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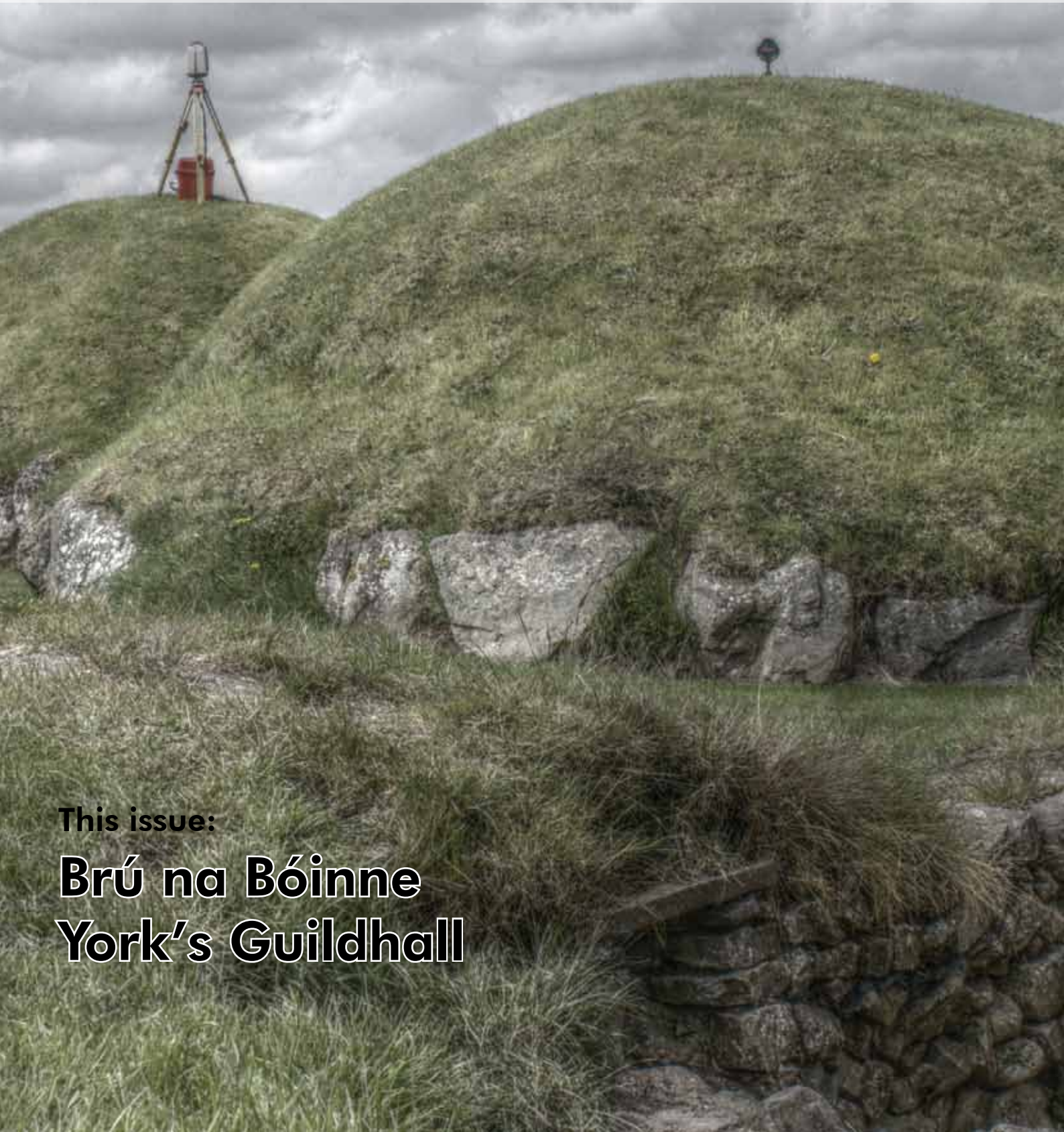

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Brú na Bóinne

York's Guildhall

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Cover picture: Survey in progress on the satellite mounds surrounding the passage grave at Knowth, the largest of the monuments in the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site.

Welcome!

In this issue we look even further afield, to the green fields of Ireland and the mysterious prehistoric monuments of the Brú na Bóinne. Ancient art meets modern technology in a project to record the more inaccessible parts of this World Heritage site and allow virtual access to its secrets.

Nearer to home, we examine community-focussed projects studying the industrial heritage of the Eastern Peak district, while in York the celebrations of the 800th anniversary of the city's Charter allows YAT to investigate the building at the very heart of the city's public life in the Middle Ages, its Guildhall.

As York once more staged its Mystery Plays this summer, Nicola Rogers looks behind the scenes at the medieval craft guilds which were responsible for this tradition, and what archaeological finds can tell us about the craftsmen and women who originally took part in the plays in a new book published by YAT.

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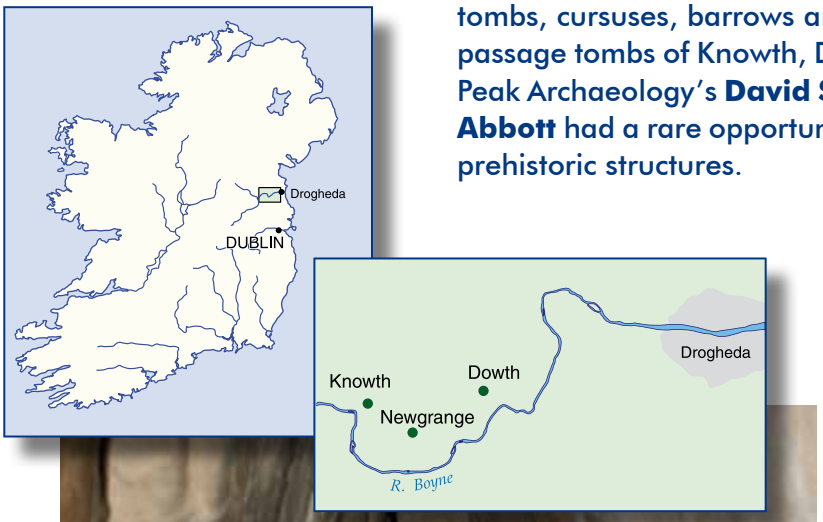
Brú na Bóinne

Around 30 miles north of Dublin in a bend of River Boyne stands the Brú na Bóinne World Heritage Site. The soft, green, undulating landscape of County Meath is studded with henges, standing stones, chambered tombs, cursuses, barrows and, most famously, the three huge Neolithic passage tombs of Knowth, Dowth and Newgrange. In May 2012 Trent & Peak Archaeology's **David Strange-Walker** and ArcHeritage's **Marcus Abbott** had a rare opportunity to investigate and survey these awesome prehistoric structures.



ArcHeritage's Marcus Abbott surveying at Knowth in very challenging conditions!

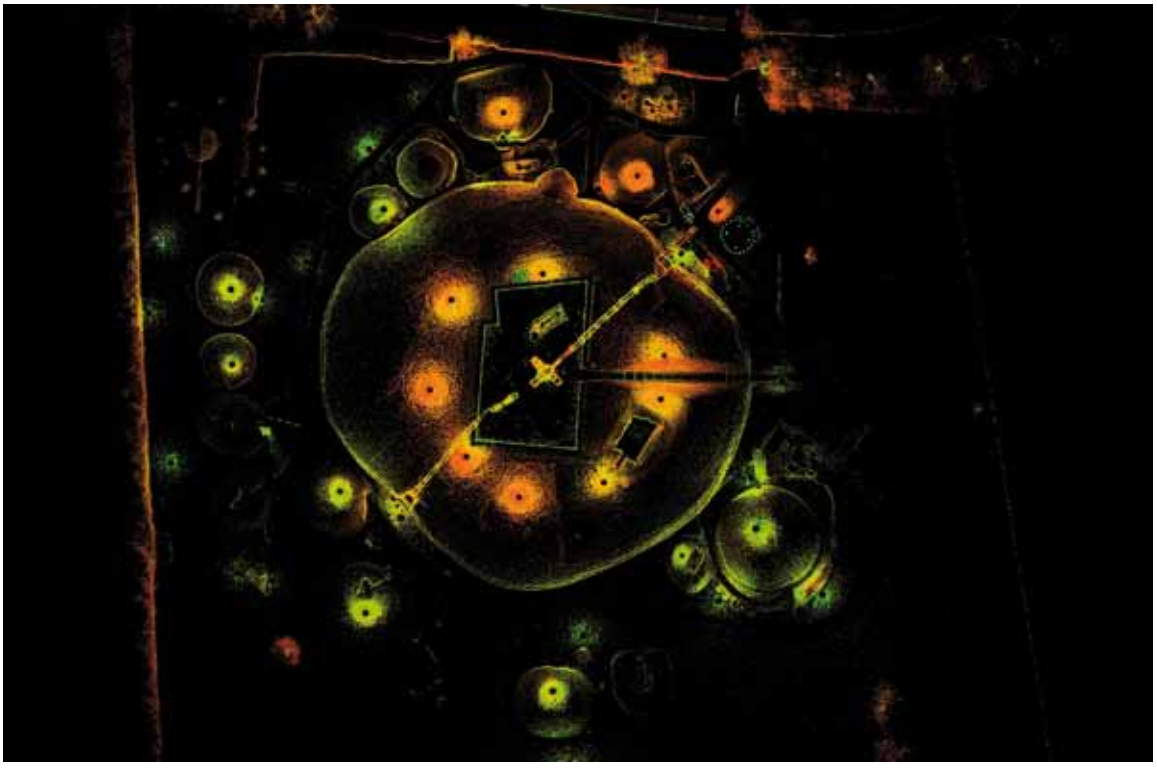
Inevitably World Heritage Site status brings with it issues of accessibility. Tourists flock to the Boyne and its new visitor centre to see the three main mounds, and naturally wish to get to the heart of the matter – the central passages and chambers. Unfortunately access to these varies from a fairly tight squeeze (Newgrange), to a dangerous dance between ageing pit-props (Knowth west), to a long, pitch-dark belly-crawl through mud and partly-collapsed stones (Knowth east, Dowth north). It is hard to envisage these tight, tricky spaces ever being physically accessible to more than a select handful of people, so virtual access has become an attractive idea. With this in mind Dr Stephen Davis of University College Dublin (UCD) contacted York Archaeological Trust looking for assistance. Dr Davis had previously seen YAT's work with the Nottingham Caves Survey (see *Northern Archaeology* 1) and hoped that this technology would be useful in creating virtual access to the sites as well as high-resolution records of the tombs and their rock-art. Following a small but successful funding bid to the Irish Office of Public Works, YAT loaded up a car with high-tech kit and headed out to Ireland for ten long days of data capture.

Of the three tombs, Newgrange is by far the best-known and most visited. The massive white quartz facade towering over the river below fronts a mound 76m in diameter, and flanks a 19m-long passage open to the south-east. Famously this passage aligns with the midwinter sunrise; for a few minutes after dawn, the pale December sun shines through

Panoramic view of Knowth, with the reconstructed timber circle, main mound with the entrance to the eastern passage, and two smaller satellite mounds.

the roofbox above the entrance and illuminates the back of the cruciform chamber. This magical phenomenon was rediscovered by the tomb's excavator, Professor M. J. O'Kelly, in 1967, and each year around 50 people are chosen by lottery to experience this magnificent piece of solar engineering in person. For those not so fortunate, every tour of Newgrange concludes with an electrically-illuminated facsimile.

As befits the most famous of the tombs, Newgrange is the most studied, most accessible and most heavily reconstructed of the three, and as such the least interesting for the UCD / YAT



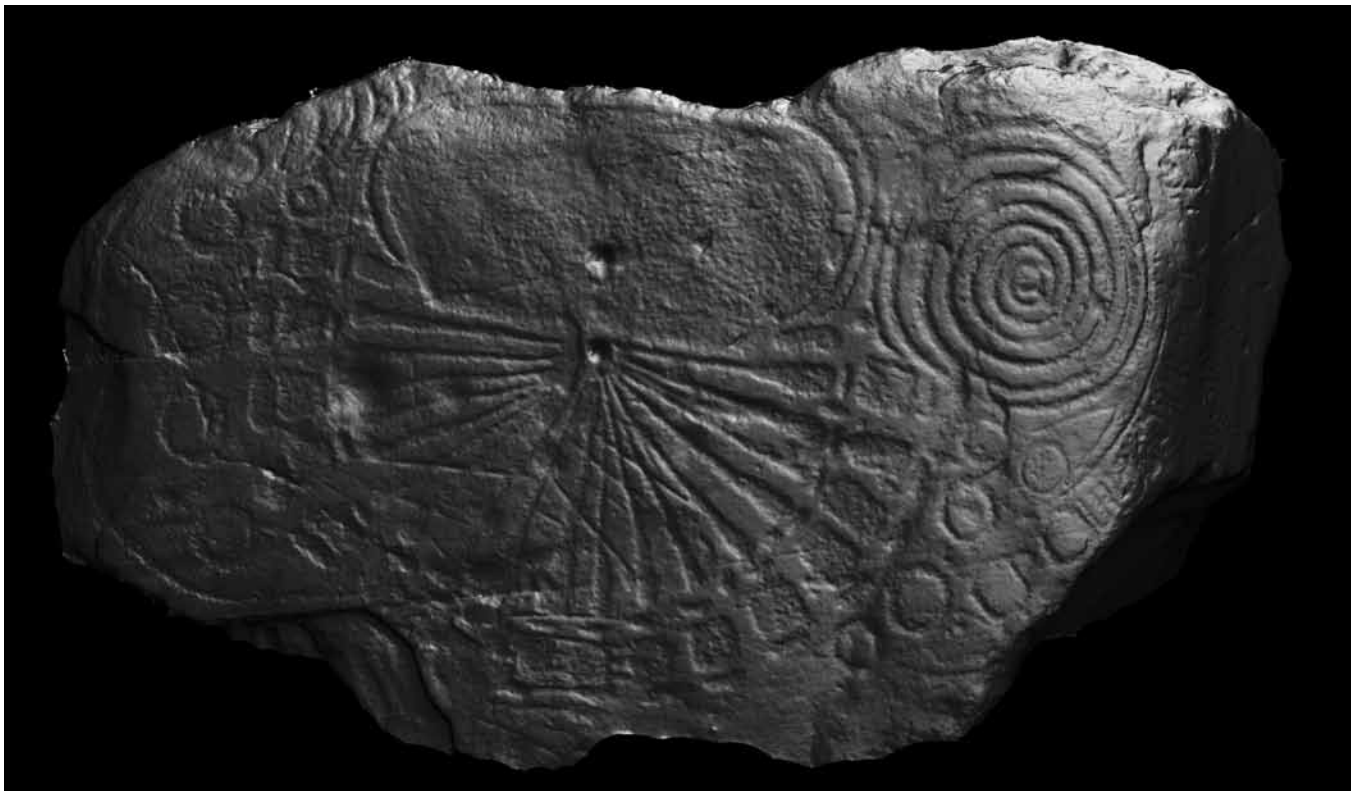
Silhouette laser-scanned plan view of the Knowth complex, showing the main mound and its two passage tombs, and numerous smaller satellite mounds

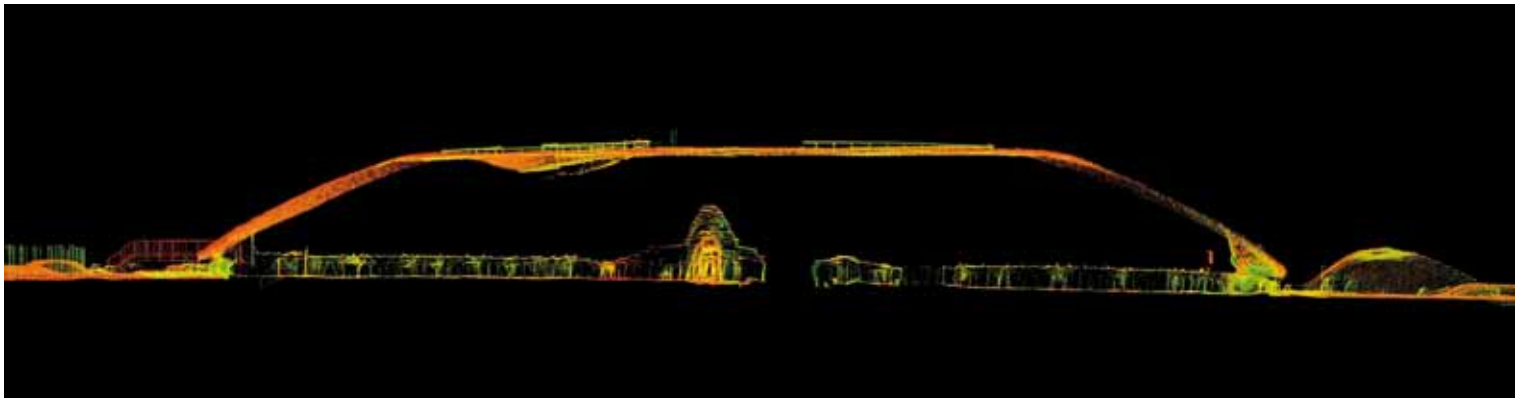
Surveying the satellite mounds at Knowth

project. Given these factors and the difficulty in actually surveying the monument (it is open to the public 364 days each year, which means surveying can only take place after dark), the decision was taken to focus our resources on the two lesser-known monuments of Knowth and Dowth.

Knowth is the largest of the three tombs, a huge earth-and-stone mound around 80m x 95m and 12m high. Around the foot of the mound are 127 decorated kerbstones each 2–3m wide. Beneath the mound are two long stone-lined passages running to the east and west, the eastern of which terminates in a cruciform chamber almost 6m high. Surrounding the main central mound are 17 smaller

The Knowth 'calendar stone', meshed from photogrammetry and lit and rendered as a Reflectance Transformation Image





Silhouette laser-scanned section view through the main Knowth mound, showing the eastern and western passage tombs.

satellite mounds around the size of a British round barrow, each with its own passage. The site tends to bring to mind Hobbiton, or possibly Teletubbieland. Including kerbstones and internal passage stones, Knowth has over 200 panels of Neolithic art – over a third of all the known megalithic art in Western Europe. The 34m-long western passage includes such gems as the 'owl stone', while the spectacular eastern chamber houses a stunning decorated stone basin over a metre in diameter and weighing well over a tonne. This stone is too large to have fitted through the eastern passage, and so must have been in place before the mound was constructed. The corbelled roof of the chamber is a masterpiece of neolithic architecture and engineering, although evidence of partial collapse in one corner is a sobering reminder of the potential dangers of structures of this type.

The third mound at Dowth is by some distance the least-known and least-understood of the three tombs. Dowth has never been properly excavated, many of its kerbstones lie buried beneath slumped mound material, and almost no-one has access to the two passages known to exist beneath it. The southern passage – Dowth South – is short and leads to a large chamber (now with a concrete ceiling) with a single antechamber full of decorated stones. Dowth North, however, can only be reached by crawling on hands and knees along a much later early Christian souterrain which connects with the neolithic passage. This leads to another cruciform set of decorated chambers similar to Knowth East, again with a large basin stone.

The 'Knowth Owl' – was this carved rock a guardian of the western tomb? Is it even an owl?

Inside the main chamber of Dowth North, looking past the rock-art and down the narrow, partially collapsed Neolithic passage

Dowth is known locally as 'the fairy mound of darkness', and numerous legends tell of its construction. A healthy disbelief in the power of fairies is to be expected in the modern world but when one finds oneself alone in the stygian dark of a 4,000-year-old tomb, with a five-minute belly-crawl through partially collapsed passages back to sunlight, such beliefs seem somewhat less ridiculous.

Surveying the tombs

The authors' complementary skills were put to good use in combining sub-millimetre high-resolution rock-art surveys with georeferenced site surveys covering hundreds of metres. Along with Trent & Peak Archaeology's Leica HDS6100 laser scanner, the team hired a Leica HDS7000 scanner, with lower range noise and longer range. These scanners were coupled with digital HDR photography to produce full-colour high-resolution point clouds, which were then used to produce fly-through videos of the sites and also meshed for close examination of the rock-art panels. Additionally, detailed photogrammetry was performed on many of the panels. This low-cost technique can produce very high-quality textured models ideal for use in other software packages such as 3D Studio Max or Cinema4D and is rapidly proving itself as a valuable tool in the digital archaeologist's kit.

The data from Brú na Bóinne are still being processed and finalised but the initial results are very promising: YAT's work has produced not only the most detailed survey of the tombs to date, but will also allow virtual access for thousands of visitors to spaces previously inaccessible to all but the privileged few.

Leading the way in community-led regeneration

ArcHeritage has recently undertaken three community-focussed projects commissioned by the East Peak Innovation Partnership (EPIP). EPIP was established in 2008, as part of the LEADER funding programme, to deliver a bottom-up, community-led approach to rural development. EPIP runs the East Peak Industrial Heritage Support Programme, which is jointly funded by English Heritage and the East Peak LEADER Programme (with funding from Defra and the European Union). The LEADER approach recognises that rural communities themselves are best placed to identify their needs and that, by working together, they can find innovative solutions and achieve real and lasting changes.

EPIP links together three similar areas covering Penistone and District, North Sheffield and the parishes of Denby Dale and Kirkburton. ArcHeritage has been working with the EPIP Industrial Heritage Officer, Tegwen Roberts, to deliver a variety of industrial heritage projects, all of which have involved collaboration with local community groups. The projects have been specifically designed to incorporate opportunities for volunteer participation and training, and help local groups to secure other funding streams for interpretation and repair projects.

GPR (ground-probing radar) survey training, January 2012 (Photo courtesy of EPIP)

Farnley Mill

The remains of Farnley Mill are located along the Range Dike, in a wooded valley to the east of Netherton, Farnley Tyas, in the parish of Kirkburton, West Yorkshire. The remains of mill structures, cottages and the water management system are all present within the woodland. The site is owned by Farnley Estates Ltd. Desk-based research and a walk-over survey were commissioned to inform a scheme of interpretation and future management plans for the Estate.

The first stage was to collate archive information to inform our site survey, and in this we were aided by local historian Alan Brooke who had already undertaken some research on the site. We then provided a survey skills training session for members of the Huddersfield and District Archaeological Society. Following this, some members joined us on site to help with the detailed survey of the mill remains. Whilst on site we also provided a survey training day for the enthusiastic members of Huddersfield and District Young Archaeologists Club.

Our survey shows that significant remains of the 18th-century woollen mill buildings survive, as well as 19th-century additions, including the wheel pit and the steam engine setting. Other features include a gas holder base associated with a short-lived gas works at the site, the well-preserved remains of the water management system, and features associated with managers' cottages and outbuildings.

We concluded that the site has considerable potential for interpretation and display. Careful and selective clearance of vegetation would increase the visibility of the features, and reduce the ongoing root damage to the structural remains. There is the potential for further community-based archive research and archaeological fieldwork projects to investigate the workings at the mill, and the living conditions within the workers' cottages.

Rockley Furnace

The remains of the Rockley blast furnace and engine house stand within an area of woodland to the north-west of the village of Birdwell. Both the furnace and the engine house are Scheduled Ancient Monuments and the site is owned and managed by the South Yorkshire Industrial History Society (SYIHS). The blast furnace had been built in 1704–5, with the mine pump engine house being built in 1813. The site also contains a number of earthworks relating to water management and later mining activities, as well as the remains of a later 19th century waggonway.

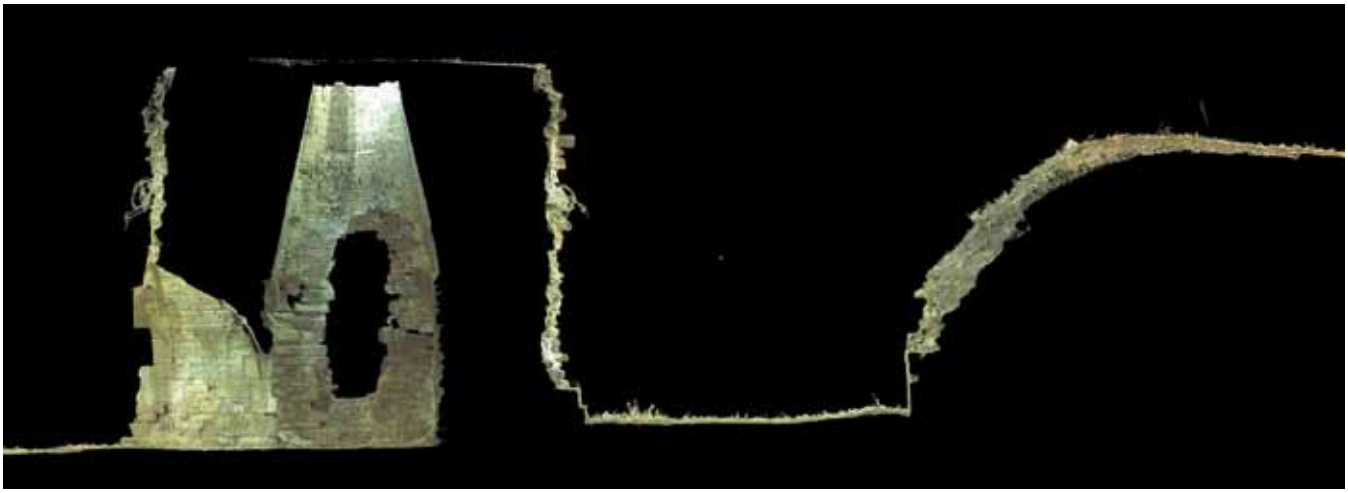
An archaeological/topographical survey was commissioned to assist with the ongoing management and conservation of the site.

Archaeology Training Day on Silkstone Common, November 2011 (photo courtesy EPIP)

Remains of Farnley Mill

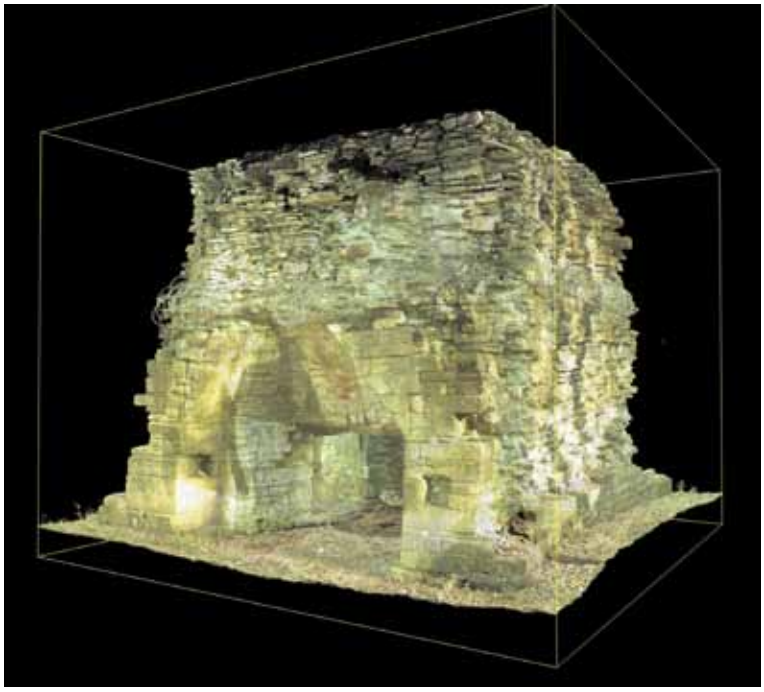
Again, the first stage of work was to collate all known archive information about the site as part of a desk-based assessment. The furnace had been partially excavated by David Crossley between 1978 and 1982 and so we also had access to good information about a number of buried features which are no longer visible. SYIHS also provided some very useful archive photographs of the site, some dating back to the 1950s.

Following the archive research, we used the subsequent survey programme as an opportunity to employ a number of different survey techniques, and to introduce these to SYIHS through a workshop which was also attended by the Roggins Local History Group (see Silkstone, below). This included GPS/total station survey, photogrammetry and laser scanning. The information from these combined techniques allowed us to create a detailed topographic survey of the site, including the location of all the trees, in relation to known archaeological features, which was required to inform future woodland management plans. The laser scan data allowed us to produce cross sections through the surface topography and the monuments very quickly, alongside the detailed earthwork survey. The earthwork survey allowed us to gain a much greater understanding of the complex phasing of water management features which had been fundamental to the operation of the furnace.



Through documentary and survey evidence we also identified the possible site of an early 18th-century mill.

The laser scan data will be useful for monitoring the condition of the stonework over the coming years and a number of consolidation works are being designed to protect some of the more vulnerable features.



Top: Section through laser scan data and (below) photogrammetric model of Rockley furnace

Silkstone Waggonway

The Silkstone Waggonway is an early 19th-century horse-drawn railway that ran between Silkstone Common and Cawthorne, on the outskirts of Barnsley. The Roggins Local History group in Silkstone has been particularly active in researching this monument and has already produced some on-site interpretation panels, a booklet and a short animated film, as well as web content. An archaeological survey was commissioned to assist the group in bringing this historical information together, in combination with a comprehensive field survey of the entire waggonway complex to establish the survival of waggonway features, as well as offering training opportunities for the Roggins group.

The waggonway was constructed in several phases, beginning with the Barnsley Canal Company route between Barnby Basin and Silkstone High Street. Construction began in January 1809 and was almost complete by December of that year. The northern section of this route replaced an earlier waggonway constructed by the Low Moor Iron Company in 1802. Several private waggonways and short extensions were associated with the canal company waggonway. These connected the principal route with a number of local collieries, including Banks Hall, Norcroft, Waterloo, Silkstone, Pall Mall, Noblethorpe and Warren.

A study of historic maps suggested that additional waggonways may have served Greenland Colliery and coal workings in Little Fall Wood, but little other documentary evidence for these routes could be found. We commissioned Geophysical Surveys of Bradford

to undertake some ground penetrating radar surveys along parts of the route. GSB were joined by members of the Roggins group, who learnt about the radar technique and helped to conduct the survey. The results successfully identified a former waggonway along the Greenland line, all surface traces of which have subsequently been completely removed with the exception of displaced sleeper stones contained within a drystone wall along a nearby field boundary.

The survey and desk-based assessment recorded a total of 951 features, which have been archived in a GIS database recording their coordinates, physical attributes and significance. Features recorded include large numbers of sleeper stones (for which a typology has been created), bridges, canal basin, limekilns, tally houses, embankments, inclined planes, mills, furnaces, coal pits and other industrial sites.

The survey clearly illustrates the significance of the Silkstone Waggonway as a central transport and communication route in the centre of a busy 19th-century industrial valley.

The survey also indicates that despite sections of damage to the waggonway, its current state of preservation is relatively good. To counter ongoing threats to the waggonway a number of management recommendations were made to promote awareness of the importance of the surviving elements and to provide guidance for additional fieldwork for management and research purposes.

This project has benefited greatly from the contribution of the members of the Roggins Local History Group and other local volunteers. Training in hand-held GPS survey techniques provided to members during the project is already proving valuable and will allow new data to be collected in a consistent manner; this body of evidence will continue to grow. The survey training was followed up with a training session on the use of GIS, using freely available software, which will allow the group to incorporate its new findings into the existing survey database. This local support has been invaluable in the protection, promotion, and enjoyment of the waggonway to date, and will continue to play a central role in its long-term future management.

Surveying sleeper stones along the Silkstone waggonway (photo courtesy Colin Bower)

Far-reaching effects

The East Peak Industrial Heritage Support Programme has been extremely effective in bringing community groups together with a variety of professional organisations to deliver projects which enhance the quality, interpretation and enjoyment of the industrial heritage in this region.

As always, community-based projects involve a large number of people to help organise work and to take part. Already new ideas are being generated by the groups, and new sources of funding are being sought to enhance the interpretation of these very complex and interesting industrial landscapes. It is impossible to list everyone who collaborated with us, but we are grateful for everyone's support, enthusiasm and knowledge – these projects bring archaeology to life and have benefits that long outlive the duration of the projects themselves.

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Medieval Craft and Mystery:

Discovering the People behind York's Mystery Plays

A new book by Nicola Rogers from York Archaeological Trust looks into the background of the plays

Ferdinand Kingsley and Graeme Hawley lead a cast of hundreds of local York people in the 2012 Mystery Play

York's Mystery Plays were performed annually for around two hundred years until suppressed in 1569. Revived in 1951, modern productions either take to the streets in wagons (above, in 2002), or may be full-blown staged productions as this year's in St Mary's Abbey (top right)

Modern productions of York's medieval Mystery Plays attract thousands of visitors, but many of those who go to see the performances may not be aware that the original plays, then known as 'pageants', were always performed by particular groups of citizens, namely craftsmen and traders who were all members of guilds, organisations broadly made up of men (and some women) who carried out the same jobs. One of the main functions of each guild was the responsibility for the annual funding, production and performance of their own particular pageant. The modern term for the plays gives a clue to these origins, for 'mystery' was the word used to describe the special skills of the craftsmen.

We can learn a great deal about the performers of York's medieval mystery plays from surviving documentary records of the time, but increasingly, archaeology has been providing us with a different type of evidence – the physical remains of places where these men and women lived, worked and met together, and the products they made. This has been gathered from 40 years of excavations and research across the city by York Archaeological Trust, from sites large and small, some very well known, and others less so. A new publication from York Archaeological Trust, *Medieval Craft and Mystery* makes use of this newly acquired archaeological knowledge to explore the lives of York's medieval artisans, and illustrates them with objects from within the Trust's extraordinarily rich material culture collection, many being published for the very first time.

The plays – or rather pageants – were performed as a cycle known as The Corpus Christi play, and celebrated the Feast of Corpus Christi which took place

on the first Thursday after Trinity Sunday, which fell between 23rd May and 24th June; it was no coincidence that this time of year is when daylight hours are longest, for to complete the cycle in one day may have taken up to 20 hours. Performed on wagons, up to 50 pageants followed an established route around the city; these told stories from the Old and New Testaments, from the Fall of the Angels and the Creation, right through to the Last Judgment. Each guild put on the same pageant every year, and some were clearly allotted to particular groups as a result of the work they carried out; for example, the Shipwrights' pageant was 'The Building of the Ark', that of the Fishers and Mariners was 'The Flood' and the Baxters (or Bakers) put on 'The Last Supper', no doubt complete with their own bread as a prop.

The guilds were responsible for producing – and sometimes retailing – goods and services that covered virtually all the needs of York's citizens, from tools to tapestries, cloth to cutlery, and bread to bows and arrows. Archaeological excavations have identified a number of sites in the city where certain crafts were carried out, and also some of the products that the craftsmen made. One activity that is more easily identified than others, probably because its physical remains tend to be robust and consequently survive well, is metal-working. Large-scale excavations in the 1970s in the area of Bedern for example revealed the presence of a foundry

A late 15th–early 16th century hearth and working floor uncovered at the Bedern Foundry excavation

Below left: Metal-working workshop surfaces exposed in the St Andrewgate excavation

A miniature cast bronze cauldron found at 27 Lawrence Street (height 2.45cm)

Top to bottom: Sheep metacarpal bones, waste products from the processing of sheepskins at 58–59 Skeldergate: links from copper-alloy chain mail from Henlys Garage site on Stonebow: Pins and pinners' bones from Hungate

operating in the 13th–early 16th centuries. The foundations of a number of industrial buildings were identified, and finds indicated that copper-alloy vessels such as cauldrons, and small cast dress accessories were being made there. In the 1990s, excavations nearby in St Andrewgate and Spen Lane found further evidence of the casting of copper-alloy dress fittings in the area in the early 14th–early 16th centuries. Excavations in 2004–05 on the site of the former York College for Girls at 62–68 Low Petergate produced finds showing that several different crafts had been carried out in adjoining tenements; these included metal-working, but also horn-working and leather-working, probably cobbling.

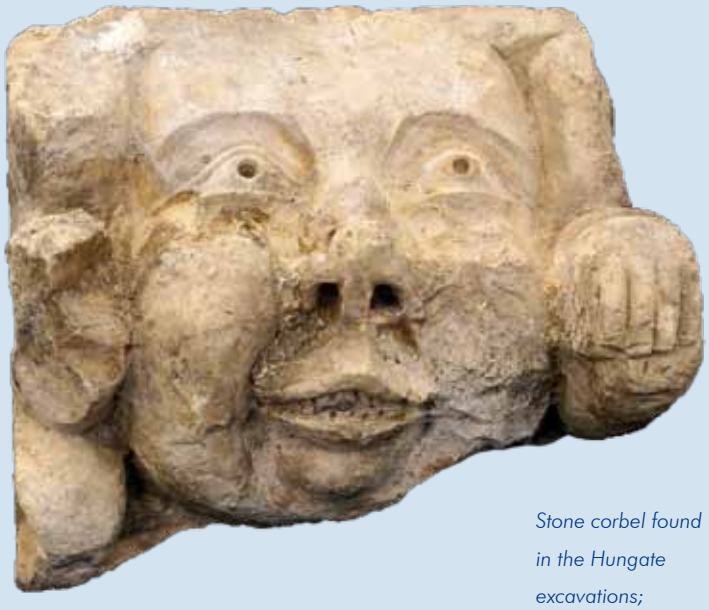
Elsewhere in the city, hints at possible craft-working are mainly provided by the artefacts or other material culture. The presence of abundant bark fragments at a site on Layerthorpe Bridge, for example, is thought to indicate tanning (the preparation of animal hides in order to make leather) on the site, while unusually large numbers of sheep bones, specifically foot bones, found in a 15th century cess pit at 58–59 Skeldergate have been interpreted as debris

from the processing of sheepskins. At the site of the former Henlys Garage on Stonebow, copper-alloy chain mail links made of wire were found, which appeared to have been discarded during manufacture in the 14th century. Pins for fastening clothing, and the wire they were made from, were recovered from the same site; similar finds from the excavations nearby on Hungate indicate the same craft was undertaken there.

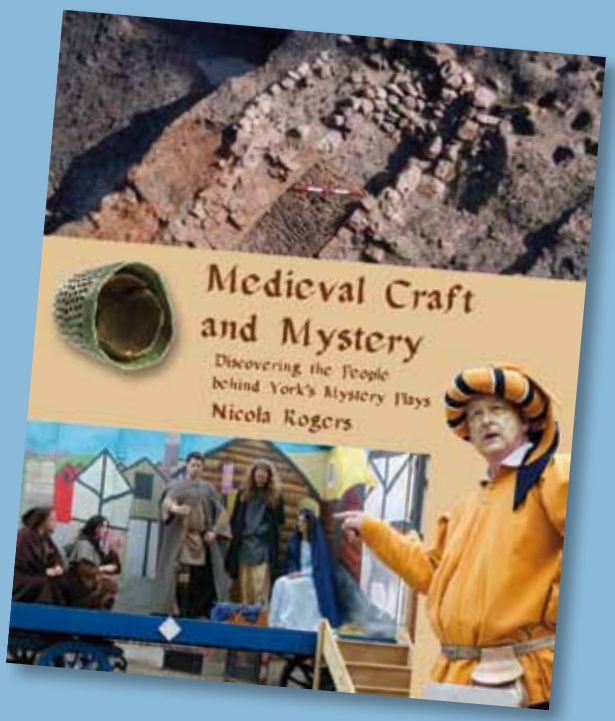
Archaeology has also revealed information about the guildhalls which were built as meeting places for guild members, where they could conduct business, and discuss their social and religious obligations. At the Merchant Adventurers' Hall on Fossgate, trial excavations within the undercroft in 1995 revealed that the original floor lies relatively close to the present surface. Well-preserved evidence for a series of alterations to the internal layout of the building also survived, including a series of brick alignments, interpreted as the bases for partitions which subdivided the hospital in the undercroft. Amongst the finds from this excavation was a magnificent 14th century gold brooch with the inscription IH SUS NAZ (Jesus of Nazareth).

Gold brooch found at the Merchant Adventurers' Hall

Other guildhalls are long gone but traces of them are found in excavation; for example, during excavations at Hungate, part of a stone building thought to have been the Cordwainers' (or shoe-makers) Hall was identified on the corner of Hungate and Pound Lane. The building, which was probably demolished c.1810, was found to have been constructed on top of burials and incorporated re-used limestone blocks, including an ecclesiastical corbel, into its foundations; the corbel probably came from the church of St John the Baptist which stood on the site until its demolition in the mid-16th century.



Stone corbel found in the Hungate excavations; possibly originally from a church, it was found re-used in the foundations of the Cordwainers' Hall

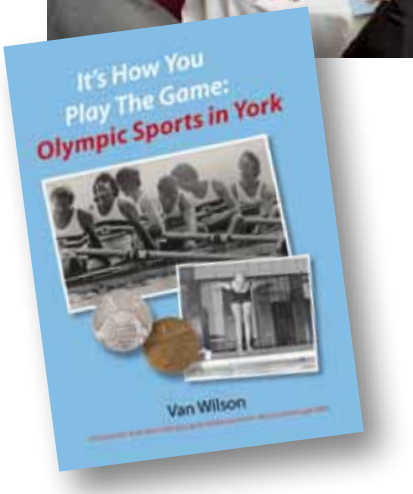


Medieval Craft and Mystery is now available priced at £8.50; it can be found in the shops in Jorvik, DIG and Barley Hall, and in most bookshops in York. Alternatively, it can be ordered from C. Kyriacou, York Archaeological Trust, 47 Aldwark, York YO1 7BX for £10 including p&p. Please make cheques payable to York Archaeological Trust.

It's How You Play the Game

The latest book in YAT's highly popular oral history series, *It's How You Play the Game: Olympic Sports in York*, by Van Wilson, had a timely launch at the Mansion House in July, just a week after the Olympic torch made its memorable appearance in York prior to the London Olympic Games. Two of the Olympic torch bearers in York, Stan Wild and Clive Warley, were at the launch, together with fellow athletes such as Olympian Allan Whitwell and Paralympian Cathy Mitton.

Interviewees and others enjoying the Jubilee tea at the launch



Author Van Wilson beside the Lord Mayor, Councillor Keith Hyman (carrying Clive Warley's Olympic torch), with interviewees Pauline Clarkson and Allan Whitwell at the book's launch in the Mansion House

The book is a fascinating exploration of sport in York, examining all 25 summer Olympic sports with the usual mix of historical information, anecdotes and images, most of which have never been in the public domain such as an 1850s outdoor archery meeting, 1914 Rowing Club Regatta and 1971 gymnastics display on the Knavesmire in the presence of Queen Elizabeth. A recent independent review of the book concluded that 'This book, which incorporates many photographs of sports people and memorabilia, forms a lively accompaniment to the more traditional Olympic previews and histories – and is a great social history of York as well'.

Runner Walter James 'Wally' Beavers was born in York in 1903 and was selected for the Olympics in 1928 in Amsterdam. He once competed in the Northern Counties Athletics Association three mile event on Leeds University track. W. Illingworth tells the story:

'All the outstanding distance runners in the North were there, but Beavers was soon nearly 100 yards behind them and was subject to some

barracking from the crowd. What many spectators did not know was that Beavers was running according to a strict schedule set by his coach Jimmy Dawson. Dawson shouted 'Tha's all reight, Walter' as he came past him. Two and a half laps from the finish, Jimmy called out, 'Nah then Walt, tha can go', and with a phenomenal burst of speed, Beavers overhauled his famous rivals. His time of 14 mins 38.4 seconds was not beaten until 1949.'

One interviewee, Malcolm Huntington, former Press sports editor and Olympic tennis umpire, recalled an unusual side of tennis player John McEnroe:

'Simon Hoare was a player in the '70s and his hero was McEnroe. Sadly Simon was in a crash and had severe brain injuries. We went to visit him in hospital, he was in a coma for about three months. And his father Terry got in touch with McEnroe. And McEnroe made a tape, "Come on Simon, this is John McEnroe, I hear you've been in an accident. Don't give up, and battle on". His father played this tape to him dozens and dozens of times and he gradually started to emerge from the coma. And that's the side of McEnroe that nobody will ever see.'

Work has begun on the seventh book in the series, on Coney Street and the Mansion House and Guildhall, due for publication in the autumn of 2013. Coney Street was an important fashion area in the years from 1900 to the 1950s. One interviewee, Carol Addy, talked about working in Rowntree's fashion store in Coney Street, just beside the Mansion House, in the 1960s.

'It was very much like 'Are you Being Served?'. A real hierarchy of buyers and older assistants, who were very much revered, then the slightly younger people maybe in their 30s and then we were the juniors. When I first went we had an overall, we had to have a special uniform. You had to be very polite, we were never allowed to go onto the shop floor without being made up.

'You had to be a certain height to work upstairs because the tranche of women before us were quite personable young ladies in their 30s, 40s, 50s of quite well-off families. Therefore if you worked at Rowntree's in the early '60s, there were small girls on the ground floor and taller girls on the second floor.

Leake and Thorpe's store in Coney Street, York, in the 1920s

'We had an art director, a chap in charge of the displays, who worked between York and Scarborough. He was Mr Mason and was terribly terribly glamorous, a bit like Noel Coward. He mesmerised me and you couldn't take your eyes off him. He used to float in and say, "I feel blue today". So we'd have blue things all over, all the mannequins would have blue.'

The book will clearly be another winner with such splendid material! We will be conducting interviews for the project until December 2012 and would be delighted to hear from anybody who has lived or worked in the Coney Street area or has images relating to this part of York.

Christine Kyriacou and Van Wilson

'It's How You Play the Game; Olympic Sports in York'
by Van Wilson (2012)
York Archaeological Trust Oral History Series: 6
256 pages, 170 black and white photographs
ISBN 978-1 874454-58-8
Price: £9.99

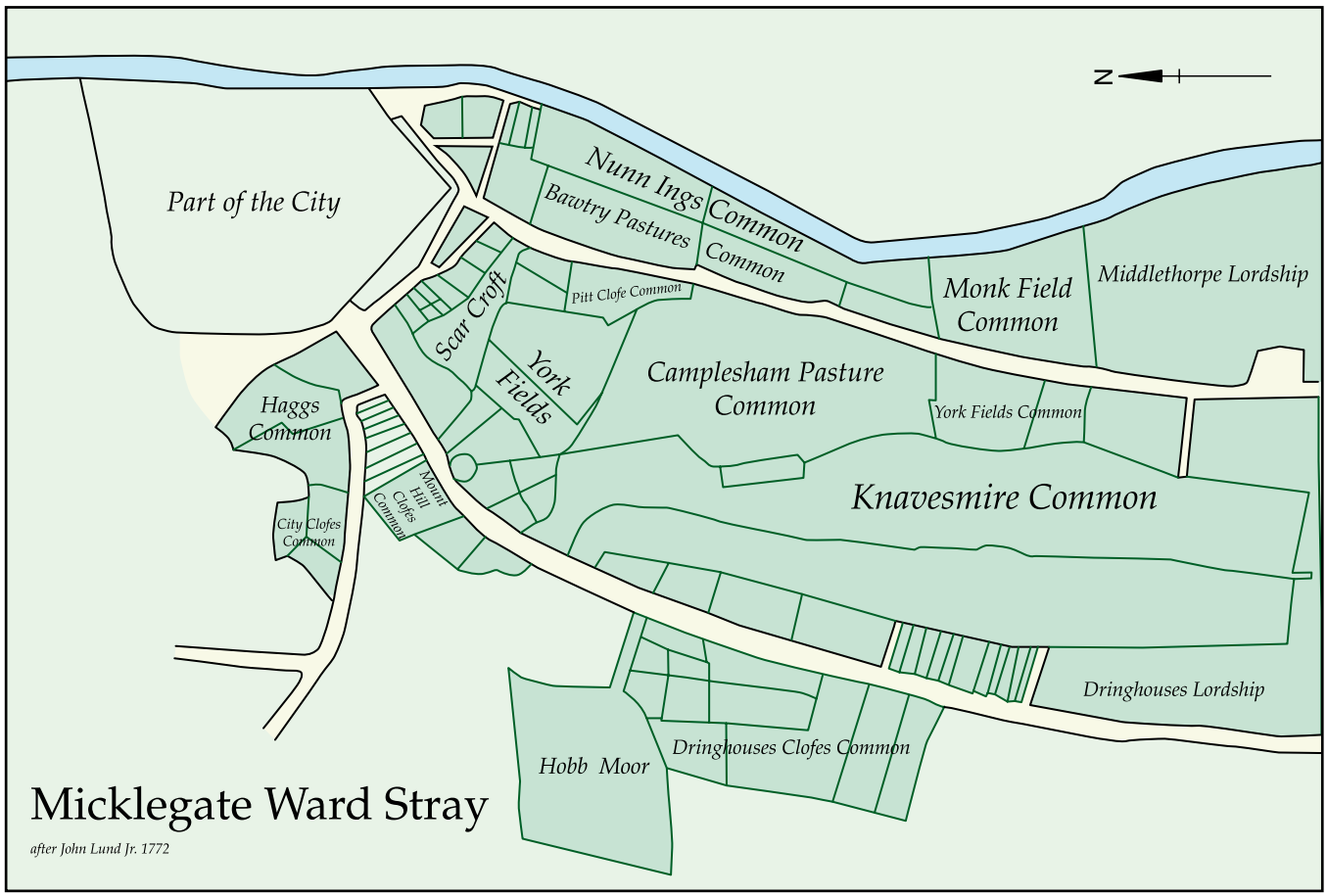
Scarcroft Road Allotment Project

Gardeners and archaeologists share many common interests. They are both concerned about the state of the earth with which they work. They both use spades, buckets, trowels, string etc; and they both dig holes and pick things out of the soil. Furthermore, many gardeners, like many archaeologists take photographs and make notes recording their efforts and their results. So it is not surprising that many archaeologists are also gardeners. So, when YAT Education Officer Andrew Jones was eventually offered an allotment on the Scarcroft Road site, it was not long before the allotment association committee asked for an afternoon of 'finds identification'. This took place on a very cold and wet Saturday afternoon in April 2012. Fortunately, the committee had borrowed a large portable gazebo from the City of York Council for the occasion. A representative of York and District Metal Detecting Club was also invited to help with finds identification.

To prepare for the day, the YAT historic map collection was consulted for evidence of what is known about the area. A map of 1772 by John Lund Jr. clearly shows fields outside the city walls named Scar Croft.

Scarcroft Allotments are located on the drier parts of what is now Micklegate Stray, and run up the hill of glacial sands and gravels which form Scarcroft Hill and south to the Knavesmire. They lie just to the east of the Roman road connecting York and Tadcaster. The area was cultivated in the medieval period and traces of ridge and furrow, medieval strip fields, can still be seen from the cycle track near Bishopthorpe Road and from the A64 near the large hotels at Dringhouses. The bulk of the stray was formerly used for grazing cattle and sheep. Parts of the Knavesmire and Hob Moor were ploughed to grow potatoes during the Napoleonic wars in the early 19th century; traces are still visible in air photographs. Horseracing on the Knavesmire has a very long history, a tradition dating to at least the 1730s. In the late 19th century York Golf Club used the Knavesmire for its course, as did archers and other sporting folk. Today it is also used by cricketers, footballers, dog walkers, circuses, the Cyclists Touring Club, caravanners, Civil War re-enactors and many more.

The allotments were established in the early 20th century on former pasture land. They were particularly important during World War



Map of Micklegate Stray by John Lund Jr., 1772 (re-drawn by Andrew Crampton)

Map by Jacob Richards, 1685, showing the Civil War fortification on The Mount

II when the famous Dig for Victory campaign encouraged many York families to pick up a spade and grow their own vegetables and fruit.

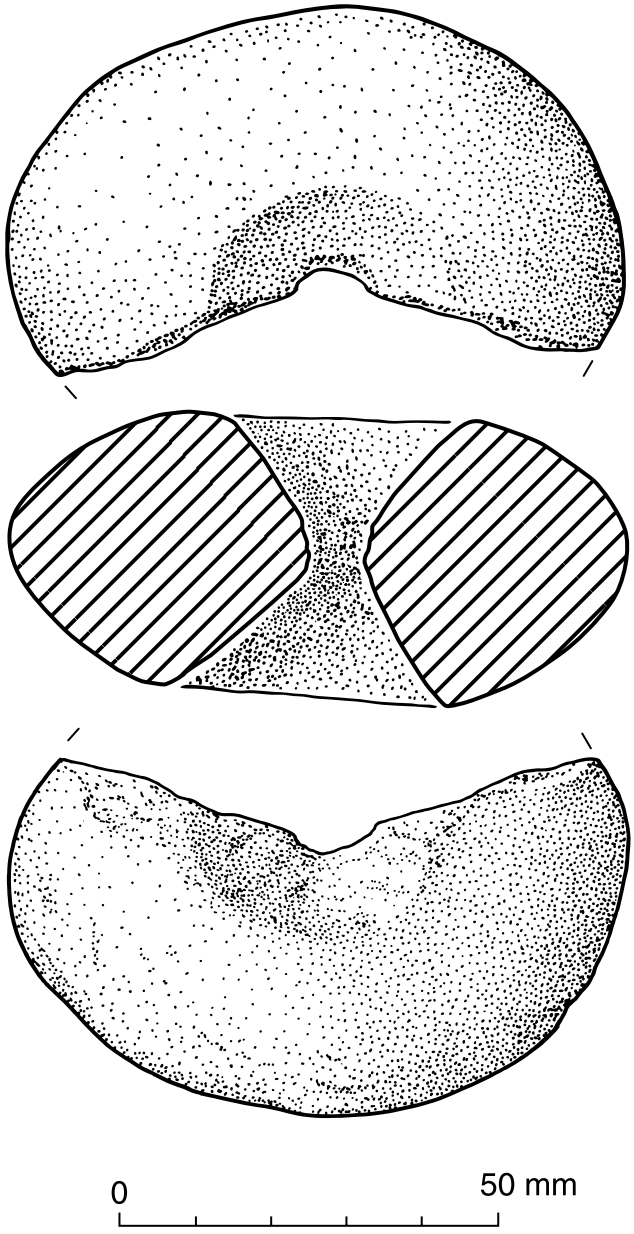
Archaeological excavations along The Mount have revealed abundant evidence of Roman cemeteries; some sites, such as that excavated behind the Lion and Lamb pub, show that human inhumations, while concentrated on the street frontage, are spread over 100 metres back from the road.

The other major archaeological feature in the area is the site of a small fortified position built on the highest point of The Mount in the 1640s by Royalist troops during the English Civil War. York was a Royalist stronghold and a well-designed sconce (small fort-like gun emplacement) was built at the summit of The Mount, straddling what is now the A64. From here Royalist troops could look out for trouble. Oliver Cromwell and his New Model Army surrounded the City in 1642, after winning the Battle of Marston Moor. The Parliamentary army captured the sconce on the Mount and bombarded the City during the Siege of York.

The siege lasted until the Royalists eventually capitulated. Towards the end of the siege Parliamentary troops blew up the Marygate Tower scattering important records from St Mary's Abbey all over Bootham and the area. Fortunately, a Mr Dugdale was on hand, and he scurried around gathering as much as he could find and eventually compiled these records into his famous and now very rare oeuvre 'Dugdale's Monasticon', still regarded as an important historical source for information on the medieval monasteries of Yorkshire.

Before the day we thought we might get some Roman finds, and maybe some artefacts relating to the Civil War, but we anticipated that much of the material would be 19th and 20th century durable consumables. The allotment committee provided a plan of the allotment site with each plot marked. We set up a digital camera and produced a written record of as many finds as possible, concentrating on older (pre-18th century) material.

To our great surprise and delight the first object we were shown was half a perforated stone ring, about the size of a half-eaten doughnut. The three archaeologists on the day came up with various identifications: a weight for a loom, for automatically closing a door, or perhaps for fishing, but Bryan Antoni was convinced it was a prehistoric object, possible a macehead from the Neolithic or Early Bronze Age period. It was found on a plot very near the summit of Scarcroft Hill and it looks as though it was made from a carefully selected natural rounded sandstone pebble. Someone had tried to make a hole in it by a combination of pecking with a harder material, possibly flint, and drilling, presumably with a bow drill and abrasive. First a dimple was pecked on one side of the stone and the rough pecked sides smoothed out using the drill to make a depression half way into the stone. Then the pebble was turned over and pecked on the opposite side. It appears that the 'macehead' may have broken just before the holes were completed. There are no signs of drilling on the second side, and so the unfinished broken



pebble was discarded. Several millennia later, Mrs Wignall found it on plot 33.

Other interesting and no less evocative finds are a sherd of Roman mortarium (food mixing/pureeing bowl) from a plot near Scarcroft Road (plot 101) and a lead sling shot (again plot 33), very similar to others found throughout the Roman world. There was also a scatter of medieval and post-medieval pottery, including three conjoining sherds of a blue and white Spode plate. Clay pipe fragments abounded, some clearly being early 17th century, but one bore a maker's stamp (JS) and is thought to be from a 19th century York maker, John Shaftoe.

More recent domestic pottery was also present. A large sherd of a ceramic vessel bearing part of the name of Hood & Son wine and spirit merchants is of interest as YAT dug part of their vaults during the training excavation at St Leonard's Hospital. We know that Hoods closed in 1830.

An unusual find with an oriental exotic tale was a mid 19th century coin, first identified as 'possibly Arabic'. Phil Dunning of the Metal Detecting Club posted a picture of this on a favourite website and soon had a definitive identification, as a Trishuli Pai, a coin issued in the Bengal Presidency c.1815–21. This site clearly provides the fastest coin identification service we have ever experienced.

How did an early 19th-century Bengali coin get into the earth at Scarcroft Allotments? We'll leave you to make up a story of your own. In the mean time we are interested to see if other prehistorians think the possible macehead is correctly identified. Objects of very recent origin included a very well-made brown glass pill bottle, designed to fit into a pocket (?1930–60s) and shaped like a miniature hip flask; and a plastic toy soldier, typical of free gifts in cereal packets of the 1960s.

Although the weather was awful, so only a small number of people turned up, we discovered a range of interesting objects that each add something new to our knowledge and provide a fascinating glimpse into human lives in the area. This simple and inexpensive project demonstrates that gardeners and archaeologists have much to gain by working together. Any one interested in turning over some vegetable plots this winter?

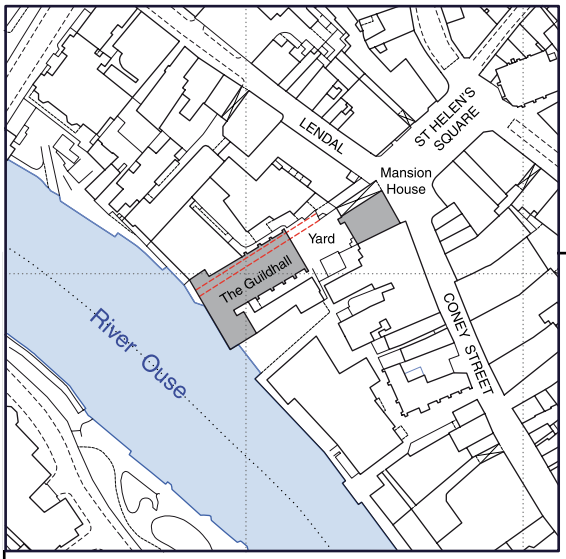
Many thanks to Kurt Hunter-Mann and Emma Turner (University of Bradford Placement Student) who helped man the YAT stall, and to Phil Dunning from York and District Metal Detecting Club who not only put on a great show on a miserable day, but helped with the identification of the Bengali coin.

Andrew K. G. Jones

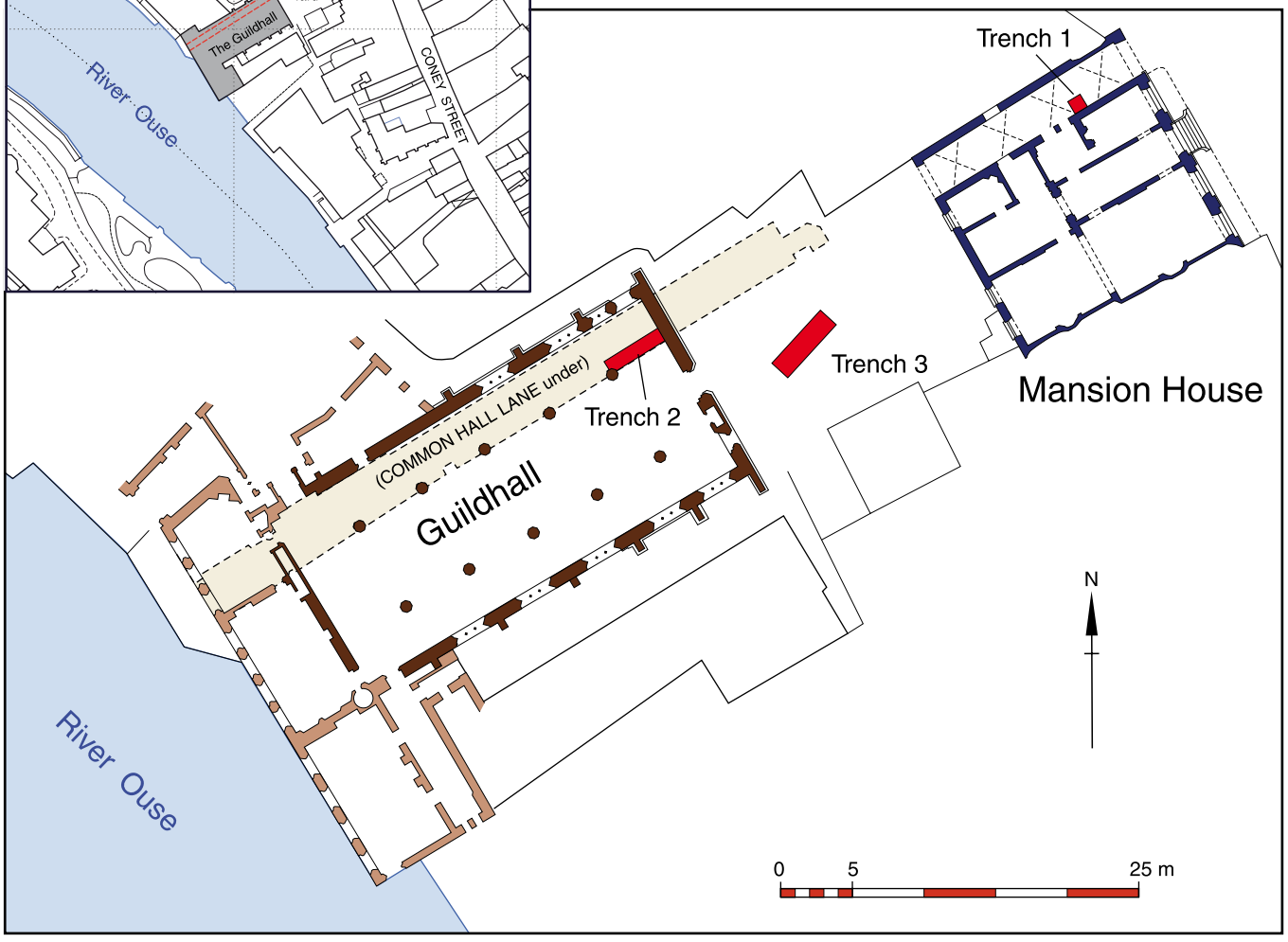
Some of the finds from the identification day: both sides of a 19th-century Bengali coin; fragment of a Spode plate; 20th-century plastic soldier and pill bottle; sherd of a stoneware vessel from Hood & Sons.

YORK 800
Excavations in Guildhall Yard

Visitors to York in 2012 can hardly have failed to notice the *YORK 800* banners, celebrating the granting of the city's first Royal Charter by King John in the year 1212. The charter gave the citizen body of York the right to govern its own affairs for the first time. On August 4th, in further recognition of this anniversary and in partnership with other organisations across the county, York Archaeological Trust launched its *Yorkshire Medieval Festival*. This programme of events included, with the agreement of City of York Council, some small archaeological excavations in and around York's medieval Guildhall, the building which symbolises York's long history of civic independence.



The present Guildhall, which stands on the riverfront on the north-west bank of the River Ouse, was built in the 1440s, but the earliest historical reference to a Guildhall in York dates from 1256. The location of this early Guildhall is



unknown – it may or may not have been on the site of its 15th-century successor – but it is clear that by 1378 the city's Guildhall *did* stand on this site. The existing building suffered heavy bomb damage in a German air-raid in April 1942, and was extensively restored in the 1950s.

The excavations were undertaken by a team led by Jim Williams and Paul Howlett of YAT, and in keeping with the participatory ethos of *YORK 800* and the Medieval Festival, were open to, indeed welcomed, public visits and participation. The people of York were thus involved in the work 'hands-on', as virtually every day of the entire six weeks of the excavations volunteers from York and the surrounding district, supervised by Hannah Baxter of the Trust's Community Archaeology team, got down into the trench to help with the digging. Media interest was also considerable, particularly when Professor Mick Aston, formerly of Channel 4's *Time Team*, dropped by for a look.

Excavation of Trench 3 in front of the Guildhall

Paul Howlett and Hannah Baxter working in Trench 3. The mortared wall in the foreground may have formed part of the chapel or *maison dieu* built with the Guildhall in the 1440s

Professor Mick Aston discusses the Guildhall Yard excavations with Jim Williams and Hannah Baxter of YAT

Three separate areas were excavated. A small investigation in the Mansion House cellar, Trench 1, measuring just 1 metre square, revealed that the brick floor of the cellar was laid directly onto 'natural' deposits, laminations of silt and clay laid down towards the end of the last glaciation about 10,000 years ago. Any more recent layers had been completely removed by the digging of the cellar in 1725.

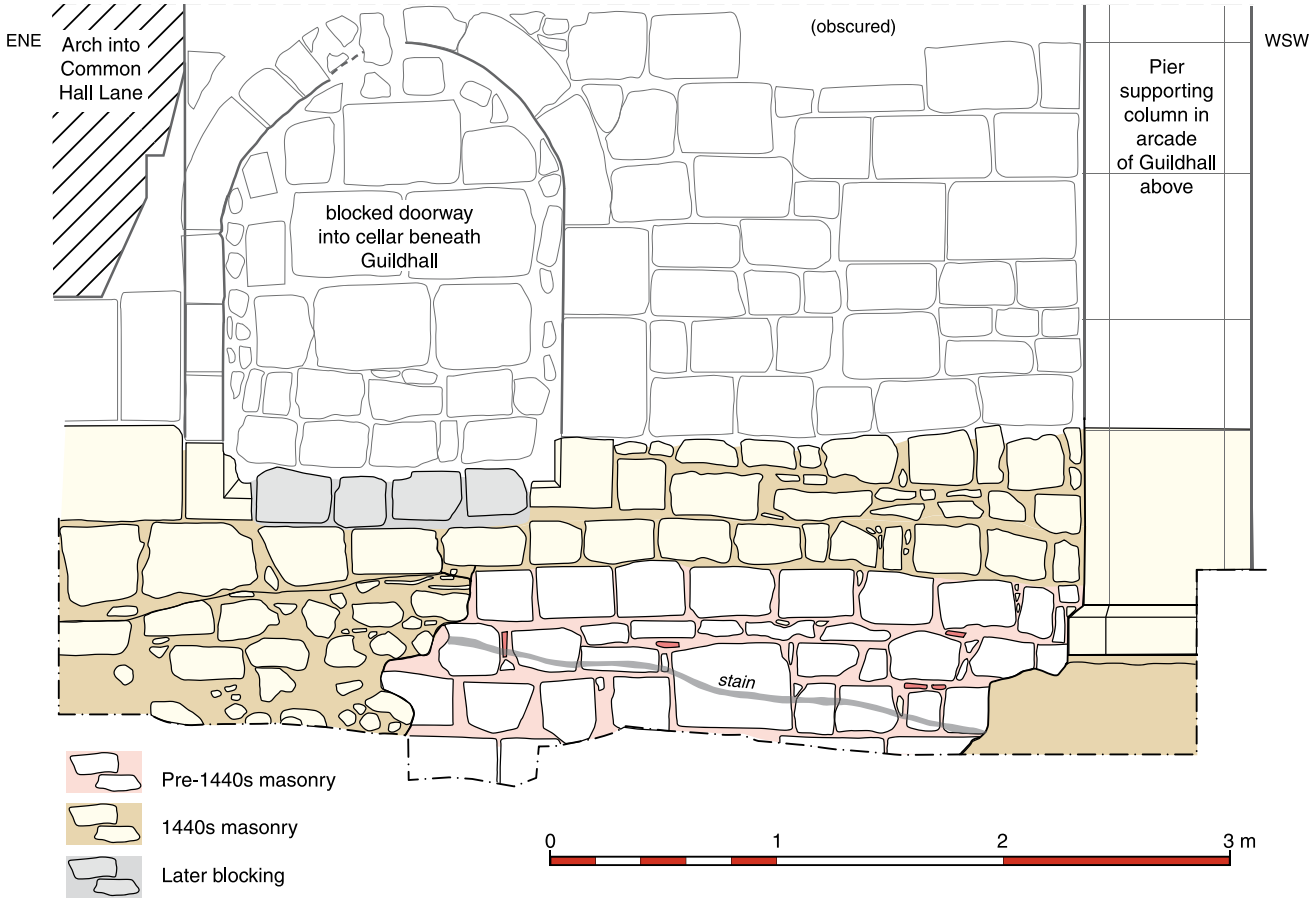
The 5.0m x 1.5m excavation in Guildhall Yard, Trench 3, was dug to establish how intact or otherwise archaeological strata in this area are, and the levels of successive medieval and later ground surfaces in front of the Guildhall. The present ground surface in the yard slopes *downwards* to the Guildhall's main entrance; had that always been the case, or was this slope the result of very recent landfilling?

Jim Williams recording a blocked cellar doorway and its masonry footings in Trench 2, beneath the Guildhall in Common Hall Lane

When excavation began it quickly became apparent that medieval deposits beneath the Yard were largely intact. The earliest layers reached, on present assessment of the evidence dating from the 12th/13th centuries, were of a type familiar from many archaeological sites in York: the muddy, bare-earth back-yards or 'backlands' often found behind medieval street-front properties, in this case on Coney Street.

This muddy backland was transformed by the construction of two substantial walls, surviving as footings about three metres apart which were aligned parallel with the front of the Guildhall. The more easterly of these was mortared, the other, closer to the Guildhall, was not. The ground surface associated with the mortared wall was at a level close to that of the threshold of the main door of the Guildhall, and may have formed part of one of two other buildings documented as having been built at the same time in the 1440s – a chapel and a *maison dieu*. The latter is a term which refers to almshouses or a 'hospital', in the sense of a place of hospitality for the poor and needy, rather than an establishment with its modern, specifically medical, connotations. This archaeological evidence also suggests that the medieval Guildhall Yard was a level, rather than a sloping, surface.

These buildings seem to have stood until 1725, when they were demolished to be replaced by the present Mansion House. In the course of the 17th century, however, the *maison dieu* had been converted into a place offering a rather different form of hospitality – the Cross Keys public house! Spanning this period the excavation revealed a series of external yard surfaces and possible internal floors. With the construction of the Mansion House the area seems to have been left as an open, cobbled yard, until late in the 19th century when it was given over to a garden or shrubbery, concealing beneath it a deep, wide drain or culvert. The asphalt of the existing yard surface and its brick rubble bedding were laid over the top of this garden soil.



Trench 2: elevation of the southern wall of Common Hall Lane beneath the eastern end of the Guildhall. The tinted stonework is primarily that exposed by the excavation, the fainter details of the wall above being above the modern ground level and interpolated from oblique photographs. (A full laser scan of the entire wall elevation is still being processed as this article goes to press, and will be incorporated in future analysis and publication.) The pink-tinted masonry (lower right) is the wall of the pre-1440s building, perhaps part of the Guildhall referred to in 1378. The wavy grey line indicates a stain on this wall which marks the position of a ground surface, probably created during the building of the existing Guildhall in the 1440s, the stonework tinted pale brown. Most of the faintly-drawn masonry in the wall above is of this build, the obvious exception being the blocking of the cellar doorway, probably in the mid-17th century, the excavated element of which is tinted grey.

Trench 3 was extremely informative, but perhaps even more interesting was the evidence revealed in Trench 2, in Common Hall Lane. This medieval lane runs from a watergate right at the edge of the River Ouse *underneath* the northern half of the Guildhall, towards St Helen's Square and Stonegate. Rarely visited due to its tendency to flood, the very existence of this atmospheric below-ground passageway excited much public and media interest. Trench 2 was located on the southern side of the lane, hard against the stone wall and piers which support the timber columns of the Guildhall's north aisle immediately above. Five metres in length by one metre wide, it exposed the footings of the medieval arch carrying the front wall of the Guildhall over Common Hall Lane, those of an arched doorway, blocked up in the 17th century, which had once led into a cellar beneath the Guildhall, and the base of a pier carrying one of the timber columns which support the roof in the building above.

These foundations proved to be of two distinct phases. The later, quite coarsely-built footings directly support the Common Hall Lane archway, the blocked cellar door and the arcade pier, all clearly integral parts of the Guildhall. These footings therefore seem to date from the 1440s, but themselves

Paul Howlett of YAT holds up a possible fragment of chandelier, found embedded in a yard surface contemporary with the 18th-century Mansion House

stand on an earlier foundation of notably finer workmanship, running immediately underneath them and on the same line. This lower, finer work thus appears to have formed part of an *earlier* building on the same site as the present Guildhall, and the quality of masonry suggested that it may actually have been part of that earlier building's superstructure, originally standing visible above its contemporary ground level, rather than its foundations.

This re-use of the standing walls of existing buildings in the foundations of later ones has been observed before in excavations on York's medieval riverside, as at the 15th-century Merchant Adventurers' Hall on Fossgate, whose builders incorporated the underlying walls of a 12th-century stone-built house in its foundation. Both the Merchant Adventurers' Hall and the Guildhall illustrate the progressive raising of ground level and buildings on York's medieval riverfronts in response to the ever-present risk of flooding. This of course is an issue very familiar to the modern citizens of York, one which became acutely apparent less than a fortnight after the completion of the Guildhall excavations, when late September's severe, unseasonal floods saw almost the entire length of Common Hall Lane inundated to a depth of over two metres.

The pre-1440s wall identified beneath the foundations in Trench 2 seems likely to have been part of an earlier Guildhall building, known from documentary sources to have stood on the site by 1378. When this earlier Guildhall was actually built is unknown. It may be the same building referred to in 1256, or a later one constructed between then and the later 14th century.

These three small excavations have produced results far exceeding their size – a combined area of only 13.5 m^2. As well as the significance of the archaeological evidence, the work has aroused a great deal of public, official and media interest, and highlighted the importance of the history of the Guildhall in the development of civic society in York. It is a pleasure for YAT to be able to thank all those who participated in the project and helped to make it happen, the guides, volunteers, staff and students of the University of York, City Councillors, officers of City of York Council (amongst whom special mention must be made of Richard Pollitt, Andrew Docherty and John Oxley), members of the press and media, and above all the public, from York and further afield, who visited the site in numbers throughout the course of the excavations and invariably expressed great interest and enthusiasm. As City of York Council relocates to its new West Offices the future use of York's Guildhall is under consideration, and it is hoped that this will include opportunities for more historical and archaeological investigation of this important medieval building and its setting.

Mark Whyman

York Archaeological Trust

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