LUCERNA

THE ROMAN FINDS GROUP
NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 33, March 2007

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Roman Finds Group Newsletter **33**

Contents

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SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 2006/7

RFG Subscriptions due for 2007!

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 large number of subscriptions outstanding for the current year, so please send me your cheques, made out to the Roman Finds Group.

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.

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Editorial

Welcome to the 33rd edition of Lucerna. *This issue includes two excellent write-ups of important new finds – a button-loop fastener, and some puddingstone querns from Kent. There is also a review of a study day I attended at the Museum of London, which provided a timely overview of Roman London and, in particular, some important recent discoveries.*

There are two related articles which deal with the issue of cultural property and crime. One concerns 'Artbeat', a new initiative described by Michael Lewis of the PA Scheme; the other an unfortunate experience I had with E-bay recently, which I wanted to share with members.

Finally, just to remind everyone that contributions are <u>always</u> welcome – particularly on new finds –so please send them to me, and share them with the rest of the Roman Finds Group!

Richard Hobbs

A double-headed button and loop fastener from Reighton, North Yorkshire
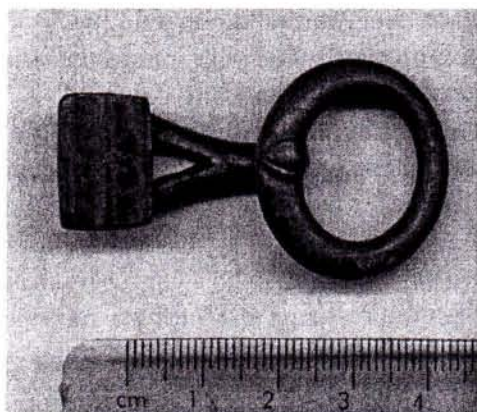
Cast button and loop fastener with a circular ring of plano-convex section and a triangular pierced loop with a rectangular plate projecting from the end of the loop. The plate stands on a pair of upstanding arms producing a rectangular slot beneath. The perimeter of the ring is grooved and a decorative lip moulding wraps around the junction of the loop and the ring. The plate is decorated with three parallel raised rib mouldings each with a narrow, central groove, the central rib moulding separated from two outer mouldings by a wide concave groove. At least nine oblique deep chisel marks are present on the lower face of the plate apparently produced from the casting rather than tooling after the object came out of the mould.

Originally with soil adhering, and a small area of bronze disease, now conserved. Complete. Total length 53mm, total height 14mm, ring diameter 29mm, ring thickness 3.5mm, rectangular plate 18x13mm, slot approx. 8x3mm

Reighton Bypass RBY06 SF1 [1029] Area B level 122.40

A cast copper alloy button and loop fastener of unusual design was found during excavations by Archaeological Services WYAS in advance of the construction of the A165 Reighton Bypass, to the south east of Filey, North Yorkshire. It was recovered from Area B located on the western side of the Hunmanby Road (B1229) where it meets the Grindale Road (NGR 513180474650). The fastener was found in primary fill [1029] of the re-cut [1030] of an E-W orientated boundary ditch [1026]. An iron object, probably a piece of heavy iron binding, was also found in the fill but no pottery occurred to assist with dating the deposit. The boundary ditch containing the fastener is assigned to the Late Iron Age while the ditch parallel to it and lying close by is attributed to the Romano-British period.

The fastener with its ring head of plano-convex section and lip-moulding resembles the ring-headed button and loop fasteners of Wild's class II (1970, 138 and fig 1) and Kilbride-Jones' quoit-shaped style (1980, 167). The fastener differs significantly from known examples, however, in having a rectangular-shaped plate with ribbed mouldings projecting above the end of the pierced, triangular loop, supported on the arms of a small strap bar or loop. The rectangular plate is comparable to fasteners with flat, rectangular heads of Wild's class VIb, Gillam type D (Wild 1970, 141 and fig 2) and flat, square heads of Kilbride-Jones (1980, 164-166). As such, having a ring head at one end and a rectangular head at the other, the Reighton fastener may be considered a double-headed form.

A small number of fittings are generally comparable to the Reighton fastener. Those that resemble the Reighton fastener most closely come from a hoard of Late pre-Roman Iron Age horse fittings and other metalwork from Melsonby, North Yorkshire, a short distance from the fort at Stanwick, by which name the hoard is usually referred. A gilded copper alloy fitting from the hoard has a ring head at one end ornamented with two pairs of lip-mouldings, and a shank ending in a rectangular plate at the

other, with a rectangular bar loop beneath (MacGregor 1962, 42 fig 7 no 25). The plate, with ring and dot ornament, continues the line of the shank rather than being raised above the rectangular bar as occurs on the Reighton fastener. Two other fittings (ibid. 28-9) from the hoard are of the same general type differing only in the shape of the second terminal and the presence of settings for enamel decoration. Thirteen ring-headed button and loop fasteners of the type more commonly found were also present. All were described as strap terminals. This metalwork of mid first century date has been considered to be a founder's hoard made in northern England in Brigantian territory (MacGregor 1962). Recent work has suggested it might be debris from a funeral pyre (Dungworth in Haselgrove, Lowther and Willis 1999, 40) rather than material collected by a metalworker for recycling.

A fitting from Traprain Law is also comparable in general form having a 'petal and boss' shaped head at one end and a square plate with a loop beneath at the other (Curle and Cree 1920-1, 178 fig 16; Burley 1955-6, 191 no 319). It was found in level 3 from which late first century and possibly second century coins were recovered (Burley 1955-6, 119). Another from the fort at Abergavenny (Savory 1993, 212, fig 14 no 43) has a petal and boss shaped head with roundels of enamelled decoration at either end, one with a cast loop below. The fitting, termed a strap hook, was dated by its enamelled decoration to AD50-75. A fastener with a pierced, rectangular head at one end and a flat, semi-circular plate with a rectangular loop beneath was found in topsoil at Richborough, Kent, at the other end of the country (Bushe-Fox 1928, 74, pl. XX no 38). Though sharing several characteristics with the Reighton fastener, all these examples differ in having strap bars cast below the plate or second head.

A preliminary scan of the literature, though not exhaustive, failed to produce an exact parallel for the Reighton fastener. Those fittings that it most closely resembles, and that may be considered variants of the more

commonly found button and loop fasteners, are outlined above. Wild's classification of button and loop fasteners (1970) has been widely adopted in the literature and is used here. The ring head is common to several class II fasteners recovered from Yorkshire. The ridged and grooved rectangular plate is similar to the rectangular head of a class VIb example from Aldborough in the same county (Bishop 1996, 60 and fig 34 no 366). Alborough, the Romano-British town of *Isurium Brigantum,* has produced a significant proportion of military fittings along with a small number of items of native metalwork (ibid. fig 3, 2-7). Button and loop fasteners are common finds from Yorkshire; class III, with a 'petal and boss' shaped head, being perhaps the most frequently recovered with class II, with a ring head, well represented, most notably in the Melsonby/Stanwick Hoard. Hybrid head forms combining features from more than one class are also known from the county.

The ring headed fastener, class II, is considered to be in the British Iron Age tradition and dated from the middle of the first century AD continuing in use into the second century (Wild 1970, 138). Thirteen examples, along with the double-headed examples discussed above, were found in the hoard at Melsonby/Stanwick, North Yorkshire dated to c. AD 50-60 (Wild 1970, 148; MacGregor 1962), later refined to AD 47-71/2 (MacGregor 1976). Fasteners with plain rectangular heads, class VIb, are dated by Wild to the second century AD (Wild 1970, 141). A clay mould for casting flat, rectangular-headed fasteners and ten fasteners of this type were found at Traprain Law, East Lothian, the mould in a first-second century deposit and the fasteners principally in first-second century and late second century levels. Fasteners of the ring-headed type, class II, and the flat, rectangular-headed type, class VIb, were both found along with other classes of fastener at Trapain Law. Lacking directly associated dating evidence it is only safe to say that the Reighton fastener dates to the second half of the first or the early years of the second century AD. As the closest parallels lie in the

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Melsonby/Stanwick hoard one could suggest a date in the third quarter of the first century AD.

Button and loop fasteners have been recovered from a wide range of sites throughout the country in both civilian and military contexts but are most strongly associated with the north of Britain. In 1989 Lindsay Allason-Jones observed that a third of the button and loop fasteners known at that time from the northern frontier zone had been found on native settlements while the rest came from Roman military sites (Allason-Jones 1989, 17). She agreed with Wild on the likelihood of button and loop fasteners being the product of native craftsmen supplying a range of trinkets to the Roman army who were ever willing to engage in a little retail therapy. Fasteners with overtly Roman decorative motifs being those targeted specifically at their military customers (*ibid.*) rather than the product of Roman manufacture. Though the recorded numbers of button and loop fasteners and their find spots have increased steadily since this time the picture appears to have stayed essentially the same. To date eighty-three examples have been recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme, a third of which came from the Yorkshire and Humberside area. Those recovered by excavation have also grown substantially. A review of the general type is required to confirm or deny this impression.

Possible uses of the Reighton fastener

While the original suggestion that button and loop fasteners were used to fasten clothing has long been viewed with scepticism (Wild 1970, 145), it has not proved easy to identify a single function for this group of objects. The general design of button and loop fasteners allows for two methods of use. They may be secured by the loop with the head free to pass through a separate loop or a 'keyhole' shaped slit in the centre of a strap. Alternatively, they may be used the other way round. The L-shaped neck allows for the fitting to be secured by the head passing through a slit in the centre of a strap leaving the loop for attachment to a second

strap or thong, or for suspension of a pendant. While the insubstantial loops of the class VIII fasteners (Wild 1970, 141-3), apparently a first century type, were clearly intended for the former method. The latter method was chosen for fittings suspending small pendants of third century date (Bishop and Coulston 1989, fig 48,4; Bishop and Coulston 1993, fig 112 no 16) variously described as military belt fittings and horse equipment. The ring-headed button and loop fasteners of Wild's class II, of which the Reighton fastener is a hybrid, differ slightly from the other classes of fastener with their solid heads in that the ring head may have acted as a strap distributor.

The rectangular plate on the Reighton fastener, with its decorative mouldings, was intended to be on view. It is most likely that a narrow strap, no more than 8mm wide and less than 3mm thick, was passed through the triangular loop beneath the plate. The ring at the opposite end may have allowed two straps, or more, to be attached. The fastener may have served to connect at least three separate straps but the ring shows no sign of wear that might confirm this. The casting of the Reighton fastener appears crisp and fresh; it may have been new or hardly used when lost. Wild noted that none of the 165 button and loop fasteners that he catalogued showed any sign of wear (Wild 1970, 145). A connector of three narrow straps could have been put to a number of uses, amongst the more obvious being to attach a sheath or scabbard to a belt or as part of a bridle or other horse harness; both of which were considered by Wild.

The double-headed fitting might have been used in the suspension of a sword or dagger scabbard, or other piece of equipment, from a belt or baldric. A sword sheath found at Mainz is said to have two fasteners adhering to it (Wild 1970, 146 and footnote 26).

In this regard, the recovery of a button and loop fastener with two *spathae* (short swords) and scabbard fittings found with two skeletons at Canterbury is of interest (Webster

in Bennett, Frere and Stow 1982, 185, fig 100B). The hurried burials were dated to the late 2nd century by association with the button and loop fastener of class Va.

A junction for narrow leather straps may have been used on horse harness. Reconstruction of Celto-Roman harness suggests that multiple straps were connected at the breast, shoulders and haunch junctions (Bishop 1988, fig 25). One might imagine that significant wear would result from such use, a feature not generally seen on button and loop fasteners. Sets of harness fittings that include matching button and loop fasteners are included in the hoards from Middlebie and Geinsheim (Wild 1970, 145 footnote 22). As the closest parallels to the Reighton fastener occurred amongst the four sets of harness fittings in the Melsonby/Stanwick hoard it is perhaps most likely that the fastener was used on horse harness.

Some button and loop fasteners are highly decorative with coloured enamels ornamenting the head others are plain and appear purely utilitarian. While the majority of fasteners are made of copper alloy, examples made of bone, class X, are also found. This might suggest that when it was not possible to supply cast copper alloy examples demand was sufficiently strong for their production in bone, a cheaper material readily to hand. Whatever their use, or varied uses, button and loop fasteners and their variants were clearly valued. Two fasteners, of differing styles, class Va and VIa, were found together in a wooden toilet box interred in a York cemetery (Wild 1970, 145, cat nos. 59 and 94), and so of some significance to the deceased or those who arranged the burial.

I would be most interested to learn of any other double-headed fasteners or any fasteners recovered from a context that might shed more light on their original function.

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The puddingstone rotary querns from Springhead Roman town, Kent

Introduction

It is not often that commercial excavations produce, examine and publish outstanding assemblages of rotary querns. The recent excavations at Springhead Roman town, part of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link have done precisely this, with their combined assemblage of 103 rotary querns (information and data reproduced with the kind permission of Union Railways (North) Limited and Rail Link Engineering). The assemblage includes mainly querns of lava, Millstone Grit and puddingstone with a few querns of Greensand including four of Lodsworth stone. The count of 103 rotary querns includes eight millstones and the larger lava fragments but not the 45kg or so of small weathered and indeterminate lava fragments also recovered.

The assemblage is currently being analysed for publication, but attention is drawn here to a component of particular interest, that is a group of 31 puddingstone querns. This number almost doubles that previously known from the entire county: only 32 were recorded in a recent survey by Blanning (2006, 17). Puddingstone querns occur mainly in western and northern Kent and have never been recorded in numbers of more than one or two at any single site in that county. The number seen at Springhead is, in fact, matched by only one other site: Elms Farm in Essex (Major 2004, 2).

Dating

The sheer number of puddingstone querns recovered from Springhead is, without question, exceptional. The assemblage also has the advantage over many that the querns are largely stratified and closely dated. There is an emphasis on the early deposition of all querns at Springhead, this being the main period of activity within the town, but the puddingstone querns are more significantly from early Roman contexts than other lithologies. Over 60% are early Roman, that is post-conquest and pre-AD 120, with only 10% from late Roman contexts. The remainder are from 2nd century/mid-Roman contexts and none are of pre-Conquest date.

Up until now little has been known about the period during which puddingstone querns were used in Kent as so few finds are stratified and/or securely dated. The closest we

have come to understanding its use is to say that most of the finds are Roman in date, with none definitely dated to the Late Iron Age (Ingle 1989; Blanning 2006). Elsewhere, the use of puddingstone has been pinned down to a period between the beginning of the 1st century AD (although largely post-conquest) and the mid 2nd century (Major 2004, 4), and the puddingstone querns from Springhead seem to be in keeping with this pattern of use.

Typology

While the assemblage indicates a period of use contemporary with puddingstone querns elsewhere (in other words that it was largely, if not wholly confined to the first two centuries of the Roman period), analysis of the typology and lithology of the assemblage is essential. It might be anticipated, for example, that a narrow window of production (and an often-assumed single source for the querns) would suggest a consistency in their form and size. The Springhead querns are indeed mainly of East Anglian form, that is, a flatter bun shape than the Hunsbury form (Philips 1950, 76) and as a range of their profiles has been previously well illustrated (King 1980, Fig 1), the exercise is not repeated here.

At Springhead, there are significant variations within the general East Anglian type from steep, almost straight-sided querns with a flatter top, to querns with curved, almost bulging edges and a rounded top. One example of a different form has short straight edges leading to a bulging top and shallow basin shaped hopper (SF 20486, Fig 1); it is of typical diameter but lower than average thickness (max 51mm). In addition, although most of the hoppers are conical or funnel shaped, there are minor variations. In some examples the eye widens out to form the hopper (and there is no distinction between the two), while in others there is a cylindrical feed pipe leading into a distinct but still conical shaped hopper. There are also examples with unusually wide feed pipes (up to 45mm in diameter, for example SF 20484) and a quern with a typical profile but an

oval-shaped feed pipe and funnel shaped hopper (SF 20480).
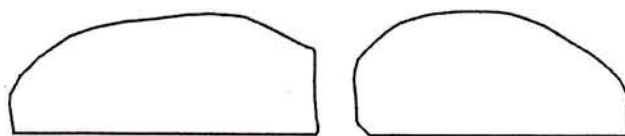
Puddingstone querns.

The Springhead querns vary in thickness from 51-133mm making them marginally thinner than previously recorded puddingstone querns from both Kent (at 98 to 180mm: Blanning 2006, 16) and elsewhere (at 85-150mm, Ingle 1989, 114). It is not clear whether this is due to extensive use (and wear) or to a difference in original size, but there is some evidence of other variations in size from the normal range. Puddingstone querns are of generally smaller diameters than querns of other materials and the Springhead examples are generally consistent with those recorded in previous general surveys for Kent, (250-375mm diameter: Blanning 2006, 16) and elsewhere (210/220 - 375mm diameter: King 1980, 70; Ingle 1989, 114). Three querns are unusually large, however, measuring approximately 450mm in diameter and with their maximum thickness ranging from 90-100mm, they are relatively thin. Two querns measuring approximately 400mm diameter have been recorded in Kent at Thurnham Villa and in Canterbury (Booth *et al* in prep and Blanning 2006, 7) but even taking these into account, the three examples from Springhead are unusually large. Two of these are of the usual East Anglian form while the third is not complete enough for form to be accurately determined.

The variable sizes of the Springhead querns may be just the result of a sudden increase in quern numbers, thus providing a more varied sample, but combined with the range of styles seen, they are unusual enough to be suggestive of either a difference in date or provenance. Two of the three larger querns are early Roman and one is mid Roman. These dates are consistent with other styles and sizes

of puddingstone querns so the most likely explanation for the difference in size is that they were produced in another place and were perhaps subject to different stylistic influences.

Lithology

Differences in the provenance of the Springhead puddingstone querns are also suggested by the variation in the petrological types represented. Of 29 querns large enough to be examined, the majority (21) are of a dark brown (ferricrete) type - that is they consist of a dark brown ferruginous cement and dark coloured pebbles varying from tan to yellow to brown. The red pebbles often seen in the 'Hertfordshire Puddingstone' are absent and the dark cement is in stark contrast to the pale silica cement of the above and commonly seen in the querns of Essex and nearby counties (Shaffrey in prep). A further three have a slightly paler brown matrix but appear to be part of a similar class. Puddingstone querns of this petrological type have also been recorded in Kent at Thurnham Villa and West Of Leda Cottages (Booth *et al*, in prep) and may be even more commonplace in Kent, although further detailed recording of the petrology of puddingstone querns is required in order to confirm this.

Five remaining querns have a very pale cream or grey matrix and are quite different to the rest of the assemblage. Two of these contain grey and occasional red pebbles, all quite sparse (SF 15640 and 15701). Two have cream pebbles and a cream or grey matrix (SF 20480 and context 5845), while the fifth (SF 20492) has mostly small (with occasional large), dark and pale contrasting pebbles densely packed in a cream matrix. These appear to be more in keeping with the types of silcrete puddingstone seen north of London.

As might be expected, there is some correlation between the different forms of puddingstone querns at Springhead and their lithology. The range of East Anglian forms described above all occur in the ferruginous dark brown variety most common at Springhead while some of the less common forms and sizes

are of the less common paler petrological types. The flat quern (SF 20486) and one of the three larger puddingstone querns (SF 15640) are of pale (cream or grey) types while the other two large querns are of the paler brown type (ctx 2147 and SF 20468).

Whilst a range of materials and styles is usually to be expected in a large assemblage of rotary querns, puddingstone querns are well known for their consistency in design. The large range of sizes and styles seen at Springhead, in conjunction with the wide range of lithological types, points to multiple sources. While most can probably be classed as of East Anglian form, it seems very unlikely that there can have been a single factory as envisaged by Curwen (1941, 20); the range of lithological and typological types is too great. The fact that the few unusual style querns are also of different petrological types to the rest of the assemblage is also supportive of a different quern producer or producers.

If the evidence points to multiple sources for the puddingstone querns, the next question, inevitably, is where these sources were located. The indicators so far are that some types of puddingstone recorded in Kent are quite different to those recorded north of London. The consistent petrology and frequency of these Kentish puddingstone querns may be taken to indicate a single source somewhere in Kent itself. This possibility has been suggested on occasion before (Ingle 1989, 155; Grove 1957, 225, Blanning 2006) and is currently being investigated in further detail by the author.

Discussion

The question of why there are so many puddingstone querns at Springhead is a puzzling one. The number is incredible both within Kent and further afield and excavations at nearby sites have produced only either a single specimen, for example Otford Villa (Pearce 1930, 171) or none at all (Northfleet Villa, Shaffrey in prep b). The early date of the site almost certainly has some part to play, for we

know puddingstone querns were predominantly used during the early Roman period. The location and nature of the site must also have played a role, towns being more likely to have had access to a broad range of materials than rural or villa sites and thus able to produce greater numbers of less common materials. A location right on the main road would also have increased the likelihood of passing trade, with travellers choosing to exchange items for querns. The size of the assemblage is, in addition, also likely to increase the number of puddingstone querns seen.

Individually, none of these factors is able to explain why we should see such a large assemblage of puddingstone querns. Even if we do identify a source relatively local to Springhead for the ferricrete puddingstone, it remains an anomaly within its local environment as well as in the broader picture. One possibility is that the town served as a distribution centre for the puddingstone querns, either a primary distribution centre, if a local source is identified, or a secondary distribution centre, if the querns were imported. Another explanation might be that puddingstone querns served a very specific purpose, other than for grinding flour, and that their finding at Springhead represents this activity. Environmental evidence points to the existence of brewing in the town (Channel Tunnel Rail Link information reproduced with the kind permission of Union Railways (North) Limited and Rail Link Engineering) and it may be that puddingstone querns were involved in this.

Conclusions

Whatever the explanation for the large assemblage of puddingstone querns at Springhead, their existence has highlighted a number of important issues and possibilities.

1) The dating of the Springhead assemblage points to the use of most puddingstone querns in the 1st and 2nd centuries and is thus in keeping with its use elsewhere (Major 2004).
2) Puddingstone querns may have been exploited for grinding substances other than grain and at Springhead an involvement in brewing seems the most likely explanation.
3) Puddingstone querns are not as uniform as once perceived and striking differences in both typology and lithology point to the existence of multiple sources and the likely possibility of a Kentish source.

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Dr Ruth Shaffrey
Oxford Archaeology

CALLING ALL RFG MEMBERS

Anatomical/medical *ex votos*

I am researching the distribution of anatomical or medical *ex votos* (in the form of representative body parts) from Roman Britain. I would be grateful to hear from anyone who knows of any unpublished examples in museum collections or from recent or unpublished excavations. These are relatively rare items in Roman Britain, although both custom-made and customised examples are known from a number of religious sites and contexts.

Please contact Dr I.M. Ferris
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Portable Antiquities Scheme news

ArtBeat – a new initiative to tackle cultural property crime

The Metropolitan Police is currently recruiting and training museum professionals, archaeologists and others in the heritage sector to become Special Police Constables. Working with detectives in the Metropolitan Police's Art and Antiques Unit it is hoped the new recruits will be successful in helping to prevent and detect 'art crime' in London.

The initiative - known as ArtBeat (!) – requires employers of Special Police Constables to release their staff for 200 hours a year (1 day a fortnight) to undertake their duties. In return the recruits get free Tube, Bus and DLR travel, first class training, as well as new (transferable) skills, and a uniform. By the end of 2007 it is hoped that 20 ArtBeat Special Police Constables will be fully trained and ready to patrol art crime hotspots and investigate cultural property crime.

It will obviously be an advantage for the Art and Antiques Unit to have heritage professionals in its ranks, especially in terms of expertise and as well as having more police officers at its disposal. However, it must be hoped that this initiative will also raise general awareness of the impact of cultural property crime (including the detrimental loss of information about our past) and lead to better co-operation between the Police and those in the heritage sector.

For more information about ArtBeat please contact DS Vernon Rapley, Art & Antiques Unit, Specialist Crime Directorate. T: 020 7230 3262. E: vernon.rapley@met.police.uk

Dr Michael Lewis
British Museum

DECADE OF DISCOVERY - a conference to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Portable Antiquities Scheme

Over the last ten years, the Portable Antiquities Scheme (www.finds.org.uk) has systematically recorded 235,000 archaeological objects found by members of the public. They range from hand-axes made by early hominids half a million years ago to lead seals from the hitherto little-known nineteenth-century Russian flax trade.

Patterns emerging from this vast resource are beginning to change our ideas about the past. Until now, conventional archaeological methods such as survey and excavation have shown what was lost around 'sites' where people in the past

lived, worked and died. But papers to be presented at this conference by major British archaeologists show that metal-detecting and field-walking can locate different kinds of objects. Prehistoric hoards, cart and horse-harness fittings, workshop tools and lost brooches can conjure up a subtly different view of the world. Has traditional archaeology got it right? Or will the thousands of finds made by ordinary people change the way we think? Speakers will include Mark Blackburn, Richard Bradley, Duncan Garrow, Fraser Hunter, Jude Plouviez, Tim Schadla-Hall, Gabor Thomas, Martin Welch and staff from the Scheme.

The conference will take place in the Stevenson Lecture Theatre, The British Museum, London on Tuesday 17th and Wednesday 18th April 2007, 10am-5pm, and will cost £10 per day or £15 for both days. It is planned that the proceedings will be published in 2008. If you would like to book a place please contact Claire Costin on 0207 323 8618 or email ccostin@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

E-BAY – BE WARNED!

I wanted to share with readers an experience I had recently with regard to Roman material being sold on E-bay. I was first alerted to this by Dan Pett, who is the IS Advisor to the Portable Antiquities Scheme, and is more aware than I am of items being auctioned on the internet auction site. He happened to mention in passing that he had seen me being quoted by someone on E-bay, and later that day sent me the link.

The seller – using the ID 'doorkeeper282' – was auctioning a 'Roman Officers Silver Ring – 'Soldier' Intaglio 2nd. C., and asking for a starting bid of £600. (The sale ended on the 14th January). Alongside a description, he included the following:

'BRITISH MUSEUM – Feedback on this ring

Whenever I get the opportunity to authenticate/research an item I do and in November 2005, I was able to submit a collection of detailed photographs of my findings of this particular Roman ring, to the British Museum's, Dr Richard Hobbs, Curator of the Romano-British Collections.

His findings were:

'From the excellent, detailed images that you have sent, your own identification seems entirely accurate – the condition, profile of the ring and the bezel setting are entirely in keeping with Roman ring types of this nature and of the period and is most certainly a military ring. An interesting and fairly rare item.

You might wish to pursue parallels for the setting in Martin Henig's 'A corpus of Roman engraved gemstones from British sites' (British Archaeological Report 8).'

At no point had the seller asked me or the Museum if we were amenable to me being quoted. I could not remember seeing the ring, but as I see a lot of material during the course of my job, I didn't rule out the possibility that I had seen it, even if I was absolutely certain that I would not have said some of the things which the vendor claimed I had.

Luckily, you will note that the seller states when he contacted me – November 2005. This meant that I was able to go back through departmental files to see if I could find the correspondence. And sure enough, on the 9th November 2005, I had been sent some images by a Mr Jeff Dowling, who asked me for my opinion on this ring. What I actually said in my response was as follows:

'Dear Mr Dowling

Thank you for your enquiry. From the images that you have sent your own identification seems accurate – the profile of the ring and the bezel setting are entirely in keeping with Roman ring types of this nature. You might wish to

pursue parallels for the setting in Martin
Henig's 'A corpus of Roman engraved
gemstones from British sites' (British
Archaeological Reports 8).'

As is therefore clear, my opinion was modified
by this gentleman to make this item more
attractive to bidders – particularly by adding a
link to the Roman military, which I had not
made. I should also add that he had told me that
the ring was 'from an old European collection',
and had worked on several British
archaeological sites, and 'worked with the
Canterbury Archaeological Trust and Trust for
Thanet Archaeology'. For these reasons, I did
no believe the ring to be an item of undeclared
Treasure, although in retrospect, I realise that I
should have checked this to make sure.

Clearly, this experience demonstrates that all
specialists need to be very careful nowadays
when providing opinions on objects,
particularly via e-mail and on the basis of
images, although even traditional written
opinions could theoretically be misquoted as
well. I would be interested to hear from any
other readers of *Lucerna* who have had similar
experiences.

Richard Hobbs
The British Museum

Postscript: I sent a copy of this article to Mr
Dowling. He has apologised unreservedly for
his actions, and has now removed all references
to myself and The British Museum from E-bay.

Study Day Reviews

Londininum under occupation

28th October 2006: Museum of London

Jenny Hall (Museum of London) – 'Laying the
foundations'

During the Roman invasion, the army must
have crossed the Thames – it is thought
somewhere in the vicinity of Westminster – and
awaited the arrival of Claudius. There is no
structural evidence of any early encampments,
although it is possibly that the Fulham sword
and Thames helmet (on display in gallery 49 at
the BM) were lost at this time.

The main evidence for occupation at this
early date comes from Southwark, where me
might suppose that there would have been
encampments designed to watch over the river
crossing. Southwark has produced small find
evidence, e.g. large numbers of Claudian copies,
which we usually associate with the presence of
the army, although, as Mike Bishop has pointed
out, there is no mention in Tacitus of a military
camp in London. Nevertheless, Southwark may
have served as an army depot.

When a street grid was laid out east of
the Walbrook, such planning must have
involved the army, under the direction of the
new administration. London, being selected as
the administrative capital of the province, must
have required the presence of soldiers, seconded
onto the governor's staff.

In AD200, a decision was taken to
define the shape of London by the building of a
wall. A vast quantity of stone shipped in from
the Medway would have been required, and the
military must have been involved, even if just
overseeing gangs of labourers. Gatehouses were
also constructed at Aldgate, Bishopsgate,
Ludgate (Moorgate is a later medieval addition).
The riverside wall was added, hurriedly, in the
fourth century, and towers were also added to
the east at this time. There were platforms for

ballista, and funerary monuments were stolen from nearby cemeteries for use. The wall stayed true until the 17th century, but most had gone by the Victorian period, when the gates were demolished as part of a road widening project. The Roman legacy is the shape of the city of London.

Some current and forthcoming research was also described. Mike Bishop is currently cataloguing the military finds from London, one of the finest collections around. Jenny has also secured a Designated Challenge Fund grant to work on an on-line database and web resource which will draw on MoL collections, on the theme of 'Living in Roman London'. Phase 1 is called 'A soldier's life'; future phases will include 'Life at home'. The site is due to go live in 2008.

John Shepherd (Institute of Archaeology, UCL) – 'London's power house? The Roman fort'

Bomb damage during the Second World War greatly affected the city, with many timber structures (often warehouses full of textiles) being very vulnerable to incendiaries. However, this at least gave the opportunity in the post war period to get beneath the surface of the city, and this was taken up by Professor Grimes, who was asked to head up the Roman and Medieval London Excavation Council. Between 1944 and 1968 Grimes excavated about 65 areas in the City of London and its environs, leaving behind a very good archive.

By 1950, Grimes believed that he had discovered a Roman fort at Cripplegate. He exposed some barracks in the Noble Street area; he cleared the interior of Bastion 14, which he realised was medieval. He realised however at an early stage that the wall itself was actually 2 walls back to back, a narrow outer wall and a wider inner wall. The outside was ragstone and mortar; the inner ragstone and re-used *tegulae*. He correctly extrapolated through later excavations that the outer wall was earlier, and that the inner wall represented a thickening.

The fort at Cripplegate was built in the 1st quarter of the 2nd century, about the same time as the main building of forts in the north of the province – maybe the two are linked in some way? Grimes moved on to locate the west gate of the fort (his site number 5). The gate would have had some kind of portcullis mechanism, so must have been at least 2 storeys in height. The foundations were of re-used sandstone, so this must have been robbed out from somewhere. Unclear if fort was still in use when the city wall was built in c. AD200; it was certainly causing drainage problems, as they added a culvert which drained into the fort ditch. Material from the fort ditch is early to mid 3rd century AD, so it was certainly being backfilled during this time.

Dave Lakin (Museum of London Archaeological Services) – 'The military at large in London: recent discoveries'

At St Swithams/ Wallbrook, a section of 'V' shaped military ditch was discovered. Preliminary evidence suggests that this ditch was filled in by as early as AD 50. This would fit in with the idea of a military enclosure, established in the immediate conquest period, to protect a bridgehead. The ditches were replaced by wider 'U' shaped ditches; these also went out of use quickly, having been abandoned by the time of the Boudiccan revolt in AD61.

The site at Plantation House has yielded well preserved evidence of a fort. The area MoLAS were able to excavate lay over the north-east corner of the fort. Here they found more classic 'V' shaped ditches, which lay in front of a timber-laced bank, which formed a horizontal lattice, using timbers salvaged from the civilian settlement. There would have been a timber walkway on top. Very little of the internal parts of the fort were uncovered, apart from evidence of a granary, and a cookhouse with a pair of hearths in it. The ceramic evidence suggests a foundation of this fort in AD70, with a definite date for the end in AD85. It may have functioned as a stores depot after

the Boudiccan revolt, as suggested by large numbers of amphora fragments.

At Cripplegate, it has been possible to add to Grime's work by excavating some parts of the interior. Evidence has been found of barrack blocks, seven in total, and very fragmentary. The blocks were built of timber and brick on a ragstone rubble foundation. Painted plaster fragments have been found, decorated with foliate designs, some lapis used in places. The barracks seem to have been rather irregular, not having been built as pairs, and there is no evidence for officers' quarters at the ends of the blocks.

It is possible that Cripplegate fort provided the accommodation for the governor's bodyguard. This consisted of 500 cavalry and 500 infantry, and there is room in the fort for stables of the horses. As for dating, the recent excavation work exactly matches the date suggested by Grimes for the foundation of the fort in AD 120. This would apparently mark the re-establishment of the military in London after a 35 year gap (after the abandonment of Plantation House) – where did they all go during this period? It is not possible to identify the continued use of the fort after AD200, and it is entirely possible it did not even last that long.

Gustav Milne (Institute of Archaeology, UCL) – 'The Classis Britannica: dockland developers?'

The Classis Britannica is a crucial and somewhat neglected element of the London military, and was essential to the development of the province. It disappears from the epigraphic record in about AD 250. It was first identified by Charles Roach-Smith, who found an altar at Lympe, to a prefect of the CB. At Dover, the fort of the CB was excavated in 1982 by Brian Philp, and dated to between AD117 and 208. The fleet was involved with ironworking in the Weald, as well as the stone quarrying and tile industries. It provided the umbilical cord to the distant empire.

The procuratorial office in Britain was very much linked to the prefect of the CB. One of their principal roles, aside from the movement of troops and control of piracy, was a regular channel crossing from Dover. This was to maintain the imperial mail service and for mercantile purposes. In addition, the CB was responsible for building its own ships (there was no tradition of ship building in Britain), which required a large amount of timber and a large quantity of iron (hence the importance of the Weald).

At Regis House, the CB was involved in the building of a quay, as well as the attendant warehouses and storehouses. This was a quite deliberate attempt to turn Britain into a successful province after the Boudiccan revolt, when it was entirely possible that the emperor could have decided to cut and run. The CB instead would have been employed for the collection of taxes, the transportation of wealth (like grain) and troop movements. Other evidence in London however is difficult to find: there is one 'CLBR' stamp from the fort at Cripplegate, which produced lots of procuratorial stamps, so it seems likely that the navy was present at the fort. This is also even more likely given that the fort at Dover was occupied for exactly the same length of time as the one at Cripplegate.

Mark Hassall 'Name, rank and number: identifying the soldiers from Roman London'

Mark provided some background on the army; in Rome, an inscription lists all the legions across the empire, starting in Britain, thus with the II Augusta at Caeleon, the VI Victrix at York, and the XX Victrix based at Chester. In total there were about 30 legions across the empire, therefore somewhere in the region of 150,000 men. As for legionary presence in London, these would have been legionaries pressed into service on the governors staff, such as Martianus Pulcher, one of the governor's men whose tombstone has been found.

Another type of officer was the 'speculatores', and these would have been attached to the governor as well. They were not unlike military police, as they had the rather gruesome task of executing prisoners by beheading (the governor having the right to 'ius gladi', the 'right of the sword'). In addition, one of the perks of the job was to get the spoils from the executed prisoners (unless very high value, in which case that had to go into the imperial coffers) – finger rings and so on.

A mural at Winchester Palace, south of the Thames, provided an interesting inscription. Apart from 'M. ET S.' – the meaning of which is not entirely clear – it also listed a number of cohorts, including the III, IV, V, with 7 or 8 men from each listed. It is not known what legions these men came from, but it is probable that thery had been seconded onto the staff of the governor. Someone like 'Favonius Postumus' was one, whose tombstone has been found.

As for the auxiliary troops, there were also about 150,000 of these as well. One diploma lists about 50 auxiliary unit serving in Britain, and at least one of these was London based. The Vindolanda tablets as well mention London, e.g. one strength report tells us that out of a unit of 752 auxiliary soldiers, 46 were acting as governor's body guards. Another document has an address on it, which refers to a 'Veldedeios', who was also based at London.

The late Roman army was organised rather differently, and what we know of it we owe to the Notitia Dignitatum – the 'Handbook of Offices'. This shows that the province was organised in a rather different way in the fourth century, with a 'Vicarius', a deputy governor of Britain, and he had five sub-governors, one of whom was based at London. There is also evidence in the form of small finds from London, including a very attractive belt set from East London.

Richard Hobbs
The British Museum

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Next Meeting: York

'How its done in Eboracum'

The Spring meeting will take place on **March 5th** in the Tempest Anderson Hall at the Yorkshire Museum. A separate flyer with more details has already been sent out to members. Alternatively, you can visit the website and download a copy of the application form:

www.romanfinds.org.uk/meetings.html

The cost of the day is £3 for members, £4 for non members

BOOK REVIEW

Roman Military Equipment: From the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome **by M.C. Bishop and J.C.N. Coulston Oxbow books 2006. 321pp**

Bishop and Coulston's first publication entitled *Roman Military Equipment* was a 76 page Shire archaeology booklet produced in 1989. It sought to bring attention to the evolution of Roman military equipment during the 600 year period from the Punic Wars to the Fall of Rome. For a short book it did an admirable job in outlining major developments and trends. This was followed in 1993 by a much more detailed and substantial volume of which the present book under review is a revised edition.

The book is organised into ten chapters, the first three of which deal with the categories of evidence that exist for Roman military equipment, respectively these are representational, archaeological and documentary sources. The strengths, weaknesses and reliability of each source of evidence are examined and the contexts in which they are found. The following five chapters examine the military equipment itself and are divided into five broad chronological sections from the Republican period to the end of the empire. Each of these five equipment chapters is subdivided into sections describing various types of weapons, helmets, body armour and other accoutrements. The changes and developments in equipment are examined for each particular period.

The book is well illustrated throughout with superb line drawings (mostly by Mike Bishop) and 8 pages of colour plates. The illustrations provide an essential visual reference to the text showing the gradual evolution in defensive and offensive equipment. Not only is the armour and weaponry discussed but also ancillary pieces of equipment which are

often overlooked or ignored. These include saddles, tents, tools, tunics, belts, foot gear, standards and even musical instruments. All of this evidence helps to give a much fuller picture of the Roman soldier and the world he lived in. Each chapter also has detailed and extensive end notes. The final two chapters look at production and technology, and the study of military equipment. This last chapter is perhaps the most interesting as it goes beyond looking at armour and weaponry as merely functional implements. Questions of identity and status are examined and the influences of other cultures on the development of Roman military equipment.

How does the present book differ from the 1993 edition? While most of the illustrations remain from the earlier volume the text has incorporated a significant amount of new archaeological material which has been published in the intervening 12 years. These include the recent publication of material from Dura Europus which has shed light on the equipment of the later Roman army, and the large amount of new finds from Eastern and Northern Europe that have contributed to the corpus of material from the middle to late empire. There is also an expanded and updated bibliography which includes the most recent scholarship on the topic. Bishop and Coulston state that the bibliography has increased from 703 to 1205 cited works.

Bishop and Coulston's *Roman Military Equipment* is an extremely well organised and presented work that is thoroughly researched and meticulously referenced. It will no doubt prove to be an invaluable reference for those archaeologists and specialists who deal with Roman military and related artefacts. It should also be of interest to the general reader as it presents the evolution of Roman military equipment in a very clear and concise manner that makes such a complicated topic intelligible.

It is a valuable contribution to the field of ancient military studies and to archaeology of the ancient world in general.

Dr Mike Burns
Mikeburns64@aol.com

NEW BOOKS

Julius Caesar in Western Culture
edited by Maria Wyke

Julius Caesar is not only the most famous Roman of them all. He has also been surprisingly relevant in many different periods, for many different societies and people. Edited by a leading expert on the reception of ancient Rome, this interdisciplinary volume examines Caesar's role in Western culture across a wide chronological range and diverse media. Ranging over the fields of religious, military, and political history, archaeology, architecture and urban planning, the visual arts, and literary, film, theatre and cultural studies, contributors examine the Caesars of Italy, France, Germany, Britain, and the United States. Their objects of analysis extend from Caesar's own commentaries on the Gallic wars composed in the 50s BCE through Shakespeare's Julius Caesar, on to images of Caesar in twentieth century Fascist mythology right up to contemporary cinema's fascination with Caesar, and twenty-first century debates about American empire.

365p, some b/w pls (Blackwell 2006)
ISBN 1405125993. Paperback. Price GB £22.99

Roman Siege Works
by Gwyn Davies

Using a wide range of archaeological evidence from all parts of the Roman Empire (Britain, Spain, Italy, Albania, Turkey, Israel, Jordan), Gwyn Davies explains the components of Roman siege warfare, from preparatory works and blockade camps to circumvallation, assault ramps, siege mounds and mines. The inclusion of details from numerous classical literary sources ably supports the information provided

by the archaeology studied. Throughout the book the author relates siege work construction to the general context of siege operations, and also explores the influence of foreign ideas on the Roman siege techniques that were employed across the empire. *160p, b/w and col pls (Tempus 2006)*

ISBN 0752428977. Paperback. Price GB £18.99

The Romans for Dummies
by Guy de la Bedoyere

An unashamedly non-academic introduction to the Romans and their world, de la Bedoyere invests his enthusiasm in every aspect of this mighty Empire's achievements. The 'For Dummies' format is tried and tested and allows the reader to dip in and out, using the book more as a reference than as a straight forward read. *434p, b/w illus, tabs (Wiley 2006)*

ISBN 0470030771. Paperback. Price GB £15.99

Big Screen Rome
by Monica Silveira Cyrino

Oxbow Says: The surfeit of epic films based in ancient Rome is not easy to ignore, and the questions that we ask ourselves ("Did that really happen?" "Was that interpretation historically viable?") after seeing these colourful and intriguing productions are often left unanswered. This fascinating book takes on the challenge of surveying important epic films, including all the favourites; 'Quo Vadis', 'Ben-Hur', 'Spartacus', 'Monty Python's Life of Brian', and 'Gladiator'. Each film is considered in its own right and then as a historical reworking - the main premise of the book is to demonstrate how popular interpretations and renderings of classical antiquity on the big screen can enrich our understanding of the classical tradition. Film buffs and historians alike will appreciate this book. *274p, b/w pls (Blackwell 2005)*

ISBN 1405116846. Paperback. Price GB £19.99

Romanisierung - Romanisation: Theoretische Modelle und praktische Fallbeispiele edited by Günther Schörner

21 papers on contemporary perspectives of Romanization presented at a graduate seminar and colloquium on 'Romanization and Self-Romanization' held at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena and the Siegmundsburg-Centre of Studies. The first section deals with theoretical models and sociological concepts; the second looks at archaeological and historical studies. The geographical scope covers the entire Empire from Lusitania to Asia Minor, from Hadrian's Wall to the Sahara. In German. *264p, illustrated throughout with maps, plans, figures, drawings and photographs (BAR S1427, Archaeopress 2005)*

ISBN 1841718661. Paperback. Price GB £35.00

All above available from
www.oxbowbooks.com

BULGARIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

The Bulgarian Archaeological Association have asked us to publicise a fieldwork course which they are running in Northwest Bulgaria. The Field School is involved in a study of Roman culture in the region, incorporating a research excavation at a number of sites. This year the project is based in a Roman sanctuary and fortress 'Kale' near the town of Mezdra.

Clearly the school is aimed mainly at undergraduate and graduate students, so members may wish to pass this information on to anyone they think might benefit from such an experience. The programme dates are:

July 14th – 28th
July 28th – August 11th
August 11th – August 25th

More details from: info@archbg.net
www.archeology.archbg.net

DATASHEETS

We have got off to a slow start with the production of datasheets so this is a plea to all members to share their expertise and knowledge and contribute a datasheet (or two)! It could be on a particular find type, an industry or presenting ongoing research – all will be a valuable resource for students, people just starting off in the finds careers and curators alike.

Gill Dunn is co-ordinating this so please contact her at the address below if you are willing to write a datasheet.

Gill Dunn
Joing RFG Publications Co-ordinator
Chester Archaeology
27 Grosvenor Street
Chester
Cheshire CH1 2DD

Conferences, study days, and courses, in date order

Sussex archaeology symposium

17th March 2007

Held at the Chichester Lecture Theatre, University of Sussex. Organised by the Centre for Continuing Education and Sussex Archaeological Society. Provides illustrated accounts of recent archaeological fieldwork and research in Sussex. Early booking advised. For more information contact Conference Co-ordinator at Centre for Continuing Education, The Sussex Institute, Essex House, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9QQ, tel 01273 877888, email: si-enquiries@sussex.ac.uk, web www.sussex.ac.uk/USIS/news/diary.php.

RAC/TRAC 2007
Roman Archaeology Conference & Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference

29th March – 1st April 2007

UCL and **Birkbeck College, University of London** in association with

the British Museum
the Museum of London
and the Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies

Sessions currently planned:

Death as a process: funerals in the Roman World (John Pearce & Jake Weekes)
Roman Thrace (Ian Haynes)
From Prehistory to Protohistory – the transition from Iron Age to Roman Britain (Fraser Hunter)
Creating Ethnicities in the Roman World (Andrew Gardner & Kathryn Lomas)

Romans and Other Peoples: Within and Beyond the Frontiers (Peter S. Wells)
The Emergence of Roman Identities: Italy 300 BC- AD 100 (Edward Herring & Kathryn Lomas)
Understanding the Romano-British Countryside (Pete Wilson)
The Army in Judaea / Palaestina (Gwyn Davies)
Revisiting the economy (Kris Lockyear & Dave Wythe)
Recent work on Roman Britain (Tony Wilmott)
Phenomenology of the Sacred (TRAC session) (Andrew Green)

For more information, please visit the conference website at:
www.ucl.ac.uk/RAC/index.htm

Postal enquiries can be sent to:

RAC/TRAC 07, Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY, UK
RAC email: rac07@ucl.ac.uk
TRAC email: trac07@ucl.ac.uk

Meeting of the Quern Study Group
Thursday 22nd March 2007
Institute of Archaeology, 36 Beaumont Street, Oxford

Topics and speakers include:

- The structured deposition of querns in the South West of Britain: *Susan Watts*

- Lodsworth rotary querns: an update 20 years on: *Ruth Shaffrey*

- Beehive rotary querns in Kent: *Elizabeth Blanning*

- New aspects of rotary querns in Scotland: *Dawn McLaren*

- The ground stone assemblage from Late Neolithic Makriyalos, Northern Greece: *Christina Tsoraki*

Cost for the day is £7 including lunch and refreshments. Please send enquiries to Emma Durham at the Institute or at emma.durham@arch.ox.ac.uk

Roman Army conference

1st April 2007 to 4th April 2007

A residential course meeting in Durham, open to anyone interested in the Roman army. Organised by the Hadrianic Society. Non-residential places are also available. Provisional list of speakers online. For more information contact Dr Brian Dobson at 16 Swinside Drive, Belmont, Durham DH1 1AD, email annedobson1@uk2.net, web www.hadrianicsociety.co.uk.

IFA Annual Conference

2nd April 2007 to 4th April 2007

Annual conference of the Institute of Field Archaeologists (IFA), the professional organisation for archaeologists, held at the University of Reading. For more information contact Conference Committee at Institute of Field Archaeologists, SHES, University of Reading, Whiteknights, PO Box 227, Reading RG6 6AB, tel 0118 378 6448, email alex.llewellyn@archaeologists.net, web www.archaeologists.net.

Early medieval archaeology student symposium

17th – 18th May 2007

Held at Cardiff University. To create a constructive and multi-disciplinary forum for researchers to express, discuss and explore new research and ideas in a positive and interactive environment. The symposium will explicitly aim to cross traditional period/institutional/theoretical divides to allow

discussion between researchers of diverse expertise and perspectives.

Sessions will consist of 20-minute papers followed by open discussion and debate. As wide as possible a range of topics will be selected, and papers may cover all areas of Late Antique and Early Medieval research and discourse. Papers relating to theory, method and practice are particularly welcome. Academics, professionals and undergraduates are invited to attend and give to support and comments. Poster presentations are welcome from those unable to attend or speak on the day. Abstracts by 1.3.07, registration by 1.5.07. For more information contact Andrew Seaman at Cardiff School of History and Archaeology, Cardiff University, Humanities Building, Colum Drive, Cardiff CF10 3EU, tel 029 2087 4470, email seamanap@cardiff.ac.uk, web www.cf.ac.uk/hisar/archaeology/news/conferences/early_med_symp.