



**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.**

***It looks like a combination of horrendous weather and COVID has finally put our very short digging season to an end. We had hoped to get back to our Cabus Roman road but the site is waterlogged and fairly exposed so digging would be unpleasant to say the least. With the Government's new lockdown too, we can't risk turning out, at least this month. If lockdown is lifted in December and we get an unseasonably warm couple of days then who knows...? And another pig takes to the air!***

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Just a reminder that all members should have received an individual username and password to allow access to the Members' Area on our website [www.wyresearchology.org.uk](http://www.wyresearchology.org.uk). Over time we'll put our dig reports and other reference documents that are restricted to members. If you haven't received your password or are having difficulty accessing the area, please email [secwya@gmail.com](mailto:secwya@gmail.com).  
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**Winter Newsletters**

Given the absence of material concerning our digs for the next few months, perhaps members would like to share any archaeological experiences they may have enjoyed over the last

few years. A few photos with a description, location and significance whether archaeological or personal would be ideal. I thought I'd make a start.

**Forts and cup marks**

One longstanding ambition I had ever since reading Leonard Cottrell's The Bull of Minos at about age 11 was to see Knossos in Crete. I finally achieved this exactly 2 years ago in November 2018. Seeing the Throne Room (*Right*) was quite an emotional experience.



However I managed to achieve another ambition earlier this year and a bit nearer home! During a short pre-lockdown holiday in Northumberland and Cumbria, I was able to persuade Mrs H to accompany me to Vindolanda, the Roman fort close to Hadrian's Wall, famous for its writing tablets. Having visited most of the Wall forts in the past, usually with children in tow, Vindolanda had somehow been missed off our itineraries. We picked a great

time to visit, however. The site was practically deserted and, despite occasional showers we were able to wander freely. The fort was far more impressive than I'd anticipated, with much of its interior still unexcavated.



*Far Left: Vindolanda Bath House in extramural settlement with fort walls beyond.  
Left: Road leading through western fort gate.*

Also surprisingly impressive was the site museum, far larger than expected with a wide range of artefacts found during digs, including a selection of the famous writing tablets. On of the most striking exhibits however was the 'Gladiator Cup', a beautifully painted cup found in the fort's tavern. This photo doesn't do it justice as it was taken through the display cabinet glass.



As a final surprise, on the path down to the museum we met and chatted with Andrew Birley, excavation director, whose family have led the Vindolanda excavations since the late 1920s. For some reason he was digging a 1-foot square hole in the museum's garden, too small for a *sondage* - maybe planting a tree?

Mrs H, an avid reader of guide books, identified another local but well-hidden archaeological attraction. On the road linking Lowick and



Kimberston, but in a wood and invisible to any casual visitor is a huge slab of sandstone covered in petroglyphs including cup and ring marks and other patterns. It's claimed that the rock, that lies close to

a hillfort, holds some 160 carvings: <https://thejournalofantiquities.com/category/roughing-linn-cup-and-ring-marked-rocks-in-northumbria>

Another stop on this trip, now in Cumbria, was at Bewcastle, the Roman fort known as *Fanum Cocidi*. The fort itself is dominated by the remains of a Norman castle but the churchyard that lies within the not very obvious ramparts has an ancient 7<sup>th</sup> C cross.



Next, on to the Roman fort Epiacum, also known as Whitley Castle, which was the subject of Stuart Ainsworth's lecture 'Diamonds in the North Pennines' at the Lancaster Annual Archaeology Forum in March this year. This Roman fort is unusual in several respects; the most noticeable - at least on Google Earth - is that it is diamond-shaped (hence the title of Stuart's talk). Another very prominent feature is the fort's system of defensive banks and ditches, reputedly the most complex of any fort in the Roman Empire. It is a long uphill and boggy climb however. Unfortunately there were no guide leaflets available and it was only after walking around the site that we realised that a series of white-painted stones indicated a slightly easier and drier route through the defences. The fort's website is worth a visit too, <https://www.epiacumheritage.org>



Far Left: Defensive ramparts looking S towards Pennine Way  
Centre: View towards N corner  
Left: GE image, N to top

All images, except GE image, © D W Hampson

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In response to Government advice regarding measures to mitigate against the spread of Coronavirus, Wyre Archaeology has cancelled future meetings until further notice. Digs are also suspended for the time being. News will be circulated to members by e-mail, the website and the newsletter.



We're always on the lookout for new projects so if you have a view about potential sites – especially if you have a contact – get in touch. Come to our meeting (when re-instated) or email: [secwya@gmail.com](mailto:secwya@gmail.com)

Prospective new members are especially welcome just email: [secwya@gmail.com](mailto:secwya@gmail.com)

#### WEBSITES WORTH VISITING

Lancashire Archaeological Society

<https://lancsarchaeologicalsociety.wordpress.com/>

Lancashire's Roman Roads (David Ratledge):

[www.twithr.co.uk](http://www.twithr.co.uk)

Wigan Archaeology Society:

[www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk](http://www.wiganarchsoc.co.uk)

University of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Age

<https://u3asites.org.uk/lytham-st-annes>,

<https://u3asites.org.uk/wyre-lancs>,

<https://u3asites.org.uk/preston>



**Membership Benefits:** **Full Membership:** 10 meetings with voting rights, group membership of CBA and CBA(NW), 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 MEMBERSHIP ONLY £5 THIS YEAR**

**If YOU have any articles, news or views, email to [secwya@gmail.com](mailto:secwya@gmail.com). Check out Wyre Archaeology Group on Facebook too!**

#### WYRE ARCHAEOLOGY OFFICERS & COMMITTEE

Chair	Brian Rigby
Vice Chair	Davinia Jackson
Immediate Past Chair	Chris Clayton
Treasurer	Simon Millward-Hopkins
Secretary	Dave Hampson
Committee Members	Mike Edwards, Dave Berry, Peter Scott.

#### CONTACTS

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