

ROMAN FINDS GROUP

NEWSLETTER XXI

January 2001

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EDITORIAL



This will be the last Newsletter with the current cover design. Our Chairman, Roy Friendship-Taylor, a former graphic designer, has come up with a new look, and we are looking for a name for the Newsletter to go with it (p 15). Ideas should be sent by Easter to either Roy or myself, and will be submitted to the committee for selection. The person suggesting the chosen name will be exempt from paying next year's subscription. £5 is at stake – so put your thinking caps on. It is unfortunate that *Britannia* and *Instrumentum* have already been used, but there are lots of other suitable words, Latin or English, that would do.

The Committee is also gearing up to the production of datasheets along the lines of those produced by the Finds Research Group. Don't be modest, and don't wait for us to find you. If you are willing to write one about your area of expertise, let Jenny Hall know now.

The Spring 2001 meeting will be in Colchester, and the Autumn 2001 meeting in Exeter. If you work in the North or Midlands and are willing to host and/or organise an RFG meeting in the Spring of 2002, please contact Roy Friendship-Taylor. Our members are scattered around the country, and we would like the meeting venues to reflect that spread.

Don't forget our website, www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk. It has been updated to go with this Newsletter, but items from last summer's Newsletter have been 'archived' and are still accessible. In this way we will build up a series of useful small articles.

The deadline for the next Newsletter is May 25th. Any material is gratefully received, but please let me know in advance if you wish to submit an article longer than about 1,000 words. To make sure I can access any text sent by email, it should be in a fairly basic format, such as a .txt or .rtf file. Please keep any formatting to a minimum. Pictures should ideally be black and white line drawings. Scanned images should ideally be sent as .jpg, .tif, or .bmp files. Please make sure they have not been screened.

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Of Timotei™ and boxwood combs

My local supermarket stocks over 20 brands of shampoos. In these days of "Wash 'n Go" and Timotei, it can be hard to imagine any other form of haircare. Shampoos though, are a recent invention; the word itself an import from Indonesia, is barely 100 years old in this language. Information on haircare in antiquity is quite sparse: "Xerxes washed his hair because it was his birthday" to quote Herodotus. Alternatively, the feast of Diana (August 13th) was deemed a suitable time for ladies. Quite what was used is not clear; volcanic ashes are mentioned; soap, if it were known, would have been too harsh. Water, at a suitably low temperature not to harm the scalp, would have been ineffective without a detergent.

I would like to suggest that washing was not the one and only way: there were alternatives. According to hairdressers as long as some basic procedures are followed, hair does not require washing. I have not experimented with that myself, but I have met someone reputable (the Curator at Manchester University Medical School Museum) who has done just that in the name of science with a small "s". According to his experiment, provided the hair is regularly combed and/or brushed and the scalp rubbed with some form of oil (baby oil in this case), there is no problem. The scalp may be itchy

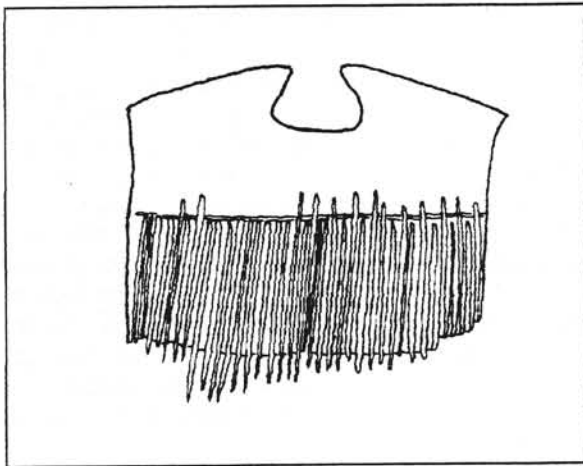


Fig 1. Neolithic boxwood comb from Charavines.

to start with, but after three or four weeks any discomfort disappears and the whole system settles down to a new physiological balance. Combing and brushing prevent the hair from matting. When the hair mats, lice and fungi can develop unchecked beneath it: the condition is known under the

wonderful name of "*plica polonica*" and was said to be widespread among 18th century Polish Jews because they did not groom their hair. The grease keeps the scalp supple and allows the regular removal of dandruff. There are very few brushes of Roman date and they seem more suitable for grooming animals and scrubbing floors, but there are plenty of combs in antiquity and beyond.

Combs have been crafted in a variety of materials: bone, antler, horn, ivory, metal and wood. Wooden combs have to be the most ancient because in all the other sorts the teeth must have been cut with metal saws: in wooden combs, teeth can be made with flint blades and the Neolithic specimens from the Alpine region are there to prove it (eg Fig 1). These combs are in boxwood, a material that possesses two important attributes: it will not splinter and therefore will not catch the hair, and can be thinned to a fine, dull point that cannot damage the scalp. Subsequent developments show a persistent preference for this kind of wood but an evolution in shape: single-sided wooden combs never really took on probably for practical considerations. Boxwood's rate of growth is measured in centuries rather than decades. Comb blanks have to be cut in the width of the billet with the grain running in the direction of the teeth. The only way to have a "longer" comb is to cut teeth on both sides.

While bone and antler combs have received sustained attention, their wooden counterparts have been generally neglected. These do not normally look too impressive, they are frequently plain and hardly ever in pristine condition. However, the sample from Roman Britain (155 and still counting) is large enough to attempt a study of the design, to draw some general conclusions about distribution, to examine manufacturing techniques and to talk about lice and Romans.

The design

A typical comb has plain terminals and an equally plain central bar. Teeth are normally fine on one side and coarse on the other. This has frequently been interpreted as "the fine side is for lice" and the coarse one for combing. Lice, I will get to later on, but it is only fair to say that on the whole, these combs are not very good for hair styling: the teeth are quite packed and short. Teeth as short as 10-15 mm are not uncommon: they may look longer first sight, but they are cut at a slant giving the artefact its characteristic lenticular section (Fig 2, left).

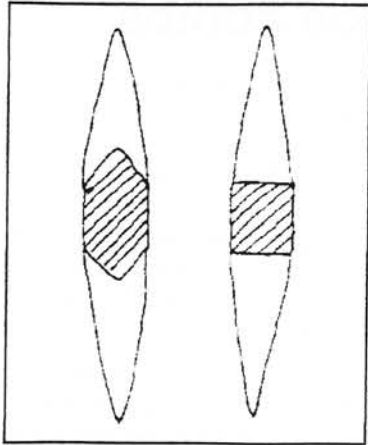


Fig 2. Types of tooth cutting. Left, lenticular section; right, bottomed section.

Among the more fancy designs, two are worth a detailed examination.

Fig 3 represents a style so far unique to Britain in the whole Empire, and more precisely to southern Britain. The earliest example has a 2nd century date; the style persists into the 4th century and beyond into the Dark Ages, but by then it has moved north to a Scottish crannog. It is unusually tall, the terminals are straight and the coarse teeth are quite chunky, well spaced out and they have been bottomed. That means that the base of the teeth has been straightened with a separate cutting operation (Fig 2, right). With teeth 30 mm tall, this is really a styling comb.

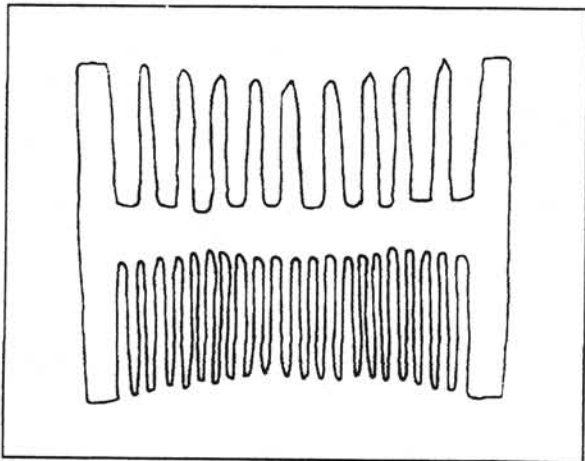


Fig 3. The British form of boxwood comb.

The "compass cut" on the other hand is not indigenous to this country where it has been found in relative abundance. The design is certainly an import from Italy as the funerary monument of the hairdresser Cyparenis shows (CIL VI 9727 - a stray

find from the Campagna Romana, Fig 4). The width/length ratio on the artefact on the stele is 1 to 3. Combs of this style from Britain are about 60 mm wide at the terminals. So a length of some 180 mm can be postulated for Cyparenis' comb. This may sound an awful lot for boxwood, but a comb in this style and even longer is known

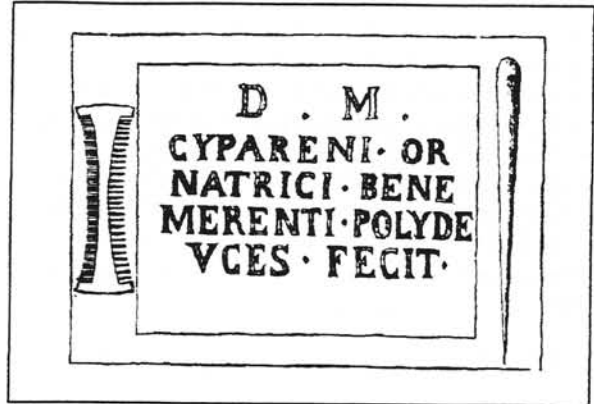


Fig 4. The stele of the hairdresser Cyparenis.

from London. This is really upmarket material since it could take boxwood several centuries to grow to that size.

Distribution

The distribution for wooden combs is obviously a function of the survival of organics. This was a new type of artefact previously unknown in Britain; it spread pretty fast in Roman Britain from Fishbourne to the Antonine Wall. Whether these were all imports it is difficult to say. Certainly the style from the southern part of the country with the straight ends and the bottomed teeth has no *comparanda* anywhere. Boxwood may have been around in that region since the Neolithic: this could be a local development. It is hard to gauge what impact if any, this grooming artefact made with the natives, but there is at least one instance of a find in a rural settlement. What is more, double-sided wooden combs (in a variety of wood species) are known from the Dark Ages onwards up to well into the 19th century.

Manufacturing

It takes several years to become a master comb-maker, or at least that was the case until the production became mechanised. In the Roman world the *pectinari* probably exercised their craft for combs of any material; the tools would have been the same. Fig 5 is the stele of one of them from Hastae in north-western Italy (CIL V 7569).



Fig 5. Stele of Valerius Placidus.

Valerius Placidus is called a *refector pectinarius*, suggesting that he could also mend combs. That must mean segmented bone combs since damaged plates can be replaced, while wooden combs cannot be mended. The stele is now lost, but there is a picture and more importantly, a sketch of whatever Placidus held in his left hand. That has been identified as a clam, a tool used by comb-makers until the last century to grip the comb blank when cutting the teeth. Placidus' clam has no handle and he presumably worked on his lap. That's why he had a stool under his feet and some sort of working surface, possibly a piece of leather on his lap (that's how I cut my combs). More modern clams had long handles and were fitted on a donkey like the one from the Musée du Peigne at Ezy in Normandy (Fig 6).

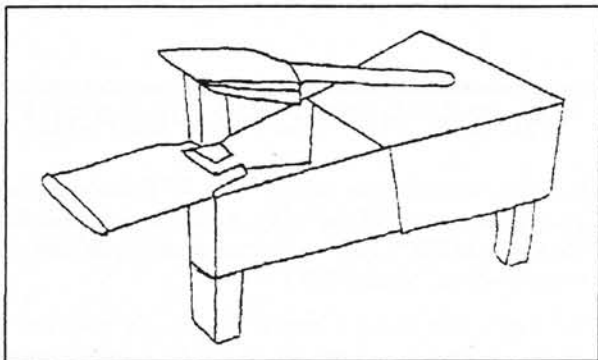


Fig 6. A combmaker's donkey and clam.

The saw is more of a problem. Teeth can be as many as 20 and even more per 20 mm, which means teeth as fine as at least as 0.5 mm because

there is a gap in between. This means a pretty fine blade which also needs to be rather wide to steady the hand. As the teeth are cut from one side and the process is then complete from the other (Fig 7), the process requires a blade with a clearance of some 15-20 mm. One possibility is a wide blade mounted on a wooden stock or fixed on a bow. Whichever system was used, the teeth were cut by eye. No comb I have seen has absolutely

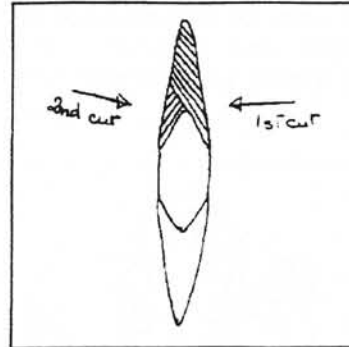


Fig 7. Method of cutting teeth.

regular teeth from end to end, a feat that could be achieved by using a *stadda* (a double-bladed saw). Coarse teeth were most times cut with the same saw, simply with a wider spacing. Chunky, well separated teeth were a bit more complicated: the space in between had to be defined by two separate cuts and cleaned out with a chisel. Each tooth was then pared with a sharp blade to a round section and a dull point.

Experimental comb-making has shown that blanks are best prepared from unseasoned material. As long as they are suitably stored, blanks will not warp. Teeth on the other hand are best cut from seasoned boxwood. Unseasoned material produces an enormous amount of sawdust, which makes life very difficult. A number of combs have perforations usually described as "suspension holes". They are more likely to have been bored into the blanks to string them up and hang them in a cool dark place to season. Who would want to hang up a comb anyway? Experimental work has also shown that the long apprenticeship is no idle threat. It is not impossible to cut a few good teeth, but doing that from end to end by eye is a different story, and mistakes cannot be corrected. On the other hand it is quite easy to produce a badly made but serviceable comb which is what I turned out. So alongside *pectinarii*, the true professionals, there was room for second rate comb-makers, those makers of shuttles, spindles and spindle whorls in Diocletian's edict for instance.

The use of wooden combs

The poor workmanship of a number of combs from Roman Britain shows that there was a market for second rate production. At the same time the written evidence is quite clear, "*buxus*" was used in Latin as a synonym for comb; wooden combs were acquired in multiples, two or three at a time. This was a widespread grooming aid used to prevent the hair from matting and to keep it clean. Additional purposes can be mentioned: Celsus expressly recommended the use of a boxwood comb for the removal of loose scurf, a process that is poetically compared in another classical text to the falling of snow!



Fig 8. Aphrodite at her toilet. Drawn from a ceramic figurine in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (1973.962).

The application of dyes is also a possibility (that is what this artefact was employed for in the 17th century), not to mention the greasing of the hair. Anything from olive oil to hog's fat, to bear's grease was applied and worked in to strengthen hair, to give it a gloss and prevent its fall. That was so with the Romans and more recent times as well: bear's grease was sold in London until the 19th century for the same purposes. Lice infestation is of course a possibility as the finds from Ribchester testify. It must be borne in mind though that in a greasy, not too clean environment, lice would have had a hard

time.

Summing up, wooden combs were tools for the regular grooming of a healthy head of hair. The Venus from the Ashmolean (Fig 8) is not saying: "Look at me: I am lousy"; her message is more likely to be: "Look at my head of hair and here is the comb that does it!".

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There is more from Paola about wooden combs on pp 9-10

SUBSCRIPTIONS PLEASE!

It's that time of year again. The RFG subscription year runs from October 1st, so subs are now due for the year 2000-2001. (Please also check that you have paid for 1999-2000.)

To make things a bit easier for people who never seem to have a fiver or a cheque book handy whenever Angela is around, a banker's order form is enclosed with this issue. Do use it!

If you want to stick to the old methods, please send your £5 to Angela Wardle, 1 Stebbing Farm, Fishers Green, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2JB

Help needed

Excavation this season, carried out by the English Heritage Centre for Archaeology at the sites of several milecastles along Hadrian's Wall, has yielded this object. At first thought to be a fragment of a stone gaming board, subsequent research has shown up no comparanda. Lindsay Allason-Jones has suggested that it may be a table-top fragment.

It is a roughly rectangular fragment of iron-rich micaceous sandstone. One end of the upper face bears two incised cross-hatched squares, highlighted in a dark red pigment. Wear suggests that the bottom edge is an original surface; the fragment appears to be broken at the other edges. There is some evidence of burning. Max length 105 mm, max width 94 mm, depth 15 mm.

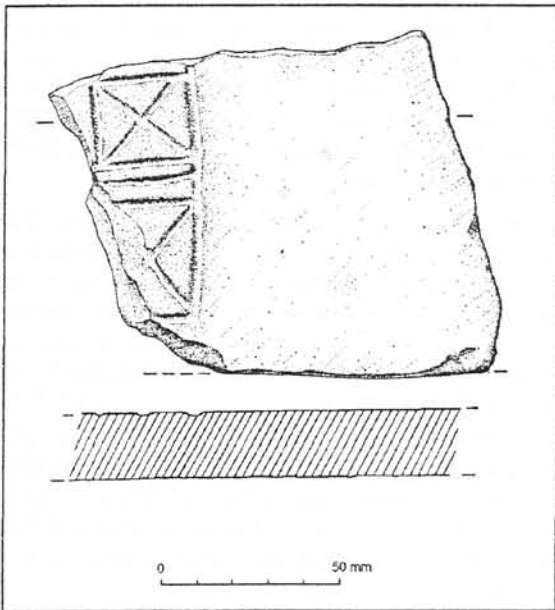


Illustration by Chris Evans, CFA Graphics Studio.

If anyone has any ideas as to the function of this object, or any similar objects that they could point me in the direction of, all information will be very gratefully received, and of course acknowledged.

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Toy storey (sic)

Various uses have been proposed in the past for the ubiquitous pottery counters, from game counters to pot lids. However, a remarkable set of eleven counters from a site near the Mercury Theatre in Colchester provide a new explanation

for these items. Stacked together in order of decreasing diameter, they form a neat tower, just like a set of stacking bricks suitable for a young child (CA 11, 34). All are made from sherds of large grey ware vessels, with the edges ground smooth and the curved parts of the faces ground away. Another seven counters were found with the set, but do not fit into the tower.

Intriguingly, another group of counters from Colchester, found in the early 1990s, was discovered in a stack with the smallest at the bottom and the largest at the top (CAR 6, 166, fig 5.24, 683-7. Most of these counters were also made of grey ware, but included one made from a BB1 sherd.

Nina Crummy

References

- CA *The Colchester Archaeologist*
CAR 6 *Excavations at Culver Street, the Gilbert School, and other sites in Colchester 1971-85*, Colchester Archaeological Report 6 by P Crummy

Two lead bull heads from Cambridgeshire

Models of bulls as cult objects are well known throughout the Celtic world and bull symbolism is associated with many aspects of Celtic and Romano-Celtic religion.

The two bull heads illustrated here are of particular interest as they come from the same general locality. The first (Fig 1) is from the southern outskirts of Peterborough, the second (Fig 2) from Flag Fen. The two models differ in style, the first being realistically modelled whilst the second is more naïve in execution.

A bronze model of a bull's head was found with the Willingham Fen hoard, and it may be significant that this is only some 20 miles to the south of Flag Fen and Peterborough.

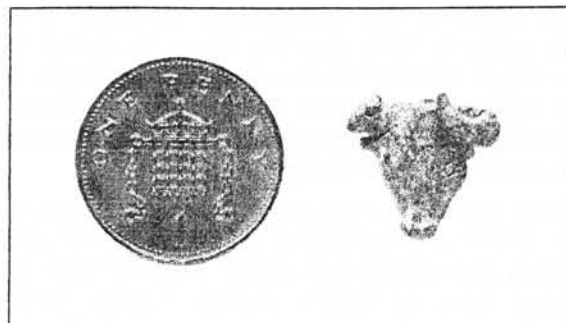


Fig 1. A naturalistic three-dimensional bull's head with forward-thrusting curved horns and delicately

defined ears (the left ear is broken). The nostrils and mouth are neatly modelled and the eyes are inset with blue paste. The top of the head is flat and projects at the back to form a shelf which is pierced vertically for suspension.



Fig 2. A flat-backed bull's head with outward-pointing horns and a mane of shaggy hair falling over the crown. The ears remain as stubs and the protruding ring-and-dot eyes stare boldly forward. Detailing of the mouth and nose is obscured by the raggedness of the model's edges. A fragmentary suspension loop springs from the centre of the head.

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(Editor: a copper-alloy terminal in the form of a bull's head with blue glass eyes was found recently at the Head Street site, Colchester.)

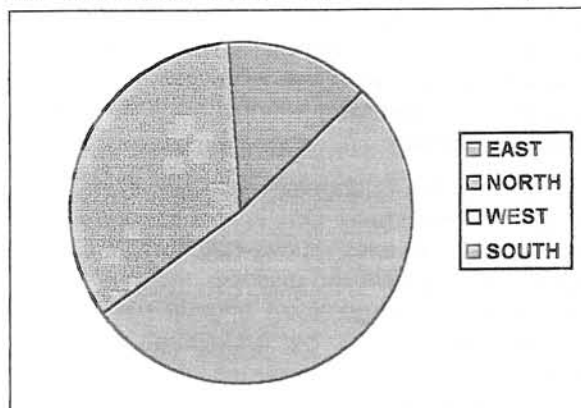
Button-and-loop fasteners in a Roman Province

A step towards a regional typology?

This piece is very much a work-in-progress, my first look at a class of object that has fascinated me since I took up the post of 'Finds Liaison Officer' a little over three years ago. Looking rather like ancient duffle coat toggles, button-and-loop fasteners are aesthetically pleasing. They also come in fairly discrete types, classified by the shape of their heads and attachment loops. In the wake of the Portable Antiquities pilot scheme, these objects are more plentiful, or certainly more recorded, than ever before.

I have recorded 16 examples from Yorkshire so far. Using the typologies put forward by Wild (1970) and MacGregor (1976), building upon the earlier work of Gillam (1958), I have simply looked at what types have been found where in the region, as recorded through the 'Finding our Past' scheme.

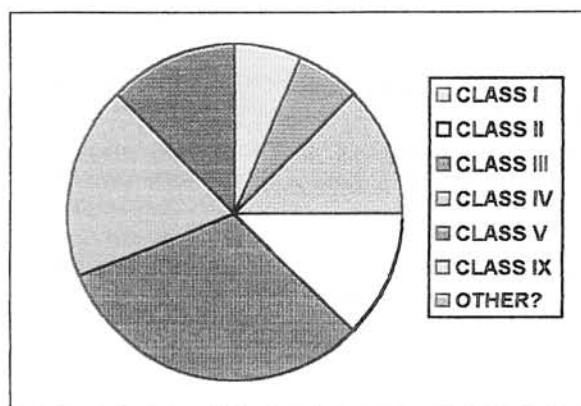
The majority of button and loop fasteners in my survey have come from East and North Yorkshire, with 8 and 5 examples respectively. I have not seen any examples from West Yorkshire and only 2 have come from the South Riding.



Distribution of button-and-loop fasteners in Yorkshire.

The overwhelming majority have been found with the aid of a metal detector. Only one has been found by eye, a beach find from East Yorkshire. This reflects the fact that 96% of all portable antiquity finds recorded from Yorkshire have been recovered in this way.

As with Wild's and MacGregor's surveys, the predominant class of button-and-loop fasteners in my sample group so far, is the boss and petal type (Class III). Another similarity with earlier surveys has been the dominance of triangular loops. All of the complete examples have triangular loops, but the loop is missing on 5 of the 16 examples recorded. Surprisingly though, and in contrast to other studies, this survey has found a very even distribution of finds through Wild's other classes. It is, of course, possible that this profile will change as more examples are recorded.



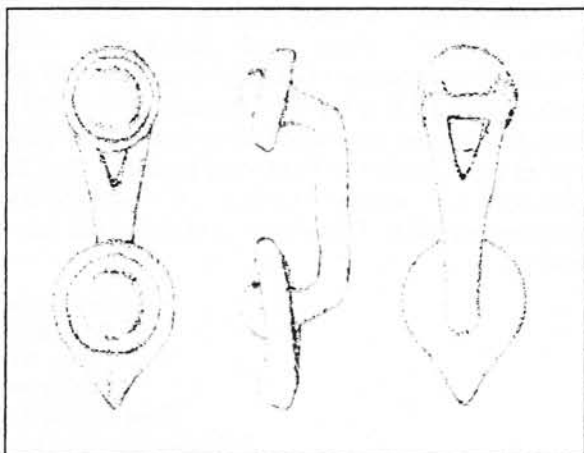
Button-and-loop fasteners from Yorkshire shown by Wild's Classes

Two examples of the double boss and petal type (Wild's Class I) have been recorded, together with one T-shaped (Class IX), two square headed (Class V), and three simple dome shaped fasteners (Class IV).

There have been two examples of the ring shaped Class II, the type given a possible pre-Roman date by MacGregor (1958). It is certainly present during the Iron Age in what is now North Yorkshire, as evidenced by the Stanwick Hoard. I had, at the outset of this survey, expected to see rather more of this type.

A trend in the Yorkshire region, certainly over the last year, has been an increase in Iron Age and early Romano-British finds (coins and artefacts) being brought in by finders.

Far more surprising has been the emergence of an unusual type. One double headed/ended boss and petal variant has been found in North Yorkshire. It begs the question, 'Is this really a new type or simply an idiosyncrasy?'



Double-headed button and loop fastener from North Yorkshire.

As with all finds research in its early stages, my initial survey has thrown up far more questions than answers, which is why I would like to appeal to RFG members. Do you have any provenanced examples of button and loop fasteners from Yorkshire?

It is possible that Yorkshire produces similar types and distributions of these wonderful objects to other areas, but as yet, we just do not know! The portable antiquities data certainly gives us a wealth of new data, ideally suited to looking at finds on a regional scale.

Ceinwen Paynton
Senior Finds Liaison Officer
Portable Antiquities Scheme ('Finding our Past')

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Wooden combs and niche markets

The majority of boxwood combs of Roman date from Britain show a rather poor level of workmanship which supports the hypothesis that they were mainly utilitarian artefacts, frequently crafted by non-specialists. Moreover, experimental work has confirmed that serviceable wooden combs can be produced with a minimum of training. The result may not be too impressive but it will do the work.

This short contribution considers those comparatively few instances of combs of outstanding quality: those that might have been intended for use, but were certainly meant to be seen. This aim was achieved in a variety of ways: some quite obvious, other more subtle. There were a number of strategies.

The first one must be to patronise an established combmaker (a *pectinarius*), perhaps one "Dignus" or "Marcellinus Lugrac..." whose impressed maker's mark can still be read on a couple of artefacts respectively from London and Carlisle. Both combs are plain, but the cutting of the teeth which was certainly done in Roman times by eye, is very regular. Experimental work has shown that while cutting a few good fine teeth is not too difficult, sustaining that from end to end of a comb must require a trained hand, and, what is more, mistakes cannot be remedied. No wonder in medieval times combmakers' training lasted years!

Fancy designs like a comb in the shape of a lyre (Fig 1) and one with curly terminals (Fig 2) were also put on the market. In the latter the design of the terminals matched the grip of the box in which it was housed, yet another refinement.

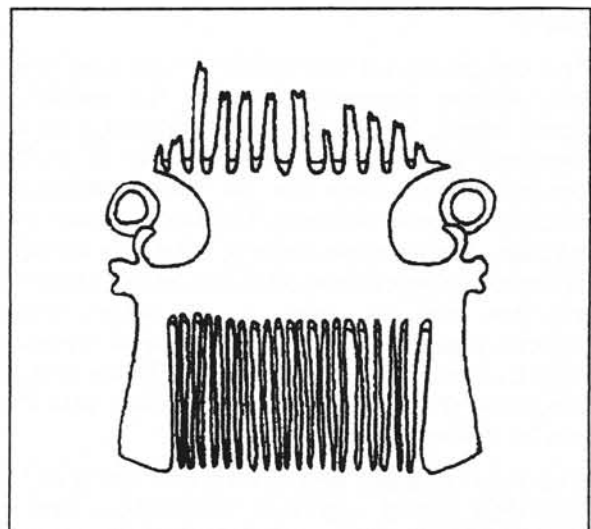


Fig 1. Lyre-shaped comb from Praeneste in Italy- now at the Villa Giulia Museum in Rome.

Another approach was to do something with the central area. This is the band between the two rows of teeth which is sometimes decorated with cordons and grooves. Experimentally such ornamentation proved extremely easy to make. Boxwood, and practically all wooden combs in antiquity were in this wood, is extremely homogeneous and has a natural excellent finish. Cutting a groove or two with a small saw, or raising a cordon proved to be very simple operations. On the other hand alternative forms of ornamentation like fine marquetry, or a dedicatory inscription in openwork (Fig 2) certainly betray a very expert hand, very possibly of a worker in ivory as well as in wood.



Fig 2. Comb with openwork inscription from the Crimea.

A different approach was to use two craftsmen instead of one, a combmaker and a metalworker for instance. There is only one known example (from Carlisle with an early 2nd century date) and what is most interesting, the artefact in question was undoubtedly meant for show: with teeth barely 7mm, long it could hardly be of any use to anyone. It must have looked quite a sight on the lady's dressing table, though. The ends have a fretted design, on one side it is all chip carving, while on the other three bronze plates embossed with classical scenes, take up practically all the space.

The last on my list, the one that may have been the ultimate statement of what the well-to-do could afford, is distinctly underwhelming in the simplicity of its design (see p 4, Fig 4). In this particular case there are no fancy shapes, no decorative *tours de force*. Cyparenis' comb may be plain, though quite elegant, but it was certainly not within everyone's reach because of the size of the raw material required. As stated above Roman wooden combs were made in boxwood and this one was no exception. There are 12 instances of this design all from Britain and they are all in that material.

The only complete one is from London: it is 190 mm long with a maximum width/length ratio of approximately 1:3, like the comb on the stele. Since combs are always manufactured with the grain in the direction of the teeth, this specimen must have required a piece of boxwood with a

width in the excess of 200 mm. Finding such a billet cannot have been easy.

For a start, boxwood in antiquity was not as wide spread as it is nowadays, since it has been propagated for ornamental purposes. Its main growing areas were the Pyrenees, the western slopes of the Alps, Corsica and the southern shores of the Black Sea. Secondly its growth rate is painfully slow: the slower the growth, the better the quality of the wood.

The analysis of a batch of boxwood logs from the Comacchio wreck (dated to the end of the 1st century BC) gives an idea of what sort of tree had to be felled to make Cyparenis' comb. The logs are the right size, between 150 to 220 mm in diameter. The ring count gives an average growth of 276 years with a maximum of 513, for a 170 mm diameter. The logs originated all from the same stand, which had apparently been managed to produce the best material, *ie* straight, with no knots. It is hardly surprising that wood of that quality was the object of long distance trade, in this case, from the Pyrenees to Italy. It is the people in whose circles a professional hairdresser like Cyparenis moved who could afford it.

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COMPETITION

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REVIEW

Roman Woman, Everyday Life in Hadrian's Britain

Lindsay Allason-Jones. 2000.

Michael O'Mara Books Limited. ISBN 1-85479-528-7.
Hardback £14.99

The year is AD 133. Hadrian is Emperor of Rome and all its vast empire, including Britannia, the greater part of which has long been under imperial rule. Around the fortress of Eboracum a bustling garrison settlement is developing, while along the northern frontier the legions are completing the building of a mighty wall.

The book opens in the New Year, with the ceremony of the Kalends Ianuarius on the military parade ground, dutifully watched by the assembled civilians. We follow one of the families home and watch the preparations for the festive meal. Next day ordinary life resumes and there are more chores, lighting the fire, fetching water from the trough (as it's freezing January the ice has to be broken) and some of the mysteries of shoe-making are explained.

The book then proceeds through the year, a chapter for each month's events or activities. Sometimes the main event is simply one of the chores, I - shopping for a new mortarium, spring-cleaning - or a regular event, such as a trip to the bath-house; sometimes it is something more unusual, such as a visit from a company of travelling players, or a chariot race. No opportunity is wasted to explain Roman cooking, gardening, farming, shopping and markets; we are presented with a wealth of information.

The main character in the book is Senovara, a daughter of the local tribe, the Parisii, whose general way of life has changed little under Roman rule. Senovara has married Quintus, a veteran of the Sixth Legion Victrix, now plying his trade as a shoe-maker, and thus found herself part of a different and more cosmopolitan world. This framework provides the author with plenty of opportunities to explain different aspects of daily life in Roman Britain - Senovara is able to reflect on the difference between her life with Quintus at Eboracum and the way of life on the , essentially, Iron Age farm where she was brought up. She and the children return to the farm during August and help with the harvest, and there is an aged grandmother who can't be doing with these new-fangled Roman ways. The presence of Senovara's young son enables Quintus to explain why the soldiers need to renew their oath from time to time and the relationship of the army to the emperor as well as shoe-making. The family have contacts with citizens and soldiers from elsewhere in Britain and other parts of the empire as well as with the Parisian family on the farm and Senovara in her chats with her friends

discusses fashion, hair styles, methods of contraception, the inadequacy of the bath-house and cough cures among many other things. There is scarcely any aspect of daily life which is not covered.

However, while the device of the "mixed marriage" enables the author to convey much detailed information, the dramatic potential of the device has been completely ignored. By the time we meet Senovara, on the first page, she has already been married to Quintus for several years, has two young children and has settled happily into her new life. She may think about her childhood on the farm but this is only to enable the author to "compare and contrast"; there is absolutely no sense of tension between the old life and the new. Each of the chapters in itself with its wealth of detail, could serve both as backdrop and springboard, the scenery against which a story could unfold. But there is no story; what we have is simply a series of scene settings.

The questions which the reader asks increasingly on the way though the book are, "Why has it been written in this form?" and "Who is it for?" "Story book or text book?" If the latter, as implied by the subtitle *Everyday Life in Hadrian's Britain*, why present it as "a deftly woven narrative of a family struggling to come to terms with new customs and reconciling their cultural differences"?

There is a lot of solid detailed information here, but there is nothing to make the reader turn the pages. If you want that, against a credible background, try Falco!

Jean E Mellor
Leicester

HELP!

Brooch without a home seeks refuge

I have had thousands of brooches for report and not one has got lost. One or two have been difficult to return for the simple reason that X says to Y, "Oh, let Don have this to see what he thinks". Such items are invariably without any site name or code or anything to identify an owner or source.

I have by me a slightly different case. It is the only brooch I cannot find an owner for, and it came to me in just the way outlined. Someone in, I suspect Northamptonshire, passed it on to me through an intermediary and the only one I could lay hands on denies all knowledge.

The item is a Wroxeter and is tied with cotton to an old-style museum padded card now browning through age. Stuck to the top is a typed label

which reads "Bronze Brooch. / Badby / Inlaid enamel". and someone has added in biro and an unsteady hand "Unstratified". On the back is the inscription in writing which leaves a lot to be desired when it comes to legibility: "Bhe Peter l.fbo... / Bachai Wood / Herts".

I would be very grateful to anyone who can point me in the direction of the rightful owner. Or, failing that, the identity of the X in this instance.

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All change at the British Museum

The Queen Elizabeth II Great Court

On December 6th the Queen opened the Queen Elizabeth II Great Court after nearly three years of building work. The courtyard is vast, which is the first impression you get on entering, especially when you raise your eyes to Foster's domed glass roof. Just as impressive from the outside, at least in terms of size, is the Reading Room in the centre, which is even larger than it was previously because a huge double staircase has been wrapped around it. I used to have the privilege, in the days of the British Library, to walk through the Reading Room every morning from the North Entrance, and was always dumbstruck by the magnificence of the dome. The restored dome is even more breathtaking: the original papier-mâché lining has been repaired, and the original paint scheme of gold on a light blue background has been reinstated. A wise decision was made to keep the original reader's desks in place, and it is intended that the Reading Room will continue to be a place of study, as it will house the Paul Hamlyn library of 25,000 volumes.

And the controversial south portico? I personally think it looks fine, and I can't really see what all the fuss has been about. It was not an original feature of the courtyard, so there isn't a problem if it stands out as looking somewhat new; how could it not? The other porticos have been exposed to the elements for 200 years. It has been built in the style of Smirke and has three portals instead of one.

The Great Court will give 50% more public space for the museum, including a new Education Centre, a Young Visitors Centre, new galleries, shops and cafes. It will also house COMPASS, a computer based information system, where visitors will be able to research the museum's

collections and have high-quality prints made of individual objects within seconds.

The main effect of the Great Court will be better freedom of movement. The original entrance hall (now restored to its original Victorian colour scheme) was badly cramped and disorientating for visitors. They will now be able to come through the entrance hall and the new South Portico into the Great Court, where they can collect their thoughts and decide how to use their visit. There is also a bridge link with the upper levels from the terrace on the outside of the Reading Room.

The British Museum Study Centre

Another development which is worth saying something about is the Study Centre. This is located a short distance away from the main Museum site on New Oxford Street. The current projected date for completion is 2004.

Although the Study Centre is still at the planning stage, it is intended that it will house a number of currently homeless British Museum departments, including Prehistoric and Early Europe. It is also hoped that it will be the central base for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, which will be a key player in the intended use of the new building as an archaeological resource centre. Some of the ideas being discussed so far are: 'Archaeology in Action', which will allow visitors to see archaeological material being studied and processed by curators (e.g. coin hoards); live video conferencing, e.g. to allow link ups with British Museum archaeological fieldwork projects; handling and teaching sessions at all levels from schoolchildren to adult learners; and the opportunity for the public to work on the vast quantity of under-researched material in the BM collections.

Portable Antiquities Website

The Portable Antiquities Scheme website provides information about Scheme, eg contact details for the finds liaison officers and reports on recent finds. The main purpose of the site however is to allow researchers access to data gathered under the Scheme. The site has recently been updated to include records of around 10,000 finds, about 600 of which are accompanied by images. The search screen has also been revised to make it far more user-friendly. If you do get a chance, please have a look at the site (www.finds.org.uk) and in particular, the on-line database, and send me any comments.

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Autumn meeting at Shrewsbury, Atcham and Wroxeter

On October 9th 2000, a small band of RFG members gathered in the wood-panelled surroundings of Rowley's House Museum, Shrewsbury, for the autumn meeting, the theme of which was *'Finds from Viroconium (Wroxeter) and its Hinterland'*.

The first speaker was Roger White, who provided the group with a detailed outline of the Wroxeter Hinterland Project. Up and running since 1995, this was a GIS-based project, comprising fieldwalking and limited excavation, to study the effects of Romanisation on the landscape through the cultural material found within it.

Metal-detected finds from the entire hinterland area included many brooches, amongst them blanks of trumpet brooches and Polden Hill types, indicating local production. Work at Whitley Grange revealed a late Roman villa, with a dining room and very large bath-house, but nothing else – could this be a hunting-lodge of some kind? Finds from here comprised pottery, beads and a bracelet.

Upton Cressett, just north of Bridgenorth, produced a large assemblage of military-style pottery. Elsewhere, a lynch-pin, terret and other harness fittings were found through metal-detecting. Why were these military objects in the civilian hinterland of Wroxeter? Perhaps retired auxiliaries, who could afford to embellish their equipment, held onto this material after retirement, to signal their *Romanitas*?

The repeated findings of the project reveal a hinterland area ostensibly going through the process of Romanisation – villas, hypocausts, household shrines – but unwilling to go too far into the process. To illustrate this point further, Roger mentioned that 100% of the samian recovered lay within 10km of Wroxeter, as do other finewares. The pottery was obviously available, but most people in the Wroxeter hinterlands did not seem to want to use it.

Jane Evans then gave us a thought-provoking insight into the objects interpreted as potters' tools, collected from a kiln outside Wroxeter, dating to the late 4th century, and producing Severn Valley and colour-coated tablewares. These items included a lava rubbing stone, another volcanic fragment used as a cutting tool, and an intriguing cylindrical pebble with finger dents worn into each end, used in the crushing, grinding or smoothing process.

This acted as a useful reminder for us all to watch out for bones and stones displaying wear or polishing – these objects may be easily overlooked and their original function missed.

Potters' tools are everyday objects, rather than distinctive specialised items— any sharp tool will do for shaving and finishing, any pointed tool for decoration and modelling, or blunt tool for grinding temper or pigment. Do these objects get overlooked on site, or overshadowed in analysis by more glamorous objects? Is there any way to interpret these objects, or do they forever remain unpublished?

Paola Pugsley then precipitated collective head-scratching with her paper on Roman wooden combs. Britain has so far revealed about 150 of these, mostly in a fragmentary state. Paola is always keen to hear about new or unpublished examples; you can contact her at Exeter University. The contents of her talk can be found in her two papers in this issue (3-6, 9-10).

Bringing the theme back to Wroxeter, Hilary Cool then spoke about the extensive glass assemblage, which totals over 10,000 fragments, all (as yet) unpublished. Wroxeter is typical of the urban-rural dichotomy of the period, the town favouring use of cups and flasks, in contrast to the bowls and bottles used in the hinterlands, and favoured by the military. Put simply, we can interpret this as evidence for civilians being present in the town, and military influence on the hinterland. The 4th-century material also reinforces this, with the city centre glass assemblage largely consisting of drinking vessels, and the hinterland assemblage focussing on closed vessels, such as jugs and flasks.

Returning to Jane Evans's point about the recognition of small tools, Hilary mentioned fragments of glass that seem to have been used as tools. Thick vessel fragments such as handles were particularly useful, and were readily available from the Flavian period on. Look out for deliberate flaking similar to that on flints.

Hilary concluded by reiterating that throughout the history of Wroxeter, the inhabitants have used the most up-to-date and fashionable glass vessels. This assemblage will not, however, be appreciated as the resource it is, due to the proposed nature of the publication. This statement led into the later discussion on publication.

The final speaker was Martin Henig, who led the group on a fascinating tour of the intaglios and stone sculptures from Wroxeter, the bulk of which can be seen in Rowley's House Museum. These included 1st- and 2nd-century intaglios showing a very wide range of subjects – Ptolemy 12th, Maenads, Diana, Fortuna and Mercury, and Bacchic scenes. Much of the sculpture is

religious, often relating to local beliefs, such as the head cult. Column tops and bases include the well-known Jupiter column. There are also tombstones, including those of Marcus Petronius, standard bearer, and Gaius Mannius Secundus, aged 52, soldier of the XX Legion. The only civilian tombstone is that of a family, bearing a couple of dolphins and a fine Medusa head.

The group then travelled to the English Heritage stores at Atcham, where much of the Wroxeter assemblage is housed. After a pleasant half-hour spent ferretting through Stewart tubs, Roger White led a discussion on the thorny question of publication. Can it really be true, as he has apparently been told, that finds volumes are economically unviable? To refute this, several instances were offered of finds volumes within report series that outsold their companion site volumes. Was one solution for individual specialists to take discrete parts of the assemblage and publish them within separate journals? This surely goes against the holistic approach that many finds researchers champion.

The question as to whether internet publication is the answer was largely met with criticism. Many members of the group felt that serious academic peer review was impossible on the net, and that continuity could never be ensured as much as could be ensured by a book on a shelf. And as for addressing the question of intellectual copyright.... This debate seems set to run and run, so well done and thanks to the meeting's organiser, Pete Guest, for precipitating such a useful discussion.

Finally, the group were treated to a guided tour of the site of Wroxeter itself, which proved very popular, and formed a good end to a stimulating and thought-provoking day.

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Some Contracting Unit Websites

These websites vary tremendously, from the austere and utterly commercial single page (MoLAS), to multi-page, multi-coloured offerings (Canterbury). Here is just a sample of those that can be found through Britarch's listing of on-line units (see www.britarch.ac.uk).

Archaeoleg Cambria Archaeology – www.acadat.com

Bath Archaeological Trust – www.batharchaeology.org.uk

Birmingham University Archaeological Field Unit – www.bufau.bham.ac.uk

Archaeological Field Unit, Cambridgeshire County Council – www.camcnty.gov.uk, then click on Heritage to reach Archaeology

Canterbury Archaeological Trust – www.canterburytrust.co.uk

Clwyd-Powys Archaeological Trust – www.cpat.org.uk

Colchester Archaeological Trust – www.colchester-arch-trust.co.uk

Glamorgan-Gwent Archaeological Trust – www.ggat.org.uk

Gwynedd Archaeological Trust – www.heneb.co.uk

Museum of London Archaeology Service – www.molas.org.uk

Norfolk Archaeological Unit – www.norfolk.gov.uk, then click on Tourism to reach Museums and then Archaeology

Orkney Archaeological Trust – www.oat.org.uk

Oxford Archaeological Unit – www.oau-oxford.com

Scottish Urban Archaeological Trust – www.suat.demon.co.uk

Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit – www.southampton.gov.uk, then click on Leisure & Tourism to reach Cultural Services and then Archaeology

Winchester City Council Museums Service Archaeology Unit – www.winchester.gov.uk, then click on Heritage to reach Museums and then Archaeology



NEXT MEETING – COLCHESTER



The next RFG meeting will be held at Colchester, in the Castle Museum, on Saturday 24th March 2001 (please note, **not** a Monday!). Peter Guest has retired as Meetings Secretary due to a new job (congratulations, Peter), so this Spring meeting was arranged in a hurry, but should nevertheless be a useful and informative day.

The title of the meeting is *A Late Iron Age and Early Roman miscellany*, and the speakers are all from the eastern region: Don Mackreth, Natasha Hutcheson of UEA, Jude Plouviez of Suffolk County Council's Archaeology Section, Mark Atkinson and Hilary Major from Essex County Council's Field Archaeology Unit, Paul Sealey of Colchester Museum, John Davies from Norfolk Museums Service, and Philip Crummy of Colchester Archaeological Trust.

Full details are on the accompanying programme and booking form.

COMPETITION

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and

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You are invited to send in ideas for a name for the Newsletter which will be incorporated into a new cover design by the Chairman

It doesn't have to be in Latin

It must be punchy and relevant

It doesn't have to be totally serious

but it shouldn't be totally silly

Remember - 'Britannia' and 'Instrumentum' have been used already

The prize subscription year will run from October 2001 to September 2002

Please send your ideas by Easter 2001 to Roy Friendship-Taylor, Toad Hall, Hackleton, Northants NN7 2AD, or Nina Crummy, 2 Hall Road, Copford, Colchester, Essex CO6 1BN
nina.crummy@ntlworld.com

P.S. Don't forget to pay this year's sub.

Portable Initiative

The Portable Antiquities scheme has won the Silver Trowel Award for the greatest initiative in archaeology in this year's British Archaeological Awards. The Scheme also won the Virgin Holidays Award for the best archaeological project presented to the public. The judges chose the PA Scheme because it demonstrated the potential to change public attitudes to archaeology through careful research, effective result dissemination, and raising awareness of the importance of archaeological finds.

Don't forget the PA website at www.finds.org.uk

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New Monographs from the Roman Society

2000 has seen the publication of four new Roman Society monographs, three from Britannia and one from JRS. The latter (JRS no 9) is a beautifully produced volume, *The Writings of the Roman Land Surveyors* by Brian Campbell. If you think it sounds dry, think again - it is full of little gems of interest and information. This volume is on special offer (£20 off) till spring 2001.

The three Britannia monographs are a varied bunch - Fulford & Timby's *Late Iron Age and Roman Silchester: Excavations on the site of the Forum-Basilica* (no 15), Evans's *The Caerleon Canabae: Excavations in the Civil Settlement* (no 16), and Rahtz, Hirst and Wright's *Cannington Cemetery* (no 17). Between them they cover the whole span of the Roman occupation of Britain, the period immediately before, and that immediately after. And the small finds are pretty good too.

Purchase details of all four books can be found on p 17, and a brief look at the Silchester Forum-Basilica book on p 18.

Y2K - Year of the Gladiator

This year certainly seems to have had a theme, and it wasn't the Dome. There can be no doubt but that 2000 was the year of the gladiator. The one that caught the public imagination was obviously Ridley Scott's film, which is now being tipped for numerous Oscars, but there was much, much more to the gladiatorial year 2000 than Russell Crowe looking moody.

The British Museum exhibition, *Gladiators and Caesars*, subtitled *The Power of Spectacle in Ancient Rome*, didn't exactly open to rave reviews (some were pretty sniffy), but I really enjoyed it. There was more than just gladiatorial combat here, with racing, wrestling, boxing, and acting also included. Some of the knuckle-dusters were truly terrifying, and the objects that I remember best were a pair of terracotta figurines of boxing Africans. They weren't things of beauty or even particularly well-modelled, but they presented a striking image, with the head of one snapping back after receiving a blow to the chin.

My one criticism is that perhaps there should have been more about the buildings in which all these activities took place, but this was an object, not a picture, exhibition, and it was noticeable that there were crowds around the object cases but only a few people around the pictures of buildings. Joe Public clearly did not agree with me.

The accompanying book, edited by Eckart Köhne and Cornelia Ewigleben, with the English version edited by Ralph Jackson (the exhibition originated in Hamburg), is very detailed and lavishly illustrated. It is divided into seven chapters: *The Politics of Entertainment; the Heroes of the Amphitheatre; Boxing, Wrestling and the Pancration; Chariot-Racing in the Circus Maximus; The World of the Theatre; The Performers and their Audiences; and Competitive Sport as Part of the Entertainment Industry*. There is a bibliography divided by topics, which will be useful for researchers, and the catalogue itself will probably become a reference work in much the same way as has the catalogue from the Pompeii exhibition of 1976.

Was the Museum of London jumping onto a bandwagon with its statement that the grave of a female gladiator had been found at Southwark? And was it announced just within the silly season? Whatever the truth of the dead woman's identity, judging from the messages on the subject on britarch, if it was a publicity stunt it was a good one. Neatly tied in with the theme came a re-enactment of gladiatorial combat in front of the City of London's Guildhall as part of an MoL exhibition. This drew the modern crowds and gained the Museum that much-desired oxygen of publicity.

On a rather more serious note, MoLAS produced in November a popular booklet on Guildhall Yard excavations. Though the title, *Gladiators at the Guildhall*, suggests the booklet only deals with the amphitheatre, it tells the story of the site up to the present day. The section on the 11th-century settlement is particularly interesting – among the environmental evidence was a group of cats' paws, perhaps suggesting a skinner worked nearby. Several of the illustrations are repeats of those in *Gladiators and Caesars*, and are repeated again in a third book, by Marcus Junkelmann.

Das Spiel mit dem Tod is an analysis of gladiatorial games, and images of those games, as an expression of *Romanitas*. Though lavishly illustrated, this is not a coffee table book, but a detailed and informative scholarly work. It is enlivened by replicas of the arms and armour of the various gladiators, not just displayed on dummies, but worn by a re-enactment group, the Familia Gladiatoria Pulli Cornicinis. The book overflows with pictures of the Familia engaged in combat in suitable settings – such as the amphitheatres at Xanten, Carnuntum, and Trier.

And finally, if you are not sated with the subject, the British School at Rome is holding a conference in March on *Roman bodies: metamorphoses, mutilation, and martyrdom*, which includes a topic on..... guess what? Yes, gladiatorial games! For more details see p 17.

Nina Crummy

Book details:

Gladiators and Caesars, edited by E Köhne & C Ewigleben, 2000. British Museum Press, ISBN 0-7141-2316-1, £16.99. 154 pp, 150 colour and 14 black and white illustrations.

Gladiators at the Guildhall, by Nick Bateman, 2000. Museum of London Archaeology Service, ISBN 1-901992-19-5, £5.99. 92 pp, many colour and black and white illustrations.

Das Spiel mit dem Tod, by Marcus Junkelmann, 2000. Verlag Philipp von Zabern, ISBN 3-8053-2563-0, 196 pp, 340 colour and black and white illustrations.

ADVANCE NOTICE

Autumn Meeting 2001

Exeter University, Monday
October 8th

Details in next Newsletter

Novel approach

Lindsay Allason-Jones of Newcastle University is well-known for her knowledge of the life and times of Roman women. She has put this knowledge to a more 'public' use by producing a novel called *Roman Woman*. Its genre could be called didactic social realism, as it is a series of slices of one year in the life of a young Romano-British woman in York, and is full of small details of cooking, furniture, clothing, festivals, etc.

Jean Mellor, formerly County Archaeologist for Leicestershire, has reviewed the book for RFG on p 11, where details of price & publisher can be found.

Conferences

Roman bodies: metamorphoses, mutilation & martyrdom (30.3.01-31.3.01)

An interdisciplinary conference to be held at The British School at Rome. Topics include mutilation and punishment in the Roman army; gladiatorial games; slavery and punishment, including branding and castration. Details from A Hopkins, The British School at Rome, via Gramsci 61, Rome 00197, Italy. Tel: +(39) 06 3264 9372. Email: a.hopkins@flashnet.it

IFA annual conference (10.4.01-12.4.01)

The IFA annual conference will be held in association with the Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne. Details from Conference Committee, IFA, University of Reading, 2 Earley Gate, PO Box 239, Reading RG6 6AU. Fax: 0118 931 6448. Email: admin.ifa@virgin.net

Archaeology in Surrey 2001 (2.6.01-3.6.01)

A two-day conference to review aspects of the county's past, and to offer some new perspectives for the future. To be held at the University of Surrey in Guildford. Details available from Surrey Archaeological Society, Castle Arch, Guildford GU1 3SX. Tel/fax:

01483 532454. Email: surreyarch@compuserve.com

Congress of Independent Archaeologists (21.9.01-23.9.01)

The CIA 2001 congress will be held at Nottingham University. Details from A Selkirk, 9 Nassington Road, London NW3 2TX. Tel: 020 7435 7517. Email: selkirk@archaeology.co.uk

Pots online

The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford has launched a project called PotWeb which aims to create an online catalogue of its ceramic collections. The pilot study covers the periods from 1000 to 2000 AD. Brief summaries of available forms are accompanied by thumbnail colour pictures. These are of a very high quality, and certainly convey an excellent idea of the vessels. (www.ashmol.ox.ac.uk)

More and more museums are putting their collections, or parts of them, onto the Net in similar ways, or as simple databases. One of the first to put its database online in the 90s was Hampshire County Council Museums Service. The entries are basic, but if you are a student tracking down objects for a corpus it is enough to tell you if a letter or visit is needed or not.

To find the Hampshire database go to www.hants.gov.uk, then follow this click route: 'Leisure & Tourism', 'Hampshire Treasures', 'Search Hampshire Treasures'. 'Search', 'Search the Museums Catalogue'.

The Roman Society: Monograph Details

All are available direct from The Roman Society, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU. Prices quoted include postage & packing.

The Writings of the Roman Land Surveyors, B Campbell, 2000. JRS Monograph 9, ISBN 0 907764 28 2, hardback, 580 pp, 54 line drawings, 6 plates. £58 till 30th June 2001, £78 thereafter.

Late Iron Age and Roman Silchester: Excavations on the Site of the Forum-Basilica, M Fulford & J Timby, 2000. Britannia Monograph 15, ISBN 0 907764 24 X, hardback, 613 pp, 242 figs. £52.

The Caerleon Canabae: Excavations in the Civil Settlement, E Evans, 2000. Britannia Monograph 16, ISBN 0 907764 25 8, paperback, 537 pp, 125 figs, 33 plates. £52.

Cannington Cemetery, P Rahtz, Hirst & M Wright, 2000. Britannia Monograph 17, ISBN 0 907764 26 6, paperback, 516 pp, 256 figs. £56.

Oxford v Cambridge

Roman Cambridge: Excavations on Castle Hill 1956-88, J Alexander & J Pullinger (ed A Taylor). 2000.

All the evidence for the small walled Roman town of Cambridge gathered together, and set in its regional context, and in that of small towns generally. The religious features of the area are especially important, as is its role in the late Roman period. Contributors include Brenda Dickinson, Kay Hartley, Martin Henig, and the late Rex Hull and Joan Liversidge.

£14.50 including p&p, cheques payable to Cambridge Antiquarian Society, c/o A Taylor, 40 Hertford Street, Cambridge. CB4 3AG

Roman Oxfordshire, M Henig & P Booth, 2000.

In the Roman period Oxfordshire fell within the territories of several tribes. This book places the archaeology and history of the county in that period in a wider context, and sets out to recreate the county's geography, settlements, economy, people, and environment. There are many illustrations of objects from the period.

Sutton Publishing, ISBN 07509 19590, Special Price £20.00 including p&p, from Customer Services Dept, Haynes, Sparkford, Yeovil, Somerset BA22 7JJ

new books

Roman Weapons, Tools, Bronze Equipment and Brooches from Neuss - Novaesium Excavations 1955-72, G Simpson, 2000.

This is a useful catalogue which contains not only 1st century brooches and pieces of military equipment, but also many vessel fragments and toilet equipment, including a valuable collection of strigils. An interesting context group is that from the *fossa sanguinis* in the Temple of Cybele, which includes two sliding weights (one a bust of the youthful Bacchus), a cymbal, and a bronze knife.

BAR IS 862, ISBN 1 84171 140 3, 177 pp, 51 pls, price £41, from John & Erica Hedges Ltd, 195 Banbury Road, Oxford O2 7AR

A visual catalogue of Richard Hattatt's ancient brooches, R Hattatt, 2000.

The brooches in Hattatt's collection were mainly Romano-British, and this reprint of the visual catalogue from his fourth book, *Ancient brooches and other artefacts*, is a guide to the types and their dates. Not surprisingly, it is selling like hot cakes! A must-have if you don't have the original four volumes.

Oxbow Books, ISBN 1842170260, 128 pp, 104 p of b/w figs, from Oxbow Books, £12.95

Late Iron Age and Roman Silchester: excavations on the site of the Forum-Basilica 1977, 1980-86, M Fulford & J Timby, 2000.

A valuable publication which contains a wealth of sections useful to the finds specialist. In most cases the finds are discussed by period. The industrial waste (by P Northover & N Palk) includes moulds for terrets, rings, strap unions, lynchpins, and probably also for penannular brooches. The building material includes some tiles with circular stamps of Nero. The coin section, by G C Boon,

also includes all British, Gaulish & pre-Flavian coins known from Calleva.

Britannia Monograph 15, ISBN 0 907764 24 X, 613 pp, 242 figs, 113 tables, price £52.

Iron, Blacksmiths and Tools. Ancient European crafts, edited by M Feugère & M Guštin, 2000.

Proceedings of the International Conference at Podsreda. This volume presents recent developments in the study of iron from a wide chronological and cultural perspective. All aspects of iron-working are covered, from the production of the metal to the manufacture of finished artefacts. Contains general papers on iron-working from Protohistory to the Middle Ages, and sections on workshops, different categories of tools, and details of several hoards dating from Antiquity to the early Middle Ages.

Instrumentum Monograph 12, 248 pp, 242 figs, price 240 FF + 40 FF p&p, from Librairie Archéologique, 12 rue des Moulins, F34530 Montagnac, France

Le plomb en Gaule romaine. Techniques de fabrication et produits, A Cochet, 2000.

During the Roman period lead was in common use in Italy and the provinces, mainly in the construction industry, but also for many everyday objects, and, with the lead coffins and cinerary urns, in cemeteries. The manufacture and assembly of lead objects requires complex techniques, which are concentrated on in this study. An inventory of the lead objects in the Gallo-Roman Museum at Lyon allows the author to highlight the often neglected technical aspects of the working of this metal in Antiquity and its particular constraints. The study of items such as roofing elements, tanks, basins, and sarcophagi, and of manufacturing techniques such as hammering, welding, and stamping has enabled products of individual

workshops and of specific periods to be identified.

Instrumentum Monograph 13, 223p, 233 figs, price 220 FF + 35F p&p, from Librairie Archéologique, address above.

Frocester: A Romano-British settlement, its antecedents & successors, E Price, 2000.

In two volumes, this brings together the results of work at Frocester up to 1994. Vol 1 is the site evidence, Vol 2 the finds, which include large groups of coins, metalwork, and pottery, plus a cemetery group and the faunal and environmental evidence. Also selling well, so hurry while stocks last! A flyer is included with this newsletter.

ISBN 0 9537919 0 7, £35 including p&p, from Frocester Publications, GADARG, Frocester Court, Stonehouse GL10 3TN

Excavations on the Norwich Southern Bypass, 1989-91. Part 1. Excavations at Bixley, Caistor St Edmund, Trowse, Cringleford & Little Melton, T Aswin & S Bates, 2000.

This is a synthesis of the results of most of the project (a Middle Saxon cemetery will follow as Part 2). It includes six excavation reports ranging in date from Mesolithic to Saxo-Norman. There are few finds, but features include a Romano-British smelting furnace.

East Anglian Archaeology 91, ISBN 0 905594 29 0, 254 pp, 181 figs, £27 from P McMichael, ECC Archaeology Section, Fairfield Court, Fairfield Road, Braintree, Essex.

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