Artist's impression of Segedunum from the North.
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By Peter Dunn
EDITORIAL

With our inaugural year completed, we look forward to expanding the Association in the years to come. It has been a busy time for the Trustees, particularly the Director and Treasurer, who have been expanding both the membership and the free entry venues. There are some exciting events scheduled for the present year, not least the conference in October at the Museum of London.

We are very pleased to welcome more free entry venues to our list. Verulamium Museum is now a free entry (from discount). Arbeia at South Shields and Housesteads Forts now complete the Hadrianic frontier together with the Tullie House Museum, Carlisle. This latter, although too late to be included on our current membership card, is nonetheless free and members are invited to visit their excellent Roman gallery. We intend to publish an article on Tullie House in a forthcoming issue of ARA, so that is something also to look forward to.

We have endeavoured to make this issue as lively and informative as possible, and some items may be viewed as controversial. so we look forward to a lively postbag! Special news items include the exciting discovery of the Crumond lions and the lost head of Longinus at Colchester. Anthony Beeson describes the recovery of the Newton St. Loe Orpheus mosaic and Bob Chard explains a fascinating system for discovering unidentified circular Roman buildings. The central feature focuses on the expansive development at Wallsend to which Paul Bidwell provides the background. Phil Crumminy has contributed a more detailed report on the rich burials at Stanway and a special contribution from the younger generation has been received from Jim Fanning as a review of an innovative educational project.

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THE CRAMOND LIONESS
by Fraser Hunter and Mark Collard

One of the most spectacular discoveries of Roman sculpture in recent years emerged, somewhat reluctantly, from the mud of the Firth of Forth in late January. The sculpture of the lioness devouring her prey was found and reported by Robert Graham, the ferryman at Cramond, on the west edge of Edinburgh. The City of Edinburgh Museums’ Archaeological Service and the National Museums of Scotland excavated and lifted it from the silt, an operation complicated by the fact that it lay in the intertidal area of the River Almond and was only above water at low tide. The sculpture is now undergoing conservation work to remove the salt from it, but its condition is remarkably good: the carving is fresh and unworn, and it cannot have been exposed to the Scottish climate for long.

The 1.5 m long sandstone sculpture depicts a lioness devouring a bearded man, his head in her jaws and his naked torso under her paws. The base, which had broken off, shows two snakes crawling from under the lioness’s stomach. This is typical Roman funerary iconography, representing the destructive power of death on the one hand and the survival of the spirit on the other – snakes represented the good spirit of the deceased. Sculptures with lions devouring their prey are relatively common, with around 25 British examples and an Empire-wide scattering beyond. However, the iconography of this example appears unique: lionesses are much rarer than lions, human rather than animal prey is unusual, and snakes are not otherwise found on the British examples. Although a strongly Roman theme, the carving is non-Classical in style and was most probably sculpted by an auxiliary from one of the Celtic provinces. It must have come from the tomb of a high-ranking Roman, perhaps the commanding officer of the fort at Cramond, which was occupied in Antonine and Severan times.

The find has other interesting implications. Funerary sculpture of this quality was previously unknown in Scotland. While there are impressive official works, such as the unique series of distance slabs from the Antonine Wall, the commissioning and creation (presumably locally) of such a private piece points to a patron of wealth, craftsmen of skill, and a belief that the conquest of Roman Scotland was going to last.

This raises the question as to why the lioness ended up in the river. It was found lying in Roman-period silts, themselves of interest as a clue to the whereabouts of the Roman harbour which must lie in the area. While it is possible that it had fallen off a boat in unloading (a question which may be resolved when the source of the stone is confirmed), it seems more likely that it was purposely deposited in the river when the fort was abandoned. Such sculptures are regularly found deliberately buried, perhaps because they were too important and powerful to be left even after their use was over. Alternatively, such a visible symbol of Roman rule may have been consigned to a watery grave by the native tribes.

While there remains much work to do in studying parallels and examining the context of the find, the Cramond lioness has been one of those rare chance discoveries which both excite the public imagination and make us rethink our views of the period. An intriguing possibility remains: as such sculptures often occur in pairs, does her companion lion still lurk under the silts of the Almond?

ARA NEWSFILE

All members of the ARA are invited to send cuttings from local and national newspapers that refer to Roman archaeology in Britain and elsewhere, to Anthony Beeson, the Hon. Archivist, so that an ARA newsfile can be established and maintained.

His address can be found on page 2.
intact at Keynsham railway station, together with another of the mosaics from the site, a beautiful geometric floor of intersecting circles and rosettes. In 1851 the mosaics were sent to what was considered a safer and more suitable home, the Bristol Institution, for display and safekeeping, but neither obtained and they disappeared so completely that by 1906 it was believed that they had perished. In the mid 1930s, the by now fragmented floors were rediscovered by G. R. Stanton, Curator of Archaeology at Bristol Museum, and he laid out the remains of the figured panel from the Orpheus floor on a bed of sand in a basement, intending to press for its restoration. The floor again vanished when Stanton left Bristol at the outbreak of the 1939 war. Lack of interest and neglect next confined the pieces to a courtyard yard in Bristol, where, lost to the academic world, they had to contend with forty years of frost, fire and vandalism, until rescued in the mid 1980s and sent to Bristol Industrial Museum's store. As late as 1991 the floors, by now reduced to many hundreds of blackened fragments, were considered to be too fragmentary to repay study.

In 1992 ASPROM was granted permission to study the fragments and a task force led by the author was established. It was immediately realised that not only did the ten pallets housing the remains contain the figured work of the Orpheus mosaic, but also the panels of its geometric border, which was not known to have been lifted from the villa. Also mixed in with this jigsaw were other mosaics from the villa, including the concentric circles mosaic. After sorting and cleaning, it can now be said that between eighty and ninety per cent of the figured work of the Orpheus floor remains, which is almost the same as in the 1930s, and more than anyone could have hoped for. Off-site work by the author has identified and placed many small fragments by comparing the shapes of the tesserae with those shown on Stanton's monochrome photographs of the mosaic. The organisers of the British Archaeological Association's annual conference, which was held in Bristol in 1996, enquired of the Museum if a display concerning the mosaics could be mounted to coincide with
this, and the author offered his services to them to retrieve the images of the head of Orpheus (the most colourful depiction of the character in Romano-British mosaics) and the stag and the bear. Six new pieces of the compositions were identified by the author during the mounting of the fragments, but as some small gaps remain to be filled (especially in the case of the plain white background which remains to be sorted) the animals are shown in a temporary setting. Uniquely for Britain, the white tesserae used have been identified by the Museum as imported marble, probably builder's waste from nearby Aquae Sulis.

ASPROM's work has shown that this unique Orpheus mosaic is capable of being restored as an impressive exhibit. Although only the bear and stag were eventually shown by the Museum their quality is evident even in their present shattered state. The question of the mosaic's ultimate fate is still uncertain. If Bristol can be persuaded to take the initiative and restore at least the Orpheus floor with its geometric borders (although the concentric circles mosaic could also be partially restored) then the city will have done a great thing for the study of early British art. Letters in the local press have urged the city to consider laying out the floor outside the Romano-British gallery in a space visible from the ground floor and upper galleries, and at present occupied by a taxidermic display. Alternative suggestions have been that it could be incorporated into one of the new public buildings planned for the Canon's Marsh area of the city, either the Centre for the Performing Arts or the animal museum Wildscreen World, as Orpheus playing to the animals would fit both themes. Letters in the Bath press have also urged its return there to be displayed in the Roman Baths. One can only hope that either Bristol or Bath may at last decide to restore the mosaic and let the public again enjoy it after a century and a half of neglect. Surely this would be a worthwhile and exciting project with which to greet the Millennium?

The exhibition 'Orpheus Rising' will continue until at least July 1997.
THE DISCOVERY OF UNIDENTIFIED ROMAN CIRCULAR BUILDINGS

by Bob Chard

For a number of years I have been undertaking a research project into Celtic and Romano-Celtic round buildings in association with the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies at the University of York. One sub-group of round buildings of particular interest is the circular Romano-Celtic temples, shrines and other buildings of Britain and Gaul. Within the term 'round' I include circular, polygonal, elliptical and ovoid structures. Descriptions of these types of building can be found in standard reference books on Romano-Celtic temples. My research has identified over 60 examples in Britain.

One problem is that some structures are difficult to date if only foundations remain; so for some it is not immediately possible to be sure if they are of medieval or Roman date. Of course in some cases excavation, construction technology or recoverable artifacts can help, but not in all cases. I have therefore developed an alternative dating technique which may be of interest to other members of the Association. It is based on design geometry. My research has shown that as far as we can tell at present all round Romano-Celtic buildings had their plan set out on the ground using a standard procedural geometry which involved a number of circles with a common centre. The circle radii are always measured in two units – the imperial Roman foot (RF), and the Roman rod (RR). All radii are multiples of either 1RF or RR. The Roman foot was 11.66 modern imperial inches or 29.62 cm; and 5RF = 1RR.

The change-over from Roman units to Saxon feet occurred in Britain at some time in the Dark Ages. Therefore, if a circular wall foundation was set out with a radius of say 10 feet in the Roman era, the diameter would be $2 \times 10 \times 11.66$ modern inches, which is a total of 233.2 inches. However if it was set out in the medieval period it would be $2 \times 10 \times 12$ modern inches, which is a total of 240. As some Roman buildings were very precisely constructed the difference of 6.8 inches is readily identifiable by measuring the foundations and sometimes, for larger buildings, from archaeologists' plans and reports.

The circular dovecote at Bisham Abbey near Marlow is an example where the measuring technique was first applied and which gave clear proof of the value of this system. It was previously assumed to be a medieval building but it can be seen that there is an irregular discontinuity line in the wall masonry which represents a sixteenth-century rebuild on an earlier, partly demolished wall. The lower, earlier wall of flint rubble is an exact circle, so by taking a number of precise measurements of both diameters and circumferences we were able to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt that the foundation is Roman. The inner wall face has a radius of 12.5 RF. There is also other confirming evidence in the plan. Thus I was able to identify a previously unknown Roman site and Roman building. The application of this technique to polygonal and ovoid buildings, as well as those with several concentric circular walls, is also possible but is more complex.

So far I have applied this technique to half a dozen structures previously assumed to be entirely medieval. As a result I have probably identified four previously unidentified Roman sites in addition to Bisham. I would therefore like to ask if any members of the Association would be interested to assist my research by investigating possible round Roman structures or letting me know of any which merit study. I would be pleased to hear from them. (Bob Chard can be contacted at 19 Crosslands, Caddington, Bedfordshire, LU1 4EP). Ed.
LONGINUS RESTORED

_ by Philip Crummy_

68 years after the original discovery, the lost face of Colchester’s Longinus Sdeapeze tombstone has been found and restored to its original sculpture.

Longinus’ tombstone is one of the treasures of the Colchester museum. It originally stood by the side of the main road leading westwards out of Colchester, the original A1 leading to London and St. Albans. Longinus presumably died between AD 43 and AD 60. He was an officer in a cavalry unit, the _ALA I Thracum_ which was raised in Thrace. He came from Sardica which is now Sofia in Bulgaria and it is likely that he came to Britain as part of the invasion force in AD 43. The inscription on the stone tells us that he only served fifteen years, which suggests that he was still in the army when he died. The tombstone shows a mounted cavalry officer standing over a naked Celtic warrior cowering on his shield. The tombstone is one of a number from Britain and elsewhere which shows this theme. The Britons may well have taken the imagery personally, but it is thought that the scene is stylistic and may have meant to symbolise the victory of life over death. It need not necessarily have been a portrayal of Longinus himself.

The tombstone was discovered in 1928 when workmen were lowering the ground level on a site near Lexden Road. The inscription on the stone makes clear that Longinus’ remains were buried on the spot but nothing of him was found, either in 1928 or years later when the site was re-investigated. In 1995 planning consent was granted for a house to be built on the site on the condition that any surviving remains of Longinus were not destroyed. This meant that an archaeological excavation was needed. The investigation was carried out by James Fawn and the Colchester Archaeological Group working in collaboration with the Colchester Archaeological Trust. An early discovery was a rectangular hole not much larger than the base of the tombstone itself, filled with soil and modern debris and which was almost certainly the original bedding for the stone. All around the hole were dozens of chips of pale yellow stone. At first there was doubt that these really belonged to the tombstone, and if they did, what were they doing here? Then one morning James picked up one of the fragments, turned it over and found himself staring at a face. The piece was then taken to the museum where it was found to fit perfectly onto the missing section. Other carved pieces started to emerge, including parts of the hands of the sphinx which sits on top of the stone. The missing pieces had all come from where the stone had cracked on the ground, which implies that they had flaked off as the stone hit the ground – or was it at some later stage?

How then do we interpret these dozens of small stone fragments? Today the monument in the museum is heavily restored so that it is not obvious how much was missing in 1928. But it is clear from contemporary photographs that the sides, particularly the right side, had been heavily damaged where repeated blows or some other kind of pressure produced the chips of stone found in 1996. It had always been assumed that the tombstone, being offensive to Boudica’s forces had been attacked and thrown down during the sack of Colchester.

A slightly different picture of the demolition of the stone now seems to be emerging. Rather than a frenzied onslaught on the face and other key features, it would seem that somebody had spent much time and energy doing something to the stone which had the effect of detaching many chips and maybe splitting it into a number of larger pieces. The stone may in fact have been broken up as it lay on the ground, face down. We cannot discount the possibility that the despoilers were the workmen who found it in 1928.

Contemporary photographs again show some very crisp sharp breaks in the stone. We have no record of how the stone was recovered but it could well have received rough treatment whilst trying to remove it from the ground. It now seems sickeningly plausible, that being face down, the stone was not recognised for what it was until it was broken, and levered up in pieces.
THE SEGEDUNUM PROJECT:
A NEW ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK AND MUSEUM FOR
THE EASTERN TERMINAL FORT OF HADRIAN’S WALL AT WALLSEND

by Paul Bidwell, Head of Archaeology, Tyne and Wear Museums.

The enduring image of Hadrian’s Wall is of its course along the brow of beetling cliffs west of Housesteads, rising and falling across the gaps and running off into the distance along the sky-line. Rather less than a quarter of the length of the Wall has this stupendous natural setting; the remainder lies beneath modern roads, agricultural land or the cities and suburbs of Newcastle upon Tyne and Carlisle. Nowhere along the line of the Wall is more uncompromisingly urban than Wallsend, where Hadrian’s huge frontier works ended. The site of the fort was cleared of buildings in the 1970s but the area between the fort and the River Tyne, where the civilian settlement was situated, forms part of the Swan Hunter shipyard. The fort is bisected by a main road and all around are housing, factory units and shops.

From 1975 to 1984 the fort at Wallsend was excavated by the late Charles Daniels of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne. The site was then landscaped, the plan of the defences and some of the internal buildings being laid out on the modern ground surface; the only remains of the fort visible at present are those of the headquarters building. Nearby is a small heritage centre, now closed, where some of the finds from the site were displayed.

The designation in 1986 of Hadrian’s Wall as a World Heritage Site and the recent decision to form a National Trail along the Wall corridor have resulted in policies for preservation and interpretation agreed by all the bodies concerned with the management of the Wall (the Hadrian’s Wall Management Plan). These include an attempt to relieve pressure on much-visited areas in the central sector of the Wall by enhancing sites elsewhere along its course.

Wallsend, the eastern terminus of the Wall and starting point of the National Trail, will become a gateway to the World Heritage Site. By December 1996 the owners of the site, North Tyneside Council, advised by Tyne and Wear Museums, had succeeded in raising £7.7 million for the complete transformation of the site. The project is financed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the European Development Fund, the Northumbrian Water Kickstart Fund, North Tyneside City Challenge, Bellway Urban Regeneration, the Arts and Heritage ABSA Funds and Tyne and Wear Museums.

At the centre of the scheme, which is being managed by Tyne and Wear Museums for North Tyneside Council, is the Roman fort of Segedunum (the name means ‘strong fort’ or the like). Its remains will be consolidated for public display, following further excavation and the publication of the 1975 – 1984 excavations. The fort, which has an area of 4 acres (1.74 ha), seals an Iron Age landscape that had been cultivated until very shortly before the land was appropriated by the Roman army; the furrows of the narrow ridge and furrow are in places filled with stone chippings from the building of the fort. Charles Daniels’ excavations confirmed that the fort was built at the same time as the length of Hadrian’s Wall to the west, an extension four miles in length from its original terminus of Pons Aelius (the Bridge of Hadrian) in the heart of Newcastle upon Tyne. The entire plan of the Hadrianic fort was recovered in outline; eight barrack and two stables indicate the presence of a cohorts quingenaria equitata (480 men divided into six centuries 80 strong and four turmae or troops of cavalry, two turmae to a
Roman army at the peak of its development. Also of great interest are the remains of Iron Age cultivation under the fort. These have been recognised at many sites on Hadrian's Wall but there has never been the opportunity to explore them extensively.

Most of the funds for the project will be spent on converting buildings to the east of the fort, originally built for the Swan Hunter shipyard, into a museum. The dominant feature will be a tower which will give visitors a bird's-eye view of the fort and allow them to appreciate its setting in relation to the River Tyne. Displays in the museum will interpret the history of the fort and the function of its buildings. The collection of objects from Wallsend is poor in sculpture and inscriptions in comparison with forts such as Chester's and Housesteads, but this is compensated for by a fine range of smaller objects, including a portable lead shrine, a statuette of Fortuna and several bronze vessels. Wallsend also has the only stone lavatory seat known from Britain! The later history of the site will also feature in the museum. Post-Roman agricultural activity is represented by an Anglo-Saxon strap end and a scatter of medieval pottery. At the end of the eighteenth century pit shafts sunk immediately west of the fort began to produce coal of the highest grade in enormous quantities. At the time of writing steam engine and boiler bases adjacent to 'B' pit are being excavated. The history of the Swan Hunter yard, where many famous ships were built, including the latest Ark Royal, will also be included in the displays.

The main functions of Segedunum were to control the eastern terminus of the Wall and the unfortified north bank of the river which runs down to the river mouth at Tynemouth, with the fort of Arbeia on the south side of the river mouth at South Shields. Hadrian's Wall is already visible to the east of the fort, together with a reconstruction of a short length of the Wall just to the south of the actual remains. More of the Wall will be excavated and this will provide a chance to examine...
further an unusual defensive addition to the Wall. Between the Wall and the large ditch in front of it there is a berm (bank) 6 m wide. In the early third century three rows of regularly-spaced post pits were dug along the berm in a staggered, quincunx layout. They might represent an entanglement of branched tree-trunks with sharpened ends, the so-called cippi used and described by Caesar in his siege works around Alesia in Gaul. From the south-east corner of the fort the final length of Hadrian’s Wall (the Branch Wall) ran down to the River Tyne, extending beyond the low-water mark according to eighteenth-century accounts. Most of its course lies beneath the Swan Hunter yard; a short length of the Wall was removed when the the slipway for the SS Mauretania was built in 1903. For many years it sat in a public park, a mile north of the fort, misleading the unwary as to the location of the eastern terminus of the Wall; it was recently re-erected on the line of the Branch Wall. What remains of the Branch Wall between the fort and shipyard will be excavated and displayed, serving as a marker for the beginning of the National Trail.

A final element in the scheme is the full-size reconstruction of a military bath-house. The original external baths of the fort probably lie beneath or near the Ship Inn and are not available for excavation. The reconstruction will occupy a nearby site to the south of the fort. It will be closely modelled on the fort baths at Chesters and Ravenglass. These are the most completely preserved baths in Britain (parts of Chesters survive to window height and Ravenglass has walls preserved to the height of the roof vaults) and are examples of a standardised plan that occurs in northern Britain under Hadrian. The reconstruction will thus be based on a mass of detailed evidence, although some elements will remain conjectural. It is intended that at least part of the bath suite will be fully functional; important information about fuel consumption and the effectiveness of the heating systems should emerge. The reconstruction will also incorporate a range of internal and external decorative techniques attested in the north-west provinces.

By April 2000 the whole scheme will be complete, although it is hoped that excavations will continue beyond that date. The site will be entirely transformed and will provide the visitor with a fascinating introduction to Hadrian’s Wall.
enclosures, with three being laid out in a line. However, the true nature of the site could not be understood until the excavations many years later. The site became a gravel pit in the 1960s when planning consent was given for mineral extraction, and excavation began in a small way in 1986 as the quarry face approached the first of the enclosures. Since then archaeological excavation has been intermittent and targeted only on the areas imminent threatened by the slowly advancing quarry.

THE BURIALS AND ENCLOSEMENTS

Work on the site up to last summer involved the examination of at least parts of four of the enclosures. This has enabled us to understand the nature of the site and construct a chronological sequence for its development. The smallest of the enclosures (Enclosure 2) was the earliest and was probably the core for a farmstead dating from the 3rd or 2nd century BC. Enclosure 1 was the next to be laid out. This was the first of the funerary enclosures. Near the centre were the remains of a small timber chamber containing a few pieces of broken pottery and some scraps of burnt human bone.

The remaining three enclosures followed. All were funerary in purpose; Enclosures 3 and 5 seem to have been first, with Enclosure 4 being more as infill between the two.

Enclosure 3 however provided the first big find: the remarkable 'warrior' grave with its extraordinarily rich collection of grave goods. These include over fourteen pottery vessels, two copper-alloy vessels, a fine glass bowl, two other glass vessels, and brooches. The objects allow it to be dated to the AD 50s. Of particular note - especially in the light of the more recent discovery in Enclosure 5 - is the collection of 20 glass counters and the remains of a folding wooden gaming board. The counters had not been placed on the gaming board, but had either been put in a bag or a pile close by. However, of all the finds, the most significant were the remains of a spear and what may have been a shield. At this time (AD 50s), Britons would not have been allowed to carry arms. We are specifically told by the historian Dio Cassius that Claudius disarmed the defeated tribes at Camulodunum, so the presence of these items suggests that the dead person must have enjoyed special privileges.

Near the 'warrior' grave was another burial which, although not nearly as well endowed, is of equal interest. This one contained two pots, two brooches, and an inkpot. The last item is very significant because it suggests that the dead person had been literate.

Normally we might have guessed that the dead people sharing the enclosure had been close relatives of the person in the central chamber. However the presence of the spear and the inkpot suggest that, rather than relatives, these were the burial places of high-ranking aides, the inkpot intimating the presence of a clerk or scribe, and the spear and possible shield the presence of an armour bearer. Armour bearers could move in high circles. The Roman historian Tacitus tells us how Cartimandua, the contemporary queen of the Brigantes, replaced her husband Venutius with his armur bearer Vellodactus.

THE SUMMER OF '96.

By 1996, it had become clear that the site was of great interest but the summer of that year was to provide even more spectacular results. The site is large, about 300 metres square, so the archaeological work is costly. Most of the work has been funded by English Heritage with additional support from Essex County Council, The Essex History Fair, The Essex Heritage Trust and Colchester Borough Council. The work of 1996 was funded almost entirely by the site owner, Tarmac Southern Ltd., with some extra help from Essex County Council.

The chamber in Enclosure 5 proved to be little different from the chambers examined in the other enclosures, although it has helped us to review our interpretation of what happened to them. In fact, there were fewer finds in the backfill of this one compared with elsewhere and these were broken into smaller fragments than we had previously found, as if the mourners had made a better job of smashing them at the time of the burial ceremony. There were the usual nails around the sides of the pit and in its backfill, and there were traces on some of the edges of the pit of the planks which formed the vertical sides of the chamber. The nails around the parts of the sides clearly were close to their original positions: the wood had rotted away but they had stayed in place, thus showing that the chamber had been made of wooden planks held together with nails. The chamber in Enclosure 3 led us to believe that it had been burnt at the time of the ceremony, but the evidence in the chamber in Enclosure 5 seems to point to a different story. Rather than being broken up and burnt, this chamber appears to have been left intact, buried under a mound of soil which eventually subsided into the void of the chamber when the roof-timbers rotted and collapsed.

In the light of this, we now think
that this could have happened to the other chambers also; particularly where the ground is very rich in iron, as it is at Stanway, there can sometimes be chemical reactions which affect decaying timbers to leave them looking as if they had been charred. The idea that the timbers had been subjected to fire will now need to be reviewed.

In terms of finds the real excitement was to come from the secondary burials. One contained at least two pots and another three pots, a small glass pot, a glass bead, and six brooches. The glassware might have been used to contain cosmetics or ointment. The number of brooches was exceptional. The small glass pot seems to suggest that the deceased was female. Analysis of the cremated bone may tell us if this is true. However, the third grave was to prove quite extraordinary.

Delicate excavation gradually uncovered the fragile remains of the game board with the pieces still more or less as they had been left 2,000 years ago. And if that were not enough, it turned out that the game had belonged to a British doctor whose surgical equipment had been placed on the gaming board with his remains. A roughly squared pit had been dug for the grave with the bottom ledge so that one end was slightly deeper than the rest.

A long wooden box was then placed tightly across one end. The cremated remains were placed on the board, either as a pile or in a bag. The medical instruments were then laid either directly on the board or on a shelf within the box. Various other items included a collection of strange rods and what appears to have been their container. Also two brooches, a bead, presumably some clothing or blankets and a dinner service of eleven pottery dishes and cups had been carefully laid out over a quarter of the grave floor. A flagon was placed against the side of the pit and something like a tray or shelf was placed over the flagon onto which had been placed three special vessels. One was a glossy red samian dish from southern Gaul, another was a large copper-alloy pan. The third item was a copper-alloy strainer with a D shaped drop handle opposite its spout. All three vessels had been standing upright as if containing food and drink. The medical instruments show that the deceased had been a medic – a doctor or surgeon – who presumably had cared for the person whose remains were ultimately to be deposited in the timber chamber at the centre of the enclosure.

Ralph Jackson from the British Museum believes that the Stanway instruments comprise the elements of a basic surgical kit. At present we have identified at least ten medical instruments. But what was the nationality of the doctor? In the Roman world many doctors were Greek because Greek medicine was rather more scientifically based than Roman, which depended more on magical and religious practices. The instruments are informative in this respect since they seem to be nearly all of Celtic rather than standard Roman types. This implies that the doctor was neither Greek nor Roman but a Briton. The metal strainer seems also to support this view. Vessels of this type are hardly known outside Britain and it seems likely therefore that the bowl in the Stanway grave was made in this country. Its presence in the grave is thus significant as it appears to confirm that this was the burial of a Briton and not a Roman.

The eight rods buried near the gaming board are very mysterious. Each rod is cylindrical in section. One end is flat and the other resembles a triangular blade although not sharp. They were clearly associated with an adjacent wooden container which had incorporated eight copper alloy rings. Ralph Jackson confidently discounts any medical or veterinary function for these items. They might have formed part of another game or they may have been used in conjunction with the gaming board.

Although the latest discoveries at Stanway have been spectacular, an important conclusion from the earlier phases of the work remains unchanged. The doctor, the ‘warrior’, and the literate person all probably collaborated with the Romans in exchange for special privileges. Being alive in AD 43 meant that they would have seen the fall of Camulodunum and the subsequent triumphal entry of the emperor Claudius with his elephants, huge entourage and army. Many Britons from Camulodunum must have chosen to fight on with Caratacus, the most famous of Cunobelin’s sons. Caratacus would have despised those who stayed behind in Camulodunum to collaborate with the Romans. Our doctor and his friends would have been very wary of their new masters but perhaps were even more fearful of some of their former patriotic friends and colleagues.

STOP PRESS
HUGE VILLA DISCOVERY NEAR SWINDON
The Director has just advised us, as we go to print, that news of an important discovery in the North Swindon Expansion Area is about to break in the national press. Bryn was brought in by the Wiltshire Museums Service as a consultant to assess the site last December.

The new villa lies 10 miles south of Cirencester and appears to be over 700 feet long by around 350 feet wide at its broadest point and appears to be in an extraordinary state of preservation. A stop on some 50 houses and three roads has been arranged with the Developer, Robert Hitchen Associates, to enable a satisfactory solution to be found to preserve the site in its entirety. More detailed news in due course.
BOOK REVIEW

by Grahame Soffe

New from Thames and Hudson

The Mysterious Fayum Portraits
Faces from Ancient Egypt

by Euphrosyne Doxiadis

Thames and Hudson (1995)
2nd Revised Edition 1996,
foreword by Dorothy
Thompson, text by Barbara
Borg, 248pp. 274 illus.,
124 in colour. hb. £48.00.

We were all taken by surprise when
the first edition of this remarkable
book was published a year ago. To
some of us a few of these faces were
familiar, but as a group, and over 1,000
have so far been discovered, they
have remained neglected by
archaeologists and art historians and
are unknown to the general public.
The so-called Fayum portraits are by
far the largest body of ancient
easel-paintings to have survived — men,
women and children, young and old,
plain and beautiful. It is therefore
remarkable that we have had to wait
so long for a book which provides the
best available combination of recent
scholarship together with profuse
illustration, much of it up to full-page
size (23 x 32 cm) and in excellent
colour. These are art works of
extraordinarily powerful insight,
probably the most moving records of
individuals to survive from antiquity.
When Susan Walker of the British
Museum’s Greek and Roman
Department reviewed the first
dition, she declared it to be the
finest book on ancient art that had
come her way since the 1970s.

The book provides a means of
actually looking into the eyes of the
upper classes who lived in Roman
Egypt during 250 years of the
Imperial Age. The Fayum district
had a mixed population of Greeks,
Egyptians, Jews, Syrians, Libyans
and Nubians, all recently Romanised.
These different cultural elements
were uniquely calibrated. In the
tradition of Ancient Egypt, they and
their contemporaries in settlements
in the Nile valley embalmed the
bodies of their dead; but they then
placed over the mummy a painted
portrait in Graeco-Roman form. The
portraits were designed to be seen in
individual tombs and to preserve the
memory of each person, which they
do to an uncanny degree — whether
with apparent perfect realism (almost
like the record of a modern
photograph), or in vivid stylisation. It
is the realistic portraits that are so
stunning to us, as one culture talking
to another.

Alongside the Roman influence in
fashion ran a clear signal of Greek
cultural identity, a legacy of the rule
of Egypt by the Ptolemies in the three
centuries before the Roman
conquest. So the portraits began to
appear when Egypt had undergone a
recent change of governmental and
administrative system in which
competition for status was important
— what was at stake was social, legal
and fiscal status. The individuals
portrayed were saying ‘I am Graeco-
Roman’ and the hidden message was
‘I am not Egyptian.’ For the Romans,
the Egyptians were rather at the
bottom of the heap, so perhaps in the
politics of identity it was only the
strength of the Egyptian religious
tradition, the wonderful gilded
mummy masks and paintings, that
held body and soul together. There is
an evolving message here too, in that
Graeco-Roman religion is eventually
taken over by Christianity and here it
is that Doxiadis, as an artist herself, is
uniquely placed to show how the
Fayum portraits relate to the later
tradition of Byzantine icon-painting, a
tradition that extends to the
Renaissance and on to the present
day.

Colour and monochrome plates
illustrate examples from the
necropolises of Memphis (Saqqara),
Philadelphia (Er-Rubayat and Kerke),
Arsinoe (Hawara), Antinoopolis and
some unidentified sites. Sections of
text deal with social and religious
contexts, methods and techniques of
painting, the find-sites themselves,
problems of dating, costume,
hairstyles and jewellery. There is a
section of commentaries on all the
portraits, several maps of the Fayum
and Nile valley and good footnotes,
bibliography and index.

This book, together with a
symposium held at the British
Museum in 1995 (published papers
available at £40 paperback), has
provided inspiration for a special
exhibition, Ancient Faces: Mummy
Portraits from Roman Egypt, now
being staged at the British Museum
(14 March to 20 July 1997, Catalogue
by Susan Walker and Morris
Bierbrier hb. £40, pb. £18.99). On
display are nearly 200 portraits from
the museum itself, the nearby Petrie
Museum of Egyptology, and others
borrowed from collections in Britain,
Europe and the United States. They
include a recent discovery from
Marina el-Elamein, on the coast near
Alexandria. Supporting
archaeological material offers an
overview of funerary customs, and
examples of jewellery, clothing and
portraits in other media, from Egypt
and other Roman provinces, are
displayed to provide comparative
evidence.

In the past these portraits have
been consigned to an academic limbo
between art history and archaeology
and between Egyptology and Graeco-
Roman art. Now this exhibition will
bring the work of scholars such as
Klaus Parlasca (who originally
catalogued the portraits), Borg and
Doxiadis to public attention, and
perhaps Egyptologists, classical
historians and archaeologists are now
talking to one another in ways they
have not done before.
They found the stone foundations of the ‘Murder House’ about 300 metres from one of the main gates of the fort, in an area called the vicus. It was clear from the information boards around the site that every fort had a settlement or town outside it, where the civilians lived. Just like our towns, the vicus had shops and pubs and houses in it.

The ‘murder house’ was a shop. From the foundations our group could see that it had originally consisted of two rooms. The front part opened on to the street and goods would be sold from there. The back part was the living area for the shop owners.

Could the bodies possibly be part of an ordinary burial? “The answer to that is a definite no!”, “It was illegal in Roman times to bury bodies inside the walls of a fort or town. The cemeteries at Housesteads were further down the hillside and there are some gravestones in the museum”. There was also a ground plan of the fort and vicus there, showing what the area would have looked like in the 4th century.

Since it was the blade of a sword sticking in the ribs of the male victim, the murderer was probably a soldier or at least had some connection with the army. “They must have kept records at the time because Roman soldiers had to pay for their equipment and for anything they damaged. So, if a soldier had a broken sword, he must have had to give a reason for it.”

“Records wouldn’t be much good if the soldier returned to his home in Italy after committing the crime. It would be impossible to track him down then.”

“The murderer must have had help.”

Crimes are not always solved and mistakes are made. We were reminded of this when we explored the Roman commander’s house. The commander lost a ring there in the bath suite and it was discovered centuries later by archaeologists. “I wonder who he blamed or punished?”

At the time the commander must have thought it had been stolen, when in actual fact it had been ‘honestly’ lost.

Walking along a section of the Wall near the fort it was suggested that we might be ‘barking up the wrong tree’ (or indeed climbing the wrong wall!) in thinking that it was a soldier responsible for the crime. “it might have been somebody living on the other side of the wall, maybe one of the barbarians.”

When the crime team met back at the murder house they reported on their discoveries and their thoughts and we ended up with many more questions to answer.

We did at least have a rough date for the crime. An old guidebook said the murder house was used between 300 and 367 AD. In another book from the nearby gift shop it read that the skeletons had been discovered under
a 'new clay floor' in the house.

Somebody had obviously gone to a lot of bother to hide the bodies. The crime team decided that they would like to find out more about life in the vicus and in the army.

From Housesteads, they travelled about 7 miles to the Roman fort of Vindolanda. The vicus here is among the best preserved along the Wall.

In the museum near the fort they had on display writing tablets that were at least 1600 years old. They had been preserved in layers of mud and gave a really good idea of what everyday life must have been like in Roman times. There was even a letter from a soldier thanking his relations for sending him socks and underwear.

In the afternoon we travelled another 8 miles along the wall to Greenhead and the Roman Army Museum there. We could be wrong in thinking that the criminal, if he were a soldier, was Italian. According to information in the museum, the soldiers who manned the walls and forts were not Italian, but were more likely local men, who settled down in the area after they had finished their 25 years of service with the army.

The crime team returned to school the following week with an incredible amount of video, computer and written information. They will spend the next few months sifting through their evidence and preparing a computer report on their discoveries.

AND, the Tideway Timebusters hope to return to Housesteads this year and retrace the steps of their criminal by hiking along a 30 mile stretch of the Wall.

**REPORT OF VISIT TO A PARTICIPATING SITE**

We decided to make a visit to Ribchester on our way north on the M6 for the ARA (Antonine Wall) weekend at the Glasgow Hilton in August 1996.

**Background**

Ribchester Roman Fort (Bremetennacum Veteranorum) was first built some 10 Roman miles upstream on the north bank of the River Ribble in the 1st century AD. It guarded an important crossing of roads: one eastwards up the Ribble valley to Eboraacum (York), the other going north from Mamucium (Manchester) to Luguvallium (Carlisle). The earliest fort of turf and timber was built by Agrippa about AD 78. It was enlarged with stone-built central buildings in the early 2nd century and was occupied until the end of the 4th century. Its first garrison, as recorded on an altar in the museum, was a 500 man Asturian cavalry regiment from Spain, and in the 3rd century there was a garrison of Sarmatian horsemen from the Danube, again as recorded on a relief in the museum. Some 5,500 Sarmatians had been sent to Britannia towards the end of the 2nd century by Marcus Aurelius to augment the auxiliary forces in Britain.

**Fort**

Little remains to be seen because the river has removed the whole of the south east corner, together with the south and east gates. The north east corner of the fort is exposed in the rear garden of one of the High Street cottages. The rest is under the village and the church and churchyard.

Here can be seen the eastern third of a pair of buttressed horrea (granaries) showing the raised entry platforms and the supporting understructures (pilae and wall). These belong to the stone rebuild of the 2nd or 3rd centuries.

**Bath House**

This was excavated in 1978 - 1980. Situated outside the fort as usual, on the east side towards the river, it consists of two superimposed buildings (100 and 120 AD). An apodyterium (undressing room) with drain, a tepidarium with pilae, a caldarium with its praefurnium (furnace room) and a later sudatorium (sweating room) with its own praefurnium, can be made out.

**The Museum**

This is housed in a small building next to the Vicarage and the church down by the river side. It has a collection of inscriptions and reliefs, together with a 1st century or early 2nd century tombstone showing the usual iconography of a cavalryman riding down a barbarian enemy.

There is an inscription in honour of Caracalla and his mother, Julia Domna, with the customary erasure of brother Geta's name after his murder. The most important find was of a highly ornate 2nd century cavalry parade helmet (the Ribchester Helmet) now in the British Museum, but the Museum here has a replica on show.

Whilst on the site, the small 13/14th century church of St. Wilfrid with its strange dormer windows, is worth a visit for its Celtic head in the porch, the St. Christopher wall painting in the north aisle of the nave, the Jacobean pulpit, 18th century box pews, modern glass engraved panel set into the lectern front, and a fine modern stained glass window of 1996.

Practicalities: Ribchester village is best approached from junction 31 on the M6, by way of the A59 eastwards, to the B 6245 going northwards for about 2 – 3 miles. The site is well signposted. There is a free car park in the village, and a walk of some 300 yards to the Museum by the river.

The Museum is open all year round Monday to Friday, 9.00 – 17.00, Weekends 12.00 – 17.00.
This long expected publication on Colchester has at last appeared and the anticipation has been well worthwhile. The final result is a concise but scholarly presentation of Britain's first city from its princely Celtic origins through to the Norman citadel. Its flowing literary style makes for excellent and compelling reading for all enthusiasts of Roman Britain presented in a lavishly illustrated full colour volume. The book takes its title from the Roman name of the city, *Colonia Victricensis*, the location of the Emperor Claudius' triumph in AD 43.

*City of Victory* is a popular presentation of 25 years of research in and around ancient Colchester, beginning with Camulodunum, the Iron Age centre of the Trinovantian kings, with a vivid description of its defences and principal sites; Gosbecks, Sheeple, the richly equipped tombs at Lexden and more recently at Stanway. The development of the first Roman town follows, leading up to the devastating attack by Boudica in AD 60, with all the archaeological evidence graphically presented.

Under the subtitle 'Rebirth and Maturity' the recovery to a prosperous city is described, with the development of rich houses both within and without the walls of the town. The local industry producing luxury goods for the domestic market is also examined. Eventually, as with all our Roman towns, decline set in as Rome's hold on the province weakened and the increasing threat of brigandage demanded changes to the defences. The development of Christianity is explored, centred on the Butts Road 'church' and burial ground. The volume closes with the coming of the Saxons and the transition into the Norman town dominated by the castle of Eudo Dapifer above the remains of the great temple of Claudius.

160 pages, 240 mm x 185 mm, contain finds from the excavations: glassware, jewellery, mosaics, sculptures and exotic pottery, all illustrated in full colour, including 34 specially commissioned reconstruction paintings by Peter Frost. This book is not simply recommended; without question, it is essential reading for all enthusiasts of Roman Britain.

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