

Stay in touch! If you have an interesting topic you'd like to share or a question just get in touch and we'll publish or try to answer.

August has already been quite a busy month; we had our first face to face meeting, we acquired a new venue, we returned to the Roman road dig we closed at a critical stage last October and we got wind of two potentially exciting projects.

Our first meeting, held only recently on 18th August also happened to be our first Annual General Meeting since May 2019. Attendance was a little disappointing, although a number of members who had intended to be there had to drop out at the last minute. Nevertheless, once the brief formalities were out of the way, members present were fascinated by Dr Bill Shannon's talk, *'Morikambe to Morecambe: How The Bay got its Name'*.

Bill had given this talk earlier this year to the Morecambe Bay Partnership via ZOOM. Subsequently released on YouTube it has notched up nearly 3,500 viewings. Bill explained how the name (meaning 'curved sea' or 'great bay') was coined by Greek geographer Claudius Ptolemy sometime in the 2nd Century CE. It wasn't until 1774 however that 'Morecambe Bay' began to appear where we now find it on modern maps. What of the town of Morecambe? That didn't appear on maps until the second half of the 19th Century. Bill's talk can still be viewed at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FkEthJ7nK74>

Our new venue, Great Eccleston Village Centre seemed very suitable. A large, airy downstairs room seats around 25 people suitably distanced. (Maximum recorded WA attendance is 28). The Centre is run entirely by volunteers and a special thanks is due to Sandra for setting out the room and providing us with tea, coffee and biscuits. We're still interested in feedback so if you have any comments about the venue, please email them to me.

Chairman Brian also reported that membership of Wyre Archaeology has increased significantly in

the past 18 months. A major contributing factor is the Wyre Archaeology Group Facebook page, launched last year:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1091772967850657>

Dig News

Our friendly Cabus farmer let us know that he would be willing to let us return to the Roman road site that we excavated last October. We had to curtail that dig at a critical point since the farmer needed to get his field back under cultivation, resulting in our using a tarpaulin to cover the feature we had exposed and then backfilling the trench over it.

We had planned to go back in September or October but, this time, the farmer offered the first two



weeks of August, leaving very little time to organise an excavation team. In the event however, a dozen or so members made themselves available on a variety of days over the period, interrupted by adverse weather and adverse - though incorrect - weather reports.



The feature we first exposed was initially thought to be kerb stones at the edge of the Roman road, or perhaps the lower course of a wall (maybe a

Roman road-side snack bar) but as the new Trench 1 was extended to the east and south and more was uncovered there appeared to be two parallel rows of blocks running N-S about 30-40 cm apart. Other suggestions for the feature were some sort of drainage channel or a passage-way to drive sheep into a pen for shearing or dipping. This last was discounted since the gap between the rows appeared too narrow, so its purpose remains a puzzle. What was clear, however was that it had been constructed probably from the road's foundation stones and that it lay over what remained of the road. Underneath the feature, at a depth of about 150mm and continuing to the south and west was a substantial layer of cobbles of about 100mm to 150mm diameter. This was interpreted as part of the structure of the Roman road and which extended approximately 3m from the fence line.

However when a section was cut through the centre of the trench, no substantial underlying



structure was found. A small *sondage* at the SW corner, where a roadside ditch may have been anticipated, also revealed nothing but natural sandy clay at a depth of 0.33m.

The location of the presumed outer ditch was the next question and two new 2m x 1m trenches, separated by a 2m baulk, were opened about 60m further down the field to the north and 16m from the fence, where a slightly darker line in the vegetation, parallel to the road, was just visible in aerial photos taken by drone pilot Chris just after the very hot and sunny spell in July.

After a superhuman effort over a few days, Kev did expose in the outer trench what appeared to be the cut of a ditch, the natural clay being exposed at a depth of 0.6m, although its profile didn't quite match the diagnostic 'V' shape.



The trench was extended to the east and, ultimately, to the fence alongside the lane. Consistent with the findings in Trench 1 a layer of cobbles was revealed.



Time ran short, however, and it was necessary to start closing the trenches and backfilling. Post excavation discussion necessarily focused on what we had discovered. Whilst an absolute conclusion is still to be reached, initial thoughts are that we did confirm the existence of the Catterall-Lancaster section of the main northern Roman Road (Margary 70 D).

A number of questions remain unanswered however. Why did we not find the roadside ditch? Why did the outermost ditch not conform to the typical Roman 'V' profile? Why did we not find a substantial foundation layer in the centre of Trench 1?

We may get an opportunity to return to try to answer these questions but in the meantime, maybe clues could be found elsewhere.

A visitor to the site who happens to own a nearby farm has invited us to investigate what she believes is a Roman road across her land. It certainly appears to conform to the line identified by David Ratledge's research and preparations

are in hand to respond to this invitation as soon as we're able.

The second potential project, mentioned in earlier newsletters is an opportunity to investigate the archaeology of the quay at Wardleys Creek, believed to date at least from Georgian times but possibly even more ancient. More details of these projects in the next issue!

LATE AGM INFORMATION

New member Helen Coulthard was co-opted onto the Executive Committee (in line with procedure set out in our Constitution). Vice-Chairperson, Davinia has indicated she wishes to step down, creating this vacancy and there remains one more Committee vacancy. Nominations (or volunteers to secwya@gmail.com).

Apologies for late issue of this newsletter.

WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

Lancashire's Roman Roads (David Ratledge): www.twithr.co.uk
Roman Roads Research Association: <http://www.romanroads.org>
Lancashire Archaeological Society: <https://lancsarchaeologicalsociety.wordpress.com>
Wigan Archaeology Society: www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk
University of the 3rd Age: <https://u3asites.org.uk/lytham-st-annes>, <https://u3asites.org.uk/wyre-lanacs>, <https://u3asites.org.uk/preston>

Membership Benefits: Full Membership: 10 meetings with voting rights, group membership of Council for British Archaeology and CBA(NW) and Lancashire Local History Federation, free training, participation in digs, basic kit loan, personal dig insurance, WA Newsletter, Wigan AS and Lancashire Local History Federation newsletters, Lancaster Uni's Centre for Regional Studies circulars. (*£12 individuals, £18 two family members at same address, full-time students up to age 21 free*). **Associate Members:** participation in digs, basic dig training, loan of kit, dig insurance, newsletter and circulars as above (*£5*).

All classes of paid membership in 2021 - £5 per person

WYRE ARCHAEOLOGY OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

Chair	Brian Rigby
Vice Chair	VACANCY
Immediate Past Chair	Chris Clayton
Treasurer	Simon Millward-Hopkins
Secretary	Dave Hampson
Committee Members	Mike Edwards, Dave Berry, Peter Scott, Helen Coulthard.
	One Vacancy.

CONTACTS

WEB www.wyresearchaeology.org.uk
EMAIL secwya@gmail.com
Facebook www.facebook.com/groups/1091772967850657

Please forward this newsletter to anyone you think may be interested.