

# inHeritage

# Romans on the Don

# **Final Report**

### February 2007

#### Prepared by:

Bill Bevan (*in*Heritage) in association with South Yorkshire Archaeology Service

inHeritage 35, Fulton Rd Sheffield S6 3JL Tel: 0114 2345411 billbevan@inheritage.co.uk www.inheritage.co.uk

South Yorkshire Archaeology Service
Development Services
Howden House
1 Union Street
Sheffield
S1 2SH
Tel: 0114 2736354

Syorks.archservice@sheffield.gov.ukwww.sheffield.gov.uk/syas

# **Romans on the Don**

# **Project Design**

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# Romans on the Don

## **Final Report**

#### 1. Introduction

This is the final project report about the Romans on the Don project (4680). Romans on the Don was an educational and community outreach project funded by English Heritage through the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund designed to promote a greater public awareness and understanding of recent Iron Age and Romano-British archaeological discoveries made in the Doncaster Metropolitan Borough as a result of fieldwork undertaken in advance of aggregates quarrying. The project was launched in November 2005 and comes to an end in March 2007.



Illustration 1. Location of Doncaster.

With this aim in mind the target audience for the educational material, booklet and website was those with no or little prior knowledge of the subject. The objective was to reach beyond the existing archaeological community of interest to those living in the region who have been affected by aggregates quarrying. The community talks were aimed at a target audience with a pre-existing interest in archaeology but did not assume that attendants would have a great depth of technical knowledge about the subject.

The project was developed by *in*Heritage in partnership with South Yorkshire Archaeology Service (SYAS) and with assistance from Doncaster Museum and Doncaster MBC IT department.

SYAS are the archaeological advisors to Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC). We are responsible for ensuring that archaeology on aggregate extraction sites is properly recorded (or preserved *in situ*). We realise there is a demand for wider dissemination of the results of this fieldwork, in particular to the local communities affected by quarrying but do not have the resources to undertake this.

*in*Heritage are a Sheffield-based heritage interpretation consultancy, providing interpretation, illustration, copywriting and editing services to cultural heritage organisation, community groups and the archaeological sector.

Please see the Romans on the Don project design, version 2, November 2006 for further details about the archaeological resource, methodology statement, extent of aggregates quarrying, the results of the initial public consultation programme, list of the relevant grey literature housed in the South Yorkshire SMR, and the lists of schools and community groups identified as potential beneficiaries of the project.

#### 2. Aims and Objectives of Project

#### 2.1 Project Aim and Objectives

The project's aim was to:

Reduce the effects of aggregates extraction on local communities in the vicinity of active and past aggregates quarries.

This aim will be met by a series of four objectives:

- 3.1.1 raise awareness of the Iron Age to Romano-British historic environment of the lower Don Valley
- 3.1.2 make known to the public the results of investigations on Iron Age and Roman sites in advance of aggregates extraction as recorded in grey literature reports
- 3.1.3 demonstrate the national importance of the Iron Age to Romano-British historic environment of the lower Don Valley
- 3.1.4 promote the work of quarry companies in preserving sites by record

#### 2.2 Relation to Objective 2 of the Aggregates Levy Sustainable Fund

These aims and objectives addressed two fundamental aims of Objective 2 of the Aggregates Levy Sustainable Fund:

- 3.2.1 communicate to the public the knowledge gained through archaeological work in advance of aggregates extraction in the lower Don Valley
- 3.2.2 promote an understanding of conservation issues arising from aggregates extraction, specifically how quarry operators have helped to discover this knowledge through contracting archaeological units to investigate sites and have enabled the preservation by record of sites removed during aggregates extraction

The project's key messages comprised the following:

 Aggregates extraction quarries have funded archaeological works on suspected Iron Age and Romano-British sites and landscapes.

- Archaeologists have discovered important information about these sites and landscapes through systematic aerial photography, geophysics and excavation.
- Discoveries at each site have confirmed that there is evidence for settlement layout, burial practice, trade and exchange and wider utilisation of the landscape for the Iron Age and Roman period.
- Archaeologists are able to reconstruct the lower Don Valley landscape during the Iron Age and Roman period.
- How people lived during the Iron Age and Roman period in the lower Don Valley.
- Who were the people living in the area during the Roman period native descendents of Iron Age communities or Roman settlers?
- That work relating to aggregates extraction in the Don Valley landscape has helped increase our knowledge of past activity in the area.
- Why aggregates quarrying is undertaken in the Doncaster region explaining the geology of the lower Don valley.

#### 3. Outputs

The project's outputs can be readily broken down into two main but inter-related categories: education and community outreach. Educational outputs targeted 7-11 year old history pupils at Key Stage 2. They comprised a series of school visits, the production of a downloadable teacher's pack and a comic (see 4). Community outreach was targeted at an older audience and consisted of a series of community talks, a popular booklet, website and travelling exhibition (see 5).

All outputs were delivered within the agreed timetable except for the teacher's pack which required more work and revisions than first envisaged in the project design. The launch of the pack was delayed from March 2006 to September 2006.

#### 4. Education

#### 4.1. Schools Visits

A total of 8 visits were made to four primary schools located in the vicinities of aggregates quarries. These schools were those who responded to the offer of a school visit from an original list of twelve located in the parishes affected by aggregates quarries where Iron Age or Roman sites have been investigated.

Each visit comprised elements of presentation to give some background information about archaeology, the Iron Age, the Romans, and the regional evidence. This was followed by worksheet completion and practical exercises. Each visit lasted for between two and three hours. Three pre-printed worksheets were provided for each pupil and at the end of the visit each was given a copy of the comic produced as part of the Romans on the Don project. Pupil numbers totalled 216.



Illustration 2. Children and parents participate in activities at Doncaster Museum

The lesson was based on the lesson plan detailed below.

#### Lesson plan contents:

#### Worksheet1:

What does an archaeologist do?

How do things get buried?

How does an archaeologist know where to look?

From a Geophysical plan of IA/RB ditches – where would you excavate?

Crop marks – what makes crops grow shorter/taller? What can an archaeologist do to see crop marks better? What do the crop marks on the photograph show?

#### Worksheet 2:

Practical exercise with props – an archaeologist falls into a hole and is found 2000 years later. What things would have survived?

#### Worksheet 3:

What did Iron Age people use to spin wool?

How do you think having writing helps people?

Would you rather have money to buy things or just swap things?

What could you use instead of pottery for cooking, drinking and carrying? (with props)

Artefact recognition from photographs.

What do you think is the best thing that the Romans brought to Britain?

Where did the Roman soldiers in Britain come from?

Practical exercises included writing on wax tablets with styli, spinning wool using drop spindles, and excavating/planning/interpreting a scale model of a round house based on one of those from Brodsworth.

Name of School	Date visited
Misson Primary	18/06/06
	12/07/06
Adwick Park Juniors	10/07/06
	14/07/06
Dunsville Primary	06/06/06
	07/06/06
	08/06/06.
Hatfield Woodhouse	23/06/06
Primary	

In addition, educational activities were delivered to Doncaster and Sheffield Young Archaeology Clubs and other children attending the Doncaster Museum Open Day on the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2006 and the South Yorkshire Archaeology Day on the 25<sup>th</sup> November. A total of 70 children attended these two sessions.

#### Feedback

Each class teacher was provided with a feedback form and three teachers returned these (see 9 for an example form). All three teachers stated that they were satisfied with the visits which provided good content at the right level. Two out of three agreed that their pupils developed an understanding of the Iron Age and Romans. The teacher who disagreed had arranged for the visit to be made to a KS1 rather than a KS2 class without notifying us. All teachers thought that the worksheets were useful for their pupils and felt able to use further exercises on their own and could understand the content of the lesson plan.

#### 4.2. Teacher's Pack

The teacher's pack was produced in September 2006 and went live on the Doncaster MBC website at the end of September 2006. It will continue to be hosted by Doncaster as an ongoing element of their website. Aimed at teachers of Key Stage 2 History it also helps to develop skills in citizenship, numeracy and writing. It is available as a set of free downloads and is being promoted to teachers in Doncaster by Doncaster Museum.

The pack comprises three elements - background information, classroom activities and classroom worksheets. Background information has sections on Aggregates Extraction, Archaeology in Doncaster, the Iron Age, the Romans and Archaeology as Historical Enquiry. Four worksheets cover general themes related to archaeology as historical enquiry and the nature of Iron Age and Roman life in Doncaster. These are Archaeology, What Survives from the Past, Romans and Britons and The Romans and Us. Four exercises focus on specific themes related to individual archaeological sites in Doncaster. These are Living in a Round House at Brodsworth, Having a Roman Bath at Hampole, Jewellery and Baking Bread at Stainton and Farming Fields at Barnsdale Bar.

The URL for the pack is http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/romansonthedon

#### Feedback

No system was set in place to collect feedback about the pack and no feedback has yet been received from teachers using it.

However, during the period 17/11/06 to 5/2/07 Worksheet 1 (Archaeology) was the most downloaded worksheet with 196 downloads. The Iron Age Background PDF has been downloaded 245 times.

### 4.3 Comic

The comic is perhaps the most innovative element of the education programme. Called 'Watch Out! The Romans are Coming!', it is a 12-page full colour comic. It is essential that such a publication should look like a comic not a pictorial educational resource so that it will attract children irrespective of their interest in archaeology or the Romans. It was created by a children's librarian and a comic artist (ex of the Bunty) and featured an eye-grabbing cover, two stories - with boy and girl lead characters - a makeover page and four pages of activities, jokes and facts. A contemporary manga art style was used for one story.

Four thousand copies of the comic were initially printed in June 2006 with a reprint of 1,000 in February 2007 due to demand. The comics were distributed free to all schools participating in the school visits (both to pupils present at the visits and for teachers to use in subsequent classes), through all 25 Doncaster branch libraries, through Doncaster Museum and at the Museum open day (see 5.5). The comic was officially launched at Doncaster Children's Library in July 2006. This generated local newspaper interest and an interview on the BBC Radio Sheffield breakfast show. The comic was printed on recycled paper using vegetable dye inks.



Illustration 3. Children going through the 'What's Wrong?' activity in the comic

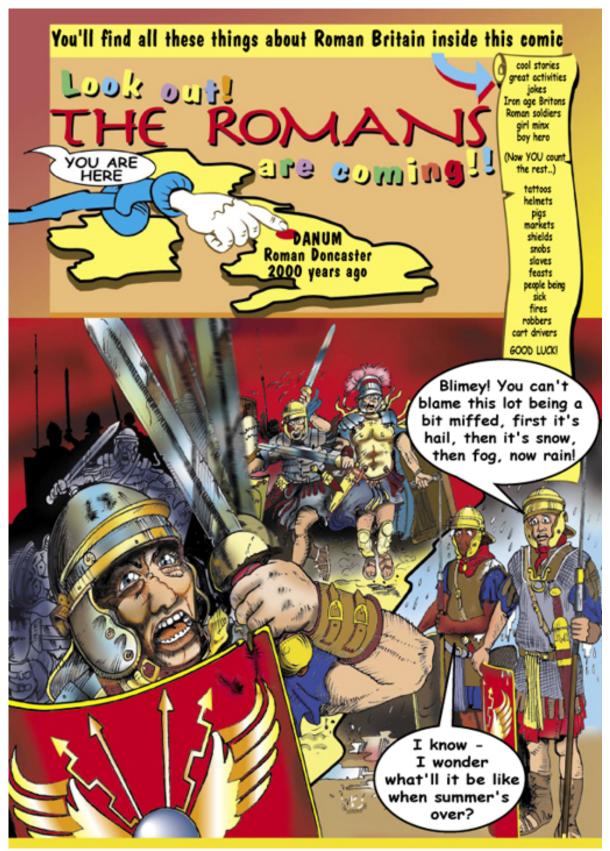


Illustration 4. The front of the Romans on the Don comic

#### Feedback

We obtained feedback on the comic from teachers returning school visit feedback forms and from children attending an educational session at the Doncaster Museum open day (see 5.5).

All three responding teachers said that the children 'loved' or 'enjoyed' the comic.

Twenty-five children gave feedback on the comic. There were asked if they liked the comic, what they liked and what key messages did they learn. Seventeen said they liked the comic and four said they didn't. All of those who didn't like it were older than the target age group. All respondents learnt the Roman name for Doncaster and that there were people living in Doncaster before the Romans. The majority also picked up key messages about aggregates quarrying, underfloor heating, the use of querns to grind flour and that there was a Roman fort at Rossington Bridge.

One parent and a grand-parent approached Bill Bevan to say that their dyslexic children and grandchildren enjoyed the comic and learnt about the Romans because of the preference given to images over text.

#### 5. Community Outreach

#### 5.1 Booklet

The booklet is a 44 page accessibly written full-colour free publication that presents information on archaeology in planning, aggregates quarrying in Doncaster, cropmark landscapes, geophysics, changes between the Iron Age and Romano-British landscapes, the impact of the Romans, Doncaster's Romano-British pottery industry, and the discoveries made at aggregates quarries in Doncaster. The booklet is highly illustrated with the reconstruction drawings produced for the project as well as photographs from various sites and photographs of people dressed in Romano-British and Roman military dress kindly supplied by the Vicus.

One-thousand five-hundred booklets were originally printed in November 2006 with a reprint of 750 in February 2007 due to demand. Copies were distributed free to all those attending a community talk (see 5.4), through all 25 Doncaster branch libraries, through Doncaster Museum and at the Museum open day (see 5.5). The booklet was officially launched along with the website at the open day. Deposit copies have been sent to the UK copyright libraries. It was printed on recycled paper using vegetable dye inks.

#### Feedback

A sample of 24 readers were asked for feedback about the booklet via a form and SAE envelope inserted into copies of the booklet. A total of 17 responded. Out of these 15 scored the booklet either 4 or 5 out of for whether it was a good idea, did they enjoy reading it, did they like the way it was written, did they like the way it looked, have they learnt something about Iron Age and Roman Doncaster and would they like to see similar booklets for other areas and time periods in South Yorkshire. The other two respondents scored 5 out of 5 for everything except had they learnt anything about Iron Age and Roman Doncaster which they scored 1 because they already had a good knowledge of the area due to being members of an archaeological society.

Fifteen respondents answered positively the question whether similar booklets should be produced on other topics or places. These included Sheffield, the early Medieval and Medieval periods, Iron Age Wincobank, Templeborough Roman fort, the Industrial Revolution and a number of other locations in Doncaster.



# **ROMANS ON THE DON**





WHEN THE ROMANS ARRIVED IN DONCASTER by BILL BEVAN

Illustration 5. The front cover of the Romans on the Don booklet

#### 5.2 Website



Illustration 6. The homepage of the Romans on the Don webpages

A project website was identified as being a crucial element of Romans on the Don. The aims were to create ongoing access to the content of the booklet to those who were unable to receive a copy and as a long-term resource.

All of the booklet content is included on the website which also contains a downloadable version of the comic and the teacher's pack. The website is hosted by Doncaster MBC and is an integral element of their leisure services content within which it will be maintained. The time taken by the council IT staff to format and upload the pages and the actual web hosting are provided by the council as an in-kind contribution to the project.

The URL for the website is http://www.doncaster.gov.uk/romansonthedon

The website was officially launched along with the booklet at the Museum open day (see 5.5).

#### Feedback

Feedback about the site was requested on the site's homepage which provided an email address for people to write to. No feedback has to date been received.

The website recorded 284 hits during the period 17/11/06 to 5/2/07.

#### 5.3 Exhibition

A small travelling exhibition comprising two pop-up banners was produced as part of the project. The banners communicate four key messages: the Romans arrived in Doncaster, the Roman conquest brought changes to people's lives, that there was an existing population living in Doncaster before the Roman conquest and that there is an extensive Iron Age to Roman cropmark landscape.

The exhibition has been displayed at all community talks and will hopefully tour all Doncaster branch libraries in the near future before being provided to Doncaster Museum as a lasting resource.

#### 5.4 Community Talks



Illustration 7. Doncaster Archaeological and Historical Society

A total of 8 talks were given to local historical societies in Doncaster as well as to the South Yorkshire Archaeology Day (Sheffield) and the CBA Yorkshire Symposium (York). All organisations responding positively to a letter offering a talk were included. A total of 585 people attended all talks.

Community Group	Date
Doncaster Archaeological Society	14/11/06
Friends of Doncaster Museum	18/11/06
Thorne & District Local History Society	12/12/06
Carcroft & District Local History Society	12/01/07
Conisbrough & Denaby Main Heritage Group	18/01/07
Hatfield History Society	22/01/07
Rossington History Group	31/01/07
Mexborough & District Heritage Society	27/02/07
South Yorkshire Archaeology Day	25/11/06
CBA Yorkshire Symposium	03/02/2007

#### Feedback

A total of 46 feedback forms have been received from people attending a talk. Twenty six of these were a standard project form asking four questions while another 20 were a form specifically produced by Doncaster Archaeological and Historical Society.

Of the 26 respondents using the standard form all 26 people enjoyed the talk and felt that they learned something about the heritage of their area. Twenty five people thought talks were a good way of telling people about archaeological discoveries made as a result of planning regulations, one was not sure. Twenty-two people strongly agreed that they would like to see similar projects in other parts of South Yorkshire, three were unsure and one did not answer.

From Doncaster Archaeological Society responses 18 people thought the subject was excellent or good and 14 the overall content excellent or good. Nineteen respondents thought the talk relevant to the Society.

Informal feedback from those attending community talks given in person after the talks has been overwhelmingly positive and sometimes grateful. Many have made a point of saying how glad they are to discover about the results of work in their region made as a result of work carried out under PPG16. All archaeological societies immediately requested further talks on other subjects.

#### 5.5 Museum Open Day



Illustration 8. Visitors at the Vicus Romano-British living history camp

An open day at Doncaster Museum was held on Saturday the 18<sup>th</sup> November 2006, at which the booklet and website were officially launched. The day comprised an all-day living history camp presented by the Vicus, Roman object handling sessions and the first ever display of Roman artefacts from Paul Buckland's excavations in Doncaster. There was also an educational activity session for Doncaster YAC and other children and an illustrated talk to Friends of Doncaster Museum.

The day was a great success with 640 people visiting the event. The normal Saturday attendance of the Museum is between 30 and 200 people.

#### 5.6 Articles

Two articles are being published by the project. One will shortly appear in the *Bulletin* of the Roman Section of the Yorkshire Archaeology Society. The other will appear in the 2006/07 edition of the South Yorkshire Archaeology Review.

#### 6. Summary of Success of Project

'the booklet is more suited to the younger generation and to those who know little or nothing about the Iron Age and Roman occupation in Doncaster.'

We feel that the project has successfully met its aim and all four objectives. The range of school visits, educational material, community talks and publications has combined well to reach different sections of the Doncaster community. Feedback on the school visits, comic, community talks and booklet were almost all extremely positive and indicated that people did learn about the Iron Age and Roman heritage of the Doncaster area as a result of work undertaken in advance of aggregates quarrying. To archaeologists the work of aerial photographer Derrick Riley and the South Yorkshire brickwork field systems may be well known but these were near-unknown subjects to the majority of local people living in Doncaster who attended an event or completed a feedback form. The feedback given by people attending talks shows the strong desire to learn about local archaeological results of work undertaken under PPG16. The large number of visitors to the Museum open day also had the spin-off benefit of introducing hundreds of people to the museum who had not visited since the installation of the major new permanent exhibition space 'By Road and Rail'.

The demand for comics and booklets through Doncaster Museum and public libraries has been extremely high with the initial print runs distributed to people within weeks of their availability. Peter Robinson, curator of Archaeology at Doncaster Museum and Christine Fitt, Library Manager: Children's Reading Development Doncaster Library & Information Services have commented on how popular both publications have been and their difficulty in keeping up with demand. Christine said in October 2006 that

'The Romans on the Don' comics...have been quite popular - most of ours have now gone & some libraries are requesting fresh supplies.'

The project has not only communicated to people about the Iron Age and Roman heritage and the role of aggregates quarrying in archaeology in the immediate term but has also left a more lasting legacy of more informed people who may develop a lasting interest in their heritage.

We feel that the combination of avenues chosen to disseminate the results of fieldwork work well as a package and offer good value for money as content created for one avenue can be readily reworked for use in others.

A large part of the success of the project stemmed from the collaboration and involvement of the private heritage section, the regional archaeological curators, English Heritage, the regional museum, the regional library service and other local authority core officers. This enabled the appropriate archaeological materials and resources to be delivered throughout the community to different audiences. The involvement of the schools, libraries and the Doncaster IT team has been crucial in delivering the outputs to non-archaeologically aware audiences living in communities affected by aggregates quarrying.

#### 7. Future

There are a number of ways that we can build on this project for the future. The interest generated in Iron Age and Roman discoveries made in Doncaster in advance of aggregates quarrying relates to only a small part of the South Yorkshire archaeological heritage. Nearly all of those completing feedback forms have requested similar projects elsewhere in the region and on other time periods. A number requested opportunities to participate in archaeological fieldwork. Romans on the Don could, therefore, be taken as a starting point for such future heritage-based education and community outreach projects in the region.

The success of the project should ideally be built-upon as soon as possible through the development of a wider South Yorkshire project that covers all four constituent districts and other time periods. Similar projects could also be developed in partnership with individual quarry operators to focus on the results of archaeological work undertaken at specific quarry locations.

There was no opportunity for people to be involved in any community based fieldwork through Romans on the Don. This was because all sites had been excavated under PPG16 and were all removed or existing within the boundaries of operational or defunct quarries. No accessible extant archaeological sites formed part of the core information disseminated by the project. Community based fieldwork could be incorporated in a future project where a quarry is located alongside an area which contains earthworks of the potential for geophysics and fieldwalking.

Secondary school pupils were not specifically targeted by the project, though many attended the Museum open day and took copies of the booklet. The project could be extended to develop educational visits and resources for KS3. A more teen-oriented graphic novel would be a good vehicle to reach teenage members of the community.

Interactive white-boards were installed in schools throughout the country after the project began which provide huge potential as an educational tool. We restructured the teacher's pack to be readily used on these whiteboards, however the power of the interactivity could be harnessed to through the development of interactive class and small group activities that capture pupils' interest and imagination. An example could be a 'fit the cropmark together' tile puzzle.

The massive success of the comic in communicating key messages to the 7-11 age group is of particular significance. The comic worked because it looked like a comic not a pictorial educational resource. This was due to employing a comic artist to produce the artwork and the working partnership between the artist, the children's librarian and the archaeologists ensure that archaeological subjects were conveyed in a dynamic and stimulating way. The key messages were 'taught' without the experience feeling like a learning experience. This potentially powerful medium should be utilised elsewhere to reach this important target audience.

#### 8. Acknowledgements

Many people were involved in successfully delivering the Romans on the Don project. Bill Bevan would like to thank Dinah Saich and Roy Sykes of South Yorkshire Archaeology Service for developing and delivering the project in partnership and for ensuring the archaeological accuracy of the outputs. Sarah Cole provided advice and support throughout the project. I would also like to thank English Heritage for commissioning the project.

Peter Robinson and Alison Rodgers of Doncaster Museum supported the school visits by contacting schools and helped enormously in making sure that the Museum open day ran smoothly and attracted such good numbers of visitors. Members of the Vicus must also be congratulated for ensuring the success of the open day and for providing photographs of their members for use by the project. David McLeod was instrumental in supplying aerial photographs to the project.

Many of the outputs would not have been so successful without the hard work of Steve Fox (reconstruction drawings), Marvin Harding (comic), Georgia Litherland (comic and editing the booklet) and Dave Sainty (school visits and teacher's pack).

### 9. Appendices

Age	Gender	Postcode

We would be grateful if you could answer these questions, marking them from 1 to 5 depending on how strongly you agree or disagree.	1 = disagree 3 = not bothered 5 = agree
Is the Romans on the Don booklet a good idea?	
Have you enjoyed reading the Romans on the Don booklet?	
Do you like the way it is written?	
Do you like the way it looks?	
Have you learnt something about Iron Age & Roman Doncaster by reading this booklet?	
Would you like to see similar booklets on other areas or time periods in South Yorkshire?	

Please list any new information you have	learnt about Iron Age & Roman
Doncaster after reading the booklet	

Please list any topics or places you would be interested in for similar booklets in the future

Once completed, please return this form I the SAE to South Yorkshire Archaeology Service, Development Services, Howden House, 1 Union Street, Sheffield S1 2SH

Thank You



Age	Gender	Postcode

We would be grateful if you could answer these few questions. Please mark closer to the left of the page the more you agree or closer to the right the more you disagree. Mark inbetween if you're not sure.

Did you enjoy the Romans on the Don talk?

<Agree More

**Disagree More>** 

Have you learnt anything about the heritage of your area?

<Agree More

**Disagree More>** 

Are talks a good way of telling people about archaeological discoveries made as a result of planning regulations?

<Agree More

**Disagree More>** 

Would you like to see projects on other areas or time periods in South Yorkshire? Please list any topics or places you would be interested in

<Agree More

Disagree More>

Thank You

