

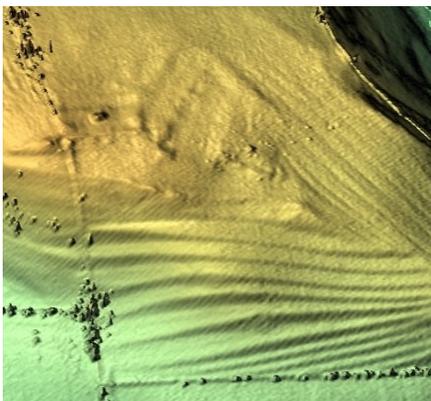
# Altogether Archaeology

*Digging our heritage in the North Pennines*



## ALTOGETHER ARCHAEOLOGY NEWSLETTER 2019 (Autumn edition)

MARIE GARDINER  
WWW.MARIEGARDINER.CO.UK



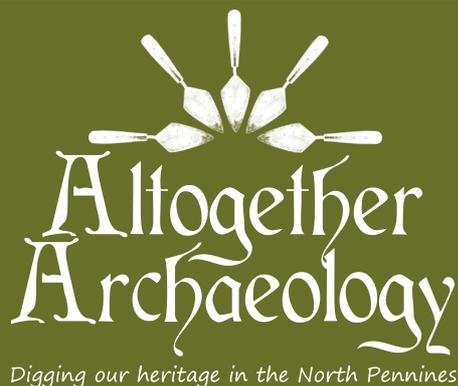
**LIDAR IMAGE OF THE  
GUESWICK HILLS**



**YOUNG  
ARCHAEOLOGISTS AT  
HOLWICK**



**AND HERE'S ONE  
THEY MADE EARLIER!**



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## Firstly ....

2019 has been another action-packed year for Altogether Archaeology, and we hope to give you a flavour of it in this edition of the newsletter, as well as taking you on a couple of tantalising trips abroad!

We are delighted to include an article by our Honorary President, Stewart Ainsworth. Stewart takes a keen interest in what we are up to at Altogether Archaeology, and hopes to involve us in his ambitious new project, **Past Reality: Future Vision**.

Altogether Archaeology is in the process of applying to become a charity. This is an important step for the group and Jenny Pritchard tells us about the implications on page 5.

And ... we held our very first Altogether Archaeology film premiere! The film, along with a podcast series, was produced as part of our **Holwick Stories** project. As always, we welcome feedback and suggestions from our members ... so, if you were involved, please do get in touch and let us know what you thought.



*Barbara takes to the air waves!  
(photo: Mike Powell)*



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# Editorial

Not one, but two excavations this year! November saw a successful exploratory dig at a fascinating site in the Gueswick Hills in Teesdale and we will bring you news of that in our next newsletter.

Meanwhile, in May, back at the Well Head Settlement, Holwick, we discovered more evidence of medieval buildings and the site continued to yield a prolific crop of small finds. The previous newsletter included an article about the making of a film and podcast series on site, and on page 7 you can read about how we followed this up with workshops at Cotherstone Primary School.

In July, the AA committee called an Extraordinary General Meeting on whether we should apply for charitable status; you can read Jenny Pritchard's report on page 5. After the meeting, Dr. Stuart Wrathmell of the Medieval Settlement Research Group put some of our Holwick findings into context.

Also in July, Alan Newham took us Church Crawling! The title was borrowed from John Betjeman and Alan's article, on page 9, takes us on a literary and archaeological expedition to explore his beloved churches. Martin Green continues the literary theme with his item about the Weardale Woozle Hunt on page 15.

In the autumn, Alan teamed up with Martin Roberts to deliver a fascinating double bill on the subjects of Anglo-Saxon Church Architecture and Early Vernacular Buildings. Professor Rebecca Gowland from Durham University delivered an inspirational talk on the topic of Bioarchaeology in November and Tony Metcalfe organised two finds processing workshops ... we had that much material!

Also in this edition of the newsletter: Stewart Ainsworth gives an update on **Past Reality: Future Vision** (page 6), Sue Goldsborough explores a Load of Old Cobbles at Binchester (page 10), on page 11 Liz Ryan treats us to a journey around Chaco Canyon in New Mexico and Eleanor Williams goes on a Greek Adventure on page 13.



*Backfilling at Gueswick - the human steamroller in action (photo: Tony Metcalfe)*



*Another great Xmas Shindig organised by Elaine Vallack; another fiendish quiz devised by Martin Green!*



*Tony Metcalfe & Professor Rebecca Gowland*



*Whose gloves? (photos: Marie Gardiner)*



I hope you enjoy this newsletter. We are always on the lookout for items for the next issue. So, if you, too, would like to contribute an article about your travels, or have any suggestions for items please get in touch (details on page 17).

**Chris Powell**

## Business News: becoming a charity

At our Annual General Meeting in March of this year, the Committee proposed making an application for Altogether Archaeology to become a charity.

At the AGM, it was felt that some clarification of the implications was needed and the committee sent out further information to members to facilitate an informed decision. An Extraordinary General Meeting was then held on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2019 in order to discuss any queries, and to enable members to vote on the matter. As it was such a significant issue, we arranged for members who couldn't attend the meeting to be given the opportunity to vote by proxy, and I am pleased to say there was a good response to this.

At the meeting I gave an overview of why we had decided to try and obtain charitable status. This was primarily to fulfil the business plan proposal drawn up in 2017 and to give more weight to the work of Altogether Archaeology in future when applying for funding, Gift Aid and any other options. Greg Finch, Altogether Archaeology treasurer, informed the meeting about the financial implications of applying for Gift Aid, donations and subscriptions and was confident that we can make a good case for this to be accepted by HMRC.

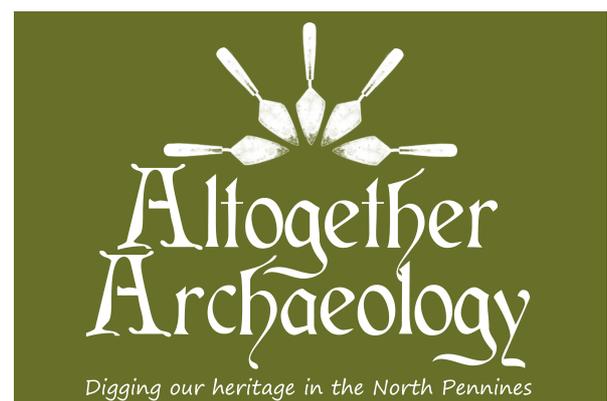
After a couple of questions, there were two votes. The first concerned applying for charitable status: of the 34 members who attended the meeting 33 voted in favour and 1 person abstained; no votes against.

Additionally, 20 proxy votes were received – all in favour but 1 proxy vote was discounted as the member attended and voted in person. The second vote was on whether to adopt the

new Governing Document as our constitution; this would come into effect if we are accepted as a charity. On this issue the voting was the same – 52 in favour and 1 abstention. Six Committee members have agreed to stand as Trustees as required by the Charity Commission.

The application is now finalised and has been sent to the Charity Commission. It can take the commission several months to process applications and we have heard subsequently that they are exceptionally busy, so don't expect to hear anything soon! I will keep you informed of progress. Many thanks to Rob Pearson, Greg Finch and Tony Metcalfe for all their work on this.

***Jenny Pritchard***



## Past Reality: Future Vision



*Stewart Ainsworth is Visiting Professor In Landscape Archaeology at Chester University and Honorary President of Altogether Archaeology (Photo: Alex Jackson)*

Altogether Archaeology has clearly had a busy year. You only have to look at the website to see the broad variety of projects that have been undertaken, and it is reassuring to see that the group is both participating in and providing opportunities to learn about all aspects of archaeology. As the group matures (in ideological terms – not simply getting older!) it needs to continue representing community archaeology as a discipline which comprises different skills and practices, not just digging. Offering a range of invasive and non-invasive activities to members is a sign of archaeological maturity.

The foundations which underpin participation in archaeology, whether as a professional or volunteer, are that we follow practice guidelines and that our investigations contribute to research and knowledge. We must not allow the natural desire to dig to cloud our judgement about how, why and where we invest our time and resources. I am also keen that AA continues its good work in

reaching out to those who might not otherwise get involved. Part of the process of outreach, I believe, is not only enticing new volunteers to the subject, but also developing relationships with other archaeology and local history groups and helping share expertise more widely. The more we all share the more we all benefit.

As part of this philosophy I have had discussions with AA about encouraging volunteers to become involved in **Past Reality: Future Vision**, a project that I have developed with the University of Chester and Liverpool John Moores and York universities. The aim of the project is to explore methodological approaches to the collection and integration of digital survey data, in order to create a comprehensive research and visualisation tool for the interpretation and display of archaeological sites and landscapes.

The project is currently in the development stage and trial surveys have been undertaken to help refine methods. We aim to use the latest generation remote-sensing technology (including hi-resolution lidar, radiometric thermal and infra-red imaging, and biogenic emissions sensors mounted on an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV)), as well as collection and integration with ground and sub-surface surveys. Work will be focused on the Roman fort at Whitley Castle (Epiacum) and the surrounding multi-period landscape, and on some of the Roman-period sites discovered by AA volunteers during the **Lidar Landscapes** programme.

I know that a number of AA volunteers also played a valuable role in some of the lead-in to this project, as part of the continuing programme of support to the Epiacum Trust.

Late in 2018, volunteers, alongside the **Past Reality: Future Vision** team, helped to digitally record the drystone wall that crossed the Roman fort before it was dismantled under the direction of archaeologist Alastair Oswald from the University of York. From this wall came a large, exciting collection of Roman querns, which have now been assessed by a specialist from the University of York, and a report is currently in preparation.

We would welcome the injection of expertise that AA volunteers have built up to assist with scoping surveys, test-pitting and field-walking projects for next year, as well as to help mentor new volunteers. There is no doubt that AA continues to make a significant contribution to the archaeology of the region. Let's keep it that way.

**Stewart Ainsworth**

## Altogether Archaeology goes back to school



In the Spring newsletter, I wrote about the Holwick Stories project, which was funded by the Northern Heartlands Community Initiative Fund. That enabled us to not only extend our investigations into the Well Head site, but to document the process through the production of two short films and an oral history podcast series.

We held the first ever Altogether Archaeology film premiere in November, at Bowlees visitor centre. It was a great social occasion, and an opportunity for members to get together, listen to some of the recordings from the sound archive and watch the two films. One of the films was about Altogether Archaeology in general, and the other was more specifically about the Holwick site.

However, the real stars of the show were not, alas, members of Altogether Archaeology, but the children from Cotherstone Primary School. They visited the site while we were digging and had plenty of theories about the buildings, the people who lived there and why they might have left so many broken pots and fragments of rusty metal behind!

A couple of weeks later, Tony Metcalfe, Margaret Ablett and I went back to school, accompanied by Mark Thorburn and Marie Gardiner of Lonely Tower Film and Media and Rachel Cochrane of Listen Up North.

Tony and Margaret, battling valiantly through mud, water and endless questions, supervised finds-processing with the children, who were totally engrossed by the weird and wonderful objects they were cleaning.



*Definitely a two-person job!*

Rachel ran a creative writing workshop, getting the children to focus on particular objects, to tell stories about who might once have owned them and how these objects ended up in the ground. The resulting poems and stories were amazingly creative - and beautifully written. Rachel recorded the children's responses and asked a couple of them to interview one of their teachers, Jennie Lee, whose family has lived in Holwick for generations.

And the day was filmed by Mark and Marie. If you haven't managed to watch the films yet, they are highly recommended and links can be found on the AA website. The podcast

series, also on our website, provides insights not only into the history of the site and the memories it evokes, but just why we dig, why we are all so captivated by this archaeology thing!



*'it's just so ... old!'*

Holwick Stories was a great project on many levels. We have two excellent films that we can use to promote AA, a Holwick archive containing masses of invaluable material that would otherwise have been lost and, most importantly, we have inspired the next generation of archaeologists to actively investigate their cultural inheritance. I would like to think that this is the first of many AA community archaeology projects.

**Chris Powell**



*All photos: Marie Gardiner*





# Yet Another Load of Old Cobbles

This summer saw a second season of excavation at Binchester Roman Fort, and our first task was to clear the weeds sprouting from last year's dig! The aim was to further investigate the chronology and development of the original first-century timber fort, so we needed to strip back layers of late fourth-century deposits to explore what lay beneath. After eight weeks of trowelling and cleaning, we came down to a cobbled road that, judging by the variations in colouration and stonework, had been patched up over many years. The road had a slight camber and what appeared to be gullies on either side, possibly for drainage purposes. There was also evidence that the road forked off in different directions, almost forming a parallel, although much narrower, path or track to Dere Street.

Beside the cobbled road, we uncovered the remains of a rectangular stone building and, inside, a number of re-purposed quern stones (originally used for grinding cereals into flour). Beneath the building was a wall with an internal circular cavity and the vestiges of a large burnt deposit. Our guess is this was an oven, and may have been associated with the quern stones. A series of post holes on the opposite side of the road possibly indicate some sort of wooden structure, but for what purpose we can only speculate ... could this have been a Roman roadside eatery specialising in Vinovia-politan pizza?

Excavating the first-century ditch was a real team effort. It was almost 2 metres deep and the stratigraphy revealed evidence of both natural and deliberate backfill suggesting the



ditch had been levelled before the road was laid. After the organic material had composted down, however, the road slumped slightly into the ditch.

A third-century copper-alloy coin, featuring a female head and the name Julia Maesa, was among the fascinating finds unearthed.



Research revealed that she came from the eastern fringes of the Roman Empire in Syria, almost as far away from the north-east frontier as possible.

Another find was a set of melon beads made of paste and stone. One theory suggests they were a protective amulet guarding against evil



influence, but they may have been just a purely decorative item. The beads were found in a clump, so

perhaps originally threaded on a string or kept together in a bag.

No dig is complete without its moments of drama, and this was no exception! One night a half-blind bull decided to take a closer look at the bottom of the trench and had to be rescued by a fork-lift attached to a tractor. Fortunately, he was none the worse for his adventure. And, judging by the deposits left behind – clearly not Roman – a flock of sheep had also spent a productive evening exploring the site. Who said excavating cobbles is dull? Roll on a third season.

**Sue Goldsborough**

*All photos: Sue Goldsborough*

## New Mexico or Bust!

Earlier this year, as part of my job working for the archaeology journal *Antiquity*, I was given the opportunity to travel to Albuquerque in New Mexico for the Society for American Archaeology's annual meeting. This meeting is one of the largest archaeology conferences in the USA, so it was a privilege to attend. However, it was also an unexpected opportunity to visit this part of the world, and I made plans to see more of the area. It would have been a shame not to explore!

The trip started in Santa Fe. The city was founded in 1610 by the Spanish and was later part of the railroad phenomenon of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even though the railroad didn't actually make it to Santa Fe. The city fuses Spanish influences, Native American culture and adobe architecture with the trading posts of the Old West.



Apart from the lure of prickly pear margaritas and red chilli burritos, the rationale for the expedition was, of course, the archaeology and Chaco Canyon. Chaco Canyon is a National Historical Park, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and globally renowned as one of the most important areas in the USA for pre-Columbian culture. The canyon was a major centre for the Ancestral Puebloans, a Native American culture best known for stone

and earth dwellings, and the archaeological evidence shows a thriving civilisation during the 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.

One of the most important sites in Chaco Canyon is Pueblo Bonito. This 'great house' (large multi-storey Ancestral Puebloan structure) was a focal point and acted as a walled village for its inhabitants. The sheer scale and level of preservation of the structures is amazing, and being able to walk through doorways into people's houses was quite special.



*Multi-roomed buildings in Pueblo Bonito*

As well as the rooms within the Pueblo, there are 'great kivas', large, circular underground structures used for important public events.



*A great kiva at Pueblo Bonito in Chaco Canyon.*

The site is contemporary with the settlement we have excavated at Holwick, and it is fascinating to speculate how different the lives of our Holwick residents must have been compared to the Ancestral Puebloans living in Chaco Canyon. If only we had walls like this!

The Ancestral Puebloans also created rock art, which can be found throughout the canyon. Rock art isn't usually my thing, but at Una Vida, another great house in the canyon, the petroglyphs (depictions of animals and geometric patterns etched into the rock) were my favourite part of the site.



*Una Vida petroglyphs showing animals and geometric patterns.*

After the Chaco Canyon adventure, I had to focus on the *real* reason for being in New Mexico, and dutifully manned an exhibition stand in a convention centre, meeting the American archaeology community. Attending the conference was a fantastic experience, but visiting Chaco Canyon and learning about its culture in such a completely different setting from the UK was the highlight of my trip

**Liz Ryan**



*Working hard at the Society for American Archaeology conference!*

*All photos: Liz Ryan*

*Crow Canyon. 2011. What is a Great Kiva?*  
[http://www.crowcanyon.org/  
EducationProducts/peoples\\_mesa\\_verde/  
definition\\_great\\_kiva.asp](http://www.crowcanyon.org/EducationProducts/peoples_mesa_verde/definition_great_kiva.asp)

*National Park Service. 2019. Chaco Culture.*  
<https://www.nps.gov/chcu/index.htm>

*Smart History. 2018. Introduction to Chaco Canyon.* <https://smarthistory.org/chaco/>

*Wikipedia. 2005. Pueblo Bonito.* [https://  
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pueblo\\_Bonito](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pueblo_Bonito)

## A Greek Adventure

What do archaeology undergraduate students do over the summer holidays? Some get jobs, some get work experience; some, like me, go exploring - in this case to the Askleion on the Greek island of Kos.

Getting off the bus, apparently in the middle of nowhere, is where your journey into the realm of healing in the ancient world begins. Worship began at this hillside site in the Geometric period (10th-8th centuries BC), and continued until earthquakes in AD 469 and 554 forced its abandonment. Wandering down the tree-lined path towards the ticket office you can glimpse the sanctuary, constructed in the late 5th to early 4th century BC. Excavations were carried out in the early 1900s by German archaeologists, and the Italians made some major restorations from 1938. Once through the turnstile, you are confronted with the full scale of the Askleion: three magnificent terraces linked by monumental staircases. It is certainly an impressive sight.

The lowest level explains why it is called the Askleion: Asklepios was the son of the god Apollon and both were known for their healing and were worshipped here. The cult of Asklepios was the primary focus of worship and was introduced to Kos in the mid-6th century BC. His attribute was a snake, said to cure patients by licking and touching them in their sleep - perhaps this is partly why some people find snakes so unsettling. Fortunately, a plaque slightly further on reassures you that healers without snakes were the prevalent miracle workers here. Most importantly, in these

courtyards, Hippokrates established principles of medicine that are still used by every doctor today (the Hippocratic oath).

You can understand, as well, why Hippokrates was revered to the point of having his own cult; he died in 380 BC after living to the incredible age of 80. Along with others working at the Askleion, he must have seemed truly god-like.



*The lowest level of the Askleion showing the therapeuterion (healing sanctuary). The columns of one of the temples on the second terrace can be seen in the background.*

Walking up to the middle terrace you come to the temples of the Askleion, the *abaton* (sleeping enclosure with two dormitories), and the *lesche* (council chamber) housing offerings made at the site. Hydrotherapy pools were also built here. Perhaps the most impressive part of this site, however, is the monumental staircase rising 11 metres to the highest terrace and dominated by a temple constructed around 170 to 160 BC. The view from this terrace is spectacular: you can look down over the lower levels, down to Kos

Town, out over the bay, and finally to Turkey, only a few kilometres away. It is sobering, yet inspiring and invigorating, to think that you are standing in one of the ancient world's greatest centres for medicine, and that the ethics that modern doctors still abide by were created here.

***Eleanor Williams***

*All photographs: Eleanor Williams*

**(Eleanor is a second year Archaeology student at York University; she lives in Weardale)**



*View from the uppermost level of the Askleion showing the middle terrace in the foreground, down to the lower terrace, with Kos Town, the bay, and Turkey in the background. The forest surrounding the Askleion was also believed to be sacred.*

*A statue in the Archaeology Museum of Kos, Kos Town, thought to depict Hippokrates (last third of the 4th century BC)*



## A Weardale Woozle Hunt (with apologies to A.A. Milne)

Once upon a time, Piglet spent a lot of time going round and round in a circle, tracking something that probably wasn't there. But if it *had* been there, it would have been big and a bit scary, and it would have been a woozle.

To begin at the beginning, the Weardale woozle hunt starts with the LIDAR Landscape project. One of its findings was a 50m diameter circular feature on the south side of Weardale, low down on the valley side in a field between Wolsingham and Stanhope. The field was previously surveyed by E. H. Shepard, who was clearly no archaeologist; he failed even to determine whether Pooh and Piglet lived in round or rectangular houses, leaving us with no clues as to period. And 'sandy pit where Roo plays'... what does that mean? Is it ritual, a grave-cut, a previous archaeological excavation?

But to loop back to the subject: this Weardale circle was one of three things found in the LIDAR surveys of the North Pennines which looked possibly Neolithic and warranted further examination. The others were a possible henge near Allendale town and a circular feature just west of Cotherstone. So, this spring, Stephen Eastmead did some magic with the LIDAR data, and Paul Frodsham and I visited the site to see if we could see anything on the ground (we couldn't) and to meet Will, the owner. He was happy for us to investigate further, though not keen on any publicity which might attract treasure-hunting detectorists.

So, whizzing forward to a wet afternoon in September, four of us from AA laid out nine 30m x 30m squares, ready for magnetometry and drone photography. Stephen had helpfully worked out that the diagonal of a 30mx30m square is 42.42m. Douglas Adams fans will recognise this as the answer to the big question about the meaning of life, the

universe and everything (twice). A good omen? The next day, we helped the volunteers from SWAAG (Swaledale and Arkengarthdale Archaeology Group) trudge their magnetometer up and down the squares - more than 4km of trudging, plus the extra bits at each end to turn round. Stephen then used GPS to determine the location of the squares on the LIDAR and flew his drone to photograph the field, fixing a paper plate at each corner so the drone's camera could see the squares.

And the result of all this work? A beautiful piece of surveying, with the magnetometry area neatly encompassing the circular LIDAR feature, and the drone photographs showing the Co-op's white party plates shining like stars in a grassy firmament. On the magnetometry, however, there was hardly a trace of the woozle and we were no further forward in identifying what lay under the field.

And where exactly did this all happen? Well, given the request of the owner, I can't tell you, and if I were to tell you where in Weardale there probably *isn't* a Neolithic monument, then I might have to kill you. Thanks to Stephen, Alan, Elaine, and Rob, and to SWAAG for use of their expertise and equipment.

**Martin Green**

### The Woozle Effect

The phenomenon whereby frequent citation of earlier publications leads to a mistaken public belief in something for which there is no evidence.

*This effect was named after the Winnie the Pooh story by AA Milne, Methuen 1926.*

## Coming up ...

You will find more details about all of our events on the website:

<http://www.altogetherarchaeology.org/events.php>

Please always check in advance

**Sat 25 Jan:** Three talks - Andy Curtis on **Investigations around rock art panels** at Carr Edge Farm, nr. Fourstones, Hexham; Phil Bowyer on **rock art in context, Ravensheugh Crags**, and Paul Frodsham on **rock art in the Canary Islands**. 11 - 3, Mickleton Village Hall

**Sat 22 Feb: A grand tour of Roman Scotland** with Andrew Tibbs, then Andrew Tate talks about **Roman aqueducts**. 11 - 3, Mickleton Village Hall

**Sat 21 Mar: A.G.M.** followed by a talk from Andy Curtis about **Technology and home access** and Margaret Collins on **Old Melrose**. 11 - 3, Whitley Chapel Village Hall.

**Weds 15 April: visit to Melrose;** Margaret Collins follows up her March talk with a guided tour of the main sites in the town. **All day; £26 pp; booking essential;** full details on the website.

**Sat 31 Oct: walk to the summit of Yeavinger Bell** with Paul Frodsham. Meet at Wooler. All day. Details will be on the website nearer the date.

**Sat 7 Nov:** Brian Page talks about **the station in the hills**, the railway from Stanhope to the Hownsgill Viaduct, and Peter Leech tell us about the **eastern end of the Stanhope and Tyne railroad**. 11 - 3, Mickleton Village Hall

## reserve the dates...

**9 - 30 May** allocated to a further excavation at the Gueswick Hills site. Further information will be circulated once the details are confirmed.

## dates tbc ... look out for details on the website

**June** - at Harehope Quarry, Frosterley, **authentic pottery workshops** with Richard Carlton. To be held on two consecutive Sundays, one full and one half day. Will include a **site tour & talk about the geology of the area** with Jill Essam. **There will be a charge for these workshops; booking essential.**

**July** - walk led by Stephen Eastmead. **Industrial Mouldside in Arkengarthdale.**

and, of course, the **Altogether Archaeology Christmas shindig** will be coming around again in December!

All events in the programme are free to members of Altogether Archaeology unless otherwise stated. For insurance reasons you must be a member to excavate otherwise non-members are welcome to join us at all other events, subject to the availability of places. Please check in advance by emailing: [info@altogetherarchaeology.org](mailto:info@altogetherarchaeology.org)  
Charges for non-members are: talks £3, walks £5; fees for workshops & other events vary, so please check on the website.

## Join us

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

[www.altogetherarchaeology.org](http://www.altogetherarchaeology.org)

## Contribute to the newsletter ...

We produce two newsletters each year: a shorter Spring edition with news and updates after the AGM and another, longer issue at the end of the year. The winter edition is a celebration of the year's events with contributions from members about activities, their particular archaeological obsessions, or interesting sites they have visited. We are always on the lookout for contributions, and welcome submissions of general archaeological interest as well as those about AA activities, so please let us know what you have been up to!

If you would like to contribute an article or photographs for the next edition, contact the Newsletter Editor, Chris Powell [chrispowl@me.com](mailto:chrispowl@me.com).

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

## Contact us

For more information about AA, please get in touch.

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## and finally ...

### Thank you to all of our contributors & photographers

Stewart Ainsworth

Marie Gardiner

Sue Goldsborough

Martin Green

Alex Jackson

Tony Metcalfe

Alan Newham

Mike Powell

Jenny Pritchard

Liz Ryan

Eleanor Williams

And to Julia Thompson  
for her help with this edition

