Excavating newly discovered section of Hadrian's Wall at Wallsend – see article on page 11.

Photo: © Sue Jones.
Editorial

In this issue we say goodbye to Dr. Tom Blagg, one of modern archaeology’s ‘greats’. We visit Colchester, where an ornamental garden pool has been identified, then move to Warwickshire for a report on the Chesterton Project, which is examining the remains of a large ‘villa’ (an unusual find for this County). Our own mosaic expert, Anthony Beeson, reports on his reassembly of the magnificent mosaic from Newton St. Loe, which was excavated in the nineteenth-century then nearly lost to damage and neglect – a remarkable rescue.

One of the finds from Plantation Place, London, a hoard of Roman gold coins, was featured on national television news, but we look mainly at the early history of the site. Next we visit the ‘Hadrianic Frontier’ for news and updates on various projects connected with improving the monuments for visitor accessibility and understanding. Anthony Beeson identifies a Jovian thunderbolt from Bath and our Chairman, Grahame Soffe, reports on last year’s very successful and well-supported visits.

We wish to thank Julie Hurst for her most generous offer of a beautiful stained glass panel (ARA Issue 9), to be auctioned by sealed bids, in order to raise funds for the Association. It was disappointing that lack of response meant there was no lucky buyer. We must hope for a better outcome to future fund-raising efforts. Thank you Julie.

With this issue, we would like to welcome Beth Bishop as Assistant Editor. Her expertise and input will continue to be invaluable in future editions (as indeed it has been in the past, albeit without official recognition!).

Finally, may we wish you all a very Happy New Year at the beginning of what, many people believe, is the true start of the third Millennium.
The death of Tom Blagg has deprived Roman archaeology of a great scholar, and his friends of a wonderful companion. He died on August 11th 2000, a few hours after his fifty-eighth birthday.

Tom was rightly regarded as the leading British scholar in the field of Roman architecture and architectural sculpture. He had an ability to go beneath the surface and to interpret the messages which lie in the external articulation of classical Roman buildings, and applied this particularly to the evidence from Britain.

Tom was educated at Oakham School and Keble College, Oxford, where he read Modern History. It was during these formative years that he acquired the traditional grounding in the Classics which was to prove so important in his later research. His family came from the village of Car Colston, Nottinghamshire, and he was immensely proud of his forbears, one of whom had (in the reign of Charles II) attempted to storm the Tower of London. Another, his grandfather Thomas Matthews Blagg, the prolific genealogist and antiquary, had edited and published extensive records of the eastern counties. Coming down from Oxford, Tom was articled to the family firm of solicitors in Newark from 1967, but this work did not satisfy his aesthetic sympathies or his enquiring spirit, and he was encouraged by his interests and an involvement in the archaeology of his local area to move to a career in Roman archaeology.

In 1970 at the Institute of Archaeology, London, Tom began his work on Roman decorative stonework in Britain, eventually enshrined in his doctoral thesis. During this period, his first experience at directing an excavation (with Hugo Blake and Tony Luttrel) was at San Paolo di Valdiponte, Perugia. In 1973, he went on to direct the excavations of the Roman “small town” at Hacheson, Suffolk, and the report, co-authored by him, is now about to be published. He also held temporary teaching and research posts at London University and with the British Museum Education Service. In 1978 the University of Kent at Canterbury appointed him to run its extra-mural programmes in Archaeology; there are many students who can bear witness to his inspiring teaching and large numbers were lured to Kent for weekend courses. He was always supportive of his students and ready to give help. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer at Kent in 1991. By then he was internationally recognised as an authority on Roman architecture and sculpture. He was much in demand as a contributor to conferences, as a speaker and editor; many ARA members will remember his contribution to the Roman Research Trust’s London conference on Architecture in Roman Britain (published 1996). Although he always hoped to write a book based on his thesis, this was never completed, though several of his best published papers were actually draft chapters from this projected work and it is hoped that these, together with other articles on Roman architecture in Britain and abroad, will be published together soon. His actual output was considerable, and included important work on the great temple at Bath (published in Britannia in 1979) and the monumental riverside arch in London (published in 1980). Throughout, he was contributing to excavation reports and publishing new discoveries of ancient sculpture in Britain. His work for the Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani included the definitive study of architectural sculpture in the Cotswold region. Unfortunately his study of the material from the NW Midlands and the S E England fascicule of CSIR covering all Roman sculptures from London, Kent and Hertfordshire, was incomplete at the time of his death. It will be completed by Martin Henig.

Tom consciously emulated another Nottinghamshire romantic, Lord Byron, and like him extended his interests to the Mediterranean world. In Italy there was a fruitful collaboration with scholars based at the British School at Rome and elsewhere: he had a major involvement in the Anguillara Roman villa excavation (with Tony Luttrel and Margaret Lyttleton), and at Perugia. He published a useful Empire-wide survey of Roman architecture (in Phaidon's Handbook of Roman Art edited by Martin Henig, 1983), and the major part in a monograph on the sanctuary of Diana at Nemi (1983). Further afield, he wrote on the sculpture at Petra (1990). His deep knowledge, charming style and good looks made him the ideal guest lecturer for Swans Hellenic Cruises and other tour companies. He planned two tours of Albania, quickly becoming an expert on the antiquities of, at that time, a relatively unknown country. Beyond the Roman period Tom also made important contributions to medieval archaeology, for example on bell-casting, a substantial study with Tony Luttrel on the papal palace at Sorgues near Avignon (in Archaeologia, 1991), and the Hal Millieri church excavations, Malta.

Along with archaeology Tom had impressively wide aesthetic interests. He had a profound knowledge of European literature and grew to be a

Continued overleaf
passionate devotee of opera and ballet, thinking nothing of spending an evening in Paris if the production merited the journey. He did much to encourage gifted writers and dancers to work towards successful careers. Many of his archaeological colleagues were surprised when he embarked on his Ballet Studies which led to an MA in 1998 and he was proceeding to a doctorate in interpretations of the ancient world in classical dance when his final illness intervened.

We feel privileged to have known Tom as a friend and to have shared his insights as a colleague. He was a great academic archaeologist, rigorous and discriminating, but never ambitious, ‘dry as dust’ or affected by the latest fashion in archaeology. He could be engagingly flamboyant in the spirit of the Grand Tour with interests in a wide cultural scene. He was fond of travel and conversation, country pursuits and good food and wine. He was generous and humane, and a quiet supporter of several charitable causes. For him life was fun, an occasion to rejoice, characteristically with a glass of wine in his hand while he kept us amused with his learning and wit. We shall miss him.

**COLCHESTER: Roman Garden Pool Identified**

*by Philip Crummy – Colchester Archaeological Trust*

An interesting feature of a recently-excavated Roman house in Head Street, Colchester, was a D-shaped basin, internally eleven feet in diameter, projecting into the garden at the rear of the house. The stones used to construct the once-mosaic-lined water-feature, were cut blocks of hard tufa, a rare material in Essex, but common on Roman sites further west where it was usually employed in the construction of vaulting in Roman baths. However, this same calcareous limestone had also been used to face the first-century monumental arch built on the site of the west gate of the fortress. The Head Street pool was first discovered in 1934, but the archaeologists were unable to tell if the basin represented the remains of a cold plunge bath in a Roman bathhouse or an ornamental pool, mainly because they were unable to excavate a sufficiently large area.

The floor and inside faces of the basin were originally surfaced with plain white mosaic tesserae, but nearly all these had been removed in the Roman period, [frost damage?], and the surfaces crudely repaired with plain plaster. The recent excavation revealed that the room onto which the basin had been built contained the remains of an underfloor heating system – as might be expected if it were part of a bath suite. Moreover the remains of a wooden water-main were also found nearby. However, it now seems almost certain that the structure is the remains of an ornamental pool built to enhance the garden. This is suggested by the relatively slight build of the structure, the absence of steps leading down into it and the rough surface of secondary plaster which would have left bathers feeling somewhat sore had they risked sitting in the basin!

All of what survived of the basin would have been below ground level. The straight side against the wall of the house presumably extended upwards some distance to form a high ornamental back, and the curved section to the front would have stood to approximately waist height.

Very few ornamental pools of this nature are known in Britain. They are more usually a Mediterranean feature, and the presence of one in a house in Colchester underlines the cosmopolitan character of the Roman town.

The excavation at Head Street was commissioned by Licet Developments Ltd.
It may be surprising that relatively few sites of Roman villas or large settlements have so far been discovered in the Warwickshire countryside. It was therefore of considerable interest in 1992 when a tessellated pavement from a Roman building, possibly part of a villa, was exposed by erosion from modern farming activity adjacent to the yards of Ewefields Farm, Chesterton.

The discovery of the pavement, a large chequer-board design but containing small tesserae, led to excavation which revealed a second mosaic. Apart from a villa at Radford Semele 5 km to the north, where tesserae had been recovered, this was the first site in Warwickshire to produce conclusive evidence of mosaic floors. In 1993 excavations by David Adams and John Burman of the Warwickshire Archaeology Research Team revealed more mosaics, which were subsequently recorded by Dr. David Neal and Luigi Thompson for the Corpus of Roman Mosaics in Britain. Adams and Burman also continued with an extensive field survey, including geophysics, in the area around these discoveries. It soon became clear that this was the site of an extensive complex. Indeed, Roman features were first recorded in a pipe trench on the north side of the farm in 1922, and in 1980, Roman building debris, tiles, fourth-century pottery and coins were recovered during the building of a house near the farm.

The site is 2 km south-east of the Roman small fortified town of Chesterton-on-Fosse, which, as its name indicates, lies on the Fosse Way, half-way between Dorn and High Cross and 10 km north of the crossing of the Roman road from Alcester to Alchester and the Fosse. A field survey by the Warwickshire team, including geophysics, has also now mapped extensive evidence of Roman suburban settlement around the walled town, which may eventually be found to extend all the way along the Roman road running out of the walled area towards the complex at Ewefields Farm.

The larger part of the main Roman buildings of the Ewefields Farm site lie beneath the present-day farm buildings, which unfortunately makes excavation and recording very difficult. Construction of a slurry tank had already destroyed part of the central area of the main Roman house before the present investigations commenced. However, sufficient remains survive to warrant continued investigation, which to date appears to indicate a very large complex ranged round a broad courtyard. Owing to a steep gradient, the buildings are terraced into a slope, with the main house at the highest point with rooms at different levels. The finest mosaic found so far decorates part of the forward corridor or porticus (Figs. 1, 2 and 4), approximately 50 cm lower than the rooms along its west side. Its design consists of a series of linear poised squares creating triangular compartments at the margins decorated with distinctive heart-shaped motifs and overlapping circles and small rectangular compartments with heart motifs. These motifs are also found at the recently discovered mosaic at the Whitley Grange villa near Wroxeter, clearly the work of the same mosaicist and therefore contemporaneous. Both mosaics date
from the fourth century, and the Chesterton example’s stone patching indicates a long period of use. Eight rooms of the main axial house have so far been planned each of which had been floored with a mosaic in the fourth century. One of these, though almost completely destroyed, was clearly of very fine quality. Fragments of fine limestone columns and mouldings testify to the architectural embellishment of the house’s façade, whilst many fragments of painted wall plaster indicate the colourful and floral decoration of the interior.

doorsway in its end wall which had been sealed with rough stone blocks, no doubt at the same time as the extension was made to the main wing. The extension revealed a sequence of rebuilding to a hypocaust which overlay a stone drain floored with terracotta tiles. The drain seemed to originate from an area beneath a modern concrete yard, possibly from a bath suite, expelling waste water to the courtyard. North of the main house and the courtyard there is evidence of a further range in the form of building debris and tesserae, while there are the earthworks of a deserted medieval settlement surrounding the site to the north and west. Indeed, it is this later settlement evidence together with the nearby isolated medieval church which indicates that there may well have been continuous occupation and functioning of the site through two millennia from the Roman settlement or villa to the modern farm.

Increasing numbers of Roman rural sites are being identified adjacent to, or sealed by later medieval settlements, a similar pattern to that identified in northern France. The villa becomes a villa-ge. In the late Roman period villas were focal points for rural communities, not simply wealthy farms or country houses. When the villa system broke down at the end of the Roman period, the indigenous population must have continued to farm the land, but at this site and most others there is no archaeological evidence for this or for direct continuity of use on the site. The nearest local excavated evidence points to a settlement of pagan Saxon Gribenhaitser and a cemetery at Stretton-on-the-Fosse. The Roman town of Chesterton-on-Fosse was abandoned like so many other similar towns at the end of the Roman period. The Saxon name Chesterton – ‘tun’ or village by the ‘ceaster’ or Roman town, may be early, but did the surviving inhabitants of these nucleated urban settlements move to the decaying rural settlements to establish new farms? Any evidence for this still awaits discovery by the Chesterton team.

Excavations during the summer of 2000, within the confined space of a modern barn, have revealed a probable extension of the main wing to the south. This abutted the west end of another building on the south side of the courtyard. This second structure originally incorporated a part of a wall has been found running down the slope to the east.

All the evidence so far points to a main residential wing at least 65 m in length, with side wings descending the slope under the modern farm for an as yet unknown distance. If this site can be interpreted as a villa, it is unquestionably one of those possessing the largest complexes of buildings to be recorded from Roman Britain. Apart from the core site lying beneath the present farm, there are the outlying buildings, difficult to identify accurately without intruding through medieval strata, for

![Image](image1.png)

**Fig. 3.** Area of building showing small portion of remaining mosaic together with length of wall and later pits. Photo: © David Adams.

![Image](image2.png)

**Fig. 4.** Detail of triangular mosaic design from the forward corridor mosaic. Photo: © David Adams.
Work by the author to re-assemble the fragments of the Orpheus mosaic from the villa found near Newton St. Loe in 1837 is proceeding extremely well.

After two months initial work at the Bristol Industrial Museum Store, the pieces were transferred to the entrance hall of the Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery, for him to continue the placing of pieces of the giant jigsaw puzzle in public. At the time of writing (early November) there are about eight identification sessions left as the exhibition has been extended by the museum until early December.

Already some interesting facts concerning the mosaic have emerged through the study of the fragments. I have so far located about 90% of the original floor including many small pieces that were neither found nor photographed in the 1930s, when the floor was last laid out in the museum basement, prior to its ignominious and near fatal banishment to the council store yard. It has become obvious that the guilloche borders were not properly placed in this earlier assembly. As the remaining pieces were much larger then, the assemblers simply placed sections around the figured panels for effect when taking photographs, rather than ensuring that they were in the correct positions. By bothering to locate many small fragments it has now been possible to join up previously unplaced sections of the border and place them correctly. A great success has been the locating of almost all of the torso of the bull, which since the 1930s has been smashed into over thirty small pieces, some without any tesserae attached. It is a tribute to the archaeological team who rescued the mosaic from the store yard in the 1980s that they saved even the smallest fragments.

It is obvious that the mosaic was seen into sections for transportation to Keynsham railway station where it was first displayed. Most of the sections seem to have been given a skim of mortar on their sides and presumably beneath as well. There are impressions of wooden shuttering remaining on the edges of the sections, especially the borders. What is particularly interesting is that one corner of the segment displaying the bull also retains an impression of shuttering on two edges. This suggests that either the panels were simply laid in place at the station and not mortared down, as had been thought, or that when they were removed to Bristol in the 1850s, greater care was taken than had been supposed, and that the edges were consolidated prior to removal. The subsequent disaster to the panels probably occurred because they were too big to be stacked without proper strengthened frames, and broke under their own weight, aided and abetted by exposure to the elements and official indifference.

What appears to be unique proof of the use of the indirect method in laying out the figured work has been found on the edge of the circular central panel holding the figure of Orpheus. I have always believed that this was made off- site and transported to the villa, as the musician is almost too big for the space provided, and the crude encircling guilloche has had to be pushed upwards in order to accommodate his Phrygian cap. The Victorian lifting process, or more likely the fact that the panel was subsequently stored on its side, has caused the border to shear off on one section, exposing an under-layer of mortar. The latter has a curious poured appearance, rather like solidified lava, and suggests that it was indeed poured into a mould above the figure of Orpheus which was probably assembled by sticking tesserae to a cartoon drawn on a linen backing.

When lifted from the mould and turned over, the panel must have vaguely resembled an upturned dinner plate with sloping edges. When the central panel, and presumably the other figured work, was placed in situ at the villa and the linen removed, the pieces appear to have then been joined together by filling and levelling the sloping sides with mortar onto which the encircling guilloche and white tessellation were then applied. All the sheared-off pieces of guilloche from this border retain a negative image of the 'dinner plate' edge on their undersides and are instantly recognisable. It is hoped that scientific tests may be carried out to date accurately the mortar of the central panel.

From the first it had been hoped that the four geometric panels above the Orpheus panel, which Steve Cosh pieced together in June, could be included along with the lozenges of
Between April and September 2000, a 5,500 m² area at the heart of Roman Londinium was excavated by the Museum of London Archaeological Service (MoLAS). During earlier building works, particularly in the 1930s, several features of interest were observed in the area, including an E-W Roman road, later Roman walls, and tessellated and mosaic floors.

LOCATION
To the north, Plantation Place faces Fenchurch Street on the south-east part of Cornhill, the easternmost of the two hills on which Roman Londinium and the modern City of London lie (Fig. 1). There was little evidence for pre-Roman occupation, although more may emerge during post-extraction work.

THE EARLY YEARS: AD 43 – 60/61
London was founded soon after the Roman invasion, timbers from early revetments giving a firm date of AD 47/48. A permanent crossing-point of the Thames was established for roads from the South Coast and at least one major E-W road, seen earlier at Plantation Place, an important thoroughfare which joined the Colchester road. Originally it was just 3.5 m wide, with shallow, timber-lined ditches for the run-off. A few mud brick and timber-framed houses were constructed on either side. Traces of brick earth floors and gravel yards survived, but no complete ground plans were recovered.

These buildings were soon cleared, and at least one narrow lane was laid out at 90° to the road. The new mud brick buildings constructed over much of the area now had a more organised layout, hinting at centralised planning. Occupied between c. AD 50 – 60, they were substantial, with walls up to 1.5 m thick set on deep rammed earth or mud brick foundations. Nearby pits, quarries and wells contained much early material, including food debris and imported pottery, suggesting domestic occupation, although a number of nearby hearths and furnaces may be evidence of craft-working.

This early version of London was destroyed by Boudica’s forces in AD 60/61. Traces of the fire were clearly visible across the northern part of the site, particularly where streetside buildings had been completely burnt out. Artefacts among the debris included pots fallen from a burning shelf, evoking the haste with which the town had been abandoned.

THE POST-AD 61 DEFENCES
Until recently it was thought that the town was largely abandoned for up to a decade, but recent work at Cheapside has shown that rebuilding began as early as AD 62. Finds of military fittings and inscriptions from Regis House suggest that the quay and stone-built warehouses were erected by the army a year later. This would be natural, the army being the obvious source of disciplined skilled and unskilled labour: but if there was a substantial military presence, where then was its base?

Part of the answer lies at Plantation Place, with the discovery of the north-east corner of a large military enclosure laid out over the levelled remains of the pre-Boudican buildings. Two parallel V-sectioned ditches (fossa fastigata), of which the inner, at 2.5 m wide and 1.5 m deep was slightly the larger, with ‘ankle breakers’ were set about 2.5 m apart, backed by a reinforced bank. Fences may have been erected alongside as further obstacles (Figs. 2 and 3).

The rampart was of broken mud brick faced with turf, with each ‘course’ tied together with long, thin planks laid side by side through the thickness of the bank. Some of the
mud bricks and facing timbers were burnt, suggesting that they had been salvaged from the ruins. The rampart was completed by a walkway and a wooden palisade. There was some evidence for a timber facing with a possible revetment behind (Fig. 4).

The east side of the enclosure was traced northwards for over 70 m before the defences curved westwards across the main road and continued for at least 50 m towards the town centre. The street now lay between the two ditches, cut off and unusable, showing the importance attached to establishing the defences; the N – S lane, laid out before the revolt, was buried under the eastern bank; neither thoroughfare was replaced during the lifetime of the enclosure.

The ditches were open for some time and much organic waste accumulated to above the top of the ankle breakers, illustrating the wane in their defensive use. Finds included amphorae, and the remains of two horses, one apparently cooked: the bones lay in a neat pile under the skull, suggesting ritual disposal or a tidy eater! The ditches and rampart are a rare example of early town defences – others are known at Verulamium and Chelmsford – but the full extent of the enclosure is not known.

**FLAVIAN/HADRIANIC:**
**AD 61 – 130**

When the defences were finally abandoned, some time before AD 70, the bank was shovelled back into the ditch and a wider E – W street was reinstated, complete with new drains, and on the south side, a wooden water main.

New buildings were laid out, although the most complete was found on the south-west corner of the site. It originally had a mosaic floor in white, dark grey and green: but the building slowly sank into a huge underlying pit. The better-preserved remains of its replacement included one room with a mortar floor, while the mosaic in the adjacent room had been replaced with oak floorboards nailed to joists. The walls were plastered and painted, in one area, white with a scheme of red lines.

This building also met an untimely end – destroyed in the major fire of the Hadrianic period (c. AD 125 – 130) recorded on many other sites in Roman London (Fig. 5). Layers of débris were spread across the area to level the surface for rebuilding, whilst large pits in the back yards were filled in with burnt mud brick, daub and tiles. In the débris were large quantities of painted wall plaster with well-executed geometric, floral and figural designs, while one fragment bore a red-turbaned human head.

**THE LATER ROMAN PERIOD:**
**AD 130 – 400**

At least some of the mud brick and timber-framed houses and workshops were rebuilt but, as elsewhere, they were being replaced within a few decades by a smaller number of more extensive, opulent town houses built in stone. Several of these were found, each built on a platform of compacted soil and rubble up to 1.5 m thick laid over their demolished predecessors. They had mortared ragstone or flint foundations, some deep and resting on the natural gravel, others shallower and set on timber piles. The largest structure, on the western half of the site, comprised a series of rooms running south from the road, flanked on the eastern side by a long narrow cellar. Some rooms continued east, while further ranges ran south and west beyond the excavation limits. Flue tiles and tesserae suggested a hypocaust and mosaics. Wall plaster was of high quality, with extensive use of expensive 'Egyptian Blue' pigment.

A notable find from a sunken, stone-lined feature in one of the rooms – probably a vault or
Fig. 6. The gold coins under excavation. Those in the foreground have been disturbed and lie in the robber trench for the vault wall. The outline of the box containing the hoard is partly visible. Photo: © Maggie Cox, Museum of London Archaeology Service.

strongbox – was a hoard of gold aurei dating from AD 54 – 68 (Nero) to AD173 – 4 (Marcus Aurelius) (Fig. 6). They had been buried next to a wall of the vault in a purse or bag inside a small box about 90 mm square. This is of particular interest, being the first stratified find of its type from a modern excavation.

The building was probably the urban residence of a wealthy and influential family; while the mosaics recorded to the east in the 1930s belonged to neighbouring buildings of equally high status in what was clearly a fashionable district.

Around AD 300, massive chalk foundations 3.5 m deep and 1.5 m wide were inserted at the junction of several rooms to the south of the vault. They are interpreted as the base of a tower superimposed on the existing building. It might have been for secure storage, or have had a defensive, or even a decorative function. There was no evidence to suggest part of an extensive citadel (burgus) like those which appeared in late Roman towns on the Continent, but it must have been a prominent feature of 4th-century London.

THE FINDS

The finds were numerous, and included many mortaria, unguent jars, oil lamps, amphorae, samian ware vessels – including marbled ware – and early Gaulish rusticated wares. Other items included jet and shale bracelets, box seals – one an enamelled seal box of Antonine date – glass bottles, a fine pillar-moulded glass lid, a decorative drawer handle and an iron mattock head; part of a rare Gaulish pipeclay figurine of Minerva was also found, one of only three examples known from London.

Mixing pots for paint were found, some containing red pigment and the rarer 'Egyptian Blue', prepared from imported ingredients. Wall plaster from all periods was of high quality. Other building materials included large quantities of clunch (hard chalk) tesserae and oficuts from mosaic production, with red, black, green and yellow tesserae, and imported marble inlays. There were also box flue tiles, an early half-box flue tile, and two tiles bearing the procurator's stamp (CC BR LON).

Despite extensive later truncation, the site, and the finds from it, proved to be not only rich and of high status, but particularly important in respect of the early town defences and the late Roman tower. Post-excavation analysis will elicit further information, and help set the site into its context within the broader scenario.

Fig. 5. Well-preserved mud brick building destroyed in the Hadrianic fire, AD 125 – 30. The walls of several rooms and part of a timber-framed floor are visible. Photo: © Maggie Cox, Museum of London Archaeology Service.

LETTER

Sir,

I congratulate Martin Henig on his perceptive challenge about the discovery of an alleged Roman fort near Faversham in his letter in ARA, Issue Nine. The rampart discovery by Mr. Wilkinson was cut through by a pipeline in 1994 and shown to be a major ploughbank, one of thousands known in Kent. The ditch containing first-century pottery is typical of many others in Kent, mostly interpreted as early farmsteads and its position 60 feet in front of the alleged rampart is quite unacceptable in military terms. Therefore the alleged discovery of Roman roads (a small patch of pebbles) and wooden buildings (small doubtful post holes), within the alleged rampart (now a ploughbank), should be sufficient reason to strike the fort from the record.

The statement that Roman Watling Street (6 to 8 m wide) had been destroyed by the pipe trench (1 m wide) is unacceptable. The pipeline was anyway moved from the Watling Street line at the last moment so did not even exist where Mr. Wilkinson dug his trench, though clearly he did not understand this. Quite rightly Martin Henig would like to see the sections and photographs upon which this (fort discovery) is based. Sadly, the Faversham and Swale area has had a growing number of doubtful claims made in recent years.

Yours sincerely

B. J. Philp
Director
Kent Archaeological Rescue Unit
NEW WORK AND DISPLAYS ALONG THE HADRIANIC FRONTIER

by Bryn Walters

The long term programme of re-excavation and consolidation at Arbeia, the Roman fort at South Shields, has been awarded a major injection of capital, enabling further work to be carried out. The site is currently undergoing a major transformation, with work both on the already laid-out remains of the fort and further reconstruction of Roman buildings.

Reconstructions available for its visitors. ARA members who joined our last Hadrian’s Wall tour will remember Nick Hodgson showing us around his excavations of the late-period commandant’s house, with, for Roman Britain, the extremely rare example of a classical triclinium. Two wings of this house are being reconstructed for public exhibition, ranged around the central garden court. Alongside the fourth-century sites at Ravenglass and Maryport.

The first phase of a long-term project by English Heritage to protect, conserve and improve the display of the remains of the fort at Ravenglass (Glannoventa), has been completed. Trees which have obscured the fort for over 100 years and were damaging the Scheduled Ancient Monument have been removed, revealing the earthworks of the fort and their relationship with the striking remains of the adjacent bath house. Some specimen trees have been preserved as a screen to one side of the fort, but others had to be removed due to wind-blown root damage to the monument. Walkers along the Cumbria Coastal Footpath can now see the fort in relation to the ruined baths which are among the best preserved Roman remains in Britain, marking the southern boundary of Hadrian’s Wall and a key location between AD 120 and 350.

Archaeological Survey at Maryport

A major new survey of the Roman site at Maryport (Alauna) has resulted in the discovery of the largest civilian settlement so far discovered along the northern frontier. It is possible that the population of this settlement, which extended for nearly a quarter of a mile north of the Roman fort, outnumbered the garrison of up to 1000 auxiliary soldiers.

The survey was commissioned by

In the central area of the fort, the stonework of the surviving buildings has been in a poor condition for some time. Consequently re-consolidation of these remains has improved the appearance and interpretation of the area. Advantage was taken to improve understanding of these buildings with some limited excavation ahead of consolidation work. One building’s function still remains uncertain but it probably pre-dates the first stone fort. A second structure has been identified as a cavalry barracks similar to others excavated recently at Wallsend (Segedunum). The horses had been stabled in the front chambers while the cavalrymen were billeted in rooms behind them.

Already well known for its impressive reconstructed gateway, Arbeia will soon have further commandant’s house a reconstruction of a third-century barrack-block is well under way, built in materials suggested by evidence from the excavations, including clay-bonded timber walls. It is hoped to have the work completed by early 2002.

As part of the extensive improvements to the Roman monuments in Tyne and Wear, a massive undertaking at Wallsend has reached completion. Lying at the eastern end of Hadrian’s Wall a programme of consolidation has laid out the complete plan of the fort, now visible from a 34 metre-high tower.

ARA members who attended the recent Roman Cumbria tour will recall the

Fig. 1: Aerial view of the Segedunum site nearing completion with the reconstructed Bath House in the upper left corner. Photo: © Tyne & Wear Museums.

Fig. 2: Excavating the Segedunum section of Hadrian’s Wall. Photo: © Tyne & Wear Museums.
the trustees of the Senhouse Roman Museum and funded by the Maryport Heritage Trust. Permission for the survey was given by the owner, Mr. Harold Messenger, and was carried out by Timescape Archaeological Surveys. The purpose of the survey was to determine the nature and extent of the fort and its associated civilian settlement.

The fort itself, though badly robbed for stone, still contains many of its internal buildings and is one of the most impressive sites belonging to Hadrian's Wall and its western defences.

The Senhouse Roman Museum, one of the ARA's partner venues, contains the country's best-preserved collection of Roman military sculpture and inscriptions, almost all from the adjoining site, and is situated in the old Naval Battery, commanding a spectacular vista from the cliff top overlooking the Solway Firth into Scotland.


A RELIEF OF JUPITER FROM BATH

...a new interpretation of a sculpture from the precinct of Sulis Minerva

by Anthony Beeson

"Jove let drop from his hand the three-forked bolt"
Ovid. Amores, II.v. line 51/2

The fragment of sculpture which is the subject of this article was discovered in 1968 during the campaign to explore the precinct of the temple of Sulis Minerva under the Pump Room. It was found lying beneath one of the fallen carved corner stones of the structure interpreted as the great altar of the temple.

The proximity of its position to the altar suggested that it had originally ornamented that structure. Until now it has been identified as showing a hand holding a trident in front of a border of Greek key pattern and, presumably, from a figure of Neptune. This identification is erroneous. What is actually portrayed is the hand of Jupiter holding the triple pronged fulmen or thunderbolt, as the interpretative reconstruction shows (Fig. 1).

Remains of a similar thunderbolt actually appear in the hand of Jupiter on the presumed altar stone corner under which it was found. The piece is some 15" (0.38 m) high and 3" (0.076 m) wide, and must have sheared off a frieze or some other architectural ornamentation with the ruin of the precinct.

The thunderbolts used by Jupiter were forged at the smithy of Vulcan under Mount Etna by the cyclopes Brontes, Steropes and Pyracmon (sometimes called Acmonides) and transported to Jupiter on Olympus by the flying horse, Pegasus. Although sometimes depicted as fat, cigar-shaped rods of fire, they are often depicted, as at Bath, with a central core of swirling fire within outer forks of lightning or rain. The wings which appear like hand-guards on the fulmen refer to the storm winds. The thunderbolt was the main attribute of Jupiter and appears on Roman coinage often associated with the Emperor Augustus in particular held the fulmen in great reverence, having almost been killed by one in Spain. He dedicated the temple of Jupiter Tonans to the god on his return to
Fig. 2. A fulmen (restored) from the ceiling of the House of Augustus on the Palatine.

Photo: © Anthony Beeson.

Fig. 3. A relief of the eagle holding a triple barbed fulmen in its claws. This important sculpture from Corbridge has been restored using cement. The original work is on the right of the slab and in relief.

Photo: © Anthony Beeson.

Ornamented the great altar. However, as one of the corner stones already had a relief of Jupiter, it seems unlikely that the monument featured yet another, especially as this fragment appears to be on a slightly larger scale than the deities featured on the corner stones. It seems far more likely that it originally ornamented another structure overlooking the precinct such as the great reservoir wall which was surely decorated in some way with sculpture.

Bibliography


Snippets

EXCAVATIONS UNCOVER AN IMPORTANT SECTION OF CARLISLE’S ROMAN FORT

A dig at Carlisle’s Castle Green in advance of the building of a ramp and staircase to the underground Millennium Gallery, has uncovered a cobbled road, a sandstone building believed to be the Commandant’s house or the main administrative centre of the fortress, and an inscribed altar to Victory. Councillors are now to decide whether the remains are to be preserved in situ.

Carlisle News and Star 14/09/2000
Cumbrian News 15/09/2000
This year’s programme was launched on 7th May with a visit to Little Brickhill, Buckinghamshire, to view work on the Roman Mosaics of Britain Corpus being carried out by Dr. David Neal and Stephen Cosh. Members attended an illustrated lecture and exhibition of paintings on the Roman Mosaics of Buckinghamshire, given by David Neal assisted by Stephen Cosh, and visited the Chapel Studio headquarters of the project. The ARA made a grant and individual members gave donations towards the publication costs of the corpus. After lunch members visited the remains of the Bancroft Roman villa where Paul spoke on the recovery and re-assembly of the Newton St. Loe Orpheus mosaic at Bristol City Museum. The tour started at the Gloucester City Museum, concentrating on material from the legionary fortress and colonia (Colonia Nervia Glapensis); the remains of the city’s Roman East Gate were also examined. At Lydney Park we visited the excavated remains of the temple of Nodens with its baths and the sites of its guest-house and abaton. Votive offerings and other artefacts from the pre-war excavations were viewed in the museum and we are grateful to Sylvia Jones who welcomed us. This was followed by a tour of the Roman town of Venta Silurum at Caerwent, including an examination of the recently-excavated remains of the forum and basilica, the temple east of the forum, houses in the north-west quadrant, and the mosaic and civic inscription preserved in the parish church. The tour ended with a perambulation of the impressive town walls and bastions. At Woodchester, Gloucestershire, a visit was made to the site of the palatial villa, the great hall of which contains the remains of the famous Orpheus mosaic. Members also had the rare opportunity to see the full-scale reconstruction of the mosaic and accompanying exhibition on temporary display at Stroud. The reconstruction, completed in 1983, had been in storage since 1992, and members commended Alec Lawless and his team for their foresight in putting on the exhibition and seeking a permanent home for the mosaic.

The second day took members to two Roman villas where remains are conserved for public display by English Heritage. These were at North Leigh, Oxfordshire, and Great Witcombe, Gloucestershire. At North Leigh, the design of the one surviving mosaic (out of fourteen originally recorded) in the south wing triclinium, was the subject of a lively discussion. At Great Witcombe it was shown how the site is unlikely to be that of a conventional villa and could be interpreted as an extensive complex of structures associated with a hillside water shrine. These included a substantial suite of baths decorated with mosaics, one depicting a scatter of marine beasts. Members were very concerned at the air of neglect which dominated both sites, where stonework had previously been adequately maintained and greater public access to the most significant remains provided. Things were found to be more encouraging at the well-known site at Chedworth where recent excavation and conservation work are providing new insights to illustrate the continuing debate on its function (see articles in ARA 9 pp. 10–15). The visit to Cirencester, the civitas capital of the

Charmian Woodfield (English Heritage) and Bryn Walters discuss the villa plan at Bancroft. Photo: © Grahame Soffe.

Reconstruction of the great Orpheus pavement from Woodchester. ARA members view the mosaic whilst Martin Henig and Bryn Walters discuss its iconography. Photo: © Grahame Soffe.
Dobunni (*Corinium Dobunnorum*), included the walls and bastions near the Verulamium Gate, the amphitheatre and the sites of the basilica and Dyer Street town-house. There followed a visit to the spectacular Roman collections, including mosaics and sculpture, in the Corinium Museum. The final day was dedicated to the Roman town of *Mansis* at Kenchester, Herefordshire, where the topography and defensive circuit of the town were examined. Just south, on the steeply sloping banks of the River Wye at The Weir Gardens, members saw parts of an elaborate terraced masonry structure. These included an octagonal cistern together with the two substantial abutments projecting into the river which were excavated and consolidated in 1977 and 1991 (see *ARA* 5). We are grateful to the Revd. and Mrs. Short at Lady Southampton’s Chapel, Kenchester, and Ned Price of the National Trust at The Weir Gardens, for their help and hospitality.

Despite travelling difficulties caused by the ‘fuel crisis’ a large number of members and guests attended the Millennium Dinner held in the magnificent setting of the Pump Room at Bath on 16th September. The dinner was preceded by a Reception held in the Roman Baths. Virtually all participants made an attempt at wearing Roman dress and several specialists were kitted-out in authentic military equipment and well-researched garments and jewellery.

After a tradition of meetings at Oxford University it was decided to hold our Millennial AGM in London, and a very successful meeting attended by approximately two hundred members was held at the British Museum on 4th November. The Chairman, Grahame Soffe, thanked Board members and officers for their efforts over the year. He also made reference to the help given by Dr. Martin Henig as Research Adviser and Peter Williams, who had developed the ARA’s new website. The Secretary, David Ridges and Treasurer, Don Flewr, gave their reports, and Don explained the new Gift Aid Scheme; the programme for the coming year and plans for recruitment of members were outlined by Bryn Walters, Director. No new members were elected to the Board, which expressed its sorrow at losing John Hyams, who retired after seven years’ service, having been a Trustee of the Association since its
short spell as Membership Secretary. Members went on to pass a minor amendment to the Articles of Association and the AGM ended with a presentation to John and Erika Hyams on behalf of the Board and the Hon. President, Dr. Graham Webster. Following lunch, (during which time members had the opportunity of viewing the British Museum’s special exhibition Gladiators and Caesars), the Symposium was devoted to two lively and controversial illustrated lectures by members of the museum’s staff. Dr. Catherine Johns, Curator of the Romano-British Collections, spoke on Treasure in late Roman Britain, and Dr. J. D. Hill, Curator of the European and British Iron Age Collections, spoke on New Views on the Iron Age to Roman Transition. The Board is grateful to Sam Moorhead and his colleagues at the museum for helping to make the meeting such a success.

the side border and the lower panels of swastika peltae, in order to ensure that the design of the mosaic was as complete as possible. Unfortunately the sand pit was not made large enough to accommodate them, but it may still be possible to display them at the edge of the enclosure in late November. I have begun to assemble sections of the borders, but at the time of writing, many pieces are still in the Industrial Museum store awaiting transfer.

In late October a chance conversation with one of the curators of the archaeology department disclosed the existence of a further eleven boxes of mosaic fragments from the villa, which were completely unknown to the author. The many unsorted pieces are both dirty and friable and on first inspection appear to come from the geometrical panels and borders surrounding Orpheus. One benefit of this new cache is that many pieces of the beautiful concentric circles mosaic from another room in the villa are amongst them, which makes some sort of reconstruction of this pavement a future possibility. All of these pieces have now been transferred to the City Museum from their store.

In July, shortly after the work in public commenced, a pleasant meeting took place between Museum officials and senior representatives of ASPROM (Association for the Preservation of Roman Mosaics), ARA (The Association for Archaeology), BAA (British Archaeological Association) and BAMM (British Association for Modern Mosaics) to express on behalf of their members those organisations’ concern over the long term future of the pavement.

For previous work on the mosaic and a bibliography see ARA, Issue 8, 6-7, 1999.

The ARA Trustees and the Editorial Committee congratulate Anthony Beeson on his tenacity, and for the excellent work he has done on the reconstruction, which adds so greatly to our knowledge of this mosaic.

Fig. 3. The stag at 11th October 2000. Photo: © Anthony Beeson.

Fig. 4. A close up view of the central roundel. Photo: © Anthony Beeson.