

Seaside fish - but no chips!

Fossil remains, discovered by walkers on the beach at Saltburn, have been identified as those of an Ichthyosaur, or 'fish lizard', which were dolphin-like marine reptiles with fins and a vertical tail. They lived from the Early Triassic through to the Late

Cretaceous – about 170 million years ago, although this example was found in Redcar mudstone, dated much earlier at 200 million years. Ichthyosaurs were between 7 and 30ft long, were carnivorous and may have given birth to live young.



Schoolboy's find is a real grind

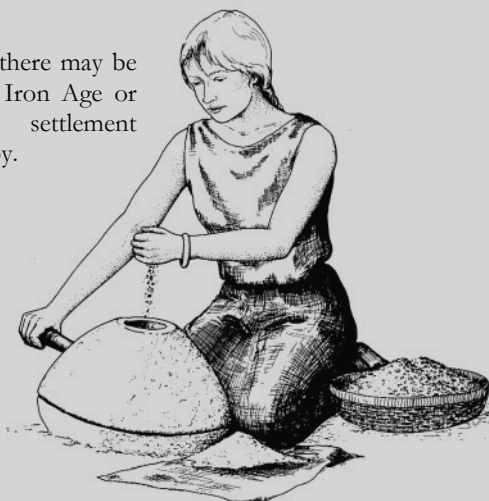


A very fine example of an Iron Age or Romano-British beehive quern was recently discovered on the beach at Skinninggrove by local schoolboy Jack Hitchen (left).

The stone had eroded out from beneath the sand and is the top-stone from a beehive quern used to mill grain into flour as shown in the reconstruction drawing below.

This is the first find of this period from the village. It is extremely heavy and probably hasn't moved far from the place it was originally used.

This means that there may be an undiscovered Iron Age or Romano-British settlement somewhere nearby.



Our annual excavation at **Stewart Park** in Middlesbrough in May turned up an intriguing piece of evidence for a pottery on the site. The broken half of a green glaze tankard with a handle, dating to c. 1500 AD, was found in one of the upper fills of the pond (previously partly excavated in 2006). This suggests that the pond was used in the medieval period, and was filled in with rubbish in the late medieval and post-medieval period.

The tankard fragments were washed and the sherds reassembled on site. It became clear that the tankard was misshapen and burnt along one of the broken edges,

showing that it had distorted and cracked during firing. As it was unusable the potter would have thrown it away as a 'waster' - presumably not far from his kiln. The presence of a pottery manufacturer may explain the large amounts of medieval and late medieval pottery found at the site.

This year also revealed some features dating back to the earliest days of the medieval village. One small ditch contained a large piece of cooking pot dating to the late 11th or early 12th century, and a large boundary ditch was found which may even pre-date the medieval village.

Anglo-Saxon Hartlepool

The first of two volumes on the history of Hartlepool is about to be published by Tees Archaeology.

'Anglo-Saxon Hartlepool and the Foundations of English Christianity' by Robin Daniels brings together the archaeological evidence amassed over 170 years of investigation into the Anglo-Saxon settlement at Heruteu (Hartlepool).

In 1833 workmen building new houses in Hartlepool discovered a cemetery. Accompanying some of the burials were small, rectangular shaped stones with crosses and names inscribed on them in Anglo-Saxon runes and cursive script. This find marked the beginning of the archaeological study of the Anglo-Saxon monastery at Hartlepool - a site of major importance in the Christian conversion of Northumbria.

Hartlepool's documented history begins with Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People* in which he described the life of Hild (St. Hilda) who was Abbess of Heruteu for eight years from about AD649. She then embarked upon the establishment of another monastery at Streaneshalch (Whitby).

Although Heruteu was in existence for several years before her arrival, Hild had royal connections and active guidance from Bishop Aidan of Lindisfarne, allowing her to reorganize the monastery.

The volume pulls together all the currently available information for Anglo-Saxon activity at Hartlepool Headland. The archaeological finds are documented and illustrated, particularly the namestones. Analysis of environmental material gives us a picture of the diet and possible state of health of the monks and nuns in the monastery. The monastic settlement is set in the

context of the surrounding landscape and it is suggested that it was established in the wealthy estate of Hartness which continued as an administrative unit into the medieval period.

A companion volume on the Medieval history of Hartlepool by Robin Daniels will be published in 2008/9.



The survey team



Marker flags showing the lines of postholes

More questions than answers

The unexpected discovery of the remains of a long wooden "jetty" structure on the last day of the 2007 Saltburn Rutway Survey, came as a major surprise to the team of professional and volunteer archaeologists carrying out the recording.

The team from Tees Archaeology, Nautical Archaeology Society North-East and the Teesside Archaeological Society, had spent the week surveying new sections of rutway on the foreshore around Huntcliff.

Then, on the afternoon of the last day on site, three parallel lines of postholes were discovered, running out from close under the cliffs some 200m seawards. With the survey team being pursued by the advancing tide, it was only possible to record brief details of the feature.

The central 'line' comprised 42 postholes, each with an approximate diameter of 180mm (7 inches). The two outer lines of postholes were smaller, approximately 90mm (3½ inches) in diameter; 27 in the western line and 28 in the eastern line.

A further line of three large postholes were found at the extreme seaward end of the feature, but on a different alignment to the other three lines, together with ten smaller postholes in a rather indeterminate pattern.

It is not yet clear what the structure is or what it was used for, suggestions so far being either a jetty, or some form of fishing structure, perhaps for salmon netting. Further documentary research will hopefully give us the answer.

What's On 2007/2008

1st - 5th October 2007

Archaeological Survey, Preston Park.
Volunteers are invited to take part in a week long programme of survey work in Preston Park. The survey is designed to record the remains of the Stockton and Darlington Railway of 1825. Initial work had indicated that the remains within Preston Park include embankments, cuttings, boundaries and spur lines, none of which has been fully surveyed in the past. No excavation will be involved and no previous experience is required. For further information, see below.

15th - 19th October 2007

Archaeological Survey, Kirkleatham Village. Tees Archaeology is seeking volunteers to take part in a detailed identification survey of Kirkleatham Village and the surrounding area. No previous experience is required. For further information, see below.

3rd November 2007

Tees Archaeology Dayschool 2007 - "Angles on the Saxons".
The Conference Centre, Ebsworth Building, University of Durham, Stockton Campus.

Topics this year will include;
Reports on excavations at Loftus and Low Lane,
Anglo-Saxon Costume,
Human Remains,
The Anglo-Saxon Monastery at Hartlepool,
And more!
For further information, see below.

1st December 2007

Half day seminar on the Iron Age and Romano-British site at Catcote, Hartlepool. There will be a talk about the site and an opportunity to handle some of the finds.
For further information, see below.

For more information on all these events, please contact Ian Jones at Tees Archaeology on 01429 523455 or write to Sir William Grey House, Clarence Road, Hartlepool TS24 8BT

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Heritage Open Day 2007

Nearly 100 visitors took a short journey underground in Hartlepool to see an authentic World War 2 bunker on Saturday 8th September as part of the annual Heritage Open Day.



The bunker was built in the grounds of Sir William Gray House in 1937 amid fears of the outbreak of World War 2.

The massive concrete structure, measuring 40 feet by 30 feet and buried 20 feet underground was used as a report centre from where air raid patrols and rescue activities were co-ordinated.

Hartlepool was bombed heavily during the war - the shipyards and steelworks were prime targets.

In the early weeks of the war the air filtration system in the bunker, which was installed because of the threat of gas attacks, had to be powered by bicycle (below) until an electric motor was eventually obtained to run it.

During an air raid those on duty had to take the telephone calls on one of 3 telephones in the middle room and report any casualties or damage.



Young messenger boys on bicycles took messages throughout the town. Mr Boagey, (below) now aged 85, who visited on the open day, recalled his experiences in the bunker - especially the time a bomb exploded nearby and sent him from the top of the bunker steps to the bottom.

The staff slept in the Gray Art Gallery and operated both day and night shifts, with a small team of staff always on duty in the bunker.

One night a bomb narrowly missed the bunker, landing on the nearby greyhound track, (now Morrison's Supermarket) killing 2 firewatchers. The bomb blast blew Mr Boagey out of his bed in Sir William Gray House.



If it had been dropped a split second sooner it would have exploded directly on top of the bunker.

The bunker was sealed after the war and was eventually re-opened in 1982 when it was used as a storeroom by the workers who were rebuilding the tramshed in the grounds of Sir William Gray House.

At this time the toilets still had a blast flap on the bottom of the door which would have opened and reduced the pressure from any bomb blast.

The electrics were also improved at this time and the bunker was then sealed for a further 10 years.

In 1992 new facilities were installed for use by school groups as the bunker was converted into an education centre.

The bunker originally had a steel sub-frame which was removed in 1996 to increase floor space.

The bunker is now used as the archaeology store for Tees Archaeology.

The Iron Age and Romano-British Settlement at Catcote, Hartlepool



This site was first discovered in 1963 during landscaping for a school playing field and elements of it were explored in 1964 and 1987.

Geophysical Survey and comprised a series of enclosures containing groups of roundhouses. There is clear evidence for numerous reconstructions/replacements of buildings and boundaries on the same lines and this points to an innate desire to perpetuate things as they are, rather than to change.

The later settlement is characterised by the use of stone as footings for rectangular timber buildings. There are a number of earlier 4th century coins and weights which indicate that the settlement was involved in trade, presumably exchanging local products with coastal traders landing at Seaton Carew.

The sea also provided sustenance as a large deposit of whelks found in 2007 demonstrated!

Death and Burial at Catcote

Fourteen burials have been found at Catcote, unfortunately we have very little dating evidence to suggest which might have belonged to the earlier settlement and which to the later. Virtually all of the burials were adults, laid out on their backs and oriented north – south. However four burials had been placed in cists comprising large slabs of stone and such slabs are a feature of the 4th century AD.



Excavation at Catcote, 1963



Roundhouse

From 1998 Tees Archaeology has been working with Durham University and Hartlepool Borough Council Countryside Service as well as local volunteers to examine the site in more detail.

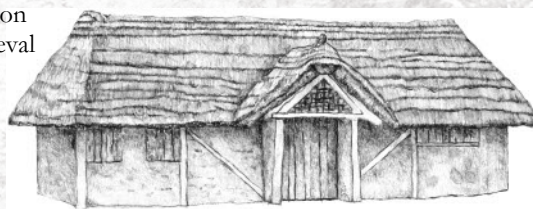
There is settlement activity from the 1st century BC to the end of the 4th century AD and in addition to this a number of burials are scattered throughout the site.

The site is most important because it allows us to examine the impact the arrival of the Romans had on an already established settlement and to ask questions about the end of the Roman occupation and the transition to Saxon and medieval settlement patterns.

The structure of part of the Iron Age settlement has been recovered by

This approach does not seem to have been unduly shaken as the Romans arrived in the region in 71 AD. Roman pottery and objects were used at the site but otherwise little seems to have changed outwardly.

The initial settlement went out of use towards the end of the second century AD and this may have been a deliberate abandonment. It is not clear if activity continued unbroken on the site, however from the end of the 3rd century a very different settlement occupied the area.



Later timber building



Cist burial

What is clear is that the known burials do not represent the whole population of the site and that the majority of people were dispatched in some other way, perhaps by cremation.