TWO VENUE CURATORS RETIRE

Paul Robinson and David Rudkin, two of our long standing venue curators, and stalwart supporters of the ARA, have retired this year within a month of each other.

Paul Robinson, after 34 years dedicated service to the Wiltshire Heritage Museum at Devizes, retired at a ‘thank-you’ party at the museum on 29th February. Paul had been Assistant Curator at the museum for 12 years before taking over from the late Ken Annable in 1986. Paul graduated in Ancient History and Archaeology from Birmingham University, and was a contemporary there of our late Assistant Editor, Beth Bishop. Paul gained his PhD in 1967. His real passion has been in the study of ancient numismatics and he has published important research works on the subject, as well as having worked closely for many years with our own trustee numismatist, Sam Moorhead, at the British Museum. Over the years Paul has built up the reputation of the Devizes Museum as one of the most important collections in the country and was instrumental with the ARA Director in arranging for the complete archive from the 12 year excavation at Littlecote to be transferred to the Wiltshire Archaeological Collection. Following 28 years of service as the Director of the Roman Palace at Fishbourne, David Rudkin closed a further chapter on the history of the palace when he retired on 28th March. Originally trained as a draughtsman with the intention of making a career in engineering, David became involved in extra-mural archaeology in the 1960s, directing the excavation of the monastic grange at Buckminster in Leicestershire, supported by the late John Hurst. Whilst attending extra-mural classes on Roman Lincolnshire it was recommended that he should consider going into archaeology professionally. Consequently he entered Sheffield, then under the eye of Professor Colin Renfrew, to obtain his degree in archaeology. His first museum post was in Portsmouth, beginning a major association with the Solent district. It was on the departure of Margaret Rule in 1979 as part-time curator at Fishbourne that led to a new post being advertised. David did not bother applying but was alerted to the prospect by a colleague and submitted a rather late application after the interviews were over. A rather hurried interview was arranged and David landed the job and he has been responsible for the management and excavations in and around the palace ever since.

We would like offer our two colleagues a long and professionally active retirement.

EARLY ROMAN COIN FIND HINTS AT TRADING WITH CORNWALL IN THE SECOND CENTURY BC

A silver denarius dating from the age of the Roman Republic has been unearthed by a metal detectorist near Fowey in Cornwall. Dating from 146BC it suggests that Romans were happily trading with Britons for minerals in the area two centuries before the Roman invasion.

Coins could often stay in circulation for more than 100 years so exact dating of the find is problematic, but it is still likely to have arrived in Britain before the invasion. The silver coin is minted in Rome and has a the head of the goddess Roma on one side and Castor and Pollux on the obverse.

Daily Telegraph - 26.02.2007
ARCHEOLOGICAL ROUND-UP

THE LUPERCAL CAVE POSSIBLY DISCOVERED ON THE PALATINE

The famous cave where Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome, were suckled by the she-wolf on the slopes of the Palatine may have been located quite close to the recently restored House of Augustus. Sounding devices employed in the restoration of that house, detected a large void 16m below the present ground level. A camera probe revealed an 8m high domed ceiling richly decorated like a temple grotto with mosaics, shellwork and marble. The ceiling is wonderfully decorative and imitates a real coffered dome such as that in the Pantheon at Rome. Above a border of flowered scrollwork, is a zone of square panels headed by a wider zone containing large rectangular panels interspersed with square and smaller horizontal ones. Above this, and bordering the vegetal scroll surrounding the central panel, are a series of square panels. The focus of the ceiling is a circular panel in pale blue dominated by a large white eagle, the symbol of Rome. All of the ceiling 'coffers' have decorative designs ranging from lozenges to rosettes. Some actually have carved marble or stucco rosettes inserted into them, giving a three-dimensional effect to the coffering.

Two thirds of the room is filled with rubble at the moment but photographs show at least one arched entrance with its spandrels ornamented with white rosettes.

The Lupercalia was a Roman festival that took place every February and was in honour of the she-wolf. It was connected with purification and fertility. Augustus is credited with restoring the sacred cave that had fallen into disrepair.

The new identification of the cave has been challenged, however, and suggestions have been made that it is part of the palace built by Nero on the Palatine. Whatever the truth, it is a fabulous survival. The search is now on for the entrance on the side of the Palatine overlooking the Circus Maximus.

Financial Times – 09.01.2008
BBC News (news.bbc.co.uk)
A WOOD AND IVORY THRONE FOUND AT HERCULANEUM

Parts of a fabulous solum or Roman throne have been found during excavations at the Villa of the Papiri in Herculaneum. Two legs and part of the back of the wooden throne have so far been discovered, decorated with ivory bas-reliefs depicting scenes from the ceremonies of Attis, the ill fated lover of the goddess Cybele. One of the finest scenes is interpreted as Attis collecting the sacred pine cones that were a favourite fuel for his altars. The piece of ceremonial furniture is the first of its kind to have survived from the ancient world and has previously only been seen in artistic representations. The cult of Attis is believed to have been popular in Herculaneum in the first century AD.

Reuters – 04.12.2007
Associated Press – 05.12.2007

EXCAVATIONS IN CHICHESTER, SUSSEX

A dig has been undertaken by Pre Construct Archaeology on the site of the former Shippams Paste Factory and Shippams Sports and Social Club that overlay part of the Roman town of Noviomagus Regensium in Sussex. This covered a large area within the city adjacent to the city walls and fronting on to East Street. An additional area was located immediately beyond the city walls. An east-west street parallel with East Street had been found running across the centre of the site in 2005 during site evaluation and longer stretches were later encountered. Considerable evidence of postholes, beam slots, floor slabs of brick earth and gravel surfaces were located. Numerous ovens and hearths from the various phases were evident. Unlike other parts of Chichester, where masonry buildings with mosaic and tessellated floors are found, the architecture here lining the street was of timber. Great quantities of finds were discovered and included brooches, cosmetic tools, a metal worker’s tray and two late third century copper coin hoards, one of which seemed to have been buried in a wooden box.

Six infant or neonate burials were found on the site, buried beneath floors perhaps as a ritual deposit. A broken Venus figurine was found on one floor. The relatively low status of the buildings suggest that this area of the town was devoted to light industry and commerce. Numerous Shippams paste pots were another unique feature of the site but from a much later period!

The dig on the site of the social club, beyond the existing walls, uncovered a series of defensive ditches dating from the Roman period and also disclosed the surprising fact that the outer face of Noviomagus’ city wall lay two metres to the east of the present city wall, which was assumed to be on the original alignment.

Chichester Observer – 15.06.2006
www.pre-construct.com

THE HOUSE OF AUGUSTUS ON THE PALATINE IN ROME RE-OPENS

New sections of the house of Augustus on the Palatine Hill in Rome have recently been restored and are to be open to small groups of the public from March 2008. Since the building closed to the public in the 1980s more than eight million pounds have been spent on restoration of the first century BC residence. Groups of up to 10 people will be guided through the rooms. Superb frescoes from the walls and vaulted ceilings have been pieced together and restored in their original positions and will be protected from light and micro-organisms by a new system of lighting and temperature control. Later emperors filled parts of the modest House of Augustus with earth and stone to support their grander constructions above on the Palatine and it is these areas that have been cleared and are now restored.

Financial Times – 09.01.2008

ROMAN LEAD COFFIN DISCOVERED AT ALDBOROUGH IN YORKSHIRE

The father and son team of metal detectorists who recently found the Viking treasure have now discovered the remains of a wealthy burial outside of Aldborough in North Yorkshire. In Roman times the town was called Isurium Brigantium. They discovered a lead coffin only a foot below the surface. The lid had been damaged in later ages when the roof of the stone lined chamber housing it had collapsed. The skeleton is believed to be female but was buried in the expensive coffin without grave goods or jewellery.

Daily Telegraph – 23.11.2007

MAGNIFICENT ROMAN MEMORIAL STONE FOUND IN LANCASTER

A team from Manchester University working on the outskirts of Lancaster have uncovered a striking memorial stone or stele commemorating a Roman cavalry man. The first or second century stone was found broken into three large and several smaller pieces, and it is calculated that when new it was probably up to 8 feet (2.5 m) in height. Published photographs appear to show the slightly curved pedimental top of the stone to have been crowned by a winged Medusa head set between two lengths of stylised garland. The main relief, showing the cavalryman on a remarkably lively and rearing steed, is deep and crisply cut, with the fringed saddle cloth and other accoutrements treated in a highly decorative manner. The rider faces the viewer and is wearing a helmet with crest and side plumes. He holds a shield aloft and has a sword by his right thigh. In the same hand he carries, by the hair, the head of the decapitated opponent whose headless body crouches beneath the horse. The body still clutches a sword and circular shield. The iconography of this group is extremely rare in cavalry memorials. The decapitated head is particularly novel.

An inscription refers to the rider as Inus Vodullus of the Treveri tribe from the area surrounding Trier. He was a member of the Ala Augusta, a cavalry unit based in Lancaster and Chester. A wonderful survival for Britain is the remains of the red paint that once highlighted the letters.

The tombstone has now been acquired by Lancaster Museum and is the subject of a new booklet by Stephen Bull entitled Triumphant Rider, published by Lancashire Museums at £5.00.

Times – 09.02.2006
A SECOND ROMAN FORT IS CONFIRMED IN CORNWALL

Archaeologists working for the Historic Environment Service (HES) of Cornwall County Council have confirmed that a square earthwork sited on a promontory overlooking the River Fowey not far from Restormel Castle is a Roman Fort. This is only the second Roman fort confirmed in the County and the discovery will have major implications for interpretations of the period (Fig. 1).

Interest in the site was recently rekindled by the results of fieldwork carried out by Jonathan Clemes of St. Austell; his finds joined an assemblage of material recovered over several years which includes imported Samian pottery, Roman coins, fragments of stone querns, glassware, gaming counters and slag from iron smelting.

The Duchy of Cornwall provided funding for an assessment of the finds assemblage which was carried out by Carl Thorpe of the HES. This revealed that, when compared to other excavated sites of the Iron Age and Romano-British periods in Cornwall, the site has produced an unusual quantity of ‘exotic’ material imported from the Continent and areas bordering the Mediterranean. In ‘native’ sites, the imported wares account for less than 25% of the total whereas at Restormel the exotic material accounts for over 75% of the total. The only comparable site is the Roman fort at Nanstallon, west of Bodmin, excavated in the 1960s by Aileen Fox and William Ravenhill.

The possibility that the earthwork was a Roman fort is not a new idea, but it had been classified as a native defended settlement when it was Scheduled in 1973. Since that time several episodes of fieldwalking have dramatically increased the quantity of finds and the preponderance of exotic material has become more apparent. In order to test the hypothesis a geophysical survey was carried out by Peter Nicholas and a team of volunteers from Tamarisde Archaeology Group, based in the Saltash Heritage Centre. The magnetometer survey has now provided conclusive evidence that the earthwork is indeed a Roman fort.

The survey shows that the site comprises two sets of banks (and ditches) surrounding a rampart which defines an internal area approximately 60 by 70 metres, with opposed entrances in all four sides. This is closely comparable to the Roman fort at Nanstallon; they are similar in shape and size, and in the arrangement of their entrances, but the Nanstallon fort had only a single ditched rampart, and excavations showed that occupation was relatively short lived, lasting perhaps for a decade or two in the latter part of the first century, whereas the finds assemblage indicates that the fort at Restormel was occupied continuously from the first to the early fourth centuries AD.

At Nanstallon, excavations revealed evidence for an headquarters building (Principia) and Commandant’s residence (Prætorium), barrack blocks, workshops and stables. The magnetometer survey at Restormel produced faint traces of structures in the interior and three areas of high readings which are thought to indicate burning (ovens or furnaces), and it is planned to carry out a resistivity survey to clarify the fort’s internal layout (Fig. 2).

With two forts now recorded, it becomes feasible to speculate about their wider geo-political context. Both forts are sited on hilltops overlooking the highest navigable point of a major river – Nanstallon overlooks the river Camel which flows north into the Bristol channel at Padstow, and Restormel overlooks the river Fowey which flows south into the English Channel at Fowey. It is possible that these sites were reached and supplied predominantly by ships sailing (or rowing) along the coast rather than overland, which would mean negotiating the inhospitable uplands of Dartmoor and Bodmin Moor. However, a number of forts and marching camps which have been recognised in Devon (at Okehampton for example), indicate that soldiers of the Second Augustan legion were also extending their influence overland westwards from their base at Exeter (Isca Dumnnoniorum) in the first century. The all-important Tamar crossing, though, has yet to be located.

The two forts are separated by a ridge which forms the central spine of Cornwall, along which a prehistoric ridgeway is thought to have run, but a short distance of only 5 miles (9 km) separates the two. They are strategically sited on either side of this watershed and would be able to ‘oversee’ traffic moving east-west along the ridgeway and north-south along the two river systems. It is worth noting that Castle Canyke, one of the county’s largest Iron Age hillforts, sits astride this ridge overlooking the present A30, Bodmin Bypass.

The discovery of the new fort has also highlighted another aspect of the Roman period in Cornwall which has long occupied local archaeologists, even more so since the designation of the Cornish Mining World Heritage Site. The discovery of iron slag among the finds assemblage at
Restormel suggests that iron smelting was being carried out in the immediate vicinity of the fort. At the moment there is no direct link between the fort and the slag, and they may be separated in time by many centuries. However, it may be no coincidence that Restormel fort is located just 300 m from a prominent iron lode, known to have been exploited in the post-medieval period. Nanstallon fort is located within 2 miles of deposits of silver, lead, tin and copper, and crucible fragments and a single drop of silver-rich slag found during the excavations seems to indicate that the Roman military were prospecting for workable deposits of minerals in this locality. The presence of an iron lode one mile to the west of Nanstallon fort now takes on an added significance.

Further fieldwork is planned. We hope to be able to return to the site to extend the area covered by the magnetometer survey, and to carry out a resistivity survey to clarify the internal layout of the fort. A survey of the iron lode is also planned and it is hoped that we might be able to associate the fort with the ironworking. Documentary research is also required to investigate the history of iron mining in the area.

Acknowledgements:

Thanks are due to the farmer, Steve Hutchings for allowing us access to the site; to the Duchy of Cornwall, and to the Duke of Cornwall’s Benevolent Fund for supporting the artefact assessment; to Shane Gould of English Heritage for arranging the Section 42 licence for the survey; to Peter Nicholas and the Tamar Archeology Group for the geophysical survey, to Carl Thorpe of HES for the Artefact Assessment, and to colleagues from the Historic Environment Service who shared their experience, expertise and knowledge. The project was devised and co-ordinated by Steve Hartgroves and John Smith of the HES Information Team.

SH & JRS
Historic Environment Service
Cornwall County Council
17th May 2007

The ARA are indebted to Steve Hartgroves and John Smith for the supply of the two figures and for permission to reproduce this article which was first published online on the Cornwall Archaeological Society website. It was subsequently put into print in the CBA South-West Newsletter and then in the Devon Archaeological Society Newsletter. Ed.

BIGNOR ROMAN VILLA

John and Dulcie Smith, curators of the Roman villa at Bignor in Sussex, would like to extend their thanks to all the ARA members who visited the villa during the 2007 season and look forward to greeting further Association members in 2008.
As this year's Annual Dinner week-end is being held in Chester, we present the following review as a background to this important Roman centre in Britain. The articles are reproduced from The Past Uncovered, the Chester Archaeology Newsletter for October 2007. We are indebted to Dan Garner, Peter Carrington and Gillian Dunn for permission to use the articles and pictures.

Ed.

CHESTER’S ROMAN TOWN

Roman Chester is best known as the base of the Twentieth Legion. Although there are still important gaps in what is known of its plan, and although many large excavations remain to be published, we have a good overall idea of what the fortress looked like. However, until recently our idea of what lay outside its walls was very crude and disjointed. Now, as a result of numerous trial excavations in advance of development and the study of old discoveries, we can begin to see hints of a pattern: we can imagine what it felt like to live there and walk from one distinct area to another; and we can begin to compare it with other Roman towns in Britain and elsewhere in the empire.

Residential buildings with elaborately painted plaster on their walls and good-quality cement floors were first discovered to the west of the fortress thirty years ago in the Greyfriars area (which would have overlooked the head of the Dee estuary in Roman times), while a little to the north, on the opposite side of Lower Watergate Street, fragments of a large bath building have been coming to light for two hundred and fifty years. Reports of discoveries made when much of Chester Castle was rebuilt in the early 1800s hinted that high-status buildings with tessellated floors existed south of the fortress as well. Recent discoveries on the former police headquarters site, north-west of the castle, give an idea of what these buildings were probably like. Also south of the fortress, on the west side of the extension of the via praetoria, was the mansio. To the east of this road part of a hypocaust, probably belonging to the bath suite of a private house, was found on the south side of Duke Street. Only slight traces of occupation and activity have been found in the area between the south wall of the fortress and the mansio and the Duke Street building.

Outside the south-east corner of the fortress was the amphitheatre, the subject of large-scale excavations between 2004 and 2006. To its south, the slopes of a natural gully running down to the Dee (the site of the modern Souters’ Lane), were exploited as a sandstone quarry. Immediately outside the east wall of the fortress, north of the east gate, lay the parade ground.

Beyond the parade ground both sides of Foregate Street – the road to Manchester and York – were lined with narrow ‘strip buildings’ containing workshops and residential accommodation arranged end-on to the street. Excavations in Grosvenor Park in 2007 showed that this development extended further south than was previously thought, at least as far as a newly discovered road leading to the eastern entrance of the amphitheatre. Over the years, a number of ditches have also been found south of Foregate Street: these may have delimited early annexes to the fortress. Two of these ditches, running north-south almost 400 m east of the fortress, were examined again in 2007 and seem to have been backfilled about the end of the first century.

Outside the north-eastern sector of the fortress there was larger-scale, more untidy industrial activity. Excavations on the site of the old Delamere Street bus station have shown that it was the site of a Roman sandstone quarry. Fragments of over-fired pottery were also found there. Similar fragments were found during the construction of the north-eastern quadrant of the Inner Ring Road and suggest that there were pottery kilns in the area.

Further out, along Boughton in the east and also north-west of the fortress at Tower Wharf, excavations have revealed shallow ditches and slight building remains, especially roof tile. These seem likely to be remains of cottages standing in their own garden plots on the edge of the settlement. Springs at Boughton were the source of the fortress water supply, which was carried in clay pipes along the south side of Foregate Street to the east gate. There was also a village-type settlement at Saltney, about 2 km south-west of the fortress on the opposite side of the Dee, and more formal roadside development a similar distance to the south, at Heronbridge on the road from Wrexeter (Watling Street).

Scattered among these rural fringes were the cemeteries. The earliest were the cremation cemeteries, to the north between Liverpool Road and Parkgate Road, opposite the university; in Handbridge to the south along Watling Street; and in Great Boughton to the east. There were later inhumation cemeteries, again in Handbridge and another closer in, on the old Chester Royal Infirmary site, outside the west wall of the fortress. The people who were buried in the latter cemetery may well have lived just to the south, in the Greyfriars area, and some at least were quite wealthy (one woman was buried wearing gold earrings).

Roman Chester now seems to have formed a number of distinct zones. At the centre lay the legionary fortress. It is possible that a strip about 150 m wide beyond the defences was reserved for buildings and activities closely associated with the military, such as the parade ground, amphitheatre and quarrying. The fact that a high-quality residential area, extramural baths and the Infirmary Field cemetery fell within this strip may tell us something about the status of the people involved. These houses, together with those south of the fortress, had pleasant views across the river and enjoyed the clean air of the prevailing winds from the west. Outside the east gate was the craft and commercial area. Around the town lay cottage gardens from which the garrison and townsfolk may have bought their fresh food, and dotted between them the cemeteries. In this area of more dispersed settlement Heronbridge may have formed a
subsidiary node.

The sharp edge which one previously imagined to separate the fortress and *canabae* from an ‘unromanised’ countryside is becoming more blurred and Chester is beginning to feel like a miniature version of the ‘extended metropolis’ model recently used to describe the imperial capital. What is needed now are larger-scale excavations to confirm some of these hints, and careful study and publication of the results to fill out the details.

*Peter Carrington.*

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**ARCHAEOLOGY IN THE PARK**

Excavations have provided significant new evidence for the story of Chester’s historic park

![Map of Grosvenor Park with trenches labeled](image)

*Fig. 1. Location of the three trenches excavated in the western part of Grosvenor Park.* © Chester City Council.

The two main objectives of the work in the western side of Grosvenor Park in the summer of 2007, were to locate the remains of a substantial eighteenth-century town house owned by the Cholmondeley family, and to establish what the area was used for during the Roman period (Fig. 1).

The excavations in Trench III confirmed the line of a massive Roman defensive ditch running north–south across the park. The ditch was over 5 m wide and more than 2 m deep. Previous discoveries suggest that it continued north beneath the modern line of Union Street. A complete Roman brooch (Fig. 2), dating to between the late first and mid-second century AD was found in the layers in the top part of the ditch, implying that the ditch may have become obsolete fairly early on in the development of Roman Chester.

The excavations also showed that Chester’s Roman civilian settlement appears to extend further south from Foregate Street than previously thought, possibly all the way to the banks of the River Dee. All of the trenches produced some evidence for Roman domestic rubbish dating to the second and third centuries AD.

However, the most compelling evidence came from Trench II where the line of a Roman cobbled street was traced for a length of 10 m. The street was aligned roughly east–west and its projected route west would have taken it along the northern side of St. John’s Church and directly to the eastern entrance of the amphitheatre.

*Dan Garner.*
Introduction:
Geoff and Glenis Long have been trekking the splendours of Italy again and have submitted the following article, which may be of interest to members contemplating a visit to the area around the Bay of Naples, perhaps by sailing into the famous bay on a cruise, or if staying in Naples or Sorrento. Members who were on the ARA Tour to the area in September 2001 will recall some of these sites, which are not that well known and undoubtedly deserve a far wider appreciation, over and above the usual visits to Pompeii and Herculaneum. It is advisable, however, to try and make sure the sites are open before you want to visit, as all too often they may be closed.

B. W., Director.

There are six very rich villas, overlooking the Bay of Naples, leading around to Sorrento, but we should stress that there is a lot of uphill walking, so you will need to be fairly fit. We would first like to recommend the Villas of San Marco and Arianna, both of which lie on elevated terraces above the south side of the Bay. To reach these sites use the excellent train which traverses the bay, the ‘Circumvesuviana’ (circling Vesuvius). Your stop is the little station ‘via Nocera’. Right beside the train station, pick up the bus No.1 ROSSO. Ask the driver to stop at the ‘Villa Romano San Marco’. A gravel path will lead you through a farm to the villa entrance (Fig. 1). This villa, along with five others one mile uphill, are run by ‘The Lions International’ and are free entry. The only request is that you sign the Visitor Book at both sites.

The Villa San Marco (Figs. 2, 3 and 4) is ‘huge’ and will not disappoint the visitor. We spent some two hours there and are sure we did not see it all. Behind the villa are the remains of a large garden. We really enjoyed our visit to this spectacular villa.

On leaving Villa San Marco along the gravel path, turn right and proceed for about a mile uphill, passing a fork in the road, turn right onto another gravelled path, passing what appears to be dog boarding kennels (Fig. 1). This will lead you to the group of five smaller villas laid out along the steep cliff-like hillside overlooking the bay and are all referred to as the ‘Villa Arianna’. Here you will be met by a very friendly site warden who will show you around, so you do not miss any of the wall paintings and mosaics, before he leaves you to wander at leisure. This is another ‘Lions International’ site so entry is free. From this site there is a
magnificent view across the bay to Vesuvius and Naples, so do not forget your cameras.

If you like walking, and it is easier to walk down hill, we walked from the Villa Arianna down to the rail station again, but you can take the bus No. 1 Rosso in the opposite direction to the ‘via Nocera’ station.

The other essential villa to visit is that of ‘Oplontis’ a vast imperial style mansion, attributed as possibly being the holiday home of Poppea Sabina, the second wife of the emperor Nero; she died in AD 65. The villa contains excellent wall frescoes and mosaics. What is displayed is extremely impressive but is only about a third of the whole site, the rest of the complex, as with Herculaneum, being still buried beneath part of the modern town. To reach the villa we travelled again by the ‘Circumvesuviana’ to train station stop ‘Torre Annunziata Oplontis – Villa Di Poppea’, all one name on the station board. On leaving the rail station entrance, turn to the left downhill for a short distance to the road junction, then turn right down the sloping road towards a set of traffic lights, carry straight on for about 300 yards, on the left hand side of the road are railings surrounding the site with a small entrance to one side, the ticket office is just around the corner (Fig. 6).

It is so very worthwhile making the effort to see these amazing villas as they are far grander than any of the houses available to view in Pompeii and Herculaneum (Figs. 5, 7, 8 and 9).

**PAESTUM:**

If you have the time, and like us, feel adventurous, we strongly recommend going to Paestum which is just south of Salerno. Many tour representatives will tell you that it is not possible to get there, but it is; this is probably because they prefer you to take their arranged trips which cost around 50 euros each. Collectively, we both went to Paestum and back for only 25 euros including the entry ticket! (saving ourselves 75 euros on the representatives tour).

**Directions and travel method:**

We bought combined bus and train tickets for 8.50 euros each return. Depending where you start from, take the Circumvesuviana to Pompeii, disembark here and ask the ticket clerk where you can pick up the bus to Pompeii main line station. This is where you can catch the high-speed service through Salerno to Ancient Paestum; approximately one hour on a sleek modern train. You
Fig. 8. Colour plan of the excavations at the Villa Oplontis.
Colour plan: © Essestampa.
will pass the high walls of the ancient city just as the train slows down on approaching Paestum. On disembarking and leaving the station, go under the railway line via a tunnel and you will see that the city walls are right in front of you. Go through the gate and straight up to the three huge Greek temples (Fig. 10), and there are other remains including Roman houses with mosaics, many of which are open to the elements. It is also possible to climb up inside the city wall towers, still complete with doors and roofs. A cracking good site and should not be missed, a truly great place to visit, and costs 4 euros to enter. Collectively, we used 4 trains and 2 buses for the round trip, taking two hours overall to reach the site, and three hours back, waiting for connections, so this has to be borne in mind when judging available time.

All together we visited about 10 sites in the area, on our own, using local transport and all done at our own leisurely pace. We intend to return, yet again, as we found out about several other sites, especially north of Naples. We will pass on news about these in another issue. We also recommend taking an open-topped bus tour from Sorrento; one goes around the peninsula and another along the coast to Amalfi. Each trip is about two hours, but the views out to sea and towards Capri are magnificent.


ARCHAEOLOGICAL ROUND-UP

SPECTACULAR SILVER 'BROOCH' FOUND AT VINDOLANDA

What is believed to be a silver brooch of singular design has been unearthed at Vindolanda, near Bardon Mill in Northumberland. The brooch, which is just under two inches in diameter, bears a now headless figure of a shield and spear bearing man who is most probably to be identified as the god Mars. Either side of him are poles with rosettes, which may be legionary standards, and next to these are elaborately decorated long shields. The decoration is all in high relief. The circular edge of the brooch bears a rope decoration, inside of which is a border of zigzag. The most unusual design aspect of the piece is the existence of the three chains that are suspended from the bottom of the roundel. These terminate in flat leaves decorated with veins and intended to represent either ivy or vine leaves. Their upper surfaces bear four holes which may have been the setting for lost enamel or jewel decoration. As a brooch to fasten a man's cloak it would have been unusually ostentatious but the thickness of the pin and the seeming absence of a catch plate has suggested that it may, instead, be either a military medal or a horse decoration. Even the owner of this elaborate piece is known, as Quintus Solonius marked it with a series of dots spelling out his name. He also added the word 'CUPID' which is believed to be a reference to Cupid, the centurion in command of soldiers sent by the Second Legion Augusta from Caerleon, to help in the building of Hadrian's Wall in AD 122.

Daily Mail – 17.05.2006

REMARKABLE STATUE BASE FOUND AT VINDOLANDA

Investigation of a sewer leading from a newly discovered lavatory block at the south-west corner of the fort at Vindolanda has discovered the base of a statue re-used in the side walls of the drain. The front of the rectangular block has corner columns that frame an anseate panel holding an inscription still bearing traces of red paint in the lettering. The inscription reads CIVES Galli/ de Gallia/ ...

continued on page 29
ARCHITECTURAL GRANDEUR AND CRUEL PRACTICE AT DEVA'S AMPHITHEATRE

The recent excavations at Chester's amphitheatre have proved once again that the buildings of Britannia, like those of the rest of the Empire, were not devoid of exterior architectural embellishment. Projections from the outside wall of the second amphitheatre of about 200 AD, that were previously dismissed as mere buttresses, can now be seen to have been the bases for engaged columns. The architectural effect when the outside wall was complete would have been much the same as can still be seen at the amphitheatres at El Djem in Tunisia and in the Colosseum itself. It is a salutary warning that other British buildings with similar projections such as the temple at Pagans Hill may well have been similarly endowed with columns and pilasters. Such may have been the case with the new circus at Colchester.

The amphitheatre's arena has produced a tethering block such as can be seen in the famous mosaic of the gladiator cupids from Bignor. The Chester block is a square stone with the remains of the springing for an iron loop held in place with a plug of lead. This is said to be the third such block found in the arena. These devices could be used for chaining animals and humans, for baiting (and worse), and to ensure that they stayed out in the centre of the arena and in the general view, and not to allow them to seek the shelter of the arena wall.

SUPERB BRONZE TABLEWARE SET FOUND IN LONDON

A unique collection of late fourth century bronze tableware has been uncovered at the bottom of an eight foot well at Draper's Gardens, London, in advance of the construction of a new office development. Its presence in the well has been interpreted as either an offering to the water spirits or the act of a family about to flee the city. The 19 items include a nest of matching bead rimmed bowls, buckets, a cauldron, jugs and a ladle. These may have been used in either a domestic or a religious context, although possibly the latter may be the most likely, considering the hoard's ultimate fate. What is remarkable about the find is that, apart from the quantity of objects, they are mostly in superb condition and some still retain, in part, their original golden patina. This is entirely due to their immersion in the watery silt of the well. Some of the vessels show evidence of having been repaired with lead, suggesting that they were in regular use. The finds will be deposited in the Museum of London.

AN INTACT ROMAN DOOR DISCOVERED IN LONDON

A nine month dig at Draper's Gardens in the Walbrook Valley, London, has discovered 1,100 objects dating from the first to third centuries AD. In the waterlogged deposits of the Walbrook preservation has been remarkable, and amongst the finds, possibly the most exciting is what is reported to be the most complete timber door to have survived anywhere in the Roman Empire. The door even retains its original hinge pivots. Also surviving were floors and wall foundations of wooden buildings, with timber pipes linked to timber roadside drains, a bear's skull and a Roman carpenter's ruler. The intact spread of floorboards inside structures are in themselves remarkable. The wooden structures were sealed beneath later grand residences when the area lost its early industrial and nosy-the-marm character. Unfortunately the unexcavated redevelopment of the 1960s totally destroyed these residences and only one scrap of mosaic survived.

NEW ROAD RAMP DISCOVERED AT CORBRIDGE

Work on new flood defences at Dilsnow Haugh, near Corbridge, has uncovered a nine metre stone structure which has been interpreted as the retaining wall for a massive stepped ramp leading to the Roman bridge over the river Tyne. In 2004 Tyne and Wear Museum uncovered large portions of another ramp which carried Dere Street over the bridge to Corbridge. It now seems likely that another ramp approached the bridge from a different angle, bearing a major new east-west road, whose existence had not previously been suspected, on the south side of the river. The important east-west Stanegate road from Tyneside to Carlisle also passed through the Roman town illustrating just how important Corbridge was as a hub for communications in the region. The remains of the ramp have been recorded but will be sealed beneath the new flood defences.

ROMAN CULT CENTRE INVESTIGATED IN EWEWELL

An excavation at Hatch Furlong on the Ewell bypass has sought to uncover more about a Roman-British cult site that has given up finds since the 1840s. A series of deep ritual shafts cut into the chalk and containing pottery vessels, coins and the bones of many presumably sacrificed dogs are a feature of the site. The new dig uncovered a flint structure, believed to be an oven for preparing food for the worshippers, and further walls and two more shafts. A burial urn showed that cremations were also a feature of the precinct. Ewell was the largest Roman settlement known in Surrey and was bisected by Stane Street. The religious complex once existed on higher ground overlooking the settlement. A feature of Roman Ewell is believed to have been sacred springs.