

LUCERNA



THE ROMAN FINDS GROUP
NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 35, March 2008

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Roman Finds Group
Newsletter 35

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Notes for contributors

Contributions are always welcome – particularly on new finds –so please send them to us, and share them with the rest of the Roman Finds Group!

E-mailed text should be sent as either a .doc, .txt or .rtf file. Please use sufficient formatting to make the hierarchy of any headings clear, and do not embed illustrations of graphs in the text but send them as separate files. E-mailed illustrations should preferably be simple line drawings or uncluttered b/w photos and sent as .tif or .jpg files. No textured backgrounds, please.

The address for e-mailed contributions is:

lindseyr.smith@btinternet.com
emma.durham@arch.ox.ac.uk

Contributions by post should be sent to:
Emma Durham, Institute of Archaeology
36 Beaumont Street, Oxford, OX1 2PG.

A Bit About Us!

Emma do you want to put a bit in about you?

Lindsey is a first year Collaborative Award Holder at the University of Reading and The British Museum, investigating a collection of just over one hundred pieces of Romano-British pewter tableware held in the BM. For further information, please see:
http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/research_projects/pewter_hoards.aspx

Subscriptions 2007/8

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Thank you to everyone who has paid the subscription promptly this year and to those who have paid their outstanding debts. We still have a number of subscriptions outstanding for the current year, so if you are one of the culprits, please send me your cheque, made out to the Roman Finds Group. We do not want to lose anyone, but postal prices are increasing and if subscriptions remain unpaid, members will be removed from the mailing list.

The subscription remains at £8 for an individual and £11 for two people at the same address. If payment by standing order would be more convenient, I can send the form, which can also be downloaded from the RFG web site.

Angela Wardle
RFG Treasurer
1 Stebbing Farm, Fishers Green
Stevenage, Herts. SG1 2JB

Editorial

Welcome to the very brief 35th edition of Lucerna and hello from us! This really is not so much as an 'issue' rather more of an information and update sheet so we can inform RFG members of the recent Committee update and changes.

We have recently taken over as Newsletter Editors from Richard Hobbs who stepped down in January 2008. We will produce a comprehensive Lucerna later in the year so please do send your contributions. We'd like to say a huge thank you to Richard Hobbs for his continued hard work to produce this magazine over the years.

We have included an article recording the discovery of a splendid example of a Minerva wax spatula handle from near Norwich described by Alan Dawson. We also have a mystery object submitted by Roy Friendship-Taylor and a 'plea for bells' from Sandie Thomas.

*We look forward to meeting you in the future.
Emma Durham & Lindsey Smith*

‘Minerva’ wax spatula handle from near Norwich.



The figure is shown wearing the usual high crested Corinthian helmet which, unlike other examples published in Lucerna, has the crest parted down the middle in a realistic rendering. The features are clear with little wear and the details of the drapery exceptionally well defined.

On her chest she wears the usual aegis or Gorgon's mask hanging from a heavy chain or collar draped round her neck. There are three indented crescents either side of the aegis and chain which could be intended to represent the muscle moulding on a breastplate. The armless torso reduces to a slender waist before splaying out to form the blade housing. The base has a transverse slot in which the remnants of the iron blade are reduced to a rusty deposit, although the fixing rivets are still in situ on the back. The handle is an impressive 76mm tall.

Alan Dawson
Numismatic Society

MYSTERY OBJECT



It would appear that since the initial reporting in Lucerna 23, and subsequently in issues 24 and 25 there are more extant examples of Feugere type 5 wax spatula handles than first thought. This latest example, which was found by a metal detectorist near Norwich about two years ago, is in an excellent state of preservation with a hard dark green patina.

Does anyone know what this object is, or, what it is part of? It was found associated with Claudian samian together with both native fine and coarse wares. It came from the early Roman Military levels at Piddington, Northants. Comments please to: roy@friendship-taylor.freemove.co.uk

Plea for Bells....

My name is Sandie Williams and I am the Finds Manager from the University of Reading's excavations at Silchester. I am currently studying for my MA in Archaeology, and for my dissertation I am looking at Roman bells from Britain.

Small bronze bells are recorded in a large majority of published excavation reports, but the suggestions for their function have been many and varied, including cow bells, phallic windchimes and simply 'ritual' objects. No significant study has been made of the Roman bells in Britain, and it is the aim of the dissertation to rectify this.

I have already begun an initial survey of the material from published excavation reports, and the PAS, and would like to hear from anyone who has any unpublished bells from Roman sites, or who knows of any that could be looked at. Any information would be invaluable, and especially photographic and dating evidence. The only criteria for the bells is that they are Roman, and they can be of any size or form.

I look forward to hearing from anyone who can help, or has any suggestions and thank you in anticipation.

Sandie Williams
Dept. of Archaeology, University of Reading
sandie.williams@rdg.ac.uk

NEXT RFG MEETING

The Spring meeting will take place on **12th May** in? at Leicester University. A separate flyer with more details will be sent to members in due course.

The Autumn meeting has been set for **13th October** in the British Museum. Further notice will be sent nearer the time.

RFG Committee

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News, conferences, study days News, conferences, study days News, conferences, study days

Holleyman Archaeology Lecture 2008 5th March 2008

The villa of Tiberius Claudius Severus at Piddington (Northamptonshire): a peep/window into the past, by Roy Friendship-Taylor of the Upper Nene Archaeological Society. Held at the Chichester Lecture Theatre, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton 7-9pm (lecture 1 hour, followed by reception). Event is free but advanced booking only. Twenty-eight years of excavation at Piddington, Northamptonshire, has produced evidence of activity from the Mesolithic onwards. The recent discovery of a Conquest period Roman fort constructed close to a high status Late Iron Age settlement site was succeeded by two phases of a timber-built proto villa. Later, a well-appointed stone-built Roman villa only 30 metres or so away succeeded these. Originally, this stone-built villa contained mosaics and highly decorated wall plaster, evidence of many high status and exotic items, and other traded artefacts. An abrupt end to villa life came in the later third century, after which there is evidence for intensive 'squatter' occupation. Finally, the Roman-period occupation was followed by a modest Anglo-Saxon settlement situated within the ruins of what had once been a great villa. Run by University of Sussex, Centre for Continuing Education (CCE) in conjunction with Sussex Archaeological Society. For more information contact Joe Francis at CCE Conference Co-ordinator, The Sussex Institute, Essex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9SN, tel 01273 872718, email J.Francis@sussex.ac.uk, web www.sussex.ac.uk/cce. The cost is £free.

Celebrating Carlisle's heritage 7th March 2008 - 9th March 2008

Held at Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery in conjunction with 'Carlisle Unearthed' exhibition (until 20th January 2008). Fee includes refreshments, lunches, three course conference dinner and reception before the opening keynote speech on

Friday, 9 March. Synthesising information from over 30 years of excavations in Carlisle to produce a detailed picture ranging from the environmental background to the industrial archaeology of the city. For brochure, ring 01228 618700. For more information contact the museum at Castle Street, Carlisle, Cumbria CA3 8TP, tel 01228 618718, email enquiries@tulliehouse.co.uk, web www.tulliehouse.ac.uk. The cost is £80.

Finds from the Frontier 8th March 2008 – 9th March 2008

From the 4th Century to the End of Roman Britain. Hosted by Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle University. Aims to bring together finds specialists of the Roman period to shed light on the lives of the 4th century limitanei of Britain.

Speakers are:

The 4th century frontier - Tony Wilmott

Coins - Richard Brigstock

Personal appearance - Lindsay Allason-Jones

Glass - Jenny Price

Epigraphy and written sources - Mark Hassall

Pottery - Paul Bidwell

Environmental evidence - Jacquie Huntley

Militaria - Jon Coulston

Brooches - Rob Collins

Barbarians north of the wall - Fraser Hunter

Identity - Hilary Cool

For more information contact Robert Collins at Museum of Antiquities, Newcastle University, Newcastle on Tyne, NR1 7RU, email Robert.collins@ncl.ac.uk, web www.museums.ncl.ac.uk/fftf/. The cost is £15–£25.

Roman army 29th March 2008 – 2nd April 2008

A residential course meeting in Durham, organised by the Hadrianic Society, open to anyone interested in the Roman army. Non-residential places also available. Topics include The Roman Army in its Landscape, Caesar's Italian Campaign, The Battle of Adrianople, The Praetorian Guard under Augustus and Caligula and the Seashells. See website for summary of this year's event and details of last year's course under 'Roman Army School'. For more

information contact Dr Brian Dobson at President, 16 Swinside Drive, Belmont, Durham DH1 1AD, email annedobson1@uk2.net, web www.hadrianicsociety.com.

Food and drink in archaeology 11th April 2008 – 12th April 2008

Second annual conference held at The University of Nottingham, Department of Archaeology. Following the success of last year's event, the 2008 conference seeks to expand and showcase the importance of current postgraduate research into the study of food and drink. Food and drink are relevant to all areas of archaeology, regardless of geography, temporality or sub-discipline. Our conference series seeks, therefore, to unite researchers from different fields through a common interest in foodways. The proceedings of each conference are published in a peer-reviewed volume, published by Prospect Books. For more information contact the organisers at Food & Drink, Department of Archaeology, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD, tel 0115 951 4820, email archaeology-enquiries@nottingham.ac.uk, web www.nottingham.ac.uk/archaeology/research/conf_fooddrink.php.

Post Roman Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium (PREMASS) 22nd May – 23rd 2008 (Please note the date change!)

Department of Arch, University of Exeter

This symposium follows on from the successful EMASS at Cardiff in 2007. The title has changed for 2008 following discussion in 2007 on the problematic label associated with the early medieval period. In order to encourage a broader range of papers discussing research from the Post Roman to the Early Medieval period it has been renamed PREMASS.

The Post Roman Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium will create a constructive forum for researchers to express, discuss and explore new research and ideas in an interactive environment. The symposium will explicitly aim to cross traditional period/institutional/theoretical divides to

allow discussion between researchers of diverse expertise and perspectives. This symposium will aim to provide a forum for researchers to present ideas and thoughts informally without the pressure of producing complete research ready for publication.

Sessions will consist of 20-minute papers followed by open discussion and debate chaired by leading specialists in each field. As wide as possible a range of topics will be selected, and papers may cover all areas of Post Roman and Early Medieval research and discourse. Academics, professionals and undergraduates are invited to attend and give support and comments. Poster presentations are welcome from those unable to attend or speak on the day.

The conference fee is £25. Included in the registration fee is a buffet, lunch on both days, tea and coffee, conference literature and bookstalls, and a guided tour around archaeological features of Exeter followed by a reception at the Devon and Exeter Institute.

For all enquiries and to submit abstracts of 250 words, please contact Imogen Wood: iw206@ex.ac.uk. Please send in your registration forms by April 18th 2008. The deadline for abstracts is 31st March 2008.

First contact: Romans and northern Britain 31st May 2008

A Tayside and Fife Archaeological Committee special conference held from 9am at Dewar's Rinks conference centre, Perth. Provisional list of invited speakers and topics available. Debating the timetable, nature and significance of Rome's first contact with Scotland, particularly in the context of contact with Northern Britain. For more information contact Mark A Hall at Perth Museum & Art Gallery, 78 George Street, Perth, Scotland PH1 5LB, tel 01738 632488, email mahall@pkc.gov.uk, web www.ConferenceScotland.com. The cost is £15.

Aqua Britannica **31st May 2008**

A dedicated one day conference organised by the Surrey Roman Studies Group of Surrey Archaeological Society which will explore key aspects of the availability, technology, use and religious functions of water in Roman Britain. The conference will be held in Chertsey Hall, Chertsey. Contact the Society also for details of speakers and topics as well as booking arrangements. For more information contact Surrey Archaeological Society at Castle Arch, Guildford GU1 3SX, tel 01483 532454, email info@surreyarchaeology.org.uk, web www.surreyarchaeology.org.uk. The cost is £12, lunches available.

Symposium on Roman Mosaics **13th June 2008 – 15th June 2008**

Summer symposium from the Association for the Study and Preservation of Roman Mosaics (ASPROM). Held at Chichester and Fishbourne Roman Palace. Programme of talks and visits to be arranged. Includes Roman banquet! Early accommodation booking advised as the symposium coincides with Goodwood. The group hotel is the Chichester Park Hotel, Westhampnett, Chichester PO19 7QL, tel 01243 786351, email info@chichesterparkhotel.com, web www.chichesterparkhotel.com. Room prices: B&B for two, one night £85 (three nights + £75); single £75 per night, dinner (book in advance) £15. Quote ASPROM 310 when booking. For more information contact Dr Stephen Cosh at Hon Secretary, 38 Oaklea, Ash Vale, Aldershot GU12 5HP, email honsec@asprom.org, web www.asprom.org/news/. The cost is £tba.

Hadrian: Empire & Conflict - British Museum **24th July – 26th October 2008**

Bringing together over 180 loans from 31 countries – from Italy to Georgia, Israel to Newcastle – the exhibition will display dramatic sculpture, exquisite bronzes and architectural fragments, many of which will be seen for the first time in the UK. The show also includes objects from the Museum's own

collection including the famous Vindolanda tablets from Hadrian's Wall. Following First Emperor, the exhibition will be the second to be held in the Museum's historic Round Reading Room, the dome of which has been compared to the Pantheon in Rome, one of Hadrian's architectural masterpieces. Opening hours for the exhibition: Daily 10.00–17.30 (last entry 16.20), Open late on Thursdays and Fridays until 20.30 (last entry 19.20) T: (+44) (0)207 323 8181 Further Information: www.thebritishmuseum.ac.uk

From Desert to Wetland. **27th and 28th September 2008**

This weekend conference in honour of Profs. Bryony Coles and Valerie Maxfield on their retirement, will take place at Streatham Court at the University of Exeter's Streatham Campus.

Speakers are:

David Breeze – Barbarians and the nature of Roman frontiers
Bill Hanson – Fort annexes in Roman Scotland
Rebecca Jones – Roman camps in Britannia
Lindsay Allason-Jones – Urban angst in RB
Alan Bowman – Vindolanda tablets and the army
Neil Holbrook – Roman South-West
Mark Hassal – Legion II Augusta – epigraphic evidence
Henrietta Quinnell – Devon Archaeology 1972-2008
Ralph Fyfe – palaeoecology in upland SW
Paul Mellars – *Homo sapiens* explosion
Denis Ramseyer – Wetland arch in Switzerland
Anthony Harding – Biskupin
Alison Sheridan – Developments in wetland arch
Linda Hurcombe – Tree and plant craftsapes
John Coles – Rock art in southern Scandinavia.

Cost for both days is £40.00 (Sat or Sunday only £25.00) plus lunch at £10 per day. For more information contact the Department of Archaeology, University of Exeter, Laver Building, Exeter, EX4 4QE. Tel: 01392 264350, e-mail: archaeology@exeter.ac.uk, web <http://www.sogaer.ex.ac.uk/archaeology/conference/s/present/desert-wetland2008-programme.shtml>