone Puzzle</i>	8
<i>Pocklington District Heritage Trust</i>	8
<i>Historical Association Talks</i>	8
<i>Spotlight on Katerina Velentza</i>	9
<i>Mini Lecture Summaries, Seeds of Change and WWII Decoys</i>	11
<i>Floating Feet</i>	11
<i>Excavation of a Medieval Sarcophagus</i>	12
<i>AGM Agenda</i>	14
<i>ERAS Programme</i>	15

Comments or contributions are always welcome. Send to Newsletter Editor, Kate Dennett,
455 Chanterlands Ave. Hull. HU5 4AY Tel. 01482 445232 katedennett@katedennett.karoo.co.uk

Other enquiries to the Secretary, John Deverell john@deverell.karoo.co.uk

To enquire about your subscription status contact the Treasurer
Colin Parr, 32 Woodgate Rd, Hull. cparrateras@outlook.com

www.eras.org.uk

Follow us on facebook

Send us a tweet @eastridingarch

ERAS is REGISTERED CHARITY No. 500878

ERAS LOCAL NEWS . . .

New volume of East Riding Archaeologist

Volume 18 of our journal series East Riding Archaeologist is now ready for distribution. This is the first one edited by our new Honorary Editor, Matthew Reeves. If you have not done so already, please collect your free book from a lecture meeting. Ken and Jackie Parker are willing to deliver in the Holderness district, possibly with this newsletter, as we want to avoid the expense of postage. We will obviously have to post to those outside E. Yorkshire. Many thanks go to Matthew for his hard work on this volume.

Elmswell Old Hall.

The remains of this 17th century listed Grade 2* manor house near Driffield will be open for one day only, on 1st April from 10.30 am to 3.30pm. It was built by Henry Best in 1634 on an estate which can be traced back to the eleventh century. Access from the car park is via a rough and rutted track and dogs are not allowed on site.

Pocklington Anglo Saxon artefact

Peter Halkon reports that the £4000 needed to buy and keep in the county, an Anglo-Saxon gold and garnet panel found by metal detectorists has been raised, mainly from local donations.

'Petuaria Revisited' Dig to continue

Excavations at Brough will be on for three weeks this year, and volunteers will be needed from 16th July, although excavation will not start until 19th. There will be an excavation Open Day, towards the end of the dig, on a date to be decided later. The dig will be preceded by the Brough Roman Festival which will be on from 11am -5pm on Saturday 12 July.

FFWAP Activities

The Fridaythorpe Fimber and Wetwang Archaeological Project, led by Alison Spencer, will be excavating at Sledmere this year and continuing with their geophysical surveys on the Wolds. Claudia Telbis reports that a group of about six have been out surveying over the winter and are always pleased if any ERAS members want to join them on these surveys. No experience is necessary and you will be instructed how to use the magnetometer. Its great exercise and you will learn a lot in the process. Simply contact Alison on ffwap.alison@gmail.com

Beverley Treasure House

After more than a year's closure, the Treasure House re-opened in December. Obviously the Tourist Information Centre is now much better placed, downstairs in the main foyer which seems bigger though a little cold and bleak. I noticed that the adjacent Conservation (and possibly book-binding) room is now much more visible to the public and has several large viewing windows - with the possibility of using it for some education events relating to conservation perhaps? The archives and family history research spaces are now further down the corridor. The museum and café are in the same place upstairs. The archives are open until 7.45pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 9am - 3.45pm on Saturdays, which is better than most archives in Yorkshire.

In a previous newsletter I had appealed for someone to index our newsletters from number 50 onwards, however, it was pointed out that our newsletters housed in the Treasure House, as part of our archive of photographs, letters, minutes, press cuttings, programmes etc, are in fact, very well indexed and available online.

Hull Minster Local History Bookfair

We had our usual bookstall at the History Book Fair this year but we felt it was poorly advertised and poorly attended. Even though there were lots of people around in the square outside, they were not coming in! The stallholders had a great convivial day and books circulated within the circle, but outside buyers were few in number. We usually see it as an opportunity to publicise ERAS, but it was hardly worthwhile this year, certainly not financially.

Resistivity Meter Replacement

Our resistivity meter, one of a batch originally designed and made by Bob Randall of TR Systems in conjunction with the Council for Independent Archaeology, is out of order at the moment and may or may not be repairable. These TR Systems meters were designed specifically to give professional, high quality results whilst being reasonably priced for amateur groups to purchase, and easy to set up and use. It has given us excellent results over many years. The committee is considering the various options for replacing it, should it not be repairable.

Editor

Field Studies Group

Matthew Walker reports that an excellent talk was given to the group by environmental archaeologist John Carrot in November. He went into great detail about, macro-plant remains, pollen analysis, animal bones and the science behind radiocarbon dating. Reconstructing past landscapes, environmental conditions and farming practices through environmental evidence is what local specialist John does every day, from his lab on a North Hull industrial estate, so it was great he could share this with the group. I know that in archaeological reports, pollen diagrams can sometimes look really unintelligible but if you have someone like John to interpret then it can become a little easier.

At Christmas, a small Field Studies group gathered in the city centre for a tour of the Hull's historic pubs. It started off appropriately enough, outside the Minerva, as you see in the photo below with lots of background information being imparted, but soon deteriorated into a traditional and convivial pubcrawl - just the job!



Photo: Matt Walker

Recent meetings have been mainly concerned with continuing the job of cataloguing the Romano-British pottery sherds from the kiln at Skiff Lane, Tollingham, near Holme-on-Spalding-Moor. If you have been involved in this, you might be interested in the photos reproduced on the right, of an experiment in 2004 by East Anglian Potters Association in Essex.

Led by potter Beryl Hines, a kiln (similar to that found in Skiff Lane) was constructed in a corner of a garden. Beryl's kiln had a solid clay floor with large perforations to draw the fire and allow smoke and heat to travel upward. In the Skiff Lane kiln, instead of a solid clay perforated floor, there were radial bars of clay which would have formed a floor supported by two clay pedestals. The pottery would have been stacked on the clay bar floor above the fire box, but otherwise the kiln was similar in shape and size to Beryl's - ie. a keyhole shaped pit lined with clay, the fire-stoking area being at the open end of the keyhole shape. Such

kilns would be roofed over with a new slightly domed clay roof each time of firing. (see ERAS News No. 59). The kiln was relatively small for the amount of pottery waster sherds found, but of course there may well have been other kilns close by, perhaps beneath the modern road surface or beyond the area of the lorry park development being monitored.

Most of the people involved in the experimental firing in Essex in 2004, were experienced professional potters and some were also archaeologists and members of the national Roman Pottery Studies Group, so the experiment would seem to be archaeologically sound. The main acknowledgement to modernity was that in order to make them transportable to the site, Beryl had already 'biscuit fired' her pots, ie she had given them a brief blast in an electric kiln. On this weekend experiment, when the kiln heat was built up gradually at first, then left overnight and built up fully the next day, Beryl was aiming to produce 'reduced' pottery. Reduction occurs with iron-rich clay, when the external oxygen supply is cut off and all the oxygen within the kiln is used up by the fire. The fire then takes the oxygen it needs from the ferrous oxide of the clay, resulting in a pottery of a black or dark grey colour.

After building to 800°C, all holes in the roof were plugged and the kiln clamped down with a layer of sand and soil. The pots first fire to a red colour, then cream as the first stage of reduction, through grey and finally to black. Partial reduction may take place when pots are tightly stacked upside down or one inside the other. It took several days of cooling, but the pots which Beryl produced were wonderful and I still treasure mine. The photo below shows the perforated clay floor of the empty kiln, before loading, with the stoking pit area lower down and to the left.



Photo: K.Dennett



Stacking the pots (already biscuit fired) in the kiln on top of the perforated clay floor, before the fire is lit.



In the photo above, you can see that Beryl had to make a few holes in the domed soft clay roof to encourage the fire to draw. However, once the heat built up, the clay roof became solid and making more holes was impossible. The stoking pit area below, had to be partially and temporarily blocked with bricks and wood, to encourage the fire to draw. It was thought that the position of the kiln in a rather sheltered corner of a garden – the only space available - was not ideal for getting enough draught, and that a kiln out in a more open area would have fired more easily.

Photos: K. Dennett

Landscaping Work at St Mary's Churchyard, Beverley

ERAS was invited to have a look at archaeological work being carried out in St Mary's Churchyard, Beverley, but unfortunately it was rather last-minute and not many people could attend. A landscaping project is being carried out which involves alterations to the periphery of the churchyard and the exposure of some 18th century burials. We are hoping to have a short report on this in the next newsletter. .

Halkon Brings the House Down!

On the 10th March this year, at Bishop Burton Village Hall, Peter Halkon was about to give a lecture when there was a loud bang and a radiator fell of the wall, followed by a breeze block. People continued coming into the hall, to hear what was to be an excellent lecture on the Chariot Burials of East Yorkshire However, further investigation revealed there was now a vehicle embedded in the wall of the building. Members of the committee and audience including a number of medically trained personnel quickly swung into action to look after those injured. Unfortunately one person sustained a broken ankle, but thankfully, an ambulance arrived quickly.

Given that there were cracks in the wall, for the safety of everyone, the decision was taken, to postpone the lecture and refunds were given - but the raffle was drawn! The building is now boarded up and repairs are expected in the next couple of months which should see it back to its former glory, when it is hoped a rescheduled date for the lecture can be agreed.

Les Hebb

Increase in fees for visitors to ERAS lectures

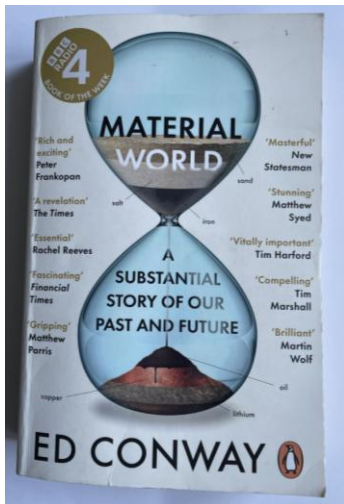
In line with charges made by other local societies for non-members attending lectures, the committee has decided that as from September of this year, the visitor fee will increase from £2 to £3. Great value anyway! In fact it is often not collected as committee members are busy with other things, but we will be making more effort to collect fees and welcome potential members next year.

Editor

Book Pages

Material World: A substantial story of our past and future **By Ed Conway**

W. H Allen, part of the Penguin Random House group. 2023



Once again, I draw your attention to a book which is only peripherally linked to archaeology, but which I can recommend as a fascinating and relevant read. Picked as Book of the Year by The Times, Financial Times and New Statesman, it looks in depth at six materials on which our modern life so depends and at the consequences of their extraction and exploitation. Sand, Salt, Iron, Copper, Oil and Lithium. It is not just a book about geology, but also about human survival, world trade, both ancient and modern, man's effect on the earth itself, and how scarily dependent on complex world systems our current way of life is. The six chapters could be read independently, but they start with sand, from which we get concrete, glass, silicon chips and yes, one could even say *'the internet is made of glass ...'* Even if you only read the amazing chapter on how silicon chips are made, with their zig-zag journey to specialist manufacturing facilities across different parts of the world, I think it would be worthwhile buying or borrowing this book.

Frequent reference to archaeology is made and Chapter 2, concerning salt, begins with archaeologist Steve Sherlock, who found the evidence of Neolithic salt manufacturing and cheese making at the well-known Street House site, on the North Yorkshire coast. We learn how vital salt has been to human survival and development throughout history. It is still the basis of much of the chemical industry and is still strongly linked to capitalism and power.

Holidaying at Whitby, how many of you know, that beneath your feet a 23 mile long tunnel linking a local mine shaft to the docks at Teeside is being built to carry vast quantities of a mined rock, Polyhalite, a hard, stony, translucent crystal of sulphur, magnesium and calcium, from the ancient Zechstein Sea, about a mile underground. Since Polyhalite makes a wonderful fertiliser and world supplies of potash from Russia and Belarus are now at risk and becoming a bargaining tool, this relatively new discovery is set to become a major export.

The chapter on iron, was another eye-opener for me, although perhaps you knew already that producing 'low-background steel' from scratch (needed for such things as medical devices and Geiger counters) has been impossible since the first atomic bombs were exploded. Hence, historic shipwrecks (pre 1945) are in great demand around the world, as a source of non-contaminated metal and are in danger of being illegally exploited.

I found that this book links so well to the study of archaeology. Archaeologists often discuss Mediterranean trade, for example, but we cannot be certain how direct this trade was and how many stages of exchange and barter was involved. Did the Iron Age Parisi charioteer whose horse gear was decorated with coral know that it was coral and where it had come from? Did he or she order coral-decorated bronze horse bits and terret rings, or was it just that the bronze-smith happened to have a lump of something decorative in his stock which he had received years ago in exchange for some glass beads or a supply of copper? I find it fascinating to consider how much people of the past understood about the world around them. Did chieftains send emissaries down to harbours to glean knowledge from sailors of the latest fantastic buildings or tombs being erected in distant lands, or the latest weapons or jewellery being used and traded? How much of what was imported was random or pre-arranged?

In this book the author points out that even now in our global system of knowledge, hardly any one person fully understands the complete and complex process of making such a specialist item as, for example, a silicon chip, from its beginnings as sand to the final usable product. People, generally, only understand their own part of the process. How much less in the pre-historic period, would people have known about materials and processes, beyond their own sphere? I certainly learnt a huge amount from reading this book.

Kate Dennett

Publishers are starting to drum up interest in these two long-awaited volumes on a site many of you, including myself, will have worked. They are the first and second of three monographs, expected soon. The summaries are as follows - Editor

Monograph 45:

Excavations at the Austin Friary; Hull, Yorkshire, 1994 and 1999.

Part 1; The stratigraphic sequence,

By D. H Evans

The house was founded in 1316/17 and it would be the very last of the Order to surrender to the Crown, on 10 March 1539. Located in the heart of the medieval Old Town, the majority of the church, all the East Range, most of the West Range and almost all of the Garth were exposed during excavation. The quality of survival was exceptional, including organic remains and structures. Some 260 articulated burials were recovered, associated with important sepulchral remains, including 44 oak coffins, a significant assemblage of textile remains and a wealth of dress accessories. After the Dissolution, much of the friary was converted into a large secular holding. Some of its buildings would still be standing as late as the 1790s, albeit with substantial modifications and changes of use. Later activity on this site includes the development of three public houses, of a Georgian Butchers' Shambles and a Victorian Market Hall. In 1941 the whole area was extensively bombed and largely raised to the ground during the Hull blitz.

Monograph 46:

Excavations at the Austin Friary; Hull, Yorkshire, 1994 and 1999.

Part 2: The fabric and the material culture,

By D.H. Evans with L.M Wastling

This volume concentrates on the material culture recovered during the excavations. The site yielded a nationally significant group of medieval coffins, all but one of which were made of imported Baltic oak – the largest assemblage of such timber from the whole of Britain. There were also significant collections of well-preserved textiles, leather, wood and dress accessories. In addition, some of the burials were accompanied by carefully placed wooden rods, an under-reported burial tradition which can be found on either side of the North Sea. Many of the monastic buildings were reused after

the Dissolution in 1539; partly in consequence, a large assemblage of masonry and building materials was recovered from the site. There were also significant collections of floor tiles (both plain and decorated) and window-glass, whilst other finds include rare musical instrument components.

Cumulatively, the volume sheds significant light upon a whole range of aspects of life and death within this northern religious house for a period of over two centuries, as well as offering yet more valuable evidence about Hull's extensive medieval trading-links, as one of England's leading ports.

Elle Clifford and Paul Bahn working on a new Ice Age Burials book

Locals Paul Bahn and Elle Clifford have just completed a book on Cave Art, aimed at children (but also a decent introduction for adults). It is to be published in a couple of months and covers most of the questions children tend to ask about cave art – including 'Did people paint what they ate?'

Their first collaboration, for children - Living in the Ice Age – has just been translated into Spanish and French. Last year they were also working on a couple of documentaries on cave art and Neanderthals in caves in Spain and Portugal and this year will be working in Italy with the same Romanian film crew. Exciting stuff.

Elle reports that they are now researching a new archaeology book - 'Ice Age Burials' - intended for adults and students. They are hoping that this will fill a gap in the market, looking at the most interesting and intriguing examples, but producing a book which is not too long or overly academic.

Older ERAS Publications

ERAS still has an extensive stock of some of our older publications (The Old Town Series) left over from the days when we used to do a print run of 1,000. We are happy to let you have them for free if you want to make up a set. Just see any of the committee at a lecture meeting. The more recent volumes are still on sale of course and you can buy these at either a lecture meeting or via our website.

Editor

Summer Bone Puzzle Answer It's a chicken!



The bone pictured above, found by my teenage grandson on a beach in Ireland had puzzled me and I asked if anyone knew the answer. Retired vet Claudia Telbis, was easily able to solve it. It is a *tartometatarsus* - the lower leg bone of a cockerel. We rarely get to see the male birds with these highly developed spurs nowadays, but think back to the days of cock fighting, which still thrives in some parts of the world. As far as can be ascertained, it is only chickens, turkeys and pheasants that have the spur. Because it was found on a beach, perhaps near a rock pool, and because the spur appeared to be composed of a different type of material from the bone itself, I had initially thought perhaps the spur was some sort of later marine growth or calcification build-up, unrelated to the original bone, but how wrong I was! Many thanks to Claudia, who tells me she consulted her *Avian Anatomy*, textbook and colour atlas, published by 5m Publishing.

Editor

Hull Historical Association Talks

Thursday 10th April, Prof. David Atkinson.

Trauma, Resilience & Recovery in the Hull Blitz.

The two nights of bombing Hull in May 1941 caused the deaths of 400 people and similar attacks in July killed many more. The government hid Hull's identity with references to a North East coastal town and later on organised secret surveillance to see how long a civilian population could endure raids before breaking down.

Thurs 15th May, Chandler Saint.

Venture Smith – From Slavery to Success.

Venture was captured in West Africa and transported to the southern states of America as a slave. His master helped him and Venture earned enough to buy his own freedom and later, freedom

for his family. His business prospered and he was admired for this.

Both meetings begin at 7.30pm at the Nordic Centre (Danish Church) , Osborne St. Hull HU1 2PN. The AGM will be held just before the talk at the beginning of the May meeting.

Visitors £3, Students free. For more information www.herha.org.uk or 01482 448065

Pocklington District Heritage Trust

At the open day in Burnby Hall's community hall, in November, I was most impressed by the quality of the 'Travelling Museum' cases commissioned by the Trust. These sturdy wooden lockable cases are used to take artefacts from the Pocklington excavations round to schools and other organisations. Each has an illustrated display panel and shaped Styrofoam inserts to hold the artefacts.



Photo: K. Dennett

The Trust's annual family open day was once again well attended, and the Viking re-enactments of the previous evening were apparently so realistic that at least one Viking was nursing a broken finger! ERAS had a stand selling books and displaying our handling collections, including some new animal bone acquired at the previous year's open day. The display of textile dying and weaving, leather work and other crafts prepared by Maxine and Brian Birkett (ERAS members) was very colourful and attracted lots of interest and many potential craftworkers.

Editor

A Spotlight on Interesting ERAS Members - Katerina Velentza



How did you first become interested in maritime archaeology?

I decided that I wanted to be an archaeologist when I was 8 years old. Growing up in Athens, Greece, with so many antiquities around, made an impression on me and I wanted to know more about the material culture of the past. As an avid swimmer, I found the possibility of conducting archaeological research under and around water really fascinating and the right thing for me. But it wasn't until my undergraduate studies at King's College London that I started looking properly into the route to becoming a maritime archaeologist. Following some lectures on the ancient Mediterranean shipwrecks of Antikythera and Mahdia – which eventually featured in my PhD thesis and monograph – I asked my lecturers at the Classics department to help me find a Master's programme that could lead me to maritime archaeology. So, after graduating from King's, I did the Master's and PhD degrees of the Centre for Maritime Archaeology at the University of Southampton, one of the earliest and best academic programmes around the world with a deep legacy and impact on the field.

Have you ever done any diving?

Yes! I have been diving since I was 18. I am a PADI certified scuba diver and trained underwater archaeologist. I have participated in several underwater archaeological projects including the excavations of the underwater site at Ropotamo in Bulgaria, part of the University of Southampton's Black Sea MAP (Maritime Archaeological Project) and the Fourni shipwreck survey in Greece, a

collaboration between the Ephorate of Underwater Antiquities and RPM Nautical Foundation.

What first brought you to Hull?

I moved to Hull in late 2023 to start a new job at the University of Hull. I immediately loved the city and the wider region of East Riding. The dynamic estuarine environment, the breathtaking coast at the North Sea, the long maritime history of the city, the risks from climate change along with the efforts to build climate resilience, but also the various connections to different types of archaeology that I have worked with during my career (Roman archaeology, Nordic and Hanseatic connections, Medieval and post-Medieval heritage) made Hull a very exciting place to be.

What organisation are you working for and can you explain their remit?

Currently I work for the Energy and Environment Institute of the University of Hull. It is a research centre that brings together leading interdisciplinary academics to tackle global issues surrounding climate change, adaptation and mitigation. The institute's work is future-focused, and aims at understanding the ways in which we, as a global community, have to live differently in order to carve out a sustainable future in which vulnerabilities are reduced, societal resilience is enhanced, and standards of living are maintained and grown across the globe.



Intertidal wreck of the Flash, in the River Hamble, Hampshire.
Photo: © K. Velentza

What do you enjoy most about your job?

I love archaeology and doing academic research, so my job right now is very exciting! I am the only archaeologist in my department, and I work with colleagues from other disciplines, offering insights from archaeology and heritage on various climate change and sustainability topics that we research.

This interdisciplinary work can be challenging at times, because each academic field ‘speaks their own language’, but it is quite fascinating how we manage to understand each other at the end, and it is very satisfying when we put our data together. I also feel that it helps me to learn so much from others and to develop as a researcher and academic. I also love working with the local communities, which we do a lot as a team. I am very passionate about local knowledge, held within communities, and I like promoting the agency of local people in preserving their heritage in the present and the future.

What do you think about the recent development of community based voluntary archaeological projects, led by a professional archaeologist?

I think it is great practice to involve volunteers from the community in any type of archaeological and heritage work. Knowledge of the past material culture is core to helping people understand more holistically the place where they live, for example: why it was inhabited and when, and whether there have been any gaps in human occupation of the area, and if yes, then why. Has the natural environment changed over time and was the material culture and type of human occupation in the past less invasive than today?

In my research, I argue that this awareness can help contemporary and future societies connect with and understand the environment they live in better and, hence, can become more resilient to climate change and other human-induced environmental risks. So, yes, I think it is the best approach to involve community volunteers in as many archaeological projects as possible. One thing to remember though is that not everyone in the community can volunteer. Usually this comes down to socio-economic factors, excluding thus the most disadvantaged groups of society from our projects, which we need to address as a field to become more inclusive and diverse.

Do you think there is an adequate wide scale research plan or framework, seeking to solve the gaps in our archaeological knowledge, here in the UK?

I think one of the biggest challenges that we will face more and more in the coming decades is the loss of heritage due to climate change effects and other human-induced environmental risks. Especially, heritage assets in and around aquatic environments have already been impacted. Coastal erosion, extreme storminess, tidal, fluvial and pluvial flooding, sea-level rise, sea-temperature increase, ocean acidification have threatened and damaged archaeological sites, historic landscapes

and buildings. Archaeology as a field and organisations, such as Historic England, have made great efforts to fill in this knowledge gap, and act to safeguard as much as possible, but I don’t think there is enough local capacity and awareness to deal with the scale of this issue. I think increasing funding and training and incorporating heritage into climate policies and adaptation strategies would be a great advantage for communities and local governments.

Do you think our traditional academic degree courses prepare students for a career in field archaeology?

I think a lot of academic degrees do prepare students for becoming field archaeologists and in recent years there are more and more opportunities for students to get a year or a few months in the workplace as part of their studies. However, nowadays humanities degrees are extremely underfunded and the many cuts from the university curricula are putting our discipline at risk.

Additionally, work conditions in field archaeology, including salary and stability, are a big challenge. For example, in the recent salary benchmarking exercise carried out by the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CifA) archaeological positions are consistently lower paid than equivalents in other fields, such as architecture. This makes archaeology feel less appealing especially as the costs of university fees are going up and the cost-of-living crisis increases.

Is there any type of site or area of expertise you would like to work on in the future?

Yes, I have so many exciting ideas! There is still a lot to be done on intertidal and riverine sites at the Humber estuary, especially in order to understand potential impacts of climate change on their preservation. I would also love to research the post-medieval archaeology preserved along the river Hull, and potentially initiate access to the river for the local community, especially because the river is not used commercially anymore. There is also a lot to be done with the plethora of shipwrecks and submerged/eroded settlements off the East Riding coast in the North Sea. The project ‘Community Waterscapes’ that I am currently leading at the University of Hull is a first step to start doing more integrated environment-heritage research in the region and I plan to continue with more projects in the future.

Many thanks to Katerina for answering so well the questions I put to her. I am so pleased she loves this area of East Yorkshire with all its archaeological potential. She is standing for the ERAS committee at the AGM in April.

Editor

'Seeds of Change' Project

Alongside its mercantile and fishing history, Hull's industrial scene has long been dominated by seed crushing mills and their spin-off industries. For the February Lecture, Peter Conelly gave us a glimpse into background research going on for a Community Heritage Project, associated with the development of the land around Hull's last working seed crushing mill - Ranks Flour Mill or Clarence Mill, sited on the east bank of the River Hull until its demolition in 2015. Hull has long been a major port, with trading links and privileges granted by the Medieval Hanseatic League. It has good draught depth for shipping, bringing goods in particular from Germany, Latvia, Estonia and Russia, while the Humber river system gives excellent hinterland access. Many of Hull's mills are of late Georgian origin, although there is a reference as far back as Domesday to a crushing mill in 'Myton'. There were various cross-over links with the whale oil industry and as well as the production of flour and cocoa, the spin-offs from oilseed crushing included things like linseed oil, paint, putty, margarine, tallow, cattle-feed cake and the many smaller associated commodities and engineering services. Seed crushing results in airborne particulates and thus major fire risks, so some of the mill frontages we see now, are not original but have been rebuilt after fire damage.

Peter stressed how much team effort is going into the project and thanked in particular, the Hull History Centre staff for their cooperation, also the Goodwin Trust. Thanks to a grant scheme for 'Everyday Heritage' for ordinary people, the working life of those in the industry and in the wide range of associated industries will be recorded, in a modern and accessible way, with the creation of a 1970s Virtual Reality crushing mill, based on Barkers and Lee Smith Mill in Wincolmllee, and perhaps even a computer game and 'time travel' game. So follow this space!

Wartime Decoys lecture

Ed Dennison

Chatting to veteran ERAS member Graham Myers, in January, we found that we had both gone to the above lecture with the attitude of '...well its not really my thing but I'll go because its ERAS!' However, we found we were quite fascinated by Ed's excellent lecture. We knew already that in WWII, such false targets were set up to trick the enemy into bombing the wrong place but the level of detail given for these projects and the feel for the subject really drew us in. The decoys had to be near enough to the real targets to be convincing to the

German pilots – no use making an imitation dock area too far away from where they were expecting it to be- and no use making an imitation airfield and aircraft factory that didn't have any movement or traffic. When these decoys were hit, they had to produce the level and type of fire, smoke and explosions which the Germans would expect. Its hard to imagine the level of planning, ingenuity, chemicals and timing that was required to make these decoys successful. For urban sites, differing types of lights and baffles were used to simulate, for example, a badly blacked out loft window, a door carelessly left open, the soft glow of an industrial furnace, the flames and sparks from a burning mill or factory. They had to be good to convince an enemy who also used similar decoys, but statistics show that they were successful to some extent. Vestiges of these structures do remain, especially where farmers adapted them to use as animal shelters or storage huts and the local Historic Environment Record office now has most of the sites recorded. For field archaeologists trying to diagnose the origin and purpose of various hollows, hillocks or unusual features in the ground, it is another possibility to be considered.

Floating Feet !

There was an interesting item recently, on Radio 4 about detective work on body parts being washed up in certain parts of the world. Police were puzzled by an increase in the number of detached human feet being found in certain areas. In the past, if a body entered the ocean, especially in tropical or semi tropical areas, the body and the clothing, would very quickly be eaten away by marine life, or would rot away and sink to the ocean floor. However, most footwear nowadays is of lightweight man-made material which neither rots away nor sinks, thus the only remaining part of the skeleton, ie, the feet, encased in their lightweight plastic based shoes, tend to be protected and to float to the surface and become subject to surface ocean currents. This results in the feet, still in their rot-proof shoes being found hundreds perhaps thousands of miles from where they entered the ocean and being washed ashore with other similar feet, according to the prevailing currents. I found this fascinating and wondered if the answer might have been somewhat different, had they had set the archaeological detectives onto the problem. Perhaps a ritual deposit or foot cult would have been diagnosed

Excavation of a Medieval Sarcophagus at St James Churchyard, Nunburnholme ***By Peter Halkon***

Serious problems with damp which was damaging the fabric of this historic church meant that drainage work had to be undertaken. I was asked to undertake any necessary archaeological work. In March 2024 ERAS members Colin Parr, Alison Spencer, John Deverell and Claudia Telbis did a geophysical survey over part of the church yard using both magnetometry and resistivity to try to locate graves to avoid disturbing as few as possible (Photo 1, below). Although graves proved almost impossible to detect, a possible large ditch was detected in the south portion of the churchyard.



Photo 1

The drainage work began on 21st September and the sarcophagus was found on 15th October. Excavation continued for 11 days with the help of ERAS Treasurer Colin Parr and Andy Fergusson, also an ERAS member, Helen Halkon and Church Warden, Dr Andrew Henworth.

The base of the sarcophagus was in two parts, hewn out of chalk. Around a third was at the foot end and two thirds the head. The lid which was slightly ridged in the centre down the length, was in four parts. The topmost stone had been broken and dislodged either by the foundations of the porch

constructed in 1873 or a subsequent drainage operation at some time before the present path had been laid. The disarticulated bones of at least three other adults were visible above and next to the sarcophagus and the bones of one of these were lifted for reburial. The head shape at the west end of the sarcophagus was found to be exposed at the time of discovery with no skull visible (Photo 2, back page). A fragment of mandible and 5 teeth were subsequently found amongst the ribs. The rest of the covering stones appeared to be in situ, and intact, however, the sarcophagus had become filled with soil. Some bones could be seen but they had clearly been displaced, largely disarticulated and included bones from other burials (Photo 3, below). Iron nails at the foot end and flecks of charcoal suggest that the sarcophagus may have had a timber lining or even a small coffin.



Photo 3

What was left of the skeleton was completely revealed (Photo 4, back page), drawn and the bone carefully removed with the help of Andy Fergusson. Assisted by Churchwarden Andrew Henworth, the sarcophagus was completely excavated and partially cleaned ready for lifting. With the help of seven members of the village community, the sarcophagus was finally lifted, cleaned and placed in the church.

Dr Alek McClain, specialist in Medieval Church archaeology at the University of York has confirmed the rarity of this burial "A find like this is absolutely of significance. We have

comparatively little surviving evidence of child burial in the Middle Ages, so finding both a juvenile skeleton and its mode of burial is important for understanding attitudes and practices related to childhood death in the medieval period and may offer particular complexity if it looks like the coffin may have been repurposed/reused”.

The tooling of the sarcophagus resembles that on some of the chalk blocks used in the construction of the early 12th century church (Photo 6 and 7, below).



Photo 6: R. Webster



Photo 7: R. Webster

Radiocarbon dating will help to confirm this. Malin Holst of York Osteoarchaeology who has been asked to report on the bone, also confirmed the importance of this burial. At the time of writing,

we are waiting for permission from the Diocese of York to allow further investigation of the skeleton, including radiocarbon dating and the long-term future of the sarcophagus. In any case the human remains will be reburied.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to the following for their help during the excavation and recovery of the sarcophagus:

Andy Fergusson, Andrew Henworth, Ann Hill, Judy Johnston, Colin Parr, Andrew and Jane Richardson, Paul West, Richard Webster.

Dr Peter Halkon MA, FSA, Emeritus Fellow University of Hull, Honorary Research Associate, Department of Archaeology. University of York.

A Few Dates for your Diary

Fri 28 March Revealing the Pocklington Shield. Pocklington District Heritage Trust

The Trust is unveiling a new, stunning reproduction of the shield alongside its 2,500 year old original at an event in Burnby Hall. The event marks a major step forward with PDHT's efforts to create a 'Chariots, Swords and Shields' museum exhibition space in Major Stewart's drawing room within Burnby Hall, Pocklington. The shields will be accompanied by talks and presentations in the community hall by the reproduction's creator, Roland Williamson, and Iron Age expert Prof. Mel Giles. It's a ticketed event, but possibly too late for most of you, by the time you get this newsletter, sorry.

Sat 5 April Day Conference – Roman Towns in Yorkshire and the North.

YAHS Roman Antiquities Section, held at York St. John University.

<https://www.yas.org.uk/Meetings/Roman-Towns-in-Yorkshire-and-the-North>

Fri 11 and Sat 12 April NEBARSS 2025, Bradford University Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Research Student Symposium

Details <https://nebarss.wordpress.com>

Thur 1 May, 7pm Basque Oak & Portuguese Wine: a medieval merchant ship reveals her secrets

CBA Zoom webinar. Free One hour talk by Dr Toby Jones.

#ThisisArchaeology

EAST RIDING ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 7.0pm, WEDS. 16th APRIL, 2025
ROOM LT1, WILBERFORCE BUILDING, UNIVERSITY OF HULL

- 1. Apologies for absence**
- 2. Minutes of the last AGM held on 17 April 2024**
- 3. Matters Arising**
- 4. Reports from Officers**
 - (i) Chair
 - (ii) Treasurer

5. Committee 2025/6

5.1 Election of Officers

Committee Nominations are:

Chair	Peter Halkon
Vice Chair	Fiona Wilson
Secretary	John Deverell
Treasurer	Colin Parr
Programme Secretary	Peter Halkon
Editor	Matthew Reeves
Marketing & Social Media	Angela Fawcett
Field Studies Officer	Matthew Walker
Records Officer	John Deverell
Newsletter Editor	Kate Dennett

Any other nominations for the above posts are welcome and should be sent to the acting secretary John Deverell no later than 6th April (john@deverell.karoo.co.uk). Members wishing to nominate somebody should seek their agreement before doing so.

5.2 Election of 5 Ordinary Committee Members

The two ordinary members who are willing and eligible to stand for re-election are:

Jennifer Wilson and Les Hebb.

Committee nominations for the three other places are

Katerina Velentza, Andy Coupe, Chris Hannard.

Additional nominations are welcome and may be made in advance or from the floor of the meeting. Members wishing to nominate somebody, should seek their agreement before doing so. In the event that there are more nominations than places, an election will be held.

6. Election of Auditor

Dave Abel has agreed to continue as auditor.

7. Report by the ERAS Trustees

8. Any Other Business

Autumn - Winter Lecture/Field Studies Programme

All lectures start at 7.30pm in Lecture Theatre LT.1 in the Wilberforce Building of Hull University, Cottingham Rd, Hull. There are usually *British Archaeology* magazines to loan and second hand books for sale.

Weds. 16 April ERAS Annual General Meeting at 7pm,

Followed by lecture at 7.30pm Mary Anne Slater – Excavations at Skeffling, Holderness
During the Outstrays to Skeffling Managed Realignment Scheme, a joint initiative by the Environment Agency and Associated British Ports, excavations undertaken by York Archaeology revealed a surprising amount of archaeology, from prehistoric to medieval. What caught media attention was a possible Roman oyster processing site near Skeffling. Mary-Anne Slater of York Archaeology will present an account of these fascinating discoveries.

SEPTEMBER LECTURE PROGRAMME

Lectures are always on the third Wednesday of the month. You will receive a newsletter in early September, detailing the 2025/6 lectures, which will also be on our website.

FIELD STUDY MEETINGS

These are usually held, throughout the year, on the **first Wednesday of each month**, at 7.30 pm in the upstairs meeting room at St. Nicholas Community Centre, Holmechurch Lane, Beverley. Recently we have worked on sorting and cataloguing pottery sherds or learning to do site drawings, but the meetings are pretty flexible. In the summer months outdoor trips or site visits might be held instead of the indoor meetings. No experience is necessary, everyone is welcome, you don't have to join the group, just turn up and enjoy whatever they are doing, but some activities or visits may have limited numbers, so please check our website first, or contact our organiser, Matthew Walker m.walker_1985@hotmail.co.uk

Please note, you can now join or renew at any time of the year. You do not have to wait until January .

Cut here -----

Renewal / Membership Form,

I would like to join ERAS **OR** Please renew my ERAS membership

Name

Address

.....

Post Code Tel. No.

Email

I enclose cheque for **£20 single / £25 family/ £10 fulltime student** made payable to East Riding Archaeological Society . Or join via our website and pay digitally.



Photo 2



Photo 4



Photo 5