

Altogether Archaeology

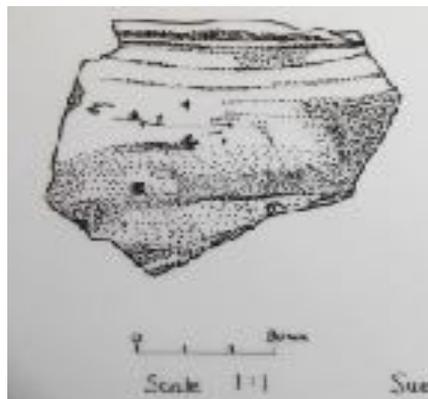
Digging our heritage in the North Pennines



ALTOGETHER ARCHAEOLOGY NEWSLETTER 2017



SIMONSHILL HILLS



FINDS DRAWING



**WELL HEAD,
HOLWICK**



Honorary President

Stewart Ainsworth

Chair

Tony Metcalfe

Secretary

Mike Powell

Treasurer

Greg Finch

Membership Secretary

Carol White

Events Programmer

Elaine Vallack

Fieldwork Coordinator

Martin Green

Newsletter Editors

Chris Powell

Liz Ryan

Website Editor

Stephen Eastmead

Archaeology Advisor

Paul Frodsham

Committee members

Rob Pearson

Alan Newham

Jenny Pritchard

Harriet Sams

Firstly

It's amazing to think that Altogether Archaeology is reaching the end of its second year as an independent community archaeology group! It is a great tribute to the original North Pennines AONB programme, directed by Paul Frodsham, that here we are two years after the project finished, an established community organisation with a thriving membership of more than 100 people and rising, still beavering away with an exciting agenda ahead of us.

A number of you responded to our survey earlier in the year, asking for feedback about our programme of walks, talks and workshops and we are incorporating your suggestions into our plans for next year, so keep your eye on the website for details of activities.

We have really consolidated our identity as an Archaeology group by publishing two reports so far this year (details on page 15) and, as if all of that wasn't enough, we also now have our very own Altogether Archaeology polo shirts!



AA members modelling the new shirts at the 'Belief in the North East' day school at Durham University



Altogether Archaeology

Digging our heritage in the North Pennines

Contents

Firstly ...	2
Contents page	3
Editorial	4
Altogether Archaeology ... where next?	5
The Holwick Well Head Survey	6
Magic Mountain: a walk in the Simonside Hills	7
Peregrini Project: a novice digger reports	9
Lost industrial Hexhamshire	11
Finds drawing workshop	12
Magic of Mallerstang	14
Publications and reports	15
Coming up	16
Membership Information	17
Contact us	17



Sandwich time in the Simonside Hills



Processing finds from the Holwick dig

Editorial

2017 has been another busy year for Altogether Archaeology. We have been drawing finds, exploring historical maps, walking in the spectacular Bollihope Valley in Weardale and listening to ghost stories in the Simonside Hills. The 'mini-conference' format we tried out, having two talks in a day with lunch in between, seems to have worked well, and members say they have particularly enjoyed the social aspect.

Our biggest venture this year has been the archaeological fieldwork survey and subsequent excavation at the Well Head deserted medieval settlement at Holwick, Upper Teesdale. Martin Green's survey report has now been published, as has the 'Lost Roads on Hexham Fell' report from last year. Martin and the field work team have done a fantastic job getting the reports turned around so quickly. We have a limited stock of printed and spiral bound-copies of both which, I'm told, will make excellent Christmas gifts for all your archaeological friends! See page 15 for details of how to obtain your souvenir copy.

In September, we joined forces with Ingleborough Archaeology for a superb guided walk around Epiacum Roman fort with our president, Stewart Ainsworth. Greg Finch led us through the lost industrial landscape of Hexhamshire in the summer rain. We also look forward to another of Harriet Sam's inspirational walks in the Mallerstang valley next year, get a foretaste from her article on the Magic of Mallerstang. AA members were much in evidence on the Peregrini Project excavations on the Heugh, Lindisfarne in June. Elaine Vallack gives a personal account of her experiences there and Alan Newham tells of being terrorised by Paul Frodsham's stories of Duergars on the summit of Simonside.

We hope you enjoy the articles and photographs that celebrate Altogether Archaeology in 2017!



Stewart Ainsworth guides AA and Ingleborough Archaeology members around Epiacum Roman Fort (photo: Tony Metcalfe)



Just one of the finds processed from the Holwick dig (photo: Stephen Eastmead)



Exploring historical maps at the County Records Office, Durham, (photo: Chris Powell)



Spring walk: Rob Young enthuses about the archaeology of the Bollihope Valley, (photo: Tony Metcalfe)

Altogether Archaeology ... where next?

A milestone event this year was the launch of our new Research Strategy at the AGM in March. This was the culmination of great deal of work undertaken on our behalf by Paul Frodsham to develop an archaeological research framework for the North Pennines. This was made possible by the start-up grant awarded to us by the Heritage Lottery Fund last year, for which we are immensely grateful. The strategy, shaped by input from many members of the group, lays out the prospect of an exciting research programme for AA for many years to come.

Probably the most significant project your committee has been involved in this year is developing a funding application to support the first phase of the research programme. The working title for the project is 'Missing Centuries - Mind the Gap'. A small task group has been working hard on plans for a project to explore the archaeology of the early medieval period in the North Pennines - the time between the collapse of Roman rule and the Norman Conquest. This is probably the period about which we currently know least in archaeological terms, partly because the evidence rarely survives. Hence the 'missing centuries' of our title. The project is challenging, but potentially very exciting and in order to try to understand this period better we are proposing to take a multi-perspectival approach.

Firstly, we will be identifying up to four areas across the North Pennines (our 'landscape laboratories') where there is evidence of strong continuity of settlement during the Romano-British, later medieval periods, or both. Using a variety of archaeological approaches including

Lidar, aerial photography, topographical surveys, geophysics and excavation, we will search for evidence of activity and settlement during the missing centuries.

To complement the archaeology we also plan to launch a study of place names in the North Pennines and to conduct surveys of pre-Conquest architectural and sculptural features in our churches. Both of these studies can yield potentially valuable information about settlement patterns during the missing centuries.

The final element of the project involves working in partnership with the Weardale Museum to create permanent display space for important finds from AA excavations. Initially, we hope the centrepiece of this can be the impressive 8th century St. Botolph's cross and associated finds from Frosterley. Working with the museum on a long-term basis will enable us to refresh the display with new exhibits from our future excavations. We are also hoping to provide on-site interpretation panels at the two key medieval sites we have worked on in Weardale, St. Botolph's Chapel and Westgate Castle.

We will be working closely with local communities and interest groups to enable more people to learn about the fantastic archaeological heritage of the North Pennines and we are currently putting out feelers to identify those groups.

So, the past year has been busy and exciting. It looks like next year is shaping up to offer more of the same!

Mike Powell

The Holwick Well Head Survey

In May, twenty-eight members took part in a survey of this site, in preparation for our September dig. The aim was to get to know the site and plan the best locations for trenches; it was also a good opportunity to practice our surveying techniques and Tony Metcalfe's daily walking tours around the archaeological sites of Holwick proved, as always, immensely popular.

Well Head is a deserted settlement on the edge of the valley floor in upper Teesdale. It lies beside a spring coming from beneath a rocky crag and is one of a string of similar settlements along the valley floor edge, probably in use in the high-medieval period around the 13th century but with some more recent occupation (see the AA 2011 report for details). This is supported by the medieval and later dated pottery found in molehills during the survey. All that remains of the ten rectangular buildings and their yards are dwarf walls (up to 20cm high) in a field next to the Strathmore Arms. The site is of particular interest as this is the kind of favoured location that may well have had earlier occupation (and because it's next to a pub!).

Participants experienced a range of surveying options: Stephen Eastmead showed us how to use a hand-held GP unit for archaeological surveying; Stuart White demonstrated using a theodolite with tacheometer to produce a site plan (including contours). This uses an optical technique to measure distances without needing a measuring tape. I planned the core area of the site using a theodolite

with disto. Stephen used his pole camera to take multiple photos and produced photogrammetry models of the archaeological features and the core area.



Getting to grips with surveying techniques (photo: Tony Metcalfe)

An unplanned 'extra' was a drone survey. Pete Schofield took a morning off from Oxford Archaeology North to come and fly the site, producing a micro-contoured photogrammetry image and vertical view.



Overview. (image: Stephen Eastmead)

A gazetteer of the thirty-or-so archaeological features on the site was also compiled, giving descriptions, photographs and photogrammetric vertical

views. Another team of AA members used our dumpy level to add elevation information to the plans, and Stephen reprocessed the Lidar data for the site to extract maximum information.



*And this is what we found when we excavated ...
(photo: Stephen Eastmead)*

I was worried that writing the survey report was going to be a nightmare, with so much information of such differing types to link up. In fact, it all came together fairly easily with no significant clashes between the results.

Much of the information was complementary rather than superfluous - a reminder that no survey is 'true', each type simplifies reality in a different way. The report is now on the AA website, along with all the plans and images produced and an update on the excavation itself.

What's the best survey method? There isn't a simple answer. The future will probably lie in the professional GPS/total-station technology trickling down to amateur groups. What the Well Head venture did prove, however, is that we are more than capable of carrying out our own archaeological surveying.

Martin Green

Magic Mountain: a walk on Simonside

Northumberland, like the rest of the cosmos, is indifferent to human expectations, never more noticeably so when it comes to the weather: and yes, it rained!. There were 23 of us. Our guide for the day was Archaeologist Paul Frodsham. Paul is passionate about the Simonside Hills and their rich array of archaeological sites and punctuated the walk with excerpts from his book '*In The Valley Of The Sacred Mountain: An introduction to Prehistoric Upper Coquetdale*'.



*Little Church Rock ... how **did** it get that name?
(photo: Tony Metcalfe)*

Leaving the pathway through the woods, we came to a small clearing and a Bronze age burial cairn almost completely demolished, save for the sunken circular outline and two exposed cists. Hidden in the trees, it gives off a sense of mystery: linger long enough and you might become spellbound.

It stopped raining. Gaining some height on our way, we were introduced to a natural rock feature known as 'Little Church Rock,' a massive protrusion of grey sandstone of such grotesque appearance that it conjures up the image of a Frankenstein Sphinx. How did it get that name? Carrying on, we eat our sandwiches beneath two huge rock shelters with a wide panoramic view to the northwest, a sloping forest, the River Coquet flowing through agricultural fields and the Cheviot Hills on the horizon.

Once on the summit of Simonside, battling against the wind, Paul read us an old Northumbrian folk-tale relating to the mythical Duergars a particularly unwholesome bunch of dwarf like creatures who inhabit the hills. Woe betide you if you're unfortunate enough to come across one as you wander the hills at night!



Paul holds court (photo: Tony Metcalfe)

Following a ridge path, we were guided to three huge, large stone, burial cairns structures, possibly Neolithic, none of

which have yet been archaeologically investigated. Descending the hill, we walked alongside a stone wall - the boundary of a deer park designed to keep the deer *in*.

Back at the car park, we followed a path to a remarkable outcrop of bedrock covered in cup and ring carvings. Paul gave us a catalogue of explanations proffered by those who've taken a great interest in finding out what exactly they mean. The conclusion: there is no definitive explanation for the purpose or meaning of the practice! Are we so desperate for answers to everything, or should we, like Paul, think that the



Rock art! (photo: Tony Metcalfe)

insoluble mystery of cup and rings makes them even more interesting? Is it, as the American polymath, Henry Thoreau believes:

... in vain to dream of a wilderness distant from ourselves. There is none such. It is the bog in our brains and bowels, the primitive vigour of nature in us, that inspires that dream...'

Finally, we reached Lordenshaws hill fort. Sitting in a hut circle of possible later date within the fort, (see cover, photo by Tony Metcalfe) we contemplated how such sites can have a complex development through a series of architectural phases. We made our way back flushed with ... what? The experience of the wonderful Simonside Hills and what they have to offer ... just don't find yourself there in the dark!

Alan Newham

Peregrini Project: a novice digger reports



Heugh with a view.

The North Pennine region to the Scottish border presents a wealth of opportunities for days out exploring and discovering. This summer, I spent eight days excavating on the holy island of Lindisfarne. I had no idea what to expect, but it was the middle of June, long days were guaranteed and hot sunny weather with blue skies were on the cards!

In my eagerness to find any treasure, tools of the trade and clothing became a bit of an obsession. During a recent hair appointment I was telling my hairdresser, who is also a keen horse rider, all about what I had been up to on Holy Island. I explained one of the jobs involved sweeping the flagstones and that any old brush just would not do. Hilarity ensued as we compared the relative merits of a decorators pasting brush, a fine art Rembrandt brush, a barbers brush and a tooth brush for use during an excavation. She described a brush she uses to clean the horses' hooves and we both decided this would be the ideal brush for getting into small horseshoe size hollows or post

holes. As for plastic buckets, I had no idea there was such a variety of weight and design. I got to recognise and avoid a particular black bucket with a wooden handle that weighed a ton even before any soil had been put in it.

And what of the dig? A wagtail regularly made its appearance on the soil heaps. Collecting and returning equipment from the store shed/ caravan each day involved



swerving out of the way of swifts flying at breakneck speeds. The weather was perfect and certainly brought out the crowds. Hundreds of people walked past the site, including lots of international tourists, most of whom were genuinely interested and often very well-informed. A pilgrimage across the causeway brought more visitors to the dig as did the extensive local TV coverage.

The hours spent digging, stacking, scraping and sweeping were well worth it. Seeing the progress unfold on a daily basis was fantastic. Absorbed as we all were in our own little bit of a trench, summary updates were presented by Paul Frodsham and Richard Carlton at the start and end of every day.



Paul and Richard update the diggers

Touring the whole site and seeing other workers endeavours was like doing a giant jig saw, fitting pieces together and seeing a picture emerge.

I can now add tumble and mattock to my novice digger repertoire. I no longer ask for a pick axe and I am keeping a lookout in the discount bins of supermarkets for knee pads and trowels. I am indeed very fortunate. Working with others and sharing this venture has posed plenty of questions and provided even more reasons to get out there and explore our magnificent country.

Elaine Vallack



Working on the jigsaw...

(all photos: Elaine Vallack)

Lost Industrial Hexhamshire



*Intrepid AA members gather in Whitley Chapel
(photo: Tony Metcalfe)*

Blazing June! They say that the sun shines on the righteous, but that saying is clearly incorrect since it was raining heavily when a dedicated, righteous, and surprisingly large, group of Altogether Archaeology members gathered in their wet weather gear outside the village hall in Whitley Chapel on 10th June 2017. What could prompt so many people to turn out on such a miserable Saturday morning, when they could instead have been having a lie-in, or reading the papers in the warm? It could only be the chance of a walk, led by Greg Finch, to explore the sites of 'lost industrial Hexhamshire'.

Now this walk is so good that I have done it twice. Last year Greg led a similar walk for the *Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne*, and I loved it. There is so much to see and hear about that I was more than happy to turn out again to revisit these sites and see some new ones.

The start of the walk led along the quiet lane from the village hall towards Whitley

Mill. We turned off before the mill, walking instead through fields near Mollersteads and on into the woods along the banks of the Rowley Burn. There was evidence of recent forestry work going on here, which sometimes made it difficult to find and follow the usual footpath, as the ground was muddy and churned up by the heavy machinery –so clearly not all the industry is yet lost from Hexhamshire!

But that was the exception that proved the rule as everywhere else on this lovely rural walk is almost the essence of peace and tranquillity - green fields, trees, birdsong and babbling brooks.

Consequently it is quite a challenge to visualise the area as Greg described it being just two or three centuries ago, when it was full of noise, dirt, people, machines and busy-ness. The walk took in the remains of mills of various kinds, including ones for cloth dying and fulling, and several for grinding corn. It also followed part of the pack horse routes and bridges of the lead miners, the arches of the smelt mill at Dukesfield, the land agent's house, and the site of red lead smelting for glassmaking.



Dukesfield Arches (photo: Tony Metcalfe)



Greg shares his expertise (photo: Tony Metcalfe)

I think it is this contrast between then and now which makes this walk so fascinating, as well as its very pleasant and varied walking.

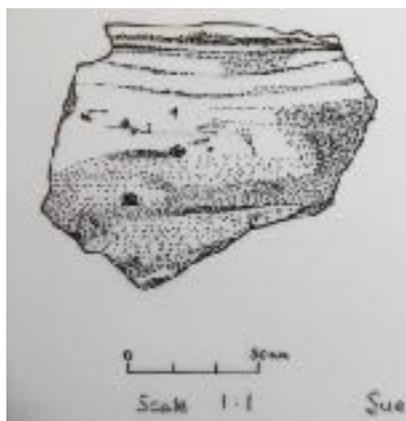
The members of the group were, as always, very friendly and informative, and so I learned a lot not only about the archaeology and history of this area, but also about its flora and fauna.

Greg is an excellent leader, and came well prepared with documents and other materials to help us interpret what is now before us. I think these walks are a great part of the work of Altogether Archaeology in promoting awareness of the archaeological heritage of this area, and I would be more than happy to do this walk for a third time, whatever the weather!

Marilyn Kendall

Finds Drawing Workshop

On 1st about a dozen AA members gathered in the village hall in Edmundbyers for an illustrated talk and workshop by Dr Sheila and Dr Andrew



Newton, which gave us an insight into the methods and techniques of recording and drawing samples: sherds of pottery, bone, flint etc.

These methods are well documented, however, this is a simple 'potted' version of my day.

The aim is to produce an image, as accurately as possible, of an artefact, and convey its three dimensional form. I secured my find (a lump of stone with a bump in middle) by 'blu-tacking' it on to a piece of tracing paper. Using a set square held vertically against the sides of the piece, I made a series of pencil dots around it to get the outline, making extra marks and notes to help indicate anything unusual on the surface (to be drawn in later). A strategically placed lamp helped highlight the details.

Once this was done and the artefact lifted, I joined the dots and, using my notes, marked any bumps, indentations, marks, cuts and cracks. The result was traced

onto a piece of permatrace (a tough film) using 0.3mm & 0.5mm drawing pens. Finally, shading - hatching and stippling in various densities - brought the artefact to life.



Just feel the concentration!

After lunch and a chat (thank you to Barbara Metcalfe for making us a cuppa and providing biscuits) it was straight back to the drawing board! Some of our members had previously attended similar courses and were promoted to more complicated articles such as WHOLE pots.



.....Back to the drawing board (all photos: Tony Metcalfe)



A whole pot!

My pot sherd had a curved rim. Andrew showed me how to move it back and forth on the drawing board until there was minimum movement, this enabled me to find the correct angle. It is important to get this as precise as possible in order to interpret the final pot shape accurately. I used a chart to determine the radius, and the base and centre lines. Holding the rim at its correct attitude and using a set square, I measured the height, then I took measurements from the centre line to the edges to determine the outer line of the pot.

I think I would need a refresher course to describe how the internal measurements were taken (I know I struggled with it) but, ultimately, with a bit of artistic licence, I managed to produce something that looked a bit like what it was supposed to. Obviously not up to professional standards, but hey, it was April Fools Day! I don't think any of us produced anything worthy of publication, but according to Sheila we had all done well - her only criticism was that we should all take more time with our stippling. I would certainly welcome more workshops like this, as I now find fieldwork and walks difficult.

**Carol White, ODORTE
Old Downwardly mobile Retiree**

Magic of Mallerstang

Tucked neatly away at the very bottom left of Altogether Archaeology's vast area lies Mallerstang, the valley that the young river Eden has carved through the Pennines in Cumbria, on its way to the Eden valley *proper*. This remote vale has been occupied, used, manipulated, travelled through, extracted from, celebrated and revered for millennia and the evidence is clear to see.

In 2016, I led a walk through the valley to show Altogether Archaeology members the evidence that is still there all around. The walk takes in Industrial Revolution evidence



Good weather for us! (photo: Mike Powell)

such as controversial 'hush' scars, limekilns and lead mines. The Settle-Carlisle railway cuts through the valley and evidence of workers' cottages and rail workings can be clearly seen. Mysterious Medieval pillow mounds can easily be mistaken for graves but are, in fact, the cosy homes of then newly-imported rabbits. Bred for the table of the well-off medieval elite, rabbits were not hardy enough to deal with the cold Cumbrian climate so needed their own homes and carers.

Pendragon castle, owned by Lady Anne Clifford, stands ruinous at the head of the



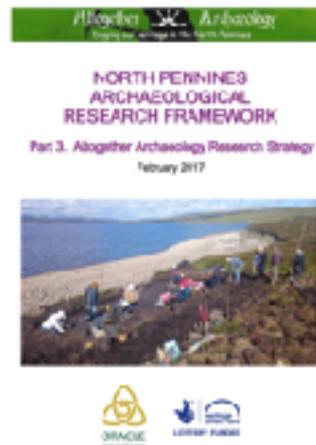
Romantic Pendragon (photo: Harriet Sams)

valley walk. Its evocative name brings to mind the tentative connection Cumbria has with Arthurian Britain; legend has it that Merlin himself was here, finding dragons and making prophesy. Bronze age burial mounds lie near the bank of the river and were poorly excavated in the late nineteenth century. Standing here, the soft outline of a hut circle and enclosure can be seen, cut into a low-lying hill nearby.

The three-hour walk culminates in a breath-taking view from a newly found Neolithic 'causewayed enclosure', a type of hilltop enclosure with passageways through a large encircling wall or bank. From here we can see the narrow, upland valley as it emerges from the Pennines to the south east, while, looking northwards, Mallerstang opens dramatically into the wide Eden valley as it sweeps onward between the escarpment of the Pennines and the distant Lakeland fells.

Harriet Sams

Reports and Publications



Most AA members will know Stephen Eastmead as the technical wizard who produces splendid pole camera images, LIDAR maps and 3-D models of Altogether Archaeology fieldwork sites and many other places of interest. Stephen, assisted by fellow AA member Sue Goldsborough, has recently decided to share some of his extensive expertise in this field by writing a guide for people who want to learn how to record archaeology using a free to download geographical information system. Details of the guide - **Use of Geographical Information System (QGIS) in Basic Field Archaeology and LIDAR Processing** - can be found on our website: www.altogetherarchaeology.org

AA reports

All of our reports are available as PDF downloads from our website. If you haven't read them yet please do because they are excellent publications.

- Lost Roads on Hexham Fell
- Well Head deserted medieval settlement at Holwick, Upper Teesdale - survey report
- Preparation of a report on the Holwick excavation in September is well advanced and should be completed and available soon.
- We have a limited stock of printed and spiral-bound copies of the Lost Roads and Holwick Survey reports. The quality of the printing and image reproduction are very good and they make excellent souvenirs of these memorable field projects. You can order them from Mike Powell, price £10 each. (powellmj@me.com)



Coming Up ...

We have another exciting year in store! You can find details of all of our events on the website:

http://www.altogetherarchaeology.org/_events.php

We are hoping to revisit Well Head at Holwick to extend our successful excavation; information will be posted on the website and on our Facebook page as soon as we have any definite information, so look out for that.



Mike Powell pointing out a few salient features of trench 3, Holwick (photo: tony Metcalfe)

January

13th Saturday - Flint knapping workshop with Rob Young, at Harehope Quarry, Frosterley.

February

Mini-conference: Two talks in one day (including a lunch break and social interaction, of course!) *How can the study of place names help the archaeologist* - Diana Whaley and *'Early Medieval North Pennines'* - David Petts.

March

AGM & update on the Holwick dig from Martin Green.

April/May

TBC

June

Walk: *Industrial Hexhamshire* (repeated!) with Greg Finch

July

Walk: *North of the Wall* - Martin Green

September

Walk: *Mallerstang revisited* - Harriet Sams

October

Mini-conference: Peter Ryder on *Early churches in the North Pennines* and Richard Carlton on the *Excavation of an Anglo Saxon church on The Heugh, Lindisfarne*

November

Mini-conference : *Excavations of early Medieval sites in the Yorkshire Dales* - David Johnson and *Digging at Sedgeford, Norfolk* - Perry Gardner

And don't forget ...

2017 AA Christmas get-together, 9th December, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m at Upper Weardale Town Hall in St. John's Chapel. It's free this year! See our Facebook page & members' bulletins for information and booking details.

Contact us

For more information about AA, please get in touch.

Email address:

info@altogetherarchaeology.org

Postal address:

Altogether Archaeology
1 Badminton Grove
Newton Aycliffe
DL5 4TN

Join us

You will find information about how to become a member of AA, including membership fees on our website:

www.altogetherarchaeology.org

Contribute to the newsletter:

Now that we are getting into our stride with the newsletters, we've decided that we will produce two each year. One like this one, a celebration of the year's events with contributions from members about activities, or their particular archaeological obsessions, and another, shorter newsletter in the spring with news and updates after the AGM. We welcome submissions of general archaeological interest as well as those about AA activities. We are always on the lookout for your contributions, so please let us know what you have been up to!

We ask that submissions should be a maximum of 500 words.

If you would like to contribute an article or photographs for the next edition, please

get in touch with the Newsletter Editor, Chris Powell chrispowl@me.com

Social media

Keep up to date with what is going on via our social media accounts.



Follow us on Twitter!

[@Altogether_Arch](https://twitter.com/Altogether_Arch)



Like our Facebook page!

<https://www.facebook.com/altogether.archaeology/>

and finally....

Thank you!

to all of our contributors and photographers for this edition:

Stephen Eastmead
Martin Green
Marilyn Kendall
Tony Metcalfe
Alan Newham
Mike Powell
Harriet Sams
Elaine Vallack
Carol White