Sheffield’s favourite hill is attracting cyclists again this year after the fantastic success of last year’s Tour de France. The CdW Hill Climb will test a range of cycling talents as they take on the steepest section in the TDF 2014 race. Keen cyclists as young as 11 will pit their legs against the hill that has held a special significance to the communities of Sheffield since at least the Middle Stone Age! The morning will see a community ride between 10am and 12pm followed by warm up and timed trials for the serious from 1pm. There will be a number of activities on the common and make sure that you look out for the Brigantes reenactors - The Friends of Wincobank Living history group who will be giving tours on the Hillfort and celebrating the terrific history on the hill.

Conservation and coffee
Many thanks to the North Sheffield Conservation Group who joined the Woodland Rangers and Friends of Wincobank Hill to cut back the new growth on the hillfort this spring and collect up remaining debris from the woods.

Illegal digging on the Hillfort
January got off to a sad start when it was noticed that there had been extensive systematic digging on the hillfort ramparts (see below). The Police were notified as it is an offence under the Archaeological Remains and Ancient Monument Act 1976 to damage or use a metal detector without licence on a Scheduled Ancient Monument.

Signs of illegal metal detecting. Some may think it an enjoyable pastime but on ancient sites like Wincobank Hill it is illegal and can result in a fine or prison sentence. It is almost certain that there is NO precious or even no so precious metal in this popular picnic spot where the only treasure is likely to be bottle tops left by the generations of young people who have sat on the rampart to listen to music drifting up from the valley below. That said, digging into the ground destroys soil levels that hold important information such as charcoal and pollen. Please help protect this important and beautiful site by discouraging and reporting such anti-social activity as soon as it is seen by ringing 101. If you see anybody actively metal detecting or digging on the Hillfort please report this by ringing 999 immediately. The FOWH and Sheffield Council are aware of this problem and will be actively monitoring the area.

Hatfield House School History Day
In February, sixty children stepped back in time for a day when they visited the Hill to learn about life in the Iron Age and to consider whether they would rather have been a Roman or a Briton. With help from our own Queen Cartimandua and rebel King Caractacus they cast their imaginations back to AD51 and tried to decide whether to rise against the Romans or keep the peace.

The University of Sheffield gave an introduction to archaeology before the children made their own clay pots. For more information about booking school living history days on the hill please contact Penny Rea 07980 143776.

The best bit is always the coffee break with cake and a chance to chat. From April 2014 to March 2015 a total of 71 bags of rubbish were collected as well as 2 mattresses, a washing machine and a settee. We know that dog walkers and other walkers are also helping to pick up other people’s rubbish. But wouldn’t it be lovely if no-one dumped it in the first place...
**Holiday Woodlanders.**

Where better to spend school holidays than out in an ancient woodland. Sheffield Children's University (CU) has provided funding for several projects this year including Family Woodlanders for children aged 4+ with their parents or carers, and Woodlander Play Days for children aged 8-12. The sessions give the children a chance to learn about playing safely in the woodland and aims to give parents the confidence to bring their children back for days out in the woods. The sessions are advertised through the CU network and on the Wincobank Active Stars Facebook page.

**Upgraded paths for Wincobank Common**

The first action of the new North Sheffield Woodlands Manager Richard Gill was to oversee the resurfacing and upgrading of the paths on Wincobank Common. This work had been requested during consultation at our Summer Fun day in 2012 and everyone has been delighted with the result which follows last year's work on the paths in Wincobank Wood. Very welcome too are the lovely wooden benches that have appeared at viewpoints or resting places. Three cheers for the Woodlands Team.

**Hinde House Iron Age Learning Trail**

Visitors to the hillfort in May half-term will have noticed a fascinating trail of historical fact sheets carefully fixed to the trees by the children from Hinde House School in response to a talk by Penny from FoWH. One enthusiastic admirer was Neil Redfern, the area officer for Historic England, who was so impressed that he tweeted photos of their work all over the country.

**The Enigmatic Roman Ridge...**

Do you ever walk along the path from Jenkin Avenue to Meadowhall? Did you know that you are walking on a mysterious manmade ridge fashioned thousands of years ago? About the only thing known about the Roman Ridge is that it was not built by Romans. Have a look at the new information board on Wincobank Common just opposite Jenkin Avenue and then tread carefully - you are walking on history.

**HORRIBLE HOARDINGS - Before and After?**

Have you ever counted the number of advertising hoardings around the bottom of Wincobank Hill? Did you know that many of them have never had planning permission. Do we really want what they are trying to sell us? Relentless campaigner for an improved environment in Wincobank, Bridget Ingle has spent hours writing letters and challenging the assumption that if no-one complains then we don't mind. If Dore wouldn't stand for it then neither should we. Follow the Love Wincobank Facebook page for the latest updates on this and other ways to improve our neighbourhood. Make your opinions count and write to your councillor or comment on Facebook or the Friends website.
MY MOTHERS FAMILY IN BRIGHTSIDE

My mother’s family had come to Sheffield from Grindleford in late 1918. Her father, my grandfather, Duncan Leishman, had been previously exempt from service due to an incorrectly set broken arm, it meant that he could not fire a gun. He was made to go in to Jessop’s steelworks on Brightside Land as a joiner. A family friend recalled that Granddad knocked on doors in Brightside trying to find lodgings; his thick Scots accent was regarded with suspicion; was he a German spy?? Eventually he moved the family into someone’s front room on Limpsfield Rd.

At this time there were the first four children, my uncle Jack, 7, my mum Margaret, 5, Rosie, 3 and Olive aged 1 (See photo below). Eventually, they got their own house, at the top of Limpsfield Rd, in which three more children were born; Jean in 1920, Eileen in 1921, and George in 1925. George only lived a few days, and was buried in with a stranger as was the custom for infant death in those days if the family couldn’t afford the burial costs. Jean also died of Pneumonia in 1927 and was buried with only a wooden cross – no headstone. They were eventually reunited in one grave several years later in St Thomas’s churchyard, now the circus church.

There was a strong community spirit, centred around Dearne St Methodist Chapel (where the three eldest girls eventually married), St Margarets on Jenkin Rd and St Thomas’s on Holywell Rd. Childhood games were age-old; skipping, ball games and hopscotch. Granddad made cases for crystal wireless sets, mended sash windows and gardened for other people. Gramma taught all the girls to knit and sew and manage on virtually nothing; at tea-time, it was bread and jam, or bread and margarine, not both together.

One day, Jack brought home a boy who had no footwear, granddad gave him Jacks outgrown boots. I was able to trace the children’s visits to my great grandparents in Glasgow through the Brightside school log books which recorded their absences (available at the archives on Shoreham St). When they left school, some to go to work at 14, my Uncle Jack went on to Firth Park Grammar school and Aunt Eileen to Owler Lane to take a business course. The school also recorded Jean’s death in a terribly callous manner “Reason for absence-Died”. The family lived in Limpsfield Rd until “bombed out” in the 1940s when they moved to Crookes.

Wendy Booth

The New Re-enactors-
The Brigantes of Wincobank

Following the success of the play written by Penny Rea which has been performed on Wincobank Hill. The play portrays the meeting of the Brigante Queen, Cartimandua and Prince Caractacus, the British leader of the revolt against the Romans, the actors decided to form a group to re-enact broader aspects of life from the period when Rome first impacts on the region. The key date is around AD50 when the northern border of the Roman Empire in Britain is thought to run roughly along the Don Valley, boundary of Cartimandua’s territory.

The group’s intention is to have members dressed as Romans and Britons and to re-enact daily life and interaction between the two groups. While the two societies were loosely based on military aristocracies, dressing up in armour with weapons will be low in our priorities. Our main accent will be on daily life and the demonstrations will be taken to local events and schools. Anyone wanting to join should decide which group they prefer and what sort of character they would want to play, what they want to do, including choosing a name. Some main characters have already been taken because of their roles in the play which will continue at future performances. Currently, performances are scheduled for every November during the Light up the Hill lantern parade and at other events as required.

Contact David Green, David Woodall, David Anson, Danny Allsebrook or Fiona Trigg for more information
A Visit to Bennachie – On Shared Ground.
May 1st - 5th 2015

The FOWH have been working with other groups across the country who share an interest in hillforts. Issue 3 has a good account of the Friends visit to South Wales. Here we pick up the story on the latest visit to Aberdeenshire.

After last year’s visit to Caerau, the hillfort in Cardiff, we had one more hill to climb to complete our exploration of the three hillforts being explored as part of the ‘On Shared Ground’ project. Bennachie is a hill range near the town of Inverurie close to Aberdeen. What is believed to be a Pictish hill fort, built around 1300 years ago, is on the highest peak known as Mither Tap [Mother’s Teat]. The Picts were a tribal society in the Iron Age famous for their ornate artwork.

Mither Tap is 518 metres above sea level, Wincobank Hill rises to 153 metres and Caerau hill fort to about 80 metres, so an immediate difference in the way Mither Tap presents itself to the walker is obvious. All three, however, are at the high point of their surrounding areas and have an important river running past to the sea. Bennachie’s river is even another River Don!

Mither Tap also differs in that it is not in the middle of a housing estate but is surrounded by other hills, forestry and open countryside. It is a very well-known and popular outdoors recreation area for miles around. Everyone we spoke to knew about it and had visited it many times. Of course this popularity brings its own problems in terms of litter and damage to the natural and historical environment.

On the first day, Saturday we, and other Friends of Wincobank Hill, Danny, Fiona and eight year old Simon, were commandeered by a group of the Baillies of Bennachie, similar to a Friends group with a history going back to 1973. Danny, Fiona and Simon worked with a group establishing a wildlife pond. We helped clear tree debris and undergrowth from the remains of a cottage and the stone base for a hayrick. These had belonged to a community known as the Colonists who were living and working on the land from 1825-1939. Squatters first settled on what was known as the Commoilte- common land- clearing and cultivating it, growing crops to feed themselves and building small houses, supplementing their meagre income by doing labouring jobs for others. In 1859 a group of local lairds divided the land between themselves and over time by various means such as charging rent and moving people out, drove the community into extinction. In 1939 the last remaining member died. The baillies have taken on the task of clearing the sites and revealing them for public interest and education.

After lunch, it being forecast as the only fine day of the weekend, we set off with our hosts to climb up to the hill fort. This was an arduous but rewarding climb ending in a hairy rock scramble. The entrance was through a huge, impressive, rebuilt outer wall which heightens the sense of a fortress. On the top was a 360 degree view to as far as the Cairngorms to the west and to Caithness in the north. Some peaks retained snow from the previous weekend. The climb down proved rather too much for one of us and he is determined to get two walking poles and to forgo any more “nearly “mountains (ed note-see Ken for details).

The following day we met everyone at the Bennachie Visitors Centre again to hear the presentations about the project. Danny gave his presentation on Wincobank Hill. It was very interesting to see the Visitor Centre and the way the history of Bennachie was displayed. Light refreshment could be bought by the public and there was a lecture and library- come -storage room for the baillies.

As we were leaving the meeting one of the senior bailies, Jackie, offered Penny and us a lift back to Iverurie and on the way, in spite of the pouring rain, took us on a tour of some of the many stone circles and standing stones in the area. We only had time to see a few of them. The importance of the site in cultural and religious terms in ancient times was obvious. Some stones have the early forms of the Irish language in a script known as Ogham.

On the Monday we and Penny took the opportunity to visit Aberdeen Old Town. We walked over one of the oldest bridges in the UK, the Brig O’ Balgownie, or the Bridge of Don. It is reputed to have been requisitioned by Robert the Bruce [of spider fame] in c1300 . The River Don, that flows through Bennachie and Inverurie, flows under it into the sea. We went up to Scotland and followed another River Don to the sea. Perhaps we should go to Russia next!

Ken and Hilary Allen

Newsletter submissions are welcome at any time, but deadlines for each issue are 1st Nov and 1st May each year.

Contributions can be sent in any format (hand-written, typed, email, floppy disk, CD-ROM, etc).

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