



Learn, laugh, live

Keyworth & District

AAH Newsletter

No. 11 February 2020

COMMENT

Our January meeting seemed to be much enjoyed by all who were there. Thank you so much to those who provided the entertainment, Margaret Wright, Hazel Menzies, Yvonne Shorten supported by Jackie and Howard.

Thank you also to you all who helped in the kitchen, it is very greatly appreciated.

The setting-up glitches with the hardware will, hopefully, prove a one-off event; it is very frustrating when things don't work immediately as they should.

Bookings for our 2020 outings are being received. We intend opening them to the general U3A membership in February so please get your bookings in as early as you can. We need to fill the coaches to ensure the viability of the outings. We don't want to have to cancel any of them due to lack of support.

Contact Changes

Please note that our email addresses have changed:-

Howard: hfnotts785@gmail.com

Jackie: jfnotts 451@gmail.com

These take effect immediately but telephone and mobile numbers remain the same.

Programme 2020

FEBRUARY 20th
Methodist Church - Church

MARCH 19th
Methodist Church - Church

APRIL 16th
Outing to Wirksworth. Guided walk, Heritage museum visit and afternoon tea with cake. Coach travel.

MAY 21st
Methodist Church - Hall

JUNE 18th
All day outing by coach to Scampston Hall and Walled Garden.
Lunch included, guided tour of Hall and enjoy the gardens and parkland.

JULY 16th
Methodist Church

AUGUST 29th
Methodist Church

SEPTEMBER 17th
Outing to Strutt's Mill, Belper. Museum and guided walk. Coach travel.

OCTOBER 15th - NOVEMBER 19th &
DECEMBER 17th. Methodist Church

The group meets in Keyworth Methodist Church Hall (sometimes in the church itself) on the third Thursday monthly commencing at 2 p.m.

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A Roman fort on Hadrian's Wall has been donated to the nation by its owner.

Carrawburgh Roman Fort in Northumberland has been cared for by Jennifer Du Cane's family since 1950.

Its remains lie under a turf cover and it has undergone little archaeological investigation in comparison to many of the 15 other frontline forts along the wall's 73 mile (117.5 km) length.

The site, between Chesters and Housesteads, will now be looked after by English Heritage.

The fort would have housed a garrison of 500 soldiers - first from South West France, later from Southern Belgium - responsible for defending the frontier of the Roman Empire from the tribes to the north.

Jennifer Du Cane said: "It has been a great privilege, but also a serious responsibility, to own Carrawburgh Roman Fort.

"The time has come to pass on this amazing site as a gift to the nation."

Legal ownership has now transferred to Historic England, the Government's heritage advisor, and it will be cared for by English Heritage as part of the National Heritage Collection.

It took about 15,000 men six years to build the wall, with work beginning in AD 122.

Duncan Wilson, from Historic England, said: "We are enormously grateful for this generous gift.

"The fort represents a key part of the Roman frontier and is of outstanding archaeological significance. "It has the potential to contribute significantly to our knowledge of the Roman Empire and to visitor enjoyment of the Wall."

Neanderthal Collectors

A study has found that evidence that Neanderthals would dive into the Mediterranean sea to gather clam shells to use as tools. The findings come from discoveries made in the Grotta dei Moscareni, a cave that is 10 feet above a beach in Latium, Central Italy.

They also collected volcanic rock from the beach and coastal waters from the Middle Palaeolithic era. These ancient humans are known to have used tools, but the extent to which they were able to exploit coastal resources has been less clear.

A team led by Paola Villa from the University of Colorado Boulder explored artefacts from the cave which is one to two sites in Italy with an abundance of hand-modified clam shells, dating to around 100,000 years ago. The team examined 171 modified shells, most of which had been retouched to use as scrapers. The found that nearly three-quarters had characteristics suggesting that they had washed up on a sandy beach. The rest had a shiny, smooth exterior, tended to be bigger and had been plucked directly from the seafloor as live animals.

Dr Villa said that the shells were collected from between two to four metres deep.

This is a growing list of evidence that Neanderthals of Western Europe were adept at wading or diving into coastal waters to collect resources.

Lightening Strike May Have Inspired Ancient Stone Circle

A powerful lightening strike at the centre of a hidden stone circle in the Outer Hebrides could explain how the mysterious monument came into being. Academics have discovered a potential link between ancient stone circles and forces of nature - potentially unearthing evidence that offers insight into rituals and beliefs of people who lived thousands of years ago.

Researchers studying a prehistoric stone circle on the Isle of Lewis, Tursachan Calanais, surveyed nearby satellite sites to uncover evidence of lost circles buried beneath the peat. One site known as Site XI or Airigh na Beinne Bige, now consists of a single standing stone on an exposed hillside, overlooking the great circle.

Geophysics revealed that not only was the stone originally part of a circle of standing stones, but also that there was a massive, star-shaped magnetic anomaly in the centre - either the result of a single, large lightening strike or many smaller strikes on the same spot.

Project leader, Dr. Richard Bates, of the University of St. Andrews, said: "Such clear evidence for lightening strikes is extremely rare in the UK and the association with this stone circle is unlikely to be coincidental.

"Whether the lightening at Site XI focused on a tree or rock which is no longer there, or the monument itself attracted strikes, is uncertain.

"However, this remarkable evidence suggests that the forces of nature could have been intimately linked with everyday life and beliefs of the early farming communities on the island".

The team was also able to virtually recreate another nearby circle, which had been lost - with its stones either buried or lying flat. Careful scanning of the stones, known as Na Dromannan, enabled a full 3D model to be built, which allowed the passage of the sun and moon around this circle to be tracked for the first time in four millennia.

Dr Alison Sheridan, director of Urras nan Tursachan, the Calanais-based charitable trust that contributed to the research, said: "This is a thrilling discovery that helps us get inside the minds of people who built the stone circles at and around Calanais."

The project is a joint venture led by the University of St. Andrews with Urras nan Tursachan and the University of Bradford. The team hopes to return to Lewis in 2020 to undertake further surveys both on land and in the waters around Tursachan Calanais, where the old landscape has been flooded by rising sea levels.

(Source: I newspaper, 24 December 2019)

Best Historical Finds of the Decade that shed new light on our past

Historic England has compiled a list of the most extraordinary archaeological discoveries of the past decade.

The Grave of Richard III - Leicestershire

In September 2012 the king's remains were discovered under a car park in Leicester city centre, identified through DNA analysis of his descendants. Further excavations revealed the extent of Greyfriars, the friary where he was buried after the Battle of Bosworth in 1485.

The Theatre - the First Successful Elizabethan Playhouse in London

Archaeological investigations have been ongoing since the 2008 discovery of the foundations of the building, built in 1576-7 and comparable to the Globe Theatre. It is thought that Shakespeare's Hamlet was first performed there in 1596

Must Farm Bronze Age Settlement - Peterborough

A 2015 excavation revealed the remains of timber roundhouses raised on stilts above the marshy ground. Destroyed by fire shortly after being built, their contents were preserved in the mud and provide a time capsule of everyday life 3,000 years ago.

Phallus and Roman Bust - Hadrian's Wall Quarry, Carlisle.

A recent discovery in February 2019, this Roman graffiti made by soldiers repairing Hadrian's Wall in 207 AD included a relief sculpture of a phallus, regarded as a good luck symbol. The inscriptions were discovered during a project trying to record them.

The London Shipwreck, Southend

One of England's most important 17th-century shipwrecks, *The London* blew up in 1665 and sank off Southend-on-Sea where it lies in two parts on the seabed. It was excavated between 2014 and 2015 with divers finding a rare wooden gun carriage.

Fear of the "Living Dead" in Medieval Yorkshire

Scientific studies of medieval human bones excavated at Wharham Percy, a deserted village in North Yorkshire, showed that corpses were burnt and mutilated after death. Research in 2017 suggested this may have been done on purpose to prevent the dead rising again.

Britain's Earliest Rabbit, Sussex

A tiny rabbit bone found at Fishbourne Roman palace in Sussex was confirmed to date from the 1st century AD, suggesting the animals arrived 1,000 years earlier than previously thought. The 4 cm piece of tibia was discovered in 1964

Anglo-Saxon Cemetery - Great Ryburgh, Norfolk

More than 80 extremely rare wooden coffins were discovered as part of preparations for a new lake and flood defence system. The waterlogged conditions of the valley led to the remarkable preservation of the tree-trunk coffins and plank-lined graves, dating from the 7th to 9th century AD.

Roman Settlement - Scotch Corner, North Yorkshire

Discovered in 2017 as part of a road improvement scheme, the settlement pre-dates those in York and Carlisle by 10 years, suggesting the Romans expanded into northern England earlier than previously thought.

Iron Age/Roman Settlement - Gillsmere Sike, Killington, Cumbria

Found in 2012 after being photographed from the air, archaeologists identified two round houses and an embanked boundary.

Wales' Answer to Mary Rose?

A salvaged 15th Century ship has "significant potential" to do for Wales what the Mary Rose did for Portsmouth when it goes on show, an archaeologist says.

The remains of the vessel were found preserved in mud in a Newport riverbank in 2002.

One of the men who is restoring it said it will be the world's largest ancient ship rebuild project.

Newport council said it hopes to display the ship in a prominent place.

Toby Jones, project curator for the Newport Mediaeval Ship project, said 2,500 timber pieces had to be restored before the ship could be rebuilt and put on show.

The team working on it say they hope it could finally be put on public display by 2025.

They estimate it could attract up to 150,000 visitors a year to Newport, boosting the south Wales economy by £7m a year.

Mr Jones said the "unique" attraction could emulate the Mary Rose exhibition of Tudor king Henry VIII's 16th Century flagship naval vessel - renowned as one of the world's best maritime displays with its own £35m museum in Portsmouth.

"Everyone knows about the Mary Rose but the Newport ship is even older than that," he said.

"The Mary Rose has had a measurable impact on Portsmouth and its economy - and this will be the same here.

"The Mary Rose is the world's 16th Century ship, the Vasa in Sweden is the world's 17th Century ship - Newport will be the world's 15th Century ship.

"Newport will be in that top level of important ships on display around the world. There'll be nothing else like it in the world.

"The Mary Rose and Vasa were never taken apart, they were conserved and put on display whole - we have the largest ship that has ever been attempted to be put back together."

Putting the Newport Ship back together is described as the world's biggest 3D jigsaw puzzle, just without any instructions.

It is 18 years since builders of a new theatre in Newport had an almighty shock by discovering the remains of a ship in the banks of the River Usk.

Historians now believe the Basque country-built vessel, launched around 1449, was involved in the "lucrative wine trade" between Portugal and the Iberian peninsula and Bristol.

It is thought the 30m (98ft) long, 400 tonne medium-sized boat was having a refit in a Newport inlet between 1468 or 1469 when its moorings broke.

A lot of the oak planks and iron were salvaged before the tide hid the stricken ship, but a third of the ship succumbed to its muddy grave.

It lay buried under Newport's riverfront, oblivious to anyone walking above it, for more than 550 years in "perfect cold, dark and wet conditions" before a stroke of archaeological luck.

The painstaking restoration - which has required the equivalent of 17 years of hard labour - has been diligent and precise but it has not been quick.

Now it could take another five years at least before the ship finally goes on show to the public.

"The preserving process for each of the 2,500 planks - some of which are 13m long and half-a-tonne each - is about four to five years," explained Dr Jones.

"Each plank is stored in water until they are wax-treated so the wood can absorb it and replace the water. After about four years, they are freeze dried to ensure the best restoration.

"We can do about 100 planks at a time. We've done 1,900 planks so 600 to go."

Archaeologists have been focused on preservation in the 18 years since the ship was unearthed but now their attentions are turning to reassembly

"We think we could start reassembly in three or four years," added Dr Jones.

"There's no book to follow so we'll have to make it up and hope it works.

Historians can only begin putting the ship back together - which itself could take three to four years - when a home is found due to the size of the reassembly project.

The Friends of the Newport Ship, volunteers who support the campaign, say £9m of public money has been spent so far and they now want authorities to commit to a permanent home for their crown jewel.

Newport Museum in the city's shopping centre is a possible option but no final decision by Newport council has been made.

"There'll be nothing like it, it'll be a powerful attraction and economically beneficial.

"Economic impact assessments predict between 100,000 and 150,000 people a year and a £7m benefit to the local economy.

"The city are looking for sites to house it and I'm optimistic. We need a very large space with a controlled warm, dry environment."

Historians have been helped by famous medieval boat exhibitions to learn restoration lessons from Mary Rose and Vasa experts.

"One problem we know from other archaeological displays is they start sagging in museums," said Dr Jones.

"They're not happy out of water so the solution is to support it and we've a unique opportunity because the ship has been taken apart into thousands of pieces."

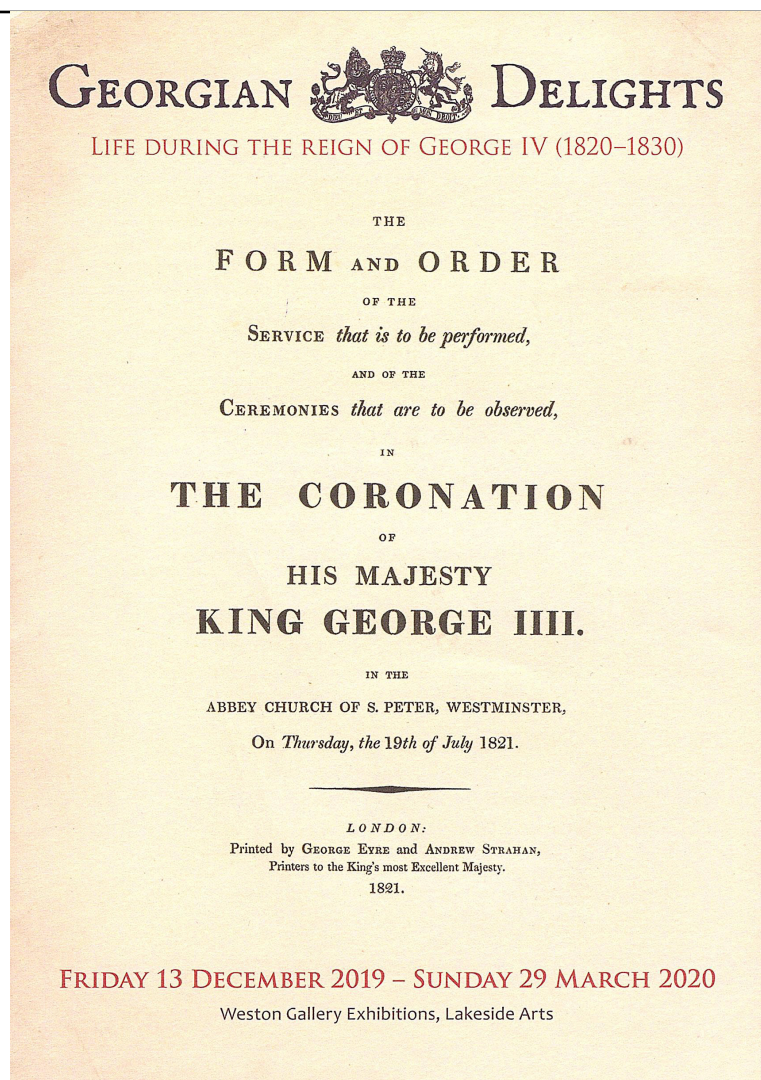
Newport Ship archaeologists have been working with Swansea University's engineering department to create a purpose-built cradle.

"We want every visitor to see the ship from every angle without any view being blocked so the idea is to build the ship around an almost invisible cradle," added Dr Jones.

"It will provide comprehensive support which will take the weight of the ship so it can be enjoyed by generations."

Newport council said it had managed the project to conserve the vessel for a number of years with financial support from the Welsh Government.

"It is council's ambition is to display the ship, and artefacts, in a prominent location in the city subject to funding and a suitable location being found, once the conservation and restoration work has ended."



**Exhibition at the
Weston Gallery**