

Tintinhull Local History Group Newsletter.

Issue 40

February 2024

New Year Resolutions featuring diet and general well-being may have become a bit neglected by now but if you had been a Roman.....

they would probably have remained as daily considerations with goods and services targeting health and fitness all available to everyone using public bathing facilities. The Greeks had believed that a healthy mind AND body were very important but the Romans were more inclined to focus on the physical side of living; taking care of ones body through cleanliness, exercise and diet was considered essential to leading a healthy life 1,500 years ago. They appreciated the need for a varied diet, tried not to get obese and to limit their alcohol intake.

Galen was a famous C2nd physician and he advocated fresh air, sufficient sleep, a sensible diet drinking plenty of water and taking exercise. We still sing from the same 'song-sheet' today but many of us are far less serious about it than most Romans were.

Galen was a great believer in working out with a medicine ball and he suggested 3 levels of work-out using minimal equipment: the relatively unfit might start with walking up a slope or lifting weights; at the next level you might run, box or use a punching bag whilst maximum exertion was achieved by doing all things mentioned as fast as possible. Many of these exercises feature in mosaic flooring at the Villa Romana del Casale in central Sicily - if you have the inclination to go there you will not be disappointed!

Bathing was a key element of Roman life as many of the more wealthy 'Welsh', the native inhabitants of Iron Age Briton, may have been able to testify. Most decent sized settlements had Bath Houses and many villas had their own - the one at Lufton certainly did. These usually included space to exercise and get sweaty before taking to the baths. There was an expectation that men engaging in sports would be hairless. Hair-pluckers worked at many bath houses with almost 50 pairs of tweezers being found at the Wroxeter site.

Wrestling and possibly boxing took place here. A range of ball games were played there too: 'Trigon', a game for three people improved co-ordination as players threw balls to each other with their right hand whilst catching with their left, attempting to keep the ball continuously in play.

'Harpastum' was played with a smallish ball in a similar fashion to a violent game of rugby. Fortunately the rules haven't survived!

'Follis' was played with a heavy leather ball and was similar to volleyball.

If none of the above kept you in the best of health AND you could afford it you could go to a Healing Sanctuary - there was one at Bath. Here the treatment might be described as 'holistic' and often relied upon the interpretation of your dreams! Not quite our NHS then!

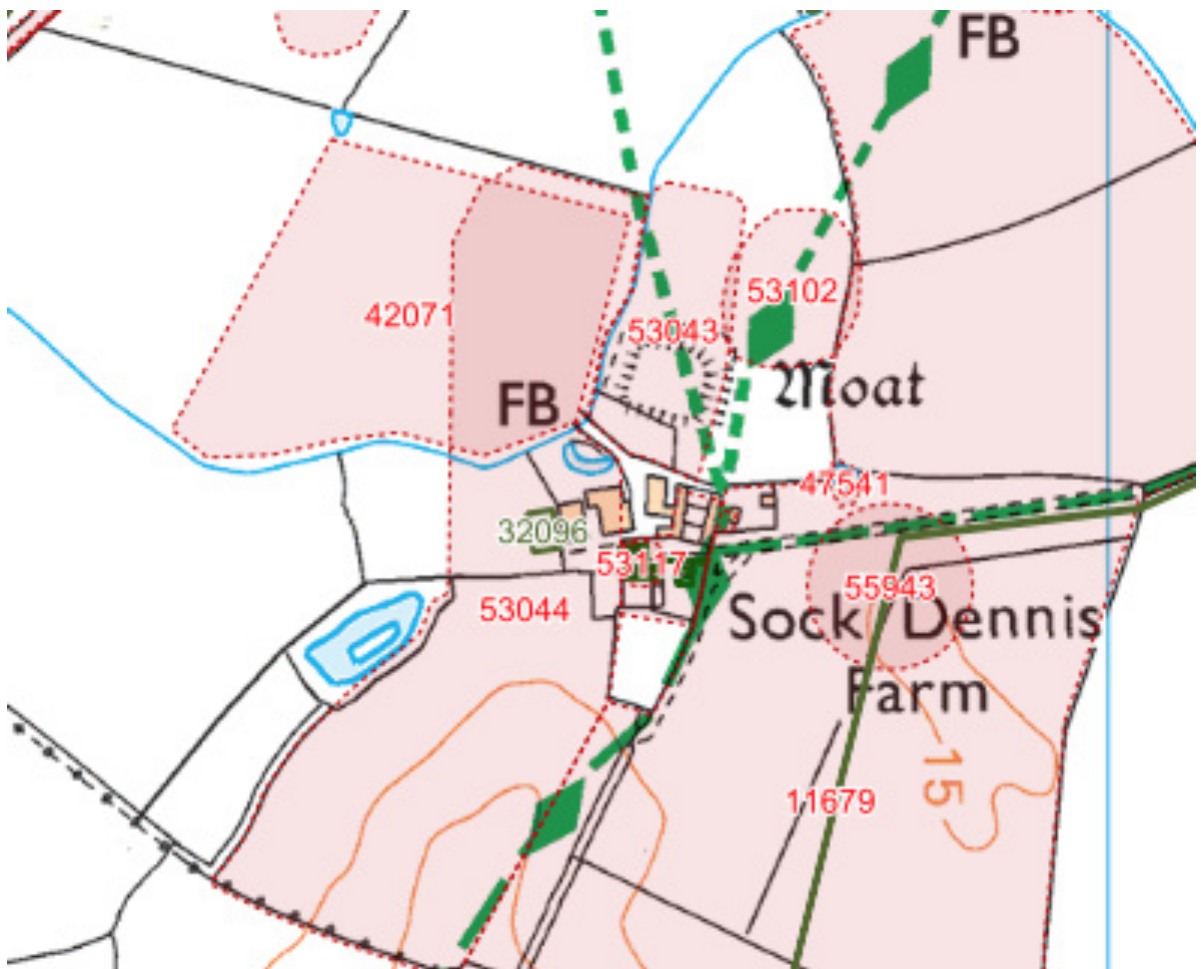
Evidence from a number of Romano-British sites suggests that they kept going as long as possible after 410AD but eventually disappeared through lack of maintenance.

If you don't fancy a trip to Sicily you may endeavour to build Wroxeter/ Viriconium Cornoviorum, one of the largest cities in Roman Britain, into a journey going north west. Here the actual Roman ruins and the reconstruction work is impressive.



More locally, Ilchester, a town of some 3,000 people should have had a bath-house which further archaeology may yet reveal.

Continuing our village journey: Sock Dennis, off the A303



Map, last page, from the HER showing the Sock Dennis area. The A303 is extreme top left:
No 47541 Medicinal Spring recorded by a Dr Beale in 1666. Avoided by cattle apparently.

53043 Moat & fishpond. Sub-rectangular moat with raised platform in SE corner, possibly a building site. Parallel to the moat is a fishpond. Documentary references confirm it was the centre of a 400a manor (VCH Vol III P230-35. SANHS Proceedings 119, 1975, P44-50)

53044 Deserted Medieval Village. In Domesday Soke was in the possession of Robert Count of Mortain, from mid C13th it was described as a manor. There were 7 tax payers in 1327, 13 in 1377 and fewer than 10 inhabitants by 1428. By the end of the C18th Soke was deserted. In 1821 the population was 10 (Census), in 1951 it was 23. William **the Dane** was a C12th owner.

53077 Sock Dennis Farm and buildings are all Grade II and listed. The farmhouse is a 3 storey building unsurprisingly constructed in Lias with Ham stone dressings. A rainwater head is dated 1623. It was originally only 2 storey and has round headed mullioned windows on the ground floor. The front portion and third storey are early C19th.

531002 Roman Settlement or Villa. Roman pottery, including the up-market Samian Ware, tesserae and tile fragments have been picked up in the immediate vicinity of the farmhouse indicating Roman occupation and possibly a villa site. SANHS Proceedings Vol 96, 1952, P43 - 51 specifically.

53117 John The Baptist Church. There was a church at Sock in 1286. It appears to have been a daughter church of Yeovil ; a pension was still paid by the rector of Sock to the rector of Yeovil in 1428. The church had disappeared by 1575; some of the structure is embedded in the walls of one of the farm buildings.

55943 Roman and Medieval finds and structure. An undated L shaped section of Lias wall foundation with substantial quantities of Roman and Medieval pottery in the topsoil.

Thomas Phelips (1514-1590) lived at Sock Dennis, Tintinhull and was often known as "of Montacute" where he also built a house which he left to his youngest son Edward (b-1560) who built Montacute House in about 1593 and demolished his fathers original house which was near the village entrance. (PC John Allen)

Tithe Map & Apportionment

"The name Sock is considered to indicate an area of marsh or streams. Middle English sok(e) 'marsh bog quagmire'. The suffix Dennis derives from the Dane family. Gerard of Trent, writing in the 17th century, tells of King John wresting Sock and Bearley from the men of Ilchester to give them to William the Dane in exchange for Petherton park. The leper hospital of St. Margaret, founded by 1212, evidently stood in the parish. John the Dane, in 1227, gave to three brethren of the house of lepers at 'Socford' 7 a. of land, three of which were in 'Casteler', just north of their house. There is no further trace of the hospital after 1268, but a chapel at 'Sokford by Ilchester' was in 1340 occupied by a hermit. A building called the 'sytell' was apparently still standing in the early 16th century.

The Domesday Book: In 1086 the manor had 70 a. of meadow, but no recorded pasture, though the demesne farm alone supported 5 beasts (animalia), 35 pigs, and 25 sheep.

There were 7 taxpayers in Sock in 1327 and 13 in 1377. There were fewer than ten people by 1428, and the disappearance of the church followed in little more than a century. By the end of the 18th century Sock was 'an obliterated place', and had long comprised only two farms.

Census: No individual return was made in the censuses of 1801 and 1811, but in 1821 the population was ten. By 1891 the number had risen to 33, but it fell to 18 in 1931. In 1951, when the last separate figure was given, the population was 23.

By the end of the 18th century Sock tithing was considered part of Tintinhull parish. It was incorporated in the Yeovil poor-law union in 1836." VCH

Those Nursery Rhymes continued:

Hey Diddle Diddle

Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle,
The cow jumped over the moon:
The little dog laughed to see such sport,
And the dish ran away with the spoon.

When Mary Tudor died Henry VIII's third and sole surviving legitimate child became queen, Elizabeth I.

She favoured the Protestant church but did not believe in religious persecution. The country was able to relax and have fun again.

Here, Elizabeth is 'the cat' and the rhyme is believed to refer to the merry-making at Whitehall Palace, her home. The Earl of Walsingham, one of her favourite advisors is 'the moon' whilst 'the dog' was a jeering reference to the Earl of Leicester who sulked because of the queen's flirtatious behaviour and asked to leave the Court and take up a post in France.

Elizabeth ordered that all church services should be in English so that everyone could understand what was being said. Everyone was expected to go to church and the penalty for not attending was a shilling fine - a lot of money then!

Still in force then was the Elizabethan statute of 1589 which stipulated that you could only build a new house if it had at least four acres of land. The reason for this, as given in the preamble to the Act, was 'For the avoiding of great inconvenience which are found by experience to grow by the erecting and building of great numbers and multitude of cottages

which are daily more and more increased in many parts of the realm'. I wish modern planners still had to abide by this!

And from a very recent survey in Sherborne by SVBRG - Bridewells:

HISTORICAL NOTES: The plot on which the house stands is the site of the former Dorset Bridewell.

The name Bridewell comes from Henry VIII's Bridewell Palace that stood beside the river Fleet at Blackfriars in London. In 1553 the redundant palace was put to use as a "house of correction" for "sturdy beggars", i.e. those able but unwilling to work. Similar institutions (likewise called Bridewells) were set up in many towns by the local Justices, often re-using former ecclesiastical buildings. Can you find any Bridewells listed in Somerset?

A Date for Your Diaries if Archaeology appeals to you.

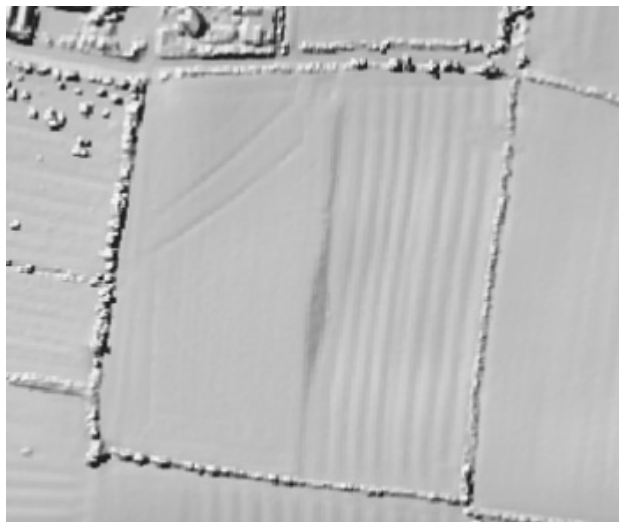
SANHS are holding their annual Archaeology Day **in Tintinhull** on Saturday 23rd March. Sadly, whilst we have been invited to report on our recent archaeology, there is nothing to say although I have tossed a few ideas into the mix which may be acceptable. Nothing is set in stone yet but their speakers may be Chris Webster (HER) on Ilchester, Amal Khreisheh (Finds Officer) on The Cheddar Brooch etc.

Naturally the programme will be sent out as soon as it's available and **they are hoping folks from Tintinhull will be in the audience**

The one positive from this that it has forced me to pull all our past archaeology into one document /folder. Clive is be delighted!

"Archaeology: all we have achieved to date" is finally on the website!

To get to it open the TLHG website - tintinhull.local-history.org.uk to the Home page. Type archaeology into the search box. On the general Archaeology page the bottom line asks you to click on the link [here](#). Do that and you should be transported to the cloud on

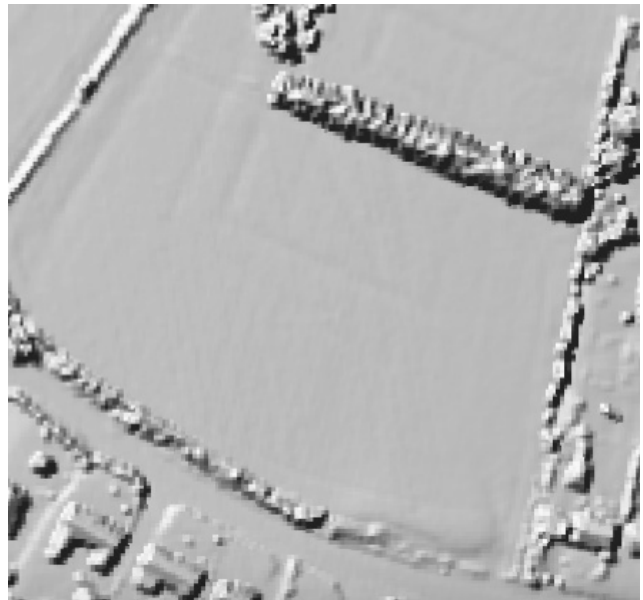


which it rests. My dyslexia does show up in a couple of places, but not so much that I'm planning to change anything at this moment in time, and of course there are still one or two things that I could have added but 39 pages is sufficient for now.....

And then there's LIDAR See left for an impressive version of the bank in the field on the RIGHT at the end of Farm St. Notice how the ridge and furrow respects it though!

Right is the field on Head St where they will soon be building more houses. It's not showing much but I know that geophysics has looked interesting if only I could find that report..... I do hope they will hold an archaeological 'watching brief' on it as they level the site and excavate it!

And finally the field named Tintinhull Forts, on the 1839 Tithe Map below. What do you make of that? Compare it to Dave Taylor's cleared-of-trees LIDAR version that is in my archaeology piece and tell me what you think. If you see nothing, as Mick Aston would say "Look harder!"

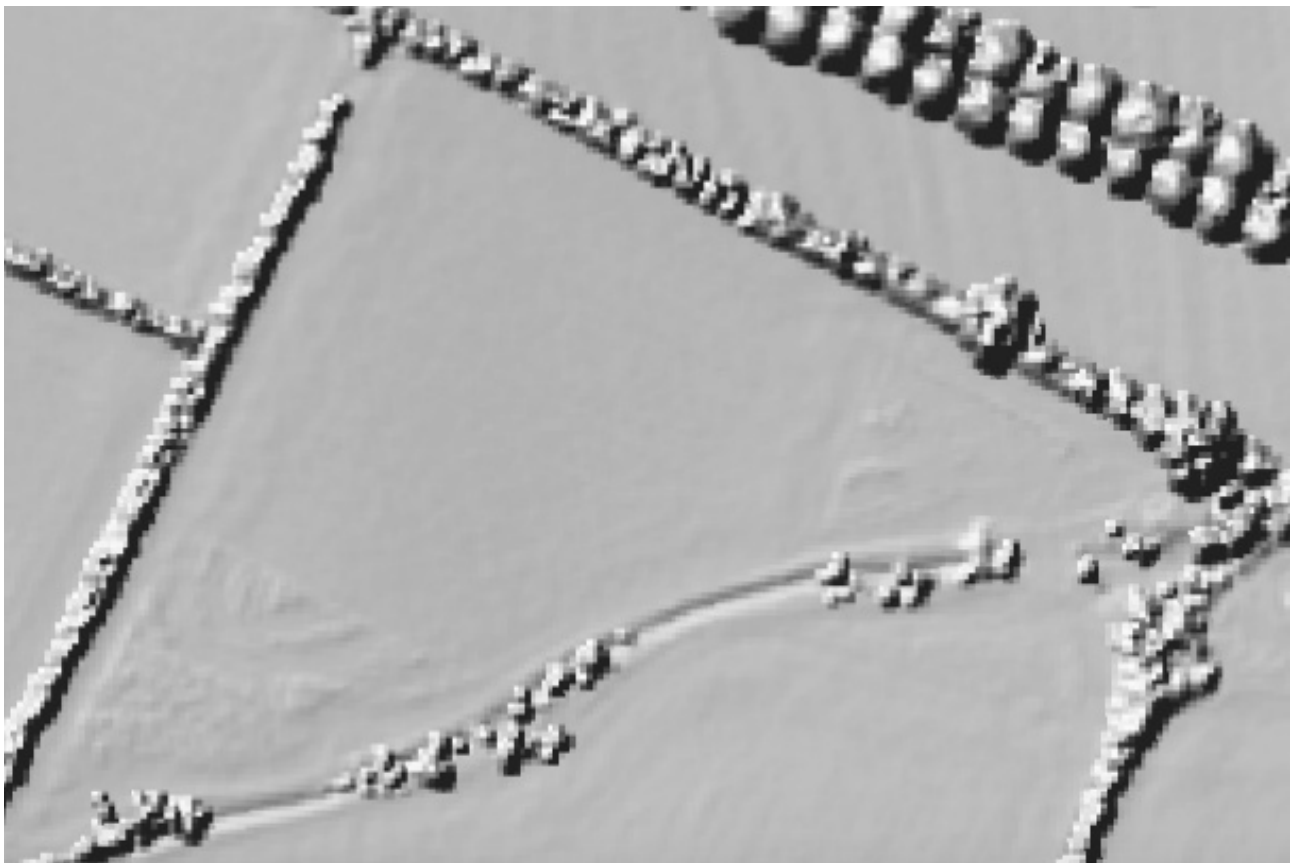


Does ridge & furrow ploughing only occur to the south east of the little stream? If so WHY?

Who owns the land?

Would we get permission to do Geophysics if green waste won't confuse the readings?

Who might want to actually 'dig'?



If you are walking the foot path along side it please keep an eye out for any pottery or other artefacts and bring them along to a meeting.

If you want to have a play yourself with Lidar yourself I stumbled across this site at archiuk.com - give it a go!

Finally, both Eileen and Clive have informed me that I miss-numbered these Newsletters sometime before Christmas so that I am now a number ahead of myself. Forgive me!

Clive assures me that he is rectifying that in the Members area of the web site. For my part just look at the month - there's a good chance that that is correct! This area is accessed via the password Napper123. Please don't share this with anyone outside of TLHG!

Along with all the Newsletters there is a 'Contents in all' post so that you can search anything that has gone into previous Newsletters. On the dank, dark days that are probably still ahead of us, regardless of the snowdrops trying to kid us that Spring really is here, there is plenty of reading matter for you!

Denny Robbins, 30.1.24

Members area of the website password Napper123