

# YCCCAR T

Yatton Congresbury Claverham and Cleeve Archaeological Research Team

Newsletter September 2017

## Chairman's chat

This edition of the Newsletter takes a form different to the usual. Instead of describing what the Group has been doing recently we have an eclectic collection of articles which could best be described as "what we did on our holidays". I hope you enjoy them as much as I have. To catch up with the work that the Group is currently undertaking please go to the YCCCAR T website. If what you see there is of interest why not join us. I can be contacted on 01934834333. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this edition.

Peter English

## Hawkinge Cemetery

On a recent trip to Kent, to research family history, I visited Hawkinge Cemetery, near Folkestone, and was moved by the military section, which contained German, British, Polish and Dutch burials. I noticed that many of the death dates were 1940, and that most were aircrew, this was the result of the Battle of Britain.

Nearby, on the old RAF Hawkinge site, is the Battle of Britain Museum, run by a group of dedicated volunteers. As their leaflet states, they have the relics of over 700 aircraft which have been excavated. These aircraft are identifiable from their serial numbers, and so their records also identify who the pilot was, on their last missions.

The museum displays the stories of the aircraft and their crews, with artifacts from both. Most telling is the effect of the crash impact on the aircraft, two identical engines differ in length by about 12 inches, due to the impact speed. Also the sight of a nearly 80 year old engine, still leaking oil onto the floor, is quite ghostly.

This really brought home the effect the Battle of Britain had on this part of England. Nearby is the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne, on the cliffs, close to Dover.

Phillipa Cormac



*Sculpture of WW2 pilot looking out across the Channel at Hawkinge Cemetery*

## Celebrating the History of Congresbury – October 21st -22nd

Over the course of the weekend a variety of walks, displays, a talk and a treasure hunt will take place.

On Saturday Chris is presenting a talk about St Andrew's Church and its surrounding environment and there will be an opportunity for those fit and brave enough to climb up onto the roof. 10.30 - 11.30am. at the church

On Sunday Peter and Vince are leading walks focussing on different aspects of village history. Vince's boundary stones walk is for much of the day so bring a packed lunch. Meet at The Star 10.30am.

Meanwhile Peter will be taking any railway enthusiasts for a walk along the Strawberry Line, 10.30-11.30am. at the Old School Rooms.

## The Mary Rose

The Mary Rose in Portsmouth Dockyard must rank amongst the finest museums in the world. For those old enough to recall the live television coverage when the ship was raised from the Solent in 1982 a visit is particularly exciting.



The layout of the exhibition is very impressive – one walks through the various deck levels with the preserved half of the ship exposed one side whilst the activities and artefacts appropriate to that deck are displayed on the other. The excellent explanations cover all aspects of the ship's history from its launch, in 1512, through its sinking, in 1545, to its raising and stabilization for the future.



There is much to absorb. Tickets are valid for a year and the exhibition is well supported by both Apple and Android apps. ([www.maryrose.org](http://www.maryrose.org))

Mike Fox

## The Story of the Mallet

The Mallet was the name given to Shepton Mallet prison by the inmates. It was also known as HMP Cornhill.

The prison was built in 1610, it housed French prisoners during the Napoleonic wars. During WW2, cell 10 was used to house some of the national treasures including the Domesday Book, a copy of The Magna Carta and the logs from Nelson's H.M.S. Victory.

It was the place of execution for Somerset from 1889, having taken over from Taunton. Also in WW2 it was an American military prison. Under the provisions of the Visiting Forces Act (1942) which allowed the American military justice to be enacted on British soil. Rape did not carry the death penalty in British law but did in U.S. military law. Execution by shooting was not permitted for murder in Britain, but was under U.S. military law. 18 U.S. servicemen were executed there, two by firing squad and the other sixteen were hanged. A special two-storey brick building was built for the executions which were carried out by the British executioner Pierrepont.



Some interesting dates. -

1610 prison was built.

1889-1926 Civilian executions took place.

1823 The tread wheel was installed within the prison, forty men would tread the wheel for many hours at a time. The wheel powered a grain mill outside the prison wall.

1890 Tread wheel was no longer used.

1930 The prison was closed and remained empty until the start of WW2.

1939 Prison reopened for British military use as a prison and to store historic documents.

1942-45 It was used as an American military prison.

1945 It became a British military prison again. During this period the Kray Twins were held there.

1966 Returned to civilian use.

1967 Gallows were removed and the room became the prison library

28th March 2013 The prison closed. It had been the oldest prison in the country still in use. It also had the second highest perimeter wall of any British prison.

2013 It was sold to City & Country to be converted into flats and houses or hotel rooms.

Dave Long



## Butrint, Albania

Butrint is Albania's premiere archaeological site set in its own national park. The site evolved over millennia with its earliest inhabitants living there in the Bronze Age. Greeks from Corfu founded a 'polis' of significant importance; there is an acropolis and the remains of a fine theatre. The area was expanded to the other side of the Vivari Channel by the Romans who built extensively across the whole site on reclaimed marsh land. All the attributes of a large Roman settlement can be seen with a fine example of a mosaic floor in the baptistery. I was unable to see this however as it is only exposed during the hot, dry summer months.



Like many Mediterranean settlements Butrint was later occupied and abandoned by the Byzantines, Angevins, Venetians and Ottomans all of whom have left traces of their time there.

Sadly Butrint is a site which is gradually sinking back into the marsh, as you walk around you can't help but notice that a large percentage of the archaeological remains have standing water in them with resident turtles and the most enormous frogs!



As it's in a national park no further excavation on the main part of the site is taking place and efforts are being made to halt any further decline. Archaeologists are now turning their attention to the wider area and are investigating the land reclaimed by the Romans and settled on by later inhabitants.

Janet Dickson

## Pula Roman Holiday

In June we went to Pula in Croatia and stayed in an excellent apartment within the old city walls. Pula is a joy. On the coast, so near beaches and within easy reach of Brijuni Island National Park (former summer residence of Tito).



For those interested in archaeology/history there is much to see in the old city. Within a short walking distance there is a spectacular Roman amphitheatre, the Forum containing the Temple of Augustus (erected from 2 BC to AD 14), and you can even visit the extensive underground tunnels built during the first World War to shelter the population.



Our visit coincided with an Archaeology festival where vaguely Roman dress is worn and gladiators fight it out in the amphitheatre before a very forgiving Emperor. Go before it gets overrun with tourists.



Chris Short



## A piece of rock

In 1974, on holiday in Scotland, I picked up a piece of rock which I still have today. It's grey in colour, approximately 10 x 8 x 7cm and has a folded, fused and, in some areas, an irregular, 'bubbly' appearance. It was from the 'vitrified' dun (or broch) at Rahoy. 'Broch' is used in the north and in the west they are often referred to as 'duns'. 'Vitrification' (fusion) of the rock occurred as a result of burning of their extensive timber structure at high temperature.



Piece of 'vitrified' rock from Dun Rahoy

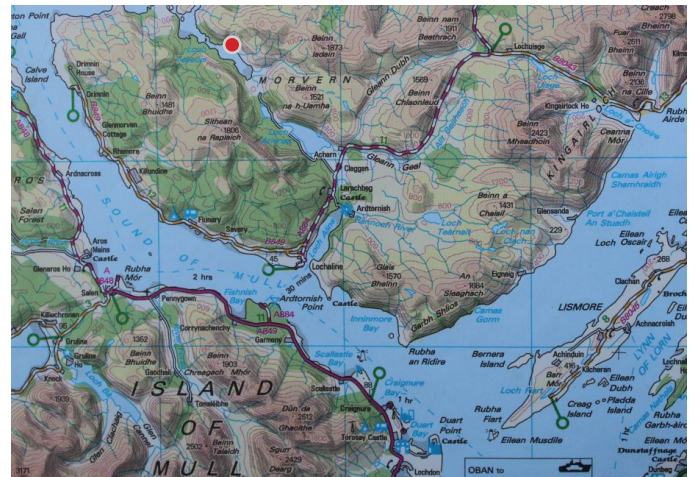
A broch (or dun) is an Iron Age, drystone, hollow-walled structure found only in Scotland and the densest concentration is in the north (Caithness, Sutherland and the northern isles). They belong to the classification "complex atlantic roundhouse" devised by Scottish archaeologists in the 1980s. Their origin is a matter of some controversy. The theory that they were defensive military structures is not accepted by many modern archaeologists, while the alternative notion that they were farmhouses is dismissed by others. The close groupings and profusion of brochs in many areas may suggest that they had a primarily defensive or even offensive function.



Dun Carloway, Lewis. Note the low entrance on the right and the gap between the inner and outer walls.

Dun Rahoy stands on top of a small, steep-sided hill on the Morven peninsula, just north of Mull, overlooking the north side of Loch Teacuis. It was excavated in 1936 and 1937 by V G Childe and W Thorneycroft (reported in 1938). A grass-grown bank largely conceals the wall which is about 0.7m thick at the base and stands to a maximum height of 1.5m internally

and 3.2m externally, enclosing an area of about 12m diameter. Sections cut through the wall, with the help of 'dynamite and a sledgehammer', revealed a mass of 'vitrified' stones in the heart of the core material, and considerable expanses of vitrification have been left exposed round the outer perimeter; there was evidence indicating that it had been timber-laced. The wall had originally been faced on both sides, and measured at least 3m, and possibly as much as 3.7m, in thickness. In the middle of the interior there was a paved area measuring about 4.3m across, with a rectangular stone hearth in the centre. Childe believed that the whole of the interior had been roofed with turf carried on rafters springing from the dun wall and having their inner ends supported by posts set round the hearth; the stumps of two posts, which may have served this purpose, were found near the west edge of the central paved area.



Site of Dun Rahoy (red dot).

The interior yielded only a few relics, now in the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland. These comprise a flint scraper; two broken saddle querns; a looped and socketed iron axe head; part of a bronze brooch of La Tene Ic type, and a number of burnt animal bones. There was no pottery. Some indication of the date of the dun is provided by the axe head and the brooch, both of which are likely to belong to the 3rd century BC. Although few, radiocarbon dates for the primary use of brochs (as opposed to their later, secondary use) suggest that most of the towers were built in the 1st centuries BC and AD.

In writing this, I came across a reference that a similar piece of rock, labelled a 'conglomerate', was deposited in the Pitt Rivers Museum in 1899!

### Acknowledgements

Compiled from material on two main websites: Canmore.org.uk and Malaga Bay.wordpress.com, where further detail can be found. I would also like to thank Mr N Crowe, Pitt Rivers Museum, for his help.

Geoff Pearson

## A successful YCCCART social evening

Many thanks to Janet and Phillipa for their brilliant organisation of the recent YCCCART social evening. After a delicious meal we all enjoyed entertainment from Ferdie & Co. and the evening was a great opportunity to meet spouses and partners and socialise beyond the confines of the 'tennis hut'.