

Hello everyone,

Here's this English chap Tony Scott Warren sending you the Lettre Jèrriaise from White Rose country, which is one of the nicknames for God's own country, Yorkshire.

A couple of months after we arrived at our new home in Howden, a new society was formed here, the Howdenshire Archaeological Society, and I became a member. Howdenshire used to be a wapentake, a name that came from the Norse, which used to be an administrative division - a bit like a cuilliette or a vingtaine in Jersey.

I have always been interested in archaeology since I was at College, partly because one of our teachers, the late Mr Green, husband of Deputy Phyllis Green, used to organise a local history club. Every week in the summer, I and the other members visited a dolmen, a fort or a castle, often by bike.

The society here had its first meeting in January last year in the Beverley archives, where I was one of the four members who spent a day looking at books, charts and documents. One month later, we had a talk by a professional archaeologist, but a couple of weeks later, the first lockdown was announced and events were cancelled.

A new president was elected in June last year and monthly meetings by Zoom began. We discussed a load of projects in places around the region about which I knew virtually nothing. Between lockdowns we managed to survey two sites by drone. One appeared on an old map where it was shown as a chapel and hermitage with a moat around it. On the photos made from the drone, the moat, now below ground level, shows very clearly. Unfortunately it's not possible for us to excavate there to get more information. The other site was a ruined castle for which we made a three-dimensional digital model.

I've read in the paper that restrictions over in Jersey are less difficult than here, where the pubs and restaurants can only serve us in the open air. Now that the Archaeological Society can meet outdoors, we had our first meeting for a year, face-to-face, last week; we had been invited to dig trenches in a field in the village of Shiptonthorpe. It's known that there was a Roman road nearby, and we hoped to find something from that time or perhaps even older; it's possible that there could be iron-age remains. Unfortunately we didn't find so much in the dig as we would have expected, but I hope to tell you more in a future Lettre.

Changing subject, I had a great surprise last weekend when we visited our daughter's garden for a supper there. Our grand-daughter Holly began to sing for us. She has a good voice, and you can imagine my pleasure when she sang "Man Bieau P'tit Jèrri" (Beautiful Jersey) in perfect Jèrriais. She had learnt it of her own free-will in the previous three weeks, and she told me that she wants to learn our language, and so it seems that I am no longer completely retired!

Before ending, I send my thoughts to the sick, and my condolences to the families of two of my friends from evening class, Joy Fox and Christine Cudlipp, who have passed away recently.

Thank you for listening to me, and I wish you a good Liberation Day next week. Till the next time, goodbye.