Dear Member,

Welcome to the fourteenth edition of the ARA Newsletter. We wish to apologise for the delay in finalising the Bulletin and Newsletter, mainly due to problems beyond editorial control. However, we hope the wait was worthwhile and you enjoy our efforts.

Once again we have our usual Booking Forms for the forthcoming season. The Annual Dinner event in May is to be held in Lincoln, another new venue for the ARA, and we have an excellent speaker lined up, as well as a local expert to guide us round the Roman town on the Sunday morning.

This year, we are running two ‘long weekend’ tours because of their growing popularity. We have Hadrian’s Wall in July and a repeat of our successful Dorset tour in September. This will give more people the chance to participate, and we therefore hope to see a number of new faces. However, if you are very keen, you are welcome to do both!

Our self-drive day out in August is to Keynsham and Bradford-on-Avon, both sites of great interest, the former an archaeological tragedy and the latter to see excavations in progress with the possibility of viewing an important mosaic.

As with all the ARA tours, you are recommended to book early; there is limited capacity and bookings are on a first come, first served basis - you really don’t want to be disappointed do you?

The remainder of the newsletter contains advertisements and offers for the information of members; and there are a few ‘Snippets’ news items which we know you all find of interest. We are suffering the usual shortage of space, so these are fewer than usual.

We have had to drop the ‘All Occasions Cards’ order form from this issue, but we still have cards available, so please use an old issue for the form if you are running short. Order soon before the postage increases yet again!

Editor.

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**SEAT OF FIRE REVEALED AT COLCHESTER**

Archaeologists have unearthed a building in Colchester which may indicate the deliberate method by which Boudicca’s rebels fired the Roman city in AD 60.

Philip Crummy, Director of Colchester Archaeological Trust, said, “The building had clearly been the site of a serious fire”. “We have found burnt material which looks as if it could have been a bed; it appears to have been the location where a fire was deliberately built up and it would have taken some time to complete”.

The bed is unusual, because most buildings already identified by archaeologists, showing signs of Boudiccan destruction, seem to have been emptied, suggesting that they may have been looted prior to being set on fire. This new discovery may help archaeologists to understand the actual method used in Boudicca’s wave of incendiary destruction. “We think they must have moved from house to house” added Mr. Crummy, “Because the structures were mostly built of clay, the rebels must have relied on the roofing timbers to ignite the buildings”.

Condensed from the Essex County Standard 21.02.2003

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**Snippets**

**PART OF GLOUCESTER’S ROMAN CITY WALL GOES ON DISPLAY**

A section of Gloucester’s Roman city wall which was first discovered in 1975 has now gone on display in the Gloucester Furniture Exhibition Centre in Southgate Street. The managing director of the store, David Wood, has paid for its display and it is available to be seen by customers. The lower level of the wall is Roman, whilst the upper section is part of the medieval rebuild.

Citizen (Gloucester), 10.08.2002
ROMAN ROAD TO CHICHESTER FOUND AT HUNSTON

The Roman road which left the city of Chichester by the South Gate has been found at the village of Hunston. Its existence was suggested by W. E. Done in 1950 and allocated the provisional number 156 by Ivan Margary in his book on the Roman Roads of Britain. Done suggested that it ran south from the city to Selsey but there was no direct evidence for it until a section was excavated in 1997 at Marblebridge Farm, Sidlesham. The latest find lies a mile further north and points directly at Chichester’s South Street. Its southern destination beyond Sidlesham is still unknown. ARA member and Chairman of the Chichester and District Archaeology Society who conducted the new dig, said that the road was about seven metres wide but seems not to have been bounded by any drainage ditches.

Chichester Observer, 17.10.2002
Keith Lawson, personal correspondent, 22.10.2002

TEMPLE TO ANTINOUS SUSPECTED AT TIVOLI

Archaeologists at Hadrian’s enormous villa at Tivoli near Rome, are claiming to have found a temple to the emperor’s favourite, Antinous, who was deified after his mysterious death in the Nile in 130 AD. A semi-circular building has been found during a dig to uncover the entrance and drive of the great villa. Preliminary digs have shown the structure to be rich in Egyptian and Egyptian-style finds. Fountains and pots for internal gardens suggest that the interior was largely filled with water features, perhaps symbolic of the Nile.

Daily Telegraph, 16.11.2002
INSCRIPTION HINTS AT LOST ROMAN TEMPLE IN CHESTER

Part of an important Roman inscription on slate has been discovered at Boughton, Chester, on the edge of the Roman civilian settlement, which had been thrown into the artificially channelled course of a stream in late Roman times along with great quantities of pottery, animal bone and building material. The site would have fronted the main road that ran from the east gate of the fortress, but deep cellars have removed the remains of the properties which originally lined it, leaving only the area behind them. A stream bed was found running south towards the River Dee. This had been lined with timber and stone, forming a channel up to 2m wide. Once its original purpose was abandoned it became a convenient dumping ground for the local people. A trackway described as “substantial” gave access to the western edge of the channel and various postholes either side of the feature are believed to represent the remains of a timber bridge.

The inscription is on a thin piece of slate and two rows of letters survive. The upper row is neatly cut and reads S L L M. The marking-out line is still visible running along the base of the letters. The lower line has P (or B) E T E R and is in a different style of lettering from the top row. A date of the early third century has been suggested. The upper row of letters seems to be part of the formula votum solvit laetus libens merito ‘Gladly and with joy he fulfilled his undertaking to (the god) who well deserved it’. This suggests that the inscription came from a temple and records the restoration or embellishment of that structure in Chester. The fact that the above formula (which should have been the last line of the inscription), was added to, suggests that a further refurbishment of the temple took place at a later date and was recorded below the original dedication.

The Past Uncovered. October 2002

TWO ROMAN VILLAS FOUND SIDE BY SIDE AT BRADFORD-ON-AVON, WILTSHIRE

Two large and well-preserved villas have been found under a school football pitch at Bradford-on-Avon at the start of a five-year dig carried out by archaeologists from Bristol and Cardiff Universities. The dig uncovered a mosaic some 16ft by 30ft ornamented with a star of interlocking squares about a rosette, and an apse with a mosaic decorated with a cantharus flanked by two superb dolphins. This floored a reception room in one of the villas. The splendid quality of the mosaic and its fine condition hint at the possibility of more discoveries in 2003. A room with a hypocaust was also located in the second building. A decapitated burial was located beyond the second villa. The occupant was a teenage boy who had been buried on his front with his head, which was removed after death, placed at his feet. Finds included fragments of delicate glass cups.

It is hoped to visit the 2003 excavations on an ARA day tour this August – see page 5.

Sunday Telegraph. 18.08.2002
Bath Chronicle. 31.07.2002
University of Bristol News. October 2002

ROMAN BATH-HOUSE DISCOVERED BELOW CHESTER’S AMPHITHEATRE

The discovery of a Roman bath-house beneath the amphitheatre at Chester has disproved the theory that the structure was built on the site of an earlier arena. Two giant sandstone foundations and evidence for a drainage system point to a large building having stood at an early date outside the walls of the fortress of Deva. An early aqueduct running through nearby Grosvenor Park is likely to have supplied the baths.

Daily Post (Liverpool). 26.06.2002

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