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CLARO COMMUNITY ARCHAEOLOGY GROUP NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2011

We would like to begin this Spring newsletter by thanking the outgoing editor Cynthia Stevenson for her excellent service over many years. Cynthia has decided to retire from the group and will be sadly missed.

Lead Bag Seals Examined by Expert



In our previous newsletter we promised to keep you up to date about an expert examining lead bag seals. The seals were used in connection with importing flax for the local textile industry.

John Sullivan, formerly of St. Andrews University spent the day with us and examined the local 'finds', after which he gave an informative talk on the subject.

Our seals dated from the early C19th and generally were exported through St. Petersburg.

The seals would have an exporters name, initials or trade mark, a date, an inspector's name or initials and a number indicating flax quality.

We are currently looking for an expert to examine our 'lead tokens'; we think we have a number that are Medieval and we would like this confirming.

Dates of Future Exhibitions.

3rd, 4th and 5th May – Display in Knaresborough Library

Following our successful 1940's Photographic Exhibition, we have been asked to return with a new display. We will be showing our work so far related to the village of Scriven.

One new display will portray case studies of local families; other displays include 'finds' eg. Medieval pottery, images of the Slingsby family and Scriven Hall, and a wide variety of maps dating from early sketch maps to the present day.

19th June – Medieval Day at the Castle

As usual the archaeological group offices will be open (below the museum) and displays of our current project exhibited. Members of the group will be available throughout the day to discuss topics.

**History and Heritage in the
Harrogate District**



Weapon 'Finds' - Ancient and Modern

Recently we were handed a stone fragment found in the area many years ago by a local man. After close examination by Kevin Cale our Community Archaeologist, it was found to be part of a Neolithic Stone Mace Head.

The stone has been shaped and drilled centrally to fit a wooden pole. It was used as a weapon by stone age man, in much the same manner as a club.



The left hand image is the fragment which has been weighed, measured and photographed. The right hand image is an example of a complete Neolithic Stone Mace Head.

On a similar warfare theme, we recently unearthed a Mortar Shell from the WWII period. As you are aware Scriven Hall and Park was used as an Army Camp during the war. Finds such as rifle shell casings are common and tank shell casings have also been found.



As you can see from the photograph the mortar shell was found at a shallow distance from the surface. When unearthed we immediately informed the police and landowner. The bomb squad later arrived from Catterick and blew up the device.



Can You Help?

Recently we were given a chance to digitize some photocopies of the 1918 Armistice Day Celebrations in Scriven. The photo's showed the adults of the village sat on tiered seating and also the children seated in a similar manner. One or two adults are in their army uniforms.

As the copies obtained were only photocopies, they are poor quality images. Can anyone help us locate an original photograph which we could then scan and have a good copy for our records?

Excavation of a possible Medieval Bank and Ditch

We have again called upon the expertise of the Community Archaeology Roving Excavation Team.

Whilst exploring landscape archaeology in a section of Scriven Park, we discovered a substantial bank and ditch feature to the west of the village.

After recording the feature on our first visit, we returned later that month with Kevin Cale our Community Archaeologist.



It was decided to explore the feature further and we called in the digging team to assist. After discussions with the landowner, it was agreed to proceed with a trench across the feature in early March.

We expect the excavation to give us a clear understanding of the profile and dimensions of the bank and ditch; and would hope to find dating evidence in the ditch eg. Medieval pottery. We will keep you updated with progress in our next newsletter!



Knarborough Library Map Cataloging

Continuing our close cooperation with Knarborough library, over a number of weeks we have been assisting with cataloging and storage of more than eighty maps.

The maps sent from Harrogate library ranged from hand tinted 1891 maps, to more recent editions. They are all of the local area and add to an already extensive resource.

We were able to digitize maps relevant to our study area and add them to our database.

We would like to thank the library staff for their continued support and look forward to our display at the beginning of May.



Amendment to a Previous Article

Reporting in our last newsletter, we mentioned our archiving work related to the 'Atkinson Papers'. We inadvertently called the local historian Arthur Atkinson, which was incorrect.

The early 20th Century historian was William Atkinson who lived at Pengarth, New Scriven. He dedicated much of his life to the study of Knarborough and area using local records and family papers.

He was given full access to Scriven Hall and its documents by Sir Algernon Firth; it is proving an invaluable source and the transcribing continues.

One of our members is converting his sketches and measurements of Scriven Hall, into a clearer set of working drawings. Wall thicknesses are given; which could assist with dating earlier sections of the building.

Progress on Houses and Census Returns

Our team are spending considerable time analyzing information relating to people and houses in the village of Scriven over the centuries.

The earliest document currently is an 'Extanta 1302', which lists tenants, land and rents. At the other extreme we have allocated properties to all 1911 Census return names.

We are also in the process of accessing 'Slingsby Estate Papers' from numerous archive sources.

We thank all local families who have assisted with photographs of relatives, access to cottages and information relating to their families.

For the forthcoming display at Knarborough Library we hope to have a number of family case studies on show. See you there!