

LUCERNA



THE ROMAN FINDS GROUP
NEWSLETTER

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Lucerna

Roman Finds Group Newsletter 24

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See page 12 for referencing policy.

Editorial

I would like to thank all the contributors to this issue for their work, especially as I brought the deadline forward.

Lucerna 24 is out now in order to publicise the University of Durham's conference on Roman Finds on July 6th-7th, further details of which will be found on pp 17 and 25, and inside the back cover. It is not too late to book a place.

The most important item in this issue is the announcement that we now have a Vice-President, Catherine Johns (p 2). Catherine worked at the British Museum for nearly 35 years, a cheerful source of information and guidance. Her retirement speech was a very pertinent and perspicacious assessment not only of the current climate at the British Museum but also of the wider world. She has kindly allowed it to be printed here (pp 3-6) for all RFG members to read.

*Still 'Catherine-related', Oxbow Books have kindly given away **FREE** to RFG members the illustrated introduction to the Hoxne treasure, and have put together the special enclosed leaflet of items on their stocklist that will be of particular interest to members. Note the special price of Catherine's The Jewellery of Roman Britain.*

*'Perhaps', 'probably', 'possibly' and 'may' are well-used words in archaeology, but are anathema to the press, so it seems inevitable that any interpretation of archaeological evidence (as opposed to the straightforward evidence itself) which finds its way into the papers will be simplified and so provoke an adverse reaction within at least part of the archaeological community. Hilary Cool's article on pp 18-21 shows what happens when a cautious and well-documented interpretation is taken up by the press. If those writing in to *britarch* had read the report, I doubt that there would have been any fuss at all. Moreover, the Roman Empire contained a wide variety of individuals and types. Small wonder one or two might be spotted in Britannia.*

Nina Crummy

RFG Vice-President

Shortly after her retirement, the RFG Committee, on the Group's behalf, sent Catherine Johns the following letter:

Dear Catherine,

In recognition of your scholarly contribution to the study of Roman finds, 'small' or otherwise, the Roman Finds Group would be delighted if you would agree to become its Honorary Vice-President.

The position is a new one, created especially to allow us to acknowledge your achievements. We are an informal body, and no duties are attached to the Vice-Presidency, but we hope and trust that you will be able to attend occasional Group meetings when convenient, and continue to contribute to Lucerna if so moved.

Your knowledge, dedication and cheerful good sense are beacons in the field. We look forward to an even greater output of publications in your retirement, which, with your existing body of work, will create a vital and important legacy for generations to come.

Yours most sincerely,

Roy Friendship-Taylor

President

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Secretary

Christine Jones

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Angela Wardle

Membership Secretary

Ellen Swift

Meetings Secretary

Nina Crummy

Editor

Jenny Hall

Publication Organiser

We are pleased to say that Catherine has accepted, and that the RFG now has an Honorary Vice-President.

Catherine Johns: a selected bibliography *

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'Romano-British precious metal hoards: some comments on Martin Millet's paper', in S Cottam et al (eds), *TRAC 94, Proc Fourth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeol Conf, Durham 1994* (1994), 107-117

Continued on p 24

* books and major articles only; contributions to excavation reports (apart from the Usk samian) and forthcoming items not included

Catherine Johns

her speech to colleagues and guests on her retirement from the British Museum 29 May 2002

The British Museum is the third museum in which I have worked; I started my employment as a museum curator 40 years ago this September, in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff, and then worked for three years at the Rheinisches Landesmuseum in Bonn before I arrived here at the beginning of December 1967. Working in Germany was a formative experience. Not only did I learn the language and make many friends there, but it ensured that as a Roman archaeologist, I have always since seen things from an international, Empire-wide perspective rather than a British one.

Because of Cardiff and a short period as a temporary Clerical Officer in a government department, I was familiar with the Civil Service. The BM was, though technically a 'fringe body', still very much a CS establishment in the late 1960s. Although the ethos didn't always suit the needs of an academic institution, it did have its advantages. There were strict rules, and they could be looked up. Some were irrelevant rules, but at least they were clear. They also promoted – indeed, demanded – a degree of loyalty and selflessness on the part of employees that is little known these days; which is why, when people of my generation encounter papers on such matters as 'professional ethics' written by complete outsiders for our instruction and edification, we feel a mixture of hilarity and outrage.

I have worked under five Directors and five Keepers. When I arrived, I entered what was still the sub-Department of Prehistory and Roman Britain within the Department of British and Medieval Antiquities. It was already evident that the British and Medieval Department was too diverse and unwieldy for efficiency, and in less than 18 months, our section had become the independent Department of Prehistoric and Romano-British Antiquities, based in spacious and well-designed penthouse offices above what is now the South Portico of the Great Court, and looking out on the beautiful, ever-changing view of the Reading Room dome, now forever lost to all but the pigeons.



Catherine Johns holding aloft her 'erotica' leaving card at her retirement party.

Nearly thirty years went by. On Friday, February 13, 1998, a highly appropriate date, the department held its last social gathering in those premises, and within a couple of years, even the name of the department had been arbitrarily changed to a meaningless and inaccurate one that, moreover, gave us the squalid acronym PEE.

Change is normal. There would be something wrong if society, institutions and individuals did not change during a period of over 30 years – a generation, a third of a century. Some changes are for the better (can't think of many, off-hand, but there must be some), but anyone who imagines that we are unaccustomed to change in the BM, and that we resist it, knows very little about us. Change has actually been the only real constant here over the last three decades. However, as people who are interested in the past, and who understand it better than most, we are right to be concerned about retaining what is good and scrutinising changes very carefully. An institution that

has functioned with spectacular success through all the changes of 250 years must have been doing something right.

I shall return to that point, but I want to say something about the two aspects of life in the BM that seem to me to encapsulate its importance and its values: our colleagues, and the museum's collections.

COLLEAGUES

The people first: it was in 1994 that I became particularly keenly aware of the profound influence of mentors and colleagues, because that was the year in which three of my former teachers died. Richard Atkinson, who was my professor at Cardiff, Mike Jarrett, who also taught me there, and who nurtured my enthusiasm for Roman archaeology, and George Boon, who instructed me in the basic principles of curatorship in my first job in the National Museum of Wales. I realise now, far more than I did when younger, how much my knowledge and my attitude to my work has owed to them.

Within this institution, it would be impossible for me to list all the people who have helped to shape my work and who bear some of the credit for any success I may have achieved. Of those who are no longer alive, I would mention especially John Brailsford and Tim Potter, both of whom were utterly committed to encouraging and promoting the work of their colleagues.

I have learned something from virtually everybody who has worked in my department for the last 34 years, and from countless colleagues in other departments and sections of the museum, and I stress that I do not mean only other curators and archaeologists. I mean also conservators, scientists, artists, photographers, messengers, designers, cleaners, warders, typists, administrators – everybody who is necessary to the functioning of a complex institution like this one.

Some obvious examples: working with scientists has deepened my perception of the ways in which antiquities may be studied and given me a whole different angle on ancient technology. Working with our illustrators has taught me how to look more acutely and more perceptively at an object – though they, and the conservators, can still usually see things that I missed. Curators in other departments have introduced me to Classical archaeology, Egyptology, medieval and

modern material culture, numismatics – again, an endless list. Needless to say, Don is at the very top of that list. I am still constantly amazed by how much he knows.

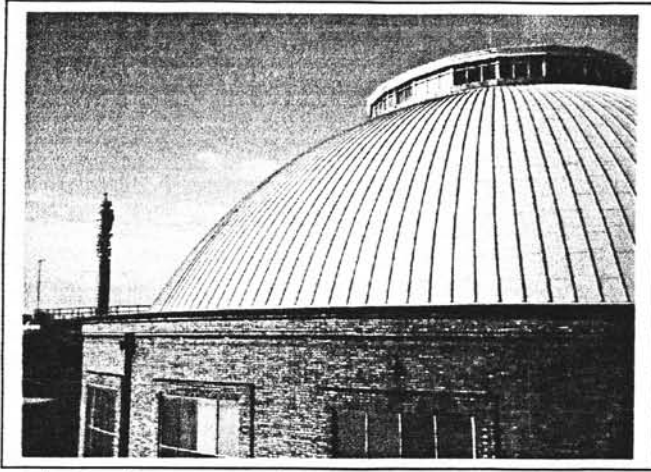
Being surrounded by younger people who understand computers in a way that I never shall has enabled me just about to keep up with such matters; remember that personal computers did not exist when I started work here. There was not so much as a single photocopier in the building. The departments of Education and Design have enriched my perceptions of the scope and focus of museum work.

Colleagues both within and outside the museum with whom I worked when active in Trade Union affairs taught me things I never even knew about as a young, innocent archaeologist, and induced a healthy cynicism about life. I learned a remarkable amount as a Trade Union rep.

And of course, the scholars and students from outside the museum who come here to study our collections are an extended part of the network of knowledge centred on our own colleagues, while the museum visitors, the ordinary members of the public who come to see us, people of all ages and from all backgrounds, have things to teach us as well as to learn from us. They are continually providing new insights, and ensure that we never become ivory-tower academics detached from reality.

There is a chain of knowledge that is passed down within a venerable institution like this one, a form of cumulative expertise which enables each one of us to stand on the shoulders of our predecessors. Through teaching by example and by anecdote, almost a process of osmosis, we are able to learn from the experiences of our predecessors, and through them, of their predecessors, as well as from our own contemporaries.

To sustain and augment that cumulative expertise, that institutional culture and collective memory, it is vital both that employees stay for long periods in the institution, and that a wide range of professional skills is represented within the workplace. All that is then required is that colleagues communicate freely and openly with each other. It is an elegantly simple, profoundly human process that has worked brilliantly for centuries and millennia, and we damage it at our peril.



The Reading Room roof

The shabby, superficial culture of outside consultants and short-term contracts shatters the process, and once broken, the chain of knowledge cannot be repaired. One day a new management guru will doubtless come along who will comprehend and promote this understanding, but it may well be too late by then to recover what has been lost.

Painstakingly writing down what we do, how and why we do it, what skills and experience we command, may look very efficient. It is not. All it does is waste a prodigious amount of paper. Describing what we do when we could actually be doing it is not a sensible use of that valuable resource, time. The constant, clumsy re-invention of the wheel that is required when we cast aside cumulative memory and expertise in favour of simplistic and, I have to say, already obsolescent, management tools, is a hugely inefficient and wasteful process.

COLLECTIONS

Now the collections: the museum's collections form the bedrock of the staff's knowledge. They stretch back 250 years and form a database of potential knowledge and inspiration which connects us directly with all our forebears, all the way back into the 18th century. A museum like this one is a precious archaeological artefact in itself, an outstanding ideological and physical, concrete product of the Age of Enlightenment which is still living, flourishing and evolving today, and we should be very careful indeed about how we handle it.

The collections of this museum helped to construct and shape the study of archaeology in Britain from its very infancy.

They still give rise to a kind of archaeological research that, though closely linked with University-based work, starts from a different point, and is complementary rather than identical.

Artefact-based research is founded on a profound familiarity with the objects that our remote ancestors used, from beautiful and precious works of art to the most mundane equipment of daily life. The questions we ask, and the answers we seek, are inspired directly by these antiquities and our response to them. This does not mean that we cannot engage in theoretical speculations about ancient societies as well as the next archaeologist: we can, and do. In fact, it is fun to formulate half-a-dozen new theoretical ideas before breakfast, and far less demanding than learning how to recognise and date a typological series of flints or potsherds. We are simply approaching the study of the past from a specific angle. The work of specialists who are deeply familiar with artefacts, who possess that indefinable skill known in other fields as connoisseurship, is a vital component in the advance of archaeological knowledge, and the environment of a large, venerable and comprehensive museum is the only one in which it can be fully nurtured and developed.

Another aspect of curatorial research that differs from the work of our University colleagues concerns our constant interaction with the general public. We become extremely familiar with the interests and levels of knowledge of the public, and we learn how to communicate effectively with them, whether through the labelling in the exhibition galleries, letters, lectures, full-length books, or personal conversations. We learn how to convey our hard-earned and often very obscure knowledge in succinct and accessible terms. This is a skill that many archaeologists need not learn.

It is something of a two-edged sword. Because we become adept at expressing difficult concepts and deep learning in simplified terms, and get into the habit of doing this whenever we converse with those who are not professional colleagues, there are people of limited understanding who imagine that our subject must be very easy – that anyone can do it, and that they are therefore entitled to instruct us simple souls on the nature of our work and how to 'manage' it better.

My advice to all of you who in future cross swords with some new and ignorant outsider

who comes in to tell you how to do your job is to speak to them exclusively in the most arcane and impenetrable professional jargon. They won't understand you, but at least they will have to accept that you know something they don't.

CHANGES

I referred to the BM as an historical artefact in its own right. It is a living and growing source of knowledge and inspiration for scholars and for the public, and the reasons for its very existence underlie much of modern 'scientific' thinking, in the widest sense of that term. If we try to rearrange it according to the current passing fads and political credos, to pull bits off it and move them elsewhere, we shall find eventually that we have abandoned some of the principles of the Enlightenment, and that we are heading back towards an attitude to learning more appropriate to the Middle Ages. Maybe, in the nature of things, that has to happen, but I hope I don't live to see it.

This is not the time to go into my views on dispersal and so-called restitution from established collections, which are well known to many of my colleagues. I would say only this; those who do not understand the past are not fit to plan for the future.

Physical changes to the Grade I listed building have to be debated and fully justified before they can be accepted; they may not be carried out on a whim. Changes imposed on the very concept of an artefact such as this museum should, likewise, be founded on a true understanding of its history and its purpose, and should not be entered into for short-term or frivolous reasons. Such ill-considered changes may easily bring disaster. Most of you here will be well aware of how close we are standing to the edge of the precipice at this moment.

MUTUAL BENEFITS

The concept of the museum, its collections and its staff, combine to create something unique and hugely important. Like all my colleagues, I am acutely aware that any success I have had in my career so far owes an immense amount to the extraordinary environment in which I have been privileged to work, an environment which, not so long ago, was amazingly conducive to thought, research and inspiration. It is less so today. I do not identify myself solely as a creation of the British Museum, but I know that I

should be a very different person if I had not worked here. I feel that this institution is incredibly important as part of the culture of the western world.

At the same time, the gift is not one-sided. The Museum owes us everything, too. It is because of the quality and dedication of the people who have worked here over the generations that the museum has retained its reputation as a centre of learning and inspiration. Because of this, those who come here from elsewhere into senior positions should have a care before they start to attack the 'culture' of the place, before they dare to patronise us and underestimate the skills and knowledge of the staff. A worldwide reputation for excellence is not built on lazy, disloyal or ignorant employees. We – the professional staff of this institution – know what we are doing, how to do it, and why it should be done, and we deserve respect.

If there is a revolution to be desired, it is a revolution in which all of those who work here, not only those of us who have collaborated and supported each other for years and decades, but the newcomers too, learn to ask the opinions of their colleagues at all levels in the hierarchy; to hear what they say, and to learn from what they say. In a word, **RESPECT**.

I think that is all I have to say. I am sorry there have not been any amusing anecdotes and jokes, but I do not believe this is a time for joking. I have enjoyed most of my thirty-four-and-a-half years here, in spite of some bad moments. I have seen management styles come and go: you will be glad to know that, given time, they do go. I have learned from my friends and from the cherished memory of my predecessors. I have tried to repay that debt, and hope I can leave a sound legacy for the future. We are curators; it is our job to care for things, and to pass them on in undamaged condition for our successors to use and enjoy as we have done, not to cast them aside and introduce the latest tawdry rubbish. I believe that this curatorship includes ideals and concepts as well as objects.

Above all, I hope, most sincerely, that some of the more shallow and frivolous trends of the early 21st century will not succeed in destroying this precious monument to the elevated ideals of the 18th.

Catherine Johns

An item of Roman coopered furniture from Dorchester (Dorset)

According to Kilby (1971, 132), the practice of recycling coopered casks and tubs into furniture was widespread from the 16th century onwards, especially in poor households. The main problem with this kind of artefact is that as wood shrinks in the drier indoor air, hoops will become too big and the item will have to be tightened until the wood has thoroughly dried out. There are nevertheless some interesting specimens of the genre ranging from barrels reused as tables at the 'Smugglers' Inn', to stools, to even padded armchairs on rockers. A rare instance of furniture from Roman Britain suggests that things may have been different in the more distant past. While barrels were reused as well-linings and makeshift tubs in Roman times, the evidence shows that craftsmen were experimenting with new, purposely-built coopered furniture of innovative design. The coopered container that is the object of this short note is no reused barrel: it is an original design.

The item belongs to an assemblage recovered in Dorset over 50 years ago.

In May of that year a very large numismatic find totalling over 22,000 coins, known as the 'Marks & Spencer hoard', was discovered during building works at 48 South Street, Dorchester. It consisted mainly of *antoniniani* and had been deposited in three vessels: a bronze jug, a metal bowl and a coopered item. While the coins and the jug were in due course examined in detail (RCHME 1970, 537), the other two containers have remained largely unreported. At the moment the artefacts are on display in Dorchester County Museum; the coin collection, on the other hand, has been dispersed (see note on page 10). This article deals with the coopered item and proposes a reconstruction.

The reconstruction is based on the pictures taken when the hoard was discovered, on the accounts of eyewitnesses and on the examination of the artefact itself. Unfortunately the latest restoration process, by which the surviving metalwork has been fixed to a polystyrene drum simulating the woodwork, is non reversible; only the outer surface of the metalwork was therefore available for inspection.

The surviving elements of the artefact are:

- *Two thin copper-alloy bands with a moulded profile some 60 mm wide: one is almost complete, the other is fragmentary.*
- *Two fragmentary, discontinuous and corroded iron hoops, 2-3 mm thick, adhering to the back of the copper-alloy bands mentioned above. Their original width cannot be ascertained.*
- *Four fragments belonging to a decorated copper-alloy band of unknown length. The original width is 80 mm as shown in two end fragments: one of them has two original edges and the complete design of the curvilinear punched decoration. The other two fragments have an original concave edge.*
- *One leaping dolphin in copper alloy (62 mm long), decorated with incised lines; it has a splayed tail and a wide-open mouth. The fragment (tail) of a matching artefact.*
- *Four moulded copper-alloy feet, square in section, 15 mm wide, 24 mm tall; they are fixed to the iron hoops.*

The wood has completely disintegrated. Some fragments may have been preserved at the back of the metalwork, but the present state of the artefact does not allow any examination of the relevant areas. The presence of wood is documented by the photographs taken at the time of the invention of the hoard. In one of them (RCHME 1970, pl 230) the edge of a stave is clearly visible. Moreover, Colonel Drew, who was called to the scene by Dorchester Museum after the workman had hit the assemblage with a pick and discovered the hoard, does mention the word 'stave' in his report. Sufficient wood was recovered at the time to identify the species. The investigation was carried out at the Biophysical Laboratory at Bourton-on-the-Hill in Gloucestershire, and the wood was pronounced to be mature yew but in a rotten and decayed state, possibly because of the chalky terrain. The sample is no longer extant.

The container appears to be a coopered artefact of a unique design (Fig 1). It

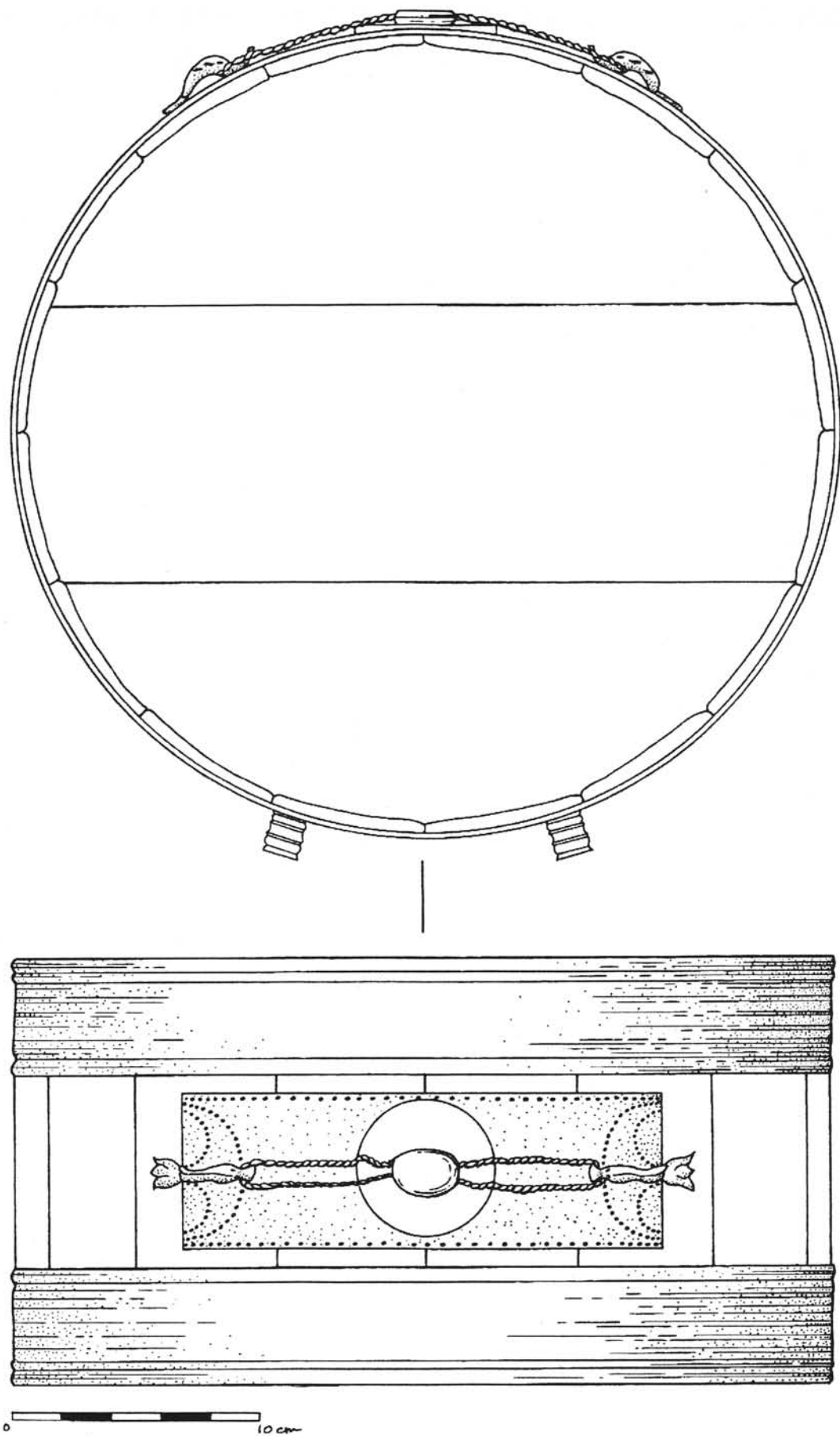


Figure 1. The Dorchester coopered container.

consisted of a staved drum resting on its side on four metal feet. This drum was bound by two iron hoops each covered with a band of copper-alloy sheeting. It is suggested that the container opened at the top and that there was an arrangement for placing a seal in a seal-box across the opening.

The width of the container has been estimated by measuring the tightly-packed mass of coins from the pictures taken at the time of invention. This gives a drum width of *approximately* 220 mm, including two wooden sides each 15 mm thick. The circumference was calculated by extrapolating from the curvature at the base of the artefact where the four copper-alloy feet appear to be *in situ*. The area also shows a build-up of metal possibly due to the fixing of the feet and the overlapping of the metal bands. The estimated maximum measurements of the container are as follows: 420 mm (diameter), 435 mm (height including feet), 220 mm (width).

The original photographs show that the iron hoops covered with the copper-alloy bands were placed on the edge of the staves. The proposed reconstruction places the decorated copper-alloy band (80 mm wide) between them where it fits with a clearance of 10 mm on either side. The length of this copper-alloy band is conjectural. From the two fragments with an original concave edge, a circular opening some 70 mm in diameter can be postulated, wide enough for a hand to get through but too tight to retrieve a fistful of coins.

It is proposed that the copper-alloy dolphins were handles but not for the purpose of carrying the container. They would be far too insubstantial for the purpose. The two leaping dolphins were used to fix a seal-box across the opening. The reconstructed artefact would therefore include a wooden bung approximately 70 mm in diameter and a sealing mechanism across it. The positioning and the exact relationship of the handles and the decorated copper-alloy band are not clear. None of the surviving fragments of the copper-alloy band shows any rivet holes. In the proposed reconstruction, it has been assumed that the band was held in place by the dolphins which would entail the presence of a rivet hole at each end of the band. In the actual state of restoration of the artefact neither the presence of rivet holes under the handles nor

the fixing mechanism of the dolphins themselves could be investigated.

The number of staves making up the drum is conjectural: obviously the smaller the diameter of the container, the narrower the staves. The proposed width of 80 mm per stave has been arrived at by considering artefacts of a contemporary date. In the Carlisle saddle keg which is smaller (maximum diameter 378 mm, Padley forthcoming, K11), the staves have a maximum width of 65 mm. In large barrels, on the other hand, staves can be as much as 120 mm wide. The flat, vertical sides of the container, for which a 15 mm thickness has been postulated, could easily have been a composite construction with planks positioned side by side and jointed with dowels, a standard practice for barrel heads both in Roman and modern times.

The construction method appears to have been fairly straightforward. Staves had to be backed, *ie* shaved at the edges on the outside and hollowed out in the centre to achieve a slightly rounded transverse section. They were then arranged around a prepared side and clamped with an iron hoop possibly applied hot to shrink to a tight grip. The process was repeated for the second hoop and copper-alloy bands and feet were then fixed.

The use of metal hoops on cooperage was confined in Roman times to buckets and tankards; barrels were normally fastened with an organic binding in hazel or willow. The only known instance, in Britain, of a barrel with iron hoops is the *cupella* from Lullingstone which also has a metal swivel handle (Meates 1987, 107).

In the case of the item in question, the iron binding (approximately 40 mm wide and 2-3 mm thick) was essential. When it was buried the container was full to the brim with coinage and must have been of considerable weight. Only a tough metal binding could have taken the strain. The design and the robust construction of the item strongly suggest that, unlike the bowl and the jug found with it, holding money was its primary function. It is certainly difficult to see what other purpose it could have served. It does look an unlikely container for small quantities of drink as Earwood suggests (Earwood 1993, 80). It is too large and the handle provisions are plainly inadequate.

The artefact was, however, not only a functional item, but also a beautiful piece of furniture. Yew was a very good choice because of its strength, durability and relative immunity to dampness; its combination with lavish copper-alloy fittings (feet, leaping dolphins and bands) would have produced a stunning effect.

This item has no immediate *comparanda* in the Empire. The style of the metalwork with the very naturalistic leaping dolphins suggests a Roman input. On the other hand, the juxtaposition of copper alloy metalwork and yew is frequently found in other coopered artefacts, namely Celtic ritual buckets, such as those from Aylesford and Baldock for Britain; Goeblingen and Vielle Toulouse for the continent, all from native contexts (Vidal 1976). According to Vidal (*ibid*, 197) the inspiration for the design may have originally come from Etruria, but the manufacture was certainly local and the style of the metalwork is strictly Celtic.

It is not proposed here to discuss in detail the circumstances of the deposition of the hoard. It has been suggested (RCHME 1970, 537) that the coins represented a consignment of cash not yet in general circulation. The date for the deposition of the hoard has been set at AD 257 or soon afterwards, giving a *terminus ante quem* of the mid 3rd century for the manufacture of the artefact. Suffice it to say that we have here an example of coopered furniture so far unparalleled in the Roman Empire, a high-status item of innovative design and possibly evidence of the coming together of different woodworking traditions.

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The Dorchester hoard

The vessels and over 1500 coins are in the Dorset County Museum; 2817 coins are in the Dept of Coins and Medals, British Museum. Other coins are in: Ashmolean Museum; Birmingham Museum; Curtis Museum, Alton; Hull City Museum; Portland Museum; Rye Museum; Dept of Archaeology, University of Sydney.

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E Besley & R Bland 1983 *The Cunetio Treasure*, 181-7
H Mattingly 1939 Dorchester hoard, *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1939, 21-61
A S Robertson 2000 *An inventory of Romano-British coin hoards* (ed R Hobbs), Royal Numismatic Society Special Publication 20, no 470

ROMAN FINDS GROUP Autumn Meeting 2002

in

LONDON

on

Monday November 18th

*"Roll up, roll up, see the
amazing Roman waterworks in
action"*

Speakers will include Jenny Hall, John Shepherd, Angela Wardle & Fiona Seeley

Further details and a booking form will be sent to members soon

Quern Study Group 27 March 2003

A meeting of the Quern Study Group will take place at the Institute of Archaeology, Oxford. We welcome offers of papers on any subject concerning worked stone.

Anyone interested in attending or giving a paper please contact:

Ruth Shaffrey, 11 Amity Road, Reading RG1 3LN
Tel: 01865 263800 (daytime)
Email: ruth_shaffrey@hotmail.com

Odd brooch, any ideas?

Excavations at the promontory site of Le Yaudet, Ploulec'h, Brittany have been undertaken every summer since 1991 by Barry Cunliffe of the University of Oxford and Patrick Galiou of the University of Brest. The work involves examining the Iron Age and Roman defences and the settlements of Iron Age, Roman and medieval date that they enclose.

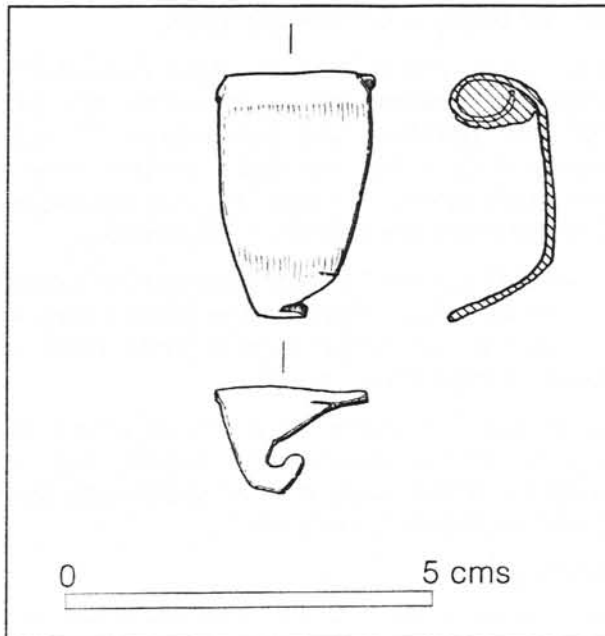


Figure 1. Brooch from Le Yaudet, Brittany. Drawn by Alison Wilkins.

The brooch (SF 157) was recovered from a Roman layer (47) in a trench behind the rampart on the upper plateau. It has a simple wide, flat, plain, copper-alloy bow, turned over at the head to create a cylinder through which passes an iron axis bar. The remains of an iron pin, hinged on the bar, are also evident. The plate tapers and has a rounded tip, which is again folded. A notch has been cut in one side to form the catch. Length 34 mm, width 21 mm.

If anyone knows of a parallel, could they please let me know.

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Ed: It looks as if it could have been made as a one-off by someone who knew what function a brooch had to perform, but had only a basic grasp of the technology of manufacture.

Bone styli

The article on iron styli in *Lucerna* 23 (Major 2002, 2-5) reminded me of a note I had previously written some 20 years ago in *Britannia* and had never quite got around to updating.

In 1983 I published a short note on pre-conquest objects of bone from south-east England (Greep 1983). Three of the objects, from Braughing (fig 6, 1-2), were referred to as spindles. Two are illustrated here. Although their identification as styli in the continental literature was acknowledged (Greep 1983, 261), it was not then accepted. It is now clear, however, that the use of these objects as styli is the more likely and therefore the Braughing pieces gain a very significant degree of importance.

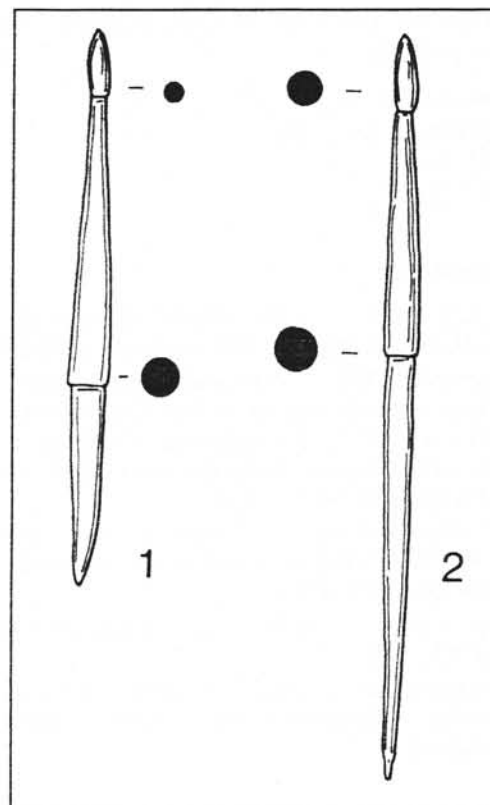


Figure 1. Styli from Braughing. Scale 2:3.

These forms of styli are well-known throughout the empire, with large numbers being recorded. They are present as early as the 3rd century BC (Gostenčnik 2001, 384), but manufacture may have ended by the turn of the era. That they are rare in Britain is therefore not surprising, although examples from London and York, together with later 1st-century examples from the continent such as at Hedderheim (Greep 1983, with many further references) indicate

that isolated examples might be expected to occur into the Flavian period.

The true significance of the Braughing finds has not previously been explored. These objects were clearly intended for writing on wax tablets. Their frequency at the Magdalensberg has been taken to 'illustrate the town's main function as a commercial and administration centre, with an intense demand for writing-equipment' (Gostenčnik 2001). The nature of the settlement at Braughing and its trading connections has been discussed elsewhere (eg Partridge 1981, 351-6).

Evidence for writing in pre-conquest Britain has previously been restricted to *graffiti* on ceramics (Hassall & Tomlin 1979, 349). If styli for writing on wax tablets were present in pre-conquest Britain then we may assume that they represent the first material evidence for the use of wax tablets in pre-Roman Britain.

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Bibliography

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K Gostenčnik 2001 'Pre- and early Roman bone and antler manufacturing in Kärnten, Austria', in A M Choyke & L Bartosiewicz, *Crafting bone: skeletal technologies through time and space*, BAR International Series **937**
M W C Hassall & R S O Tomlin 1979 'Roman Britain in 1978 : IIB : *instrumentum domesticum*', *Britannia* **10**, 346-356
H Major 2002 'Roman decorated iron styli', *Lucerna* **23**, 2-5
C Partridge 1981 *Skeleton Green. A Late Iron Age and Romano-British site*. Britannia Monograph **2**

Referencing policy for contributors to *Lucerna*

Stephen Greep has for years stressed the importance of giving credit where credit is due when it comes to citing references to specialist finds contributions published in site reports or finds *corpora*. I have certainly found myself unexpectedly promoted to an

authority on bone and antler pendants, when it was Stephen himself who wrote that section in CAR 2.

When site details are also discussed, it is definitely tempting to simplify the references just to keep the bibliography tidy. Full discussion of the Chelmsford jet 'hoard', for example, requires references to Drury 1988 (excavation details), Going in Drury 1988 (date of the pottery), and Henig & Wickenden in Drury 1988 (description and discussion of the small finds). How much neater, if erroneous, to put just Drury 1988, or just Henig & Wickenden 1988.

Lucerna is a Newsletter for finds specialists - therefore **please** check who wrote the text for your parallels and **don't** take the easy way out by using the name on the front of the book cover! If I spot this has happened, I will change the reference accordingly.

(I will let you off if the finds specialist's name is one of two or more on the front cover, eg Hawkes & Hull 1947, Cool & Philo 1998, or Neal, Wardle & Humm 1990.)

It is not just more accurate to credit the author of the small finds report, but, as Stephen Greep says, if finds specialists don't credit each other, who will?

Nina Crummy

Advance notice

The RFG Spring 2003 meeting will be at
Harlow
on March 17th

Roman Finds Group
Finds Research Group 700-1700
United Kingdom Institute of Conservators
Archaeology Section

Joint meeting
on

Standards and Practice in X-Radiography

Monday 17th February 2003
Education Room, Museum of London

Speakers will include Rob White, Hilary Cool
and Quita Mould

Further details in next issue of *Lucerna*

Some Portable Antiquities from Hampshire and Wiltshire

The Hampshire Portable Antiquities Scheme was established in January 1999 and since that time approximately 2500 objects of Roman date have been recorded. What follows are short notes on three recently recorded artefacts of interest which are included here in the light of recent articles in *Lucerna*.

Following the article on wax spatula handles in the last issue of *Lucerna* (pp 6-8), a further example of a Feugère Type A5 Minerva bust handle has recently been recorded in Hampshire (Fig 1). The handle was found using a metal-detector by Mr Larry Bunyan in Micheldever. The figure has waved hair and wears a high Corinthian helmet with a large crest of moulded plumes on a rod-like support. She is depicted draped, wearing the Gorgon's mask or *aegis*, now abraded, on her chest, and holds an object of unknown form in her left hand. The



Fig 1. Minerva bust handle from a wax spatula. Found at Micheldever, Hampshire. Scale 1:1. Drawn by Alan Cracknell.

facial features are visible, but are badly worn. The figure is set upon a triangular pedestal, which has an incised triangular motif set between plumed mouldings on either side. The pedestal has a transverse slot to take the iron blade; no traces of which now survive. The handle is 51 mm in length and has a maximum width of 16 mm.

A small number of other Roman finds, including a Colchester brooch and coins dating from the 1st to 3rd century, have been

discovered in the same general area. This assemblage may represent that of a rural settlement, but the overall volume of Roman finds from the area is low.

This find represents an important addition to the database of nine Minerva bust handles known from Roman Britain, as listed by Crummy. In addition, a further example, more stylised than the Micheldever handle, has recently been found at Stonham Earl and recorded by the Suffolk Portable Antiquities Scheme (see next article).

Figure 2 depicts a relatively common form of copper-alloy folding knife handle, which was found by Mr. Steve Boniface in Upham, Hampshire. The incomplete openwork handle measures 42 mm in length and 19.5 mm in width. It is finely made and the figured motif depicts a stylised hound running on a solid ground line. The hound is well-defined, with long fore and hind limbs, a long tail and part of one ear, although the rest of the head is now missing.

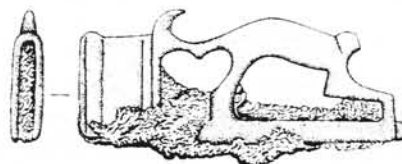


Fig 2. An openwork knife handle from Upham, Hampshire. Scale 1:1. Drawn by Alan Cracknell.

Originally, it is probable that the hound would have been chasing a hare and there would have been no division between the two animals. The flat rectangular butt has two incised vertical lines either side of a slight vertical ridge at both ends. The iron knife blade would have been fixed by an iron rivet set in the lower portion of the handle and its corroded remains, about 1 mm thick, are present along the length of the ground line.

This form of folding knife is relatively common and the probable subject of the figured motif in this case, that of a hunting scene, is the most popular. This example is very similar to a more complete knife found in the Thames at Hammersmith, London (Wheeler 1930, 78 fig 19, 4) and another example depicting a hound chasing a hare is known from Richborough (Henderson 1949, 129, no 118, pl 36). It is interesting that two folding knives depicting hounds chasing hares were found in 4th-century contexts in excavations of the Northern suburbs, Winchester (Crummy *et al* forthcoming). The

two Winchester examples are very similar to one another, being more angular and less well finished than the Upham example.

Finally, a very fine copper-alloy oval plate brooch, dating to the 3rd century, was recently found by Gwen Stokes and Cindy Wise near Calne, Wiltshire and reported through the Hampshire Portable Antiquities Scheme (Fig 3). The brooch has a flat oval intaglio setting produced in layered light and dark blue glass to imitate nicolo, with bevelled edges. It is well engraved with a depiction of Mercury standing right, with the weight on his left leg.

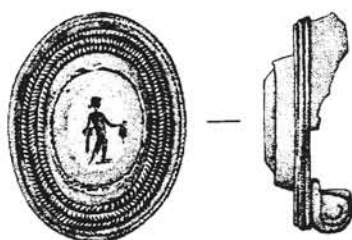


Fig 3. Plate brooch with intaglio from near Calne, Wiltshire. Scale 1:1. Drawn by Alan Cracknell.

The god is naked apart from a cloak draped over his right shoulder and he carries a money bag and a caduceus. There are three ropework moulded borders around the central setting and an outer raised moulded border and much surface gilding survives. The spring is secured through a single pierced lug and the pin of four turns is missing. The deep catchplate is intact, although the edge is damaged. Traces of white metal coating survive on the reverse surface. When worn, the catchplate would have been uppermost. The brooch is 29 mm in length and has a width of 23 mm.

The more common variety of this form is either oval or round and has a glass paste setting in the centre, which is very frequently missing. Occasionally, the setting has simple engraved figures. Very few examples with properly engraved intaglio settings are known from this country. One of these is an oval plate brooch with an intaglio depicting a female head, probably Diana, found at Abbots Ann, Hants (Hattatt 1989, 181 no 1648; Henig 1995, pl 82; Johns 1996, 181-82).

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Bibliography

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N Crummy, P Ottaway & H Rees forthcoming *Small finds from the suburbs and city defences, Winchester City Museum Publication* 6
R Hattatt 1982 *Ancient and Romano-British brooches*
M Henig 1995 *The art of Roman Britain*
C Johns 1996 *The Jewellery of Roman Britain*
R E M Wheeler 1930 *London in Roman Times*

New wax spatulae from Suffolk

Suffolk has recently had two new finds, through the Portable Antiquities Scheme, of wax spatulae. One is an example of an iron Feugère Type A3, the other is a cast copper-alloy handle in the form of a bust of Minerva from a Type A5 spatula (Fig 1).

The goddess has a helmet with large crest, a raised oval on each side, and either a substantial rim or a roll of hair beneath. The face has a worn nose and the eyes are just visible. There are no arms, and two V-shaped grooves on the chest indicate drapery. The back has three rounded facets but no other decoration. Just above the waist

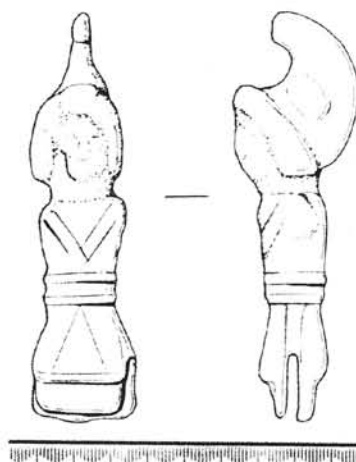


Figure 1. The Minerva bust wax spatula handle from Stonham Earl, Suffolk. Scale 1:1.

of the figure are two transverse ridges which run right around both front and back. Below this the handle flares out and has a triangular facet on both front and back, before flattening and becoming rectilinear at the base. A transverse slot runs up the middle from the base, and in this the iron spatula blade would originally have been fixed. There is no trace of any rivet, solder or other fixing mechanism. The handle is now worn and corroded. Length: 54.5 mm.

This is now the 11th such handle known from Britain, and the most easterly. The find spot is Stonham Earl (also known as Earl Stonham), Suffolk, TM 0902 5898.

For a bibliography of the other British examples see *Lucerna* 23.

Details of the A3 spatula will follow in the next issue.

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More amulets

I was interested in the recent discussion of the 'widgets' in *Lucerna*, 'Mystery widgets?' (Wardle 2001) and 'No more mystery' (Abauzit 2002). I can add one more example from Britain, found at Silchester (unpublished, Reading Museum), and there are a further two unpublished from Vindonissa.

I am informed by Angela Wardle that the two London examples are likely to be from 1st-century contexts. Together with the dated examples listed in Abauzit 2002, there is ample evidence to suggest an early (?1st-century) Roman date for these types. This is interesting since the other, more common, 'fist and phallus' pendants (eg Greep 1983) and the antler roundel pendants with carved phallus decoration (my Type 4; Greep 1994, fig 1) are also typically of this date. There is no doubt that these two forms were worn around the neck, suspended on bronze chains (as there are examples with the chain *in situ*).

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Bibliography

- P Abauzit 2002 'No more mystery', *Lucerna* 23, 13-14
S J Greep 1983 'Hand and phallus pendants from Colchester' in N Crummy, *The Roman Small Finds from Colchester 1971-79*, Colchester Archaeological Report 2, 139-140
S J Greep 1994 'Antler roundel pendants from Britain and the north-western Roman provinces', *Britannia* 25, 79-97
A Wardle 2001 'Mystery widgets', *Lucerna* 22, 7

Candlesticks in Roman Britain

At a recent meeting of the Roman Pottery Group, the suggestion was put forward that rushlights were made in East Anglia in the Roman period. It certainly seems likely that there were forms of Romano-British lighting equipment which do not survive well in the archaeological record, especially as ceramic and metal lighting equipment appears to be so rare in the province.

To put this in context, the database for my forthcoming discussion and catalogue of lighting equipment from Britain only contains approximately 2600 objects, a number easily matched by a single major continental museum such as Trier.

Given how widespread other forms of Roman material culture such as samian ware are in the province, this rarity is unlikely to be due simply to poverty; rather it may point to a cultural reluctance towards the adoption of these very Roman objects. The use of lamps and candlesticks represents a considerable economic investment (all artificial lighting requires fuel such as oil and tallow which would otherwise serve as food) but perhaps more importantly it represents a very culturally 'laden' activity. The very need for artificial light (beyond the hearthfire and torches) might well relate to very 'Roman' social practices such as reading and writing or Roman style dining. Using artificial (and portable) light would have transformed the use of domestic space and the range of activities carried out at night.

Candlesticks are quite rare in Roman Britain, with significant regional variation. The majority can be dated to the period from the 2nd to 4th century AD. The most clearly defined ceramic group is that of New Forest

candlesticks. Iron candlesticks occur in a very wide range of forms, from simple spikes to multi-directional pieces. Iron candlesticks are particularly common in rural sanctuaries and, as ceramic candlesticks are absent from such sites, I would suggest that iron possessed particular ritual significance.

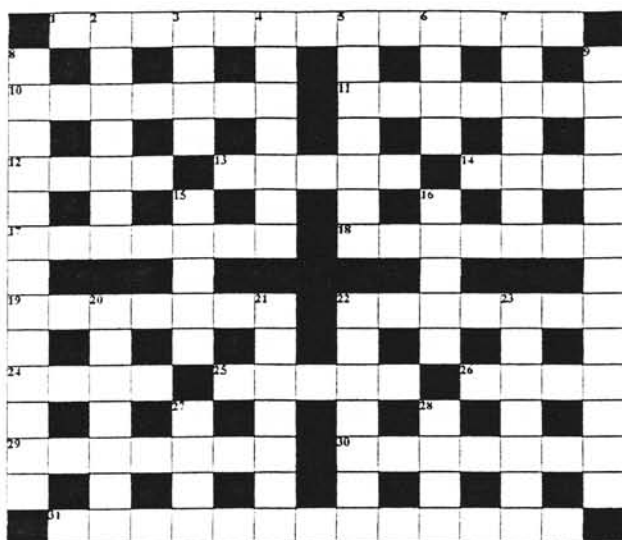
In terms of their social context, candlesticks are much more common in the countryside and smaller towns than the earlier ceramic lamps which only really occur in the large urban and military centres.

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Bibliography

H Eckardt forthcoming *Illuminating Roman Britain*, Instrumentum Monograph

CROSSWORD by 'Digger'



Across

1. The lack of French in a spa town may cause a very nasty disease (3,3,5)
10. Real crazy Portuguese nobleman could inherit this position (7)
11. Caesar was when he came to Britain in 5 AD (with a bit of hesitation) (7)
12. I'll have nothing, thanks - or just a little bit? (4)
13. Shrub-like president? At the start, yes (5)

14. Just some of lots of finds, produced by sieving? (4)
17. Roman historian is silent on America (7)
18. Gentlemen with a lot of paper in a ship (7)
19. Country with a new angle, initially not developed (7)
22. Patron saint of the dove? (7)
24. Brooch expert in a boat? (4)
25. Beer? Right! It'll make you wide awake (5)
26. Overweight, about fifty, lacking in sparkle? Could be. (4)
29. Studying in Berkshire (7)
30. Hand tools for cheats (7)
31. Enraged, he smote back at turbulent priest (6,1,6)

Down

1. Here, a convulsive movement might have followed 9 (7)
2. Corpse found by lad, about Dec. 1st (4)
3. Protects limb with sour concoction (7)
4. Warriors who reportedly don't fight by day? (7)
5. Start every new vice, and end finally with a deadly sin! (4)
6. A little fish, divine when eaten by an expert on *tegulae*? (7)
7. Frankish king with some zest in his whisky, perhaps? (5,3,5)
8. To kick up a fuss, a worker with a particular doctrine creates a religion (13)
15. Back pieces might be attached to a buckle (5)
16. Ditch seabird. Why, you might say? (5)
20. A giant hit a log in a frenzy (7)
21. Floods of French sledges (7)
22. A type of pipe particularly suited to the American ear? (4-3)
23. Cross islander (7)
27. Some of the artefacts I am cataloguing used to be in Asia (4)
28. This type of brooch is current around....? (4)

Answers on p 26

TRAC

The annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference (TRAC) was held at the University of Kent at Canterbury from the 5-6 April 2002. TRAC is intended to act as a forum for new theoretical ideas and a platform for postgraduates to present their

ERROR!

The first eight 'Down' clues in Digger's crossword are numbered wrongly. Please add 1 to each, so 1 = 2, 2 = 3, etc.

work. A selection of papers is usually published in a conference volume.

This year's conference had five sessions:

- interdisciplinary approaches to the study of women
- meaningful objects
- is ritual "out of the ordinary"?
- theorising late Antiquity
- breaking ground or treading water? theoretical agendas for the 21st century

On Friday evening there was an opportunity to view the Roman collection in Canterbury Roman Museum and a wine reception. More than 60 delegates attended, but during the TRAC general meeting the lack of representation of archaeologists working in units or museums as opposed to universities was once again noted.

The next TRAC will take place from the 3rd to 6th of April 2003 at the University of Leicester, and will be held jointly with the RAC (Roman Archaeology Conference). For more details see the Leicester University website:

<http://www.le.ac.uk/ar/rac/index.html>

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Roman Finds conference

Of particular interest to readers of *Lucerna* is a conference to be held soon (6th-7th July 2002) at the Centre for Roman Provincial Archaeology at the University of Durham.

Entitled 'Promoting Roman Finds: Context and Theory', the conference is supported by English Heritage and the Roman Society Archaeology Committee, and is organised by Dr Richard Hingley and Dr Steve Willis.

Speakers include Mark Atkinson, Paul Bidwell, Paul Booth, Hella Eckardt, Richard Hobbs, Fraser Hunter, Martin Millett, and Ellen Swift.

There are sessions on:

- contexts
- people and objects
- techniques of recording, and
- promoting finds work.

It is not too late to book. See p 25 for contact details and inside back cover for provisional programme. More information can be found at: www.durham.ac.uk/a./j.mac-mahon.

RFG Committee

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Finds Research Group 700-1700

The Autumn 2002 meeting of the FRG will be hosted by Dr David Caldwell at

The National Museums of Scotland
Edinburgh

Sat 19th - Sun 20th October 2002

FAIRS AND MARKETS

A programme of speakers will introduce the evidence for, and the development of, markets and fairs through the medieval period. There will be guided tours of the Museum and the chance to explore Edinburgh

For further information contact:

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Tel: 0131 247 4082 Fax: 0131 247 4060

e-mail: j.shiels@nms.ac.uk

The Catterick Gallus

Those of you who read a daily newspaper may have noticed that an unusual 4th century inhumation burial found at Catterick was attracting a considerable amount of attention one day in late May. Headlines such as 'Self-made eunuch emerges from Roman grave' (*The Guardian*), 'Was this priest Britain's first cross-dresser?' (*The Independent*), 'Meet Crossus Dressus - our first transvestite' (*The Daily Mail*) and 'Romo-sexual priest. Fourth century ladyboy found' (*The Daily Star*) give a taste of the coverage. The story was picked up by radio and television, providing opportunities for English Heritage representatives to be interviewed on amongst other things *The Today Programme* and *The Richard and Judy Show*. It even made it onto *Have I Got News for You*. As it is not often a Roman finds report gets this sort coverage, your editor has requested this note to provide some background.

The burial in question was found during the excavations conducted by what is now the Centre for Archaeology at Baines Farm just to the south of Catterick in 1981-2. The report on these excavations forms part of a truly monumental excavation report dealing with 40 years of work by Peter Wilson (Wilson 2002). The official launch of this was the occasion of all the coverage. Skeleton 952 was found in an extended position with its head to the south-west and the lower arms bent at the elbows and crossed on the chest. An elaborate beaded jet necklace had been worn around the neck. An annular shale bracelet was worn on the left upper arm and one formed of jet beads threaded together on the left wrist. An expanding copper alloy 'bracelet' was worn around the right ankle and two pebbles had been placed in the mouth. The jewellery may all be dated to the 4th century and individually the pieces are common types. The multi-strand necklace does seem to be unusual but that may be because few have been found under modern conditions where careful excavation has allowed possible reconstructions to be made. Anne Thompson, who wrote the report on the jet and shale from the grave, suggests that two alternate reconstructions are possible, but both would retain the multi-strand character.

Naturally the assumption was that this was a female, so when the osteological report came

back identifying the individual as a male aged about 20-25 years the reaction was that there must be some mistake. The bones were sent out for a second opinion which concurred with the first. So, in as far as it is possible to be, we are fairly confident that this was a young man.

My connection with the grave stemmed from being invited to write an overview of the finds that were being published in the report. As it encompasses excavations made over a long period by different people, there were many individual reports by many specialists and there was a danger of not seeing the wood for the trees. My aim was to extract a picture of what the finds could tell us about life at Cataractonium, and to make sure that the general reader could not ignore the wealth of evidence within the reports. The finds provide much food for thought, and it is not just this burial that suggests Catterick then was a very cosmopolitan place.

Unsurprisingly, during my work Skeleton 952 drew my attention. There can be no doubt that if he had dressed in life as he was in death, then he would have been regarded as a transvestite. In general adult males in the empire of the 4th century did not go around wearing necklaces and bracelets. Nor did they or females generally wear anklets. That this individual might have been regarded as somehow 'other' was also suggested by the pebbles in the mouth. Who was he, what was he doing at Catterick? Illumination came from a memory of Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*. During this the hero, who has been changed into a donkey, spends some time in the service of a group of eunuch priests of the Goddess Cybele who certainly would have appeared very 'other' as the following quotation makes clear.

'The next morning the eunuch priests prepared to go out on their rounds, all dressed in different colours and looking absolutely hideous, their faces daubed with rouge and their eye sockets painted to bring out the brightness of their eyes. They wore mitre-shaped birettas, saffron-coloured chasubles, silk surplices, girdles and yellow shoes. Some of them sported white tunics with an irregular criss-cross of narrow purple stripes.'

The Golden Ass, by Apuleius. (Penguin edition translated by Robert Graves).

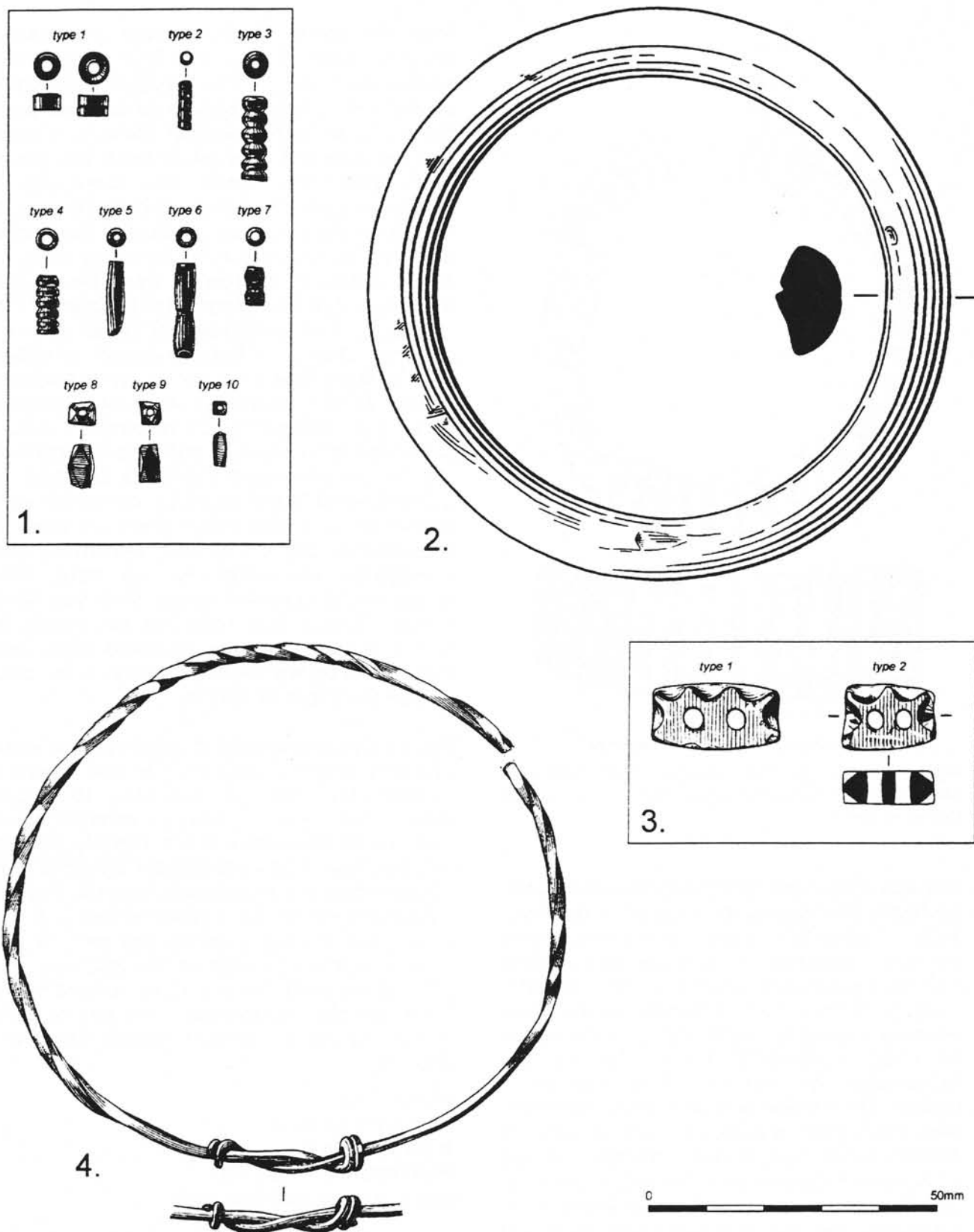


Figure 1. The grave goods from Catterick Skeleton 952. 1 and 3: jet beads; 2: shale bracelet worn on left upper arm; 4: copper-alloy anklet. Illustration by Edward Lyons, EH.

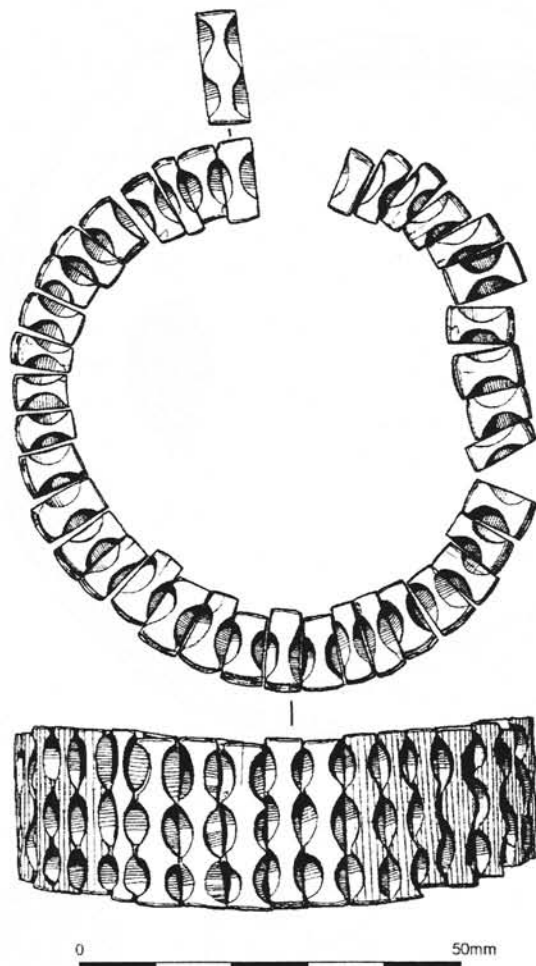


Figure 3. The jet bead bracelet from Catterick Skeleton 952. Reconstruction drawing by Judith Dobie, © EH.

The eunuch priests of Cybele, known as *galli*, castrated themselves in imitation of her lover Attis. Thereafter they abandoned male clothing, adopting a long-sleeved, belted colourful gown and wore a turban or tiara. They wore their hair in female styles. They adopted jewellery which included necklaces or chest ornaments. Could this be the explanation for Skeleton 952, was he a *gallus*? The choice of black shiny jewellery may have been significant here as Lindsay Allason-Jones has drawn attention to the possible link between the rise in popularity of jewellery made of jet and other black shiny materials, and the increasing interest in the eastern mystery religions of which the worship of Cybele was one. Certainly she was known to have had adherents in Britain, and so the presence of *galli* in the province is a distinct possibility.

Of course, I cannot prove he was a *gallus*. The priests castrated themselves when adult and so there is no chance of establishing whether this individual was castrated or not

from the bones. It is, however, a plausible story to explain him in the light of currently known information. This leaves the question of whether it is appropriate to suggest such things in an archaeological context. I raise this because the internet *Britarch* list had a flurry about my *gallus* and there was a certain amount of hostility to him. This could not be on the evidence because at that point nobody had had the opportunity to read it. As the author of the theory, I was clearly the individual that one contributor accused of the 'propagation of sensationalist (possibly self-serving) claims'. Others seemed offended that a story like this had been publicised, almost as if archaeology was not supposed to be too interesting. In response I would say that I think we owe both the objects and the people who used them the courtesy of going beyond mere typology, otherwise why bother to do archaeology? Such an attitude unavoidably takes you into narrative, and sometimes will take you, as here, into somewhat unexpected areas. So if you have doubts, please first read the full report in part 2 of Peter Wilson's *magnum opus*, and then come up with a better story. I, for one, will be delighted to read it.

Finally it is appropriate to point out that work like this is often collaborative and I owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Judith Dobie for her splendid reconstruction painting of the *gallus* which literally fleshed out my ideas. This undoubtedly played a part in attracting the journalistic interest. Part of it features on the front cover of Part 2 of the report but the full painting can still, at the time of writing, be seen on the BBC web site (URL at the end). My thanks to her and Eddie Lyons for the illustrations here and to Pete Wilson for much Catterick related help over the years.

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Reference

P R Wilson 2002 *Roman Catterick and its hinterland. Excavations and research, 1958-1997*. CBA Research Report 128. (York)

URL

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/english/uk/england/new_sid_1999000/1999734.stm

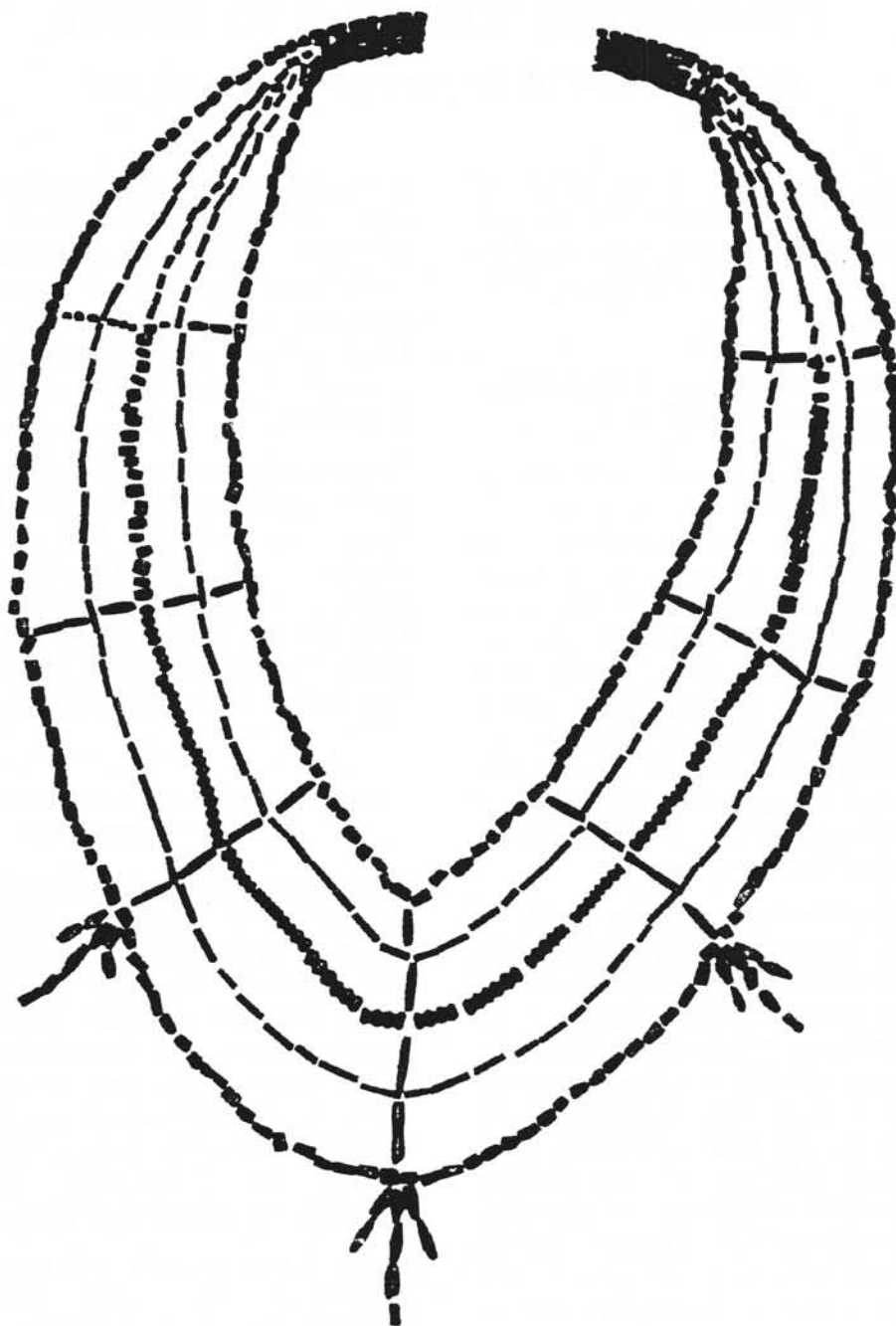


Figure 3. A reconstruction by Anne Thompson of the jet necklace worn by the Catterick *gallus*, © EH.

WANTED - wax spatulae

W H Manning identified some iron implements in the British Museum as modelling tools (1985, 31-2), and this has been the preferred identification for other British parallels so far. In Feugère's 1995 classification of wax spatulae they are Types B2 & C (see *Lucerna* 23). All but one of the British Museum accessions were from London, the exception being a Manning Type 3/Feugère Type B2 from Combend, Gloucestershire. Manning cites several other examples of Type 3s from Britain, and a Type 1/Feugère Type C from Baldock.

There are more recent finds from Hadrian's Wall, and also the new Type A3 find from Suffolk (A3; see p 14), all of which will be described in the next issue.

It would be good to list as many others as possible, of all the forms, to get some idea of distribution, so please could readers write in with examples they know about. Accompanying pictures would be useful, but allocation to either a Manning or Feugère type would do. Context details and site type where known are also important.

Nina Crummy

Finds from the Roman North

RFG Meeting at Segedunum Roman fort

The RFG met on April 15th 2002 at Segedunum, and our thanks go to our colleagues in the north for a very interesting series of talks and to Bill Griffiths for a site tour of Wallsend.

The recent post-excavation programme at Newcastle Roman fort

Margaret Snape opened the proceedings by describing the excavations of the Roman fort at Newcastle. It was an important area strategically, sited as it was on a steep promontory at the confluence of the River Tyne and the Lort Burn stream. It was an important river crossing and, following a period of farming, construction debris showed that Hadrian's Wall must have run close by, although the actual line is not known precisely. A possible Flavian timber bridge was superseded by the stone-built Pons Aelius in the Hadrianic period.

A stone inscription to Julia Domna dating to AD 213, pottery with a *terminus post quem* of the late 2nd to early 3rd century, and a coin hoard terminating in AD 210-13 gives an early 3rd-century construction date for the fort. It measured 0.9 hectares, and the *principia* (with a deep underground strong room), *praetorium* and granaries have been identified. A small building with a scattering of barley may denote stabling for animals. The unit stationed there in the early period was the *Cohors Prima Cugernorum*. In the late *Notitia*, the unit recorded is the *Cohors Prima Cornoviorum*. The fort was rebuilt in the late 3rd to early 4th century when the *principia* and *praetorium* were rebuilt and the granary converted. As part of the conversion, a stone plinth was added under the granary floor, a bronze dodecahedron was placed on top and then covered in soil.

Coin distributions at Newcastle Roman fort

Continuing with the same site, Paul Bidwell explained that the objective of the excavation had been to improve the understanding of the chronology of Hadrian's Wall. They were able to postulate the nature of the occupation of the fort in the 4th century from the distribution of coins and some of the pottery.

During excavations at the fort, 406 coins had been excavated, peaking in the period AD 330-348. The main concentration of coins were found in the main street leading to the *principia* and also the street to the front. A later concentration peaked in the period AD 364-375, after the *principia* had been abandoned.

So how was the area being used? The only other comparable site for the number of coins lost was at the auxiliary fort at Wallsend. At Usk and Chester coins and pottery denoted a possible trade function with traders living within the forts at a time when the *vici* had been abandoned. Perhaps the same had happened at the Newcastle fort.

Assemblages and cultural practices at Newstead

Rick Jones reminded us that Newstead was rich in finds, most having been excavated by Curle in 1906-1911. These finds are now in the National Museum of Scotland. From 1989-1994 a research project took place which returned to Curle's excavations and found little in the way of finds but a large amount of information on the contexts of Curle's finds. The project was extended to record an Iron Age settlement and surrounding indigenous sites.

Under Curle, metals and organics had been excavated but with little contextual information. Deep pits were excavated. For example, Pit 22 yielded 3 out of the 4 helmets. These pits were mostly outside the fort to the south.

Rick's project looked at what was around those pits and he excavated the remains of large timber buildings (15 x 5 m). The pits had originally been dug as wells and then filled with the deposition of votive offerings. He argued that the 4 helmets and 7 swords could not have been just domestic rubbish as they would have only been a small proportion of the armour in use.

On the indigenous sites there were few finds. Fifty farmsteads were sited on the surrounding hilltops. It was good farming land and the sites themselves were kept clean with little evidence of rubbish. Did this

show a different cultural practice with possible use of domestic organic rubbish as manure on the fields?

New displays at Segedunum Roman fort

Alex Croom provided an overview of the museum display policy and a rundown of some of the most interesting finds on display from the re-excavation of the fort. The museum is laid out on the pattern of the fort, which means that visitors can see the objects displayed linked to the find spot on the site. These include an unusual folding spoon with zoomorphic handle; a fragment of an iron decorated cheek-piece from an auxiliary helmet, edged with copper; a number of seal-boxes; oil lamps, which are rare finds for northern military sites; a number of spear heads, including one which is far too large to have been effectively used in battle; and spearhead-shaped finials. The publication of this material is imminent.

Recent research on Roman jet and shale

Lindsay Allason-Jones has been working with Mick Jones on analysing jet and shale objects with thin section sampling. Lindsay showed slides of jet in section, which has a wonderful golden colour and very distinctive rings. Shale on the other hand is completely different - black and speckly. This made it clear that finds reports which do not analyse black materials may be making assumptions about what they have - without analysis, it is not possible to distinguish between jet and shale (and to some extent black glass) by eye.

The analyses have been able to show where Whitby jet was and was not being exported and used; eg there are jet items from Monte Gelato in Italy, but examples for the Rhineland are not made of Whitby jet. Finds researchers should also be aware of the fact that gold leaf was sometimes applied to jet, but that this may not be obvious to the naked eye. For example, jet beads from Ashford, Kent, excavated by the OAU, had small traces of gold leaf which only became apparent on analysis.

Lindsay also talked about the amuletic properties of jet, being electrostatic; and thus objects of jet are often made to be worn next to the skin (eg pendants and bracelets), rather than being set in metal, where there would be no contact. The use of contrasting colours was also pointed out, gold being used as an inlay, as it provided a very

pleasing contrast with the black, and bone armlets were often worn between jet ones for the same reasons.

Roman brooches from Cheshire

Nick Herepath was down to talk about the Portable Antiquities Scheme in the North-West, but decided to talk about a specific aspect of the material he has recorded over the last five years. Nick was unnecessarily apologetic about being a non-Romanist, as he has clearly done an excellent job of identifying the different brooch types which have come up in his area. Nick concentrated on Cheshire, as an area where most of the detectorists he deals with conduct their hobby. Thirteen different brooch types have been identified, with Polden Hill and Trumpet types being the most common. The former includes a silver-gilt piece with settings for stones, and the latter are all sprung rather than hinged varieties.

There are also a number of headloop types, and the so-called 'Wirral' type, published in *Britannia* in 1999. Plate brooches are very rare; Nick has recorded only a handful of these. Likewise crossbow brooches, of which Nick has only seen two, and penannular types have not been seen at all. (The latter may be due to detectorists not finding these types of brooches very often, as they will not usually provide a strong signal to a metal-detecting advice. This was pointed out by Hilary Cool in her assessment of the data on Roman finds recorded by the Portable Antiquities Scheme. Nick also added that he has seen very few medieval penannular brooches as well, so this would seem to fit the pattern).

Romano-British writing tablets

John Pearce provided an account of the progress of the Centre for the Study of Ancient Documents (CSAD) in its re-examination of the Vindolanda tablets.

Originally the tablets were shot using infra-red technology, but this meant that some parts were still very hard to decipher. A new technique is being used to re-photograph the tablets and digitally enhance them. This is already proving to be extremely useful, with it now being possible to clarify readings of tablets which have already been published.

The plan is to make as many of the images of the writing tablets as possible available on the web. The site will be divided into two parts: a database of images, which is

effectively an on-line edition of the catalogue, and an on-line exhibition, which will provide the user with information about the excavations and so on. Follow the project's progress on www.csad.ox.ac.uk.

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Continued from p 2

Catherine Johns: a selected bibliography

'The classification and interpretation of Romano-British treasures', *Britannia* **27** (1996), 1-16

The jewellery of Roman Britain: Celtic and classical traditions (1996)

'Hacked, broken, or chopped?: a matter of terminology', *Antiq J* **76** (1996), 228-31

'Mounted men and sitting ducks: the iconography of Romano-British plate brooches' in B Raftery, *Sites and sights of the Iron Age: essays of fieldwork and museum research presented to I M Stead*, Oxbow Monograph **56** (1996), 103-9

'Isis, not Cybele: a bone hairpin from London', in J Bird, M Hassall & H Sheldon (eds), *Interpreting Roman London* (1996), 115-18

Erotica (1997)

The Snettisham Roman jeweller's hoard (1997)

'A gold amulet-pendant from Eaton Constantine, Shropshire', *Lucerna, RFG Newsletter* **23** (2002), 9-10

'Romn sexual imagery in Britain', *Coins & Antiquities* (May 1999), 25-28

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'A Roman hoard from Whitwell', *Rutland Record* **14** (1994), 151-8

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'The Water Newton hoard', *Durobrivae* **3** (1975), 10-12

with M G Fulford & M Henig

'A Roman gold ring from Silchester, Hampshire', *Britannia* **18** (1987), 279-81

with M G Fulford, A M Burnett & M Henig

'A hoard of late Roman rings and silver coins from Silchester, Hampshire', *Britannia* **20** (1989), 219-28

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with J Pickin

'Late Roman silver spoons from Spennymoor, County Durham', *Britannia* **24** (1993), 258-61

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The Thetford Treasure: Roman jewellery and silver (1983)

'New light on the Canterbury late Roman treasure', *Archaeol Cantiana* **99** (1983), 283-6

'The Canterbury late Roman treasure', *Antiq J* **65** (1985), 437-9

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'The Winkle, Cheshire, hoard of Roman gold jewellery', *Antiq J* **60** (1980), 48-58

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'A Roman bronze head from Cirencester', *Antiq J* **65** (1985), 437-9

with C Wingfield

'A Roman gold ring from Bromham, Bedfordshire', *Bedfordshire Archaeol* **19** (1991), 108-11

with P Wise

'A Roman silver dish from Ratley, Warwickshire', *J Brit Archaeol Ass* **149** (1996), 78-82

Thanks

Many thanks to all who responded to my survey on Roman finds research. I was very pleased to receive 48 completed questionnaires, with many thought-provoking and insightful comments, which have been very useful in my study of current attitudes to Roman finds research. I will be presenting the results of the survey in a paper at the Durham conference on 6-7 July (see inside back cover). I hope to see many of you there.

Ellen Swift, University of Kent at Canterbury

Conferences

NAMHO 2002 5th-8th July 2002, Aberystwyth

National Association of Mining History Organisations's conference, hosted by the Welsh Mines Society at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth. Theme: 'The application of water power in mining'. Details from: to John Hine, the Grottagge, 2 Cullis Lane, Mine End, Coleford, Gloucestershire GL16 7QF (send an sae).

Promoting Roman finds: context and theory 6th-7th July 2002, Durham

Conference to be held at St John's College, Durham (see page XXX). Details from Dr Richard Hingley or Dr Steve Willis, Department of Archaeology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, tel 0191 3743625, fax 0191 3743619.

Email: richard.hingley@durham.ac.uk, or s.h.willis@durham.ac.uk Website: www.durham.ac.uk/a.j.mac-mahon

British Archaeological Association 2002 27th-31st July 2002, Rochester

The BAA 2002 conference is entitled "Medieval art, architecture and archaeology in Rochester". Open to non-members. Details (send an sae) from Robert Gwynne, Conference Secretary, 44 Montagu Mansions, London W1H 1LD. Other queries to Anna Eavis, Conference Organiser, nmrc, Kemble Drive, Swindon SN2 2GZ, tel 01793 414648, email: anna.eavis@rchme.cu.uk

International Council for Archaeozoology 2002 conference 23rd-28th August, Durham

The ICAZ 2002 conference will be held at the University of Durham. Details from: ICAZ 2002, Dept of Archaeology, University of Durham, South Road, Durham DH1 3LE, tel 0191 3741139, fax 0191 374 3619. Email: icaz.2002@durham.ac.uk Website: www.nmnh.si.edu/icaz

Common threads 4.9.02-6.9.02, Birmingham

The Museum Documentation Association's 2002 conference will be held at the Botanical Gardens, Birmingham. Conference will explore the central position of information and knowledge management in the operations of collections institutions. Papers are currently invited. For further information contact Frances Bycroft, mda, Jupiter House, Station Road, Cambridge CB1 2JD, tel 01223 315760, fax 01223 362521, email frances@mda.org.uk Website: www.mda.org.uk

Association for Industrial Archaeology annual conference 6th-12th September 2002, Edinburgh

AIA conference to be held at Herriot Watt University. Details from: Isabel Wilson, Liaison

Officer, AIA Office, School of Archaeological Studies, University of Leicester, Leicester LE1 7RH, tel 0116 2525337, fax 0116 2525005. Email: aia@le.ac.uk. Website: www.industrial-archaeology.org.uk

AARG 2002 10th-12th September 2002, Canterbury

The Aerial Archaeology Research Group annual meeting for 2002 will be held at the University of Kent at Canterbury. Details: Dave Macleod, Meetings Secretary, English Heritage, 37 Tanner Row, York YO1 6WP, Email: dave.macleod@english-heritage.org.uk

6th international conference on waterfront archaeology 20th-22nd September, Southampton

Theme: "Working on the waterfront: shipbuilding, fish processing and related maritime industries". Jointly organised by the Centre for Maritime Archaeology, Southampton, University College London and the Hampshire and Wight Trust for Maritime Archaeology. Session themes: shipbuilding, timber supply and iron working; fishing, salt production and fish processing; waterfront machinery. Details: jjra@soton.ac.uk or g.milne@ucl.ac.uk

8th annual meeting of the European Association of Archaeologists 24th-29th September 2002, Greece

Will be held in Thessaloniki, Greece, hosted by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Greek Ministry of Culture. Four main themes: theory and interpretation of material culture; cultural heritage and the management of the archaeological record; archaeology in the modern world - politics and conflicts; and paths to diversity - regional perspectives. Details from: Symvoli - Congress Organisers Ltd, 8 Patmou Str, GR-551 33 Thessaloniki, tel ++30 310 425159, fax ++30 310 425169. Email: symvoli@symvoli.com.gr Website: www.symvoli.com.gr

UK Archaeological Science 2003 2nd-5th April 2003, Oxford

To be held at St Anne's College. Deadline for submissions of abstracts is 31.12.02. Details from: Archaeological Science 2003, Research Laboratory for Archaeology & the History of Art, 6 Keble Road, Oxford, OX1 3QJ, fax 01865 273932 Email: ukas2003@rlaha.ox.ac.uk

5th Roman archaeology conference 3rd-6th April 2003, Leicester

The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies conference, to be held at the University of Leicester. Full programme and booking forms will be available in September 2002. Details: Roman Society, Senate House, Malet Street, London WC1E 7HU, tel 020 7862 8727, fax 020 7862 8728. Email: romansoc@sas.ac.uk Webpage: www.le.ac.uk/archaeology/rac/index.htm

Books etc

Guide to conservation for metal detectorists

by R Hobbs, C Honeycombe, S Watkins

A step-by-step guide for members of the public, particularly detectorists, who find historic metal artefacts. The book explains the technical considerations which should be taken into account in order to ensure the long-term survival of the objects.

To be published in July 2002. Tempus. ISBN 0-7524-2522-6. £9.99.

Order from Tempus Publishing Ltd, The Mill, Brimscombe Port, Stroud, Glos. GL5 2QG

Lorica Segmentata I: a handbook of Roman plate armour

by M C Bishop

Lorica Segmentata II: a catalogue of finds

by M D Thomas

Vol 1 presents the principal types and discusses the development, technology, use, etc. Vol II is a detailed catalogue of published finds across the whole Empire. Both are useful for small finds specialists, and also to experimental archaeologists and re-enactors.

Vol I published June 2002, ISBN 0-9539848-4-2.

Vol II published July 2002. ISBN 0-9539848-5-0.

Order from The Armatura Press, Braemar, Kirkgate, Chirnside, Duns, Berwickshire TD11 3XL

Roman Carlisle and the lands of the Solway

by M McCarthy

The archaeology of this strategically-important site, rich in sculptural remains.

Tempus. ISBN 0-7524-1955-2. £16.99.

Order from Tempus, address above.

The heirs of King Verica, culture and politics in Roman Britain

by M Henig

A re-examination of the historical and archaeological evidence suggesting that Britons who were fully 'Romanised' before AD 43 were the initiators of political and cultural change, not the Romans.

Tempus. ISBN 0-7524-1960-9. £17.99.

Order from Tempus, address above.

Garrison life at Vindolanda: a band of brothers

by A Birley

Life for the soldiers and their families on the edge of Britannia as shown by the writing-tablets from this waterlogged site by Hadrian's Wall

Tempus. ISBN 0-7524-1950-1. £15.99.

Order from Tempus, address above.

Roman Catterick and its hinterland, 1 & 2

by P Wilson

The results of over 40 years of excavation of this important small town. Covers relationship between civilian and military populations, and the transition from Roman to medieval. Large assemblages of finds.

Vol 1, CBA Research Report 128. ISBN 1 902771 23 0. £32. Vol 2, CBA Res Rep 129. ISBN 1 902771 24 9. £32.

Order from York Publishing Services Ltd, 64 Hallfield Road, Layerthorpe, York YO31 7ZQ

L'artisanat romain: évolutions, continuités et ruptures (Italie et provinces occidentales)

edited by M Polfer

Contains 20 papers presented at the 2nd international conference on Roman crafts held at Erpeldange in October 2001. Covers glass, wood-working, tanning, crafts represented on tombstones, metalwork, bone-working, pottery, iron.

Monographies Instrumentum 20. ISBN 2-907303-61-9. 260 pp. €40.80 (incl p&p).

Order from *éditions monique mergoil*, 12 rue des Moulins, F 34530 Montagnac, France.

Bibliographie Instrumentum 1994-2001

by M Feugère et al

6,000 entries presented alphabetically within 33 thematic chapters covering functional categories of objects and different types of craft production. Also comes as an electronic database (Mac and/or PC) which enables personalised searching and sorting.

Monographies Instrumentum 17. ISBN 2-907303-52-X. 276 pp + CD-rom. €42.10 (incl p&p).

Order from *éditions monique mergoil*, address above.

La nécropole gallo-romaine et mérovingienne de Breny (Aisne)

by M Kazanski

A synthesis of Merovingian garnet-decorated disc brooches, with a morphological classification of eight groups and a chronology. Function, value and symbolism also explored.

Collection Europe médiévale 4. ISBN 2-907303-62-7. 269 pp, 125 pl. €42.10 (incl p&p).

Order from *éditions monique mergoil*, address above.

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Illuminating Roman Britain

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Hella Eckardt

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Crossword Answers

1. The Black Death 10. Earldom 11. Invader 12. Iota 13. Bushy 14. Fiat 17. Tacitus 18. Squires 19. England 22. Columba 24. Hull 25. Alert 26. Fiat 29. Reading 30. Chisels 31. Thomas à Becket
2. Heretic 3. Body 4. Armours 5. Knights 6. Envy 7. Tiddler 8. Pepin the Short 9. Protestantism 15. Strap 16. Gully 20. Goliath 21. Deluges 22. Corn-cob 23. Maltese 27. Siam 28. Disc

Down

Becket

Fiat 29. Reading 30. Chisels 31. Thomas à

Iota 13. Bushy 14. Fiat 17. Tacitus 18. Squires

1. The Black Death 10. Earldom 11. Invader 12.

Across

PROMOTING ROMAN FINDS: CONTEXT AND THEORY

St John's College, University of Durham, July 6th-7th 2002

Programme

Saturday 6th

9.15-11.15

Martin Millett *The Shiptonthorpe finds in context - a retrospective*

Hella Eckardt *Contexts in Colchester*

Mark Atkinson *Special deposits at Heybridge*

John Evans *Styles of pottery deposition at a Roman rural site in Hampshire*

11.30-13.00

Paul Bidwell *The distribution of 4th-century coins in the fort at Newcastle - evidence for a market?*

Paul Booth *Roman finds in context: The Birmingham Northern Relief Road and beyond*

Andrew Gardner *Artefacts, contexts and the archaeology of social practices*

14.15-15.45

Michael Erdrich *Roman finds in early medieval contexts: lessons learnt from native sites in Frisia*

Marleen Martens *Creating order in waste: structured deposits in Roman Tienen*

Daniel Keller *Contextual analysis of late Roman glass tableware from Petra*

16.00-18.00

Fraser Hunter *Silver for the barbarians: interpreting denarii hoards beyond the frontier*

Raphael Isserlin *Time and Place*

Ben Croxford *Fragmentation of Roman statues*

Iain Ferris *A severed head: thinking about the fragment in Roman archaeology and art*

Sunday 7th

9.30-10.45

Patty Baker *The deposition of medical instruments and their possible associations with pollution and votive offerings*

Gilly Carr *Creolising the body: constructing identities through appearance in the early Roman period*

11.00-12.30

Robin Symonds & Ian Haynes *Methodology for comparing Roman pottery at an interprovincial level*

Steve Willis *Archaeological approaches to Roman finds: aims, methods and potential*

Richard Hobbs *Mine's bigger tha yours: comparing 'values' of Roman hoards*

14.00-15.00

Scott Martin *Techniques for exploring context and deposition*

Nick Cooper *Rubbish counts: quantifying portable material culture in Roman Britain*

15.15-16.45

Hilary Cool *Telling stories about Brougham, or the importance of specialist reports*

Ellen Swift *Small objects, small questions? Perceptions of finds research in the academic community*

Richard Hingley *Promoting Roman finds*