Amathus, Cyprus – classical portico fronting the town baths.

*Photo: © Ken Holt.*

See article on Roman Cyprus, page 3.
EDITORIAL

Welcome to the 22nd issue of ARA NEWS; again, 24 pages packed with news, views and interesting items.

The cover picture, by Ken Holt, one of our members, offers a stunning visual introduction to our continuing travelogue of Southern Cyprus. There are many more glorious pictures by Ken illustrating the article.

Our Treasurer, David Evans, sets out a plan for the ARA to manage its e-communications in the future, and another member, Rebecca Newman, has produced a report of an Oxford University conference on the issues which affected towns in Britain in the period AD 300 to 700.

This issue contains three Book Reviews. The first, on Bristol in 1807, written by ARA Trustee Anthony Beeson, is not on a Roman subject, but I thoroughly enjoyed it. Basically a ‘dip-in’ book, it is a record of how society behaved in the early 1800s. The second is on the Roman Mosaics in Britain series. This is volume III of the four part Corpus and is published in two books. It may seem expensive, but it contains descriptions, details, and where available, pictures, of every currently known mosaic from Roman Britain. The last review is on a handy booklet depicting all the mosaics in the Corinium Museum, the text being written by our member, Dr. Patricia Witts.

A further article, on the Roman sites of North Cyprus, has been supplied by Nick Hogben, also a member. We have, I think, now ‘done’ Cyprus, so all our members can go and visit, knowing precisely what to see and where to see it. Which country shall we do next, and who will supply it? Contributions gratefully received from all you prospective authors.

You will find the AGM Booking Form and Trustee Nomination Form towards the back of the magazine. Remember, if you do not wish to deface your copy, then photocopies are equally acceptable.

There is a potted history of our Archivist and Trustee, Anthony Beeson, on his retirement as Art Librarian from Bristol Library. We wish him many fruitful years of retirement and look forward to perhaps seeing some of his dinosaur models in the shops. Bristol Library will miss him, I am sure.

The remainder of the magazine contains some notices, the obituaries, some dates on forthcoming conferences of possible interest and, of course, the Archaeological Round-up column. Enjoy.

David Gollins,
Editor – ARA NEWS.
Ken Holt, a Lancashire member, has spent much time in Cyprus and especially on the site of Amathus and he has agreed to produce this latest report on the old Roman City and nearby Acropolis.

LOCATION
This site is situated on the eastern coast road on the outskirts of Limassol, immediately after the built-up area. If you approach it from the west, turn off the motorway at junction 21 and drop down towards the sea. The site is signposted and there is a large car park available.

There is a book about the site (published by the Bank of Cyprus – Guide to Amathus) but sometimes this is unavailable in English at the ticket office. English version copies are usually available from the Museum in Limassol. You would be advised to have this book with you when you visit this complex site.

HISTORY OF THE SITE
In general terms Amathus can be subdivided into two distinct sections:
[1] The remains of the Roman town and harbour; and...

The earliest habitation on the site can be traced back to the Neolithic era, although the ruins now displayed are of Greek and Roman origin. Significant human activity can be dated to around 1100 BC from pottery deposits, with evidence of Bronze Age habitation in the form of a tomb at the summit of the Acropolis.

The ruins consist of those buildings which have survived a succession of earthquakes and the town was abandoned partly because of this, along with the silting up of the harbour and raids by Arab fleets (Fig. 1).

The dark outlines of the Roman harbour under the water can be seen on a good day from the Acropolis.

To the left of the viewing platform are the remains of a small Hellenistic gymnasium and a circular bathhouse (Fig. 4), complete with water tank, seating and changing rooms.

With your back to this Gymnasium, and to your immediate left, facing the Agora is the portico and three shops at the southern end (fig. 5).

To the north end we find three relatively large water tanks. The water used was fed by an underground tunnel, which emerges from a stone arch, into a trough (Fig. 6), which feeds a fountain as well as the large tank.

Another branch of this water supply runs towards the main bathhouse situated to the east of the site. The drain from the main tank is comprised of a pipe system con-

[1] Roman city of Amathus
As you walk in from the ticket office, the first ruins on the left, terraced on the hillside, are living quarters – possibly houses or barracks (Fig. 2).

As you enter the main ruins of the Agora, on the seaward side, there is a viewing platform with a plaque showing the salient features of the ruins (Fig. 3).

Fig. 1. Showing unexcavated inner harbour behind ticket office, and, outlined by the waves, the submerged outer harbour in the bay.

Fig. 2. Living quarters - possibly housing or barracks.

Fig. 3. Agora, with waves breaking over the sunken harbour (top right).
pipes – including a substantial fountain in the middle of the large paved Agora.

The above mentioned classic bath-house (Fig. 8) was presumably sufficient for the needs of a small Roman town. The larger tank still contains remnants of the original waterproof cement membrane and red paint.

Large areas of the town are still unexcavated and continue from north of the Agora towards the city walls, which are partly excavated at the northern end of the valley.

Let us now turn our attention to the Western Hill overlooking the Roman town, on top of which is the series of temples dedicated to Aphrodite.

[2] Western Hill of the Acropolis

In Roman times, and earlier, this was the site for the religious life of the town’s citizens. A staircase up to it was constructed in the first century by a certain Kallinikos at his own expense. This is commemorated by a dedication plaque, in Greek, set into the cliff face (Fig. 9).

This ancient path can still be climbed, but a somewhat easier route is found by returning to the car park and climbing up the steps on the pathway which skirts the Christian Basilica – which is to be found next to the road. This impressive hill was strongly fortified and a substantial curtain wall was constructed in the reign of Justinian, in the sixth century. Later, a barbican and towers were constructed to protect against Arab raiders (Fig. 10).

The remains on the hilltop include the palace dating back to 700 BC, little of which is still extant. This was
built over an earlier habitation site dating back to 1100 BC. The main interest from our point of view, however, is the temple complex on the top. To reach this, one should return to the eastern path, which skirts the side of the hill.

On reaching the summit of the plateau from the path you are faced with the spectacle of a massive stone urn. This urn is a copy (Fig. 11); the original one was ‘rescued’ by the French, although the broken one nearby is original. The original urn weighs over 12 tons and is nearly two metres high and three metres in diameter. The decoration on the rim depicts a bull and palmette design, symbolising life and fertility.

To the left lies the sacrificial area with underground stables and a grotto, in front of which was a fenced-off area with a stone tendering ring cut into the rock. This area lies in front of the remains of the Temple to Aphrodite dated to the Hellenistic period – upon which was superimposed a Roman equivalent – a classical porticoed construction.

Its stone was possibly re-used in the late sixth or early seventh century in the construction of the Christian Basilica. This, together with the large paved area, covered most of the top of the plateau (Fig. 13).

Of special note are the floors within the basilica, made up of many different tile designs (opus sectile) and re-used marble flagstones. Many of these have been recently covered up (Figs. 14 and 15).

Obviously, water supply must have been a serious problem for a site located on top of a hill. The citizens appear to have solved this dilemma by constructing a large subterranean cistern beneath the basilica area, originally with an arched roof.

Just to the north of this, temple complex is the supposed Tomb of Ariadne – a small hollow near to the edge of the cliff. From this position
one achieves a splendid view of the Northern defences complete with partially excavated curtain wall, towers and water cisterns (Fig 16). The aqueduct comes in at this point from the hills to the north and the remains of this are visible running across the fields nearby.

From this point you should retrace your steps down to the small Christian Basilica and the coast road. You may wish to cross the road and join the ‘promenade’ – a pleasant walk towards the east for around 300 yards and leave the walkway where a small modern church can be seen across the road. Behind this is a tarmac road into a new housing area. Within a few yards, the road turns right. Next to a house on the bend are a number of rock cut Roman tombs reached by stone staircases. Down the slope below the first tomb are the ruins of a Roman Mausoleum, unique to this area. More tombs follow the slope round towards the east.

Some interesting finds from these sites can be seen at Limassol museum – including a scale model of the Acropolis as it was in Roman times.

I have spent several holidays in the area of Amathus and have wandered round at leisure on this interesting site. Whilst it does not receive as much publicity as the other Roman sites of Paphos and Curium a visit here is a most rewarding experience, even including the somewhat energetic climb up to the summit of the plateau. This, together with a trip to Limassol museum and Limassol castle will surely make an unforgettable day.

Ken Holt.

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**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

As part of an ongoing review of its operations and functions, the Board of Trustees has agreed that Vix Hughes should assume responsibility for IT and Communications, with the change-over being effected by the end of this year. The Board anticipates this will result in considerable improvements in these areas to the benefit of all our membership. Initially, she will be concentrating on three areas.

**The Website**

Since its inception, the site has received over 13,000 hits. While this is not a grand figure in comparison to other popular sites such as Twitter or Facebook, it is none the less encouraging. We are getting a small but steady input of new members and we are ranked second on Google in response to searches on ‘roman archaeology’, which is highly encouraging. Colette Maxfield, our Webmaster, has recently upgraded the site to improve presentation. In view of the lack of interest from the membership, we have put the Chatroom and Picture Gallery temporarily on hold but Vix is in the process of developing an overall strategy for the site and hopes to introduce new features and enhancements in the New Year. Any ideas ([ara.enquiry@ hotmail.com](mailto:ara.enquiry@hotmail.com)) would be welcome.

**The e-Newsletter**

In response to a number of requests from members, particularly at the AGM, we will make the Newsletter available by e-mail, commencing with the first issue in 2010, to those members who wish to receive it by this route rather than by post. To this end, can members who wish to avail themselves of this facility so indicate to us ([ara.enquiry@ hotmail.com](mailto:ara.enquiry@hotmail.com)) before the end of the year. We intend to set up a secure e-mail circulation list on a highly protected stand-alone machine to accomplish this. We recommend that only members with fast (Broadband or equivalent) links register themselves for this as the file size will be large, and download speeds will otherwise be excessively slow. Your e-mail account must be capable of handling large (megabyte) files. When this is up and running, we would appreciate feedback to improve the service and remove glitches.

**Internal Communications**

More and more of our communications, particularly with members, internally between individual Trustees and with outside bodies, are increasingly dependent upon e-mails; yet internally, the Association has a number of problems which are impeding our processes. We are looking very carefully at these and are hoping to introduce improvements by the end of the year to rectify them. Again, any suggestions would be welcome.

**Acknowledgement**

Without the skills and commitment of Colette Maxfield, none of the progress we have made on the website would have been possible. We are extremely grateful to her.
TOWNS IN BRITAIN AD 300 - 700
A REPORT ON A CONFERENCE AT OXFORD UNIVERSITY

Towns in Britain 300-700 – surely there is no need for a conference on this issue? Don’t we all know already there were no towns in Britain after AD 410, when the Romans turned out the lights, and left the natives without enough denarii to feed the meter. Perhaps so – but several archaeologists reviewed the evidence, and gave us some important new insights. I provide a personal summary of the debate which took place at Oxford University in March 2009. Thanks to Roger White, Simon Loseby, Jason Wood and Mark Corney for generous help in obtaining the illustrations.

Introduction to the issues – Professor Mike Fulford – University of Reading

The decrease in the production of pottery and use of coinage seem to confirm the decline of towns. But contrary evidence may have been missed, because it was not recognised, or was removed without proper interpretation. Where stratigraphy survives there are pointers to post-Roman activity. Anglo-Saxon cemeteries are often located just outside the town, e.g. Colchester, Caistor-by-Norwich, Dorchester, Winchester and Canterbury. In Colchester at Butt Road, excavations have revealed some early Saxon occupation, including a fifth-century wooden hut built on the ruins of a Roman house in present-day Lion Walk. Some centres show renewal in Saxon times. At Venta Icenorum coins, other metal items, and pottery of the seventh and eighth centuries have been found in the area opposite the west gate. Venta Icenorum may have become once again an important regional centre in the Middle Saxon period. There are ‘grubenhausers’ dating from the fifth and seventh centuries, so what happened in the sixth century? Similar questions can be asked of other sites. There are sixth and seventh century grubenhausers in Canterbury. Did towns disappear or change in function and character?

The evidence from Britannia Prima – Roger White – University of Birmingham

Philip Barker’s seminal work on Wroxeter suggests that town life survived for a while after the Romans ‘departed’, but towns were abandoned during the fifth century – largely because they were no longer required. Towns were not an essential part of human society, and only survived as long as they were needed. Figure 1 shows the number of towns that seem to have eventually disappeared. He showed how even Wroxeter gradually decayed as it changed its purpose, e.g. the removal of the basilica roof in the early sixth century, although the shell continued to be used as a market. Figure 2 shows the ultimate decay at Caerwent.

Roger presented tables showing the presence of key features of urban life in the small towns of Britannia Prima. They had more zeros than ticks. They
can be found in his book entitled *Britannia Prima*. Some towns may have bucked the trend, e.g. Chester where a Bishop and a Synod are recorded for AD 617. There were towns in the fifth and sixth centuries – but small and unimpressive. Romans would not have considered them towns. There were few public buildings – a few churches but mainly outside the walls. Industry was small-scale metal and bone working. Houses and other buildings were of timber.

A fuller discussion in a longer version of this report is available. This also includes useful references. Please contact rebecca.isis@yahoo.co.uk if you would like a copy.

Late Roman and early post-Roman Leicester – Richard Buckley – University Leicester Archaeological Services

Until recently, evidence for activity in these periods remained elusive, but some has been provided by recent large-scale redevelopment projects. The Highcross Development site seems to show continuous occupation since Roman times, leading to over 3.5 metres of archaeological deposits. A large post-built structure was discovered, perhaps a hall, cutting into a substantial area of what may have been the Roman *macellum*. Results have not yet been fully evaluated, so the issue of sub-Roman activity is still open.

Verulamium between the Romans and Saxons – Ros Niblett – University College London

Evidence is accumulating for continuing, if diminished, fifth century occupation in the town. There is the fifth century water-pipe found by Frere in Insula XXVII, and the reference to St. Germanus’s visit to St. Albans. Early Saxon settlement is largely absent, and a small British population enclave may have still been there when Offa founded a monastery on the site of St. Alban’s grave. It may be significant that the Late Saxon abbots had ‘problems’ with the Kingsbury area, which they claimed was the residence of ‘strumpets’, and eventually persuaded Edgar to sell it to the Abbey. But was it an embarrassing area where the original, but heretical, British still lived?

Silchester – the end of an early medieval town – Mike Fulford – University of Reading

The town continued to be vibrant beyond the early fifth century, but differently. The former Forum Basilica was used for iron-making in the fourth century and continued into the fifth century. Wells remained in use in the fifth century as did fourth century pottery styles – evidence of a resident population but with diminished economic activity. A dwarf column with Celtic ‘Ogham script’ (developed in Ireland late fourth century) is found dumped in a well along with coins of Theodosius, and cattle bones are stuffed into a second well. This may indicate a ritual ‘closure’ of the city sometime after 500.

From Durovernum to Durobernia Canterbury AD 300 - 700 – Andrew Richardson – Finds Manager Canterbury Archaeological Trust

The Tannery and Marlow Car Park sites show signs of rebuilding late in the fourth century, and perhaps early in the fifth century, but it is not clear how long after AD 410 these buildings continued in use. In the Augustine House excavations some occupation along the southern frontage of Watling Street is believed to have continued into the Anglo-Saxon period. There is some evidence for occupation and industrial activity – kilns – to the north-east of Augustine House. Anglo-Saxon structures are found after AD 450, but there may be a gap in the early fifth century.

There are many examples of irregular burials in the late fourth century – bodies are thrown into a pit to get rid of them, rather than buried. Is this evidence of a plague? Was this the reason for the evacuation of the city – not the Roman departure? It would explain the odd hiatus in building lasting perhaps only 50 years. After c. AD 600 a new street pattern begins to emerge. What happened c. AD 425 to c. 590 is not clear.

Under the Portable Antiquities Scheme, coin finds suggest a scenario. Coin loss across East Kent in the fifth century is significant. There is a considerable density of finds outside Canterbury, especially around Faversham. In the mid-sixth century this becomes an important production centre, perhaps because of its access to the Wansum Channel, which provides access to Kent from Scandinavia. But there is a marked absence of coins found in Canterbury. Canterbury seems to be initially peripheral to the earliest post-Roman activity in England. But its strategic location and the political ambition of Ethelbert power a ‘comeback’. Perhaps Augustine’s mission was pre-arranged as a diplomatic coup, to support Ethelbert’s ambitions to rule all of Kent.

Roman York – Fourth Century and Beyond – Mark Whyman – York Archaeological Trust

Mark reported on his recent unpublished PhD study of evidence from the Wellington Row excavation in the *colonia*. Coins with a terminus post quem of AD 367, and evidence of rebuilding in this period may indicate continued occupation well into the fifth century. Coins of Theodosius have been found, also evidence of alterations to existing
buildings. It is difficult to date the duration of each phase precisely, so we cannot be sure exactly how long this occupation continued. However, the fabric of ceramics match some from York Minster, which is definitely post-Roman.

**London – Derek Keene – Institute of Historical Research (University of London)**

London was still important in the fourth century – and carried the title Augusta. A new defensive circuit was built sometime after the visit of Constans. The riverside wall was strengthened, and bastions were added, perhaps to control approaches up the River Thames. A new stone building near Tower Hill may have been a cathedral or a warehouse/granary. Silver ingots of the late fourth and early fifth century suggest military importance – they were probably for payment of soldiers and administrators. London lost its original purpose when the ‘Roman’ government machine ceased to operate, but there are fifth century finds – an Anglo-Saxon brooch in a bathhouse, pottery at Clerkenwell and St. Brides. A pewter ingot found in the river Thames near Battersea stamped with the name Syagrius may refer to a fifth century ruler of Northern France who was murdered in AD 487. The post-Roman mint in London issued imperialistic style gold coins. There may have been a royal residence or enclave for the East Saxon sub-kings where St. Paul's Cathedral now stands. A gold solidus of Eadbald dated 630 shows St. Paul's. However, there was no Bishop of London until 660.

The focus in London shifted westwards to Covent Garden – a recent sub-Roman burial found at St. Martin's in the Fields church may accord with Roman practice against burial within the limits of a town. No evidence has yet been found of building between the period of Londinium and Lundenwic, but migration of towns to a new site was not uncommon in this period, as Simon Loseby showed for Tours.

**Towns in Britain – the view from Gaul – Simon Loseby – University of Sheffield**

Simon considered towns in Britain in this period did not exist. In contrast recent work on Tours by the French archaeologist H. Galinie shows the recognisable urban character nature of post-Roman towns in Gaul. The archaeological evidence shows changes consistent with the continued existence of the city, although its size declines, and old features such as the amphitheatre were abandoned. A new focal point grows to the west. This is surrounded by new walls – probably both defensive and symbols of urban status. New Christian buildings spring up alongside the open-plan residential area. In comparison British towns were little more than...
semi-abandoned villages. Power which had been exercised from villas, moved to adjacent defensible hill forts especially in the south-west, e.g. South Cadbury (Fig. 6). Local élites retreat into their own ‘gated’ estates, or in some areas to rural palaces, e.g. Yeavering. In Britain, towns had to be later either rescued or re-invented as a symbol of religion – Canterbury, or as trading centres – Hamwic.

**PERSONAL CONCLUSIONS**

The weekend provided some new evidence to revise the conventional pictures of either continuity or a catastrophic sudden disappearance of towns. Perhaps we need to recognise gradual changes in functions which lead to significant changes in character. There was considerable abandonment in Britain, but this process could have taken nearly two centuries – from as early as AD 300, and continuing well after AD 410.

Simon noted that many French archaeologists do not consider even Gallic centres to be real towns. This leaves the question of what is a real town, and which term can be used for other settlements. We need to distinguish between decline of towns and decline in wealth or sophistication, particularly in the western and south-west regions of Britain. Elite landowners remain but perhaps take over the role of bishops. The church is a sign of status, but is more akin to a house church – perhaps in the villa complex itself, e.g. the possible Baptistry at Bradford-on-Avon. These differences may be due perhaps to the different ‘invaders’ and/or indigenous residents. Towns do not develop themselves, but are developed by people to reflect their needs and traditions. Future research should focus on how changing social processes led to different histories, rather than on league tables of physical characteristics and modern expectations of a town.

Rebecca Newman.

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**A MAGNIFICENT STRETCH OF ROAD AND GRANARIES FOUND AT VINDOLANDA**

A superb section of the via principalis, the central road linking the fort with the vicus outside, has been uncovered at Vindolanda on Hadrian’s Wall. Constructed of massive flagstones it survives virtually intact and has been described as the finest stretch of Roman road to be seen in the north of England. Flanking it are the 1.5 m high remains of two beautifully built stone buildings. Initial thinking places their original construction at around AD 213 followed by demolition at the end of the century and rebuilding at the beginning of the next. One seems to have been intended from the start as a granary but the other appears to have been a warehouse, most probably for foodstuffs. Both had a long history and were finally destroyed by a great fire in the late fourth century, but were again occupied and were still in use in some form, until at least the ninth century.

Vindolanda 2008 Excavations. www.vindolanda.com
BOOK REVIEWS

Bristol in 1807
Impressions of the city at the time of Abolition
Anthony Beeson
Redcliffe Press
ISBN 978-1-906593-26-1
240 pp., 37 illustrations in colour and 158 in black & white.
Paperback £10.00.

Review by Gavin Siddall

The publication of a new book by one of the ARA’s Board of Trustees is not a notable event in itself, and it might be considered that a book on early nineteenth century Bristol has little claim to be featured in these pages. However, Anthony Beeson’s look into the follies, culture and horrors of late Georgian Bristol is a fascinating volume that this reviewer believes will be of interest to most ARA members.

The book arises from the research done by Anthony Beeson for the extremely successful Heritage Lottery funded exhibition held at The Central Reference Library in Bristol from 2007 to 2008. Although arranged as part of the nation-wide events commemorating the Abolition of Slavery, from the start this exhibition was planned as being about everyday life in the city as lived by all classes and creeds in that year and not yet another breast-beating exercise about slavery. Further funding from the HLF enabled the wishes of visitors to the exhibition to come to pass, and a permanent record of all the research done for the exhibition to be published. The resulting lavishly produced, but modestly priced, volume is the lasting legacy to the exhibition and to the writer. As might be expected from an author who is a committed Romanist the book includes a chapter entitled Sea Mills: In Search of Ancient Rome, that includes a rare account by G. W. Manby of the Roman settlement as it appeared to the antiquarian visitor at the time, and of other such sites in the area where visitors from Bristol could be close to their ancestors. Of particular interest in the Sea Mills chapter is a mid-eighteenth century map of the area that shows the field boundaries on the site of the settlement appearing to mimic the

known streets of the Roman port. This, like many of the colour and black and white illustrations in the book, have never before been published.

The chapter on costume I found a particular delight. The author’s recent discovery that the classical dress so typical of the women of the period derives from Emma Hamilton’s attempts to introduce her Grecian styles was of particular interest. Her invention of an undergarment that resulted in the wearer appearing pregnant whilst aping the shape of the ‘Grecian Venus’ secured the style and the followers that it had previously lacked. By 1807 the state of women’s dress was scandalising

the press and greatly employing the satirical cartoonists. “From Bem-bazeen to Bum-be-Seen” joked one cartoon featured in the illustrations.

These are just two chapters out of many equally fascinating, in a book that it is a true delight to dip into. From tales of rude and idle boys to a schoolmaster who invented a boy spanking machine and a kite propelled carriage, in which he transported his family and horse (on a trailer) to Marlborough for the day, or of Slut, the pig, who loved to act like a pointer dog. The author has included reprints of long forgotten poems of the period, newspaper reports and accounts by residents and visitors to the city “by mud cemented and by smoke obscur’d”.

Bristol in 1807 is more than a book about one provincial city. It is a microcosm of England itself at that period. A land where one could get rich on the national lottery or ruined by the war with France. I thoroughly enjoyed it. It proves that whatever the age we live in, we are basically still the same Britons.

Roman Mosaics of Britain
Volume III South-East Britain
D. S. Neal and S. R. Cosh
Society of Antiquaries of London
ISBN 978-0-85431-289-4
606 pp., 530 illustrations, many in colour.
Hardback.

Review Contributed

The launch of the third volume of the Romano-British mosaic corpus took place at the apartments of the Society of Antiquaries in Burlington House, Piccadilly, London on 25th June. It was a fairly low-key affair, being for a middle volume of the series. It was accompanied by brief lectures by the authors, David Neal and Steve Cosh. Volume III of this four volume set, describing and

illustrating all the Romano-British mosaics, covers Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hampshire and the
Isle of Wight, Hertfordshire, Kent, London, Surrey and Sussex. It is published in two parts, and has 606 pages with 530 figures, many in colour. The mosaics are put into their architectural context and the volume also includes numerous building plans of villas and townhouses.

South-East England was very important in the history of Roman Britain, not least because most of the major cities lie in that region: London, Colchester, Verulamium, Winchester, Silchester, Chichester, and Canterbury. It is also where most of the mosaics dated to the first and second century are found, not surprising given its proximity to Gaul. The fine series of black-and-white mosaics from Fishbourne Roman Palace are well-known, and close parallels for them occur in what is now France; but several other sites in Kent, Sussex and Essex have similar mosaics, although often, sadly, fragmentary. The majority of second-century mosaics are found in this region, mostly from townhouses.

The study also has significance for the history of late Roman Britain. Many villas and towns of South-East Britain were in decline during the fourth century, and the few mosaics that were commissioned appear to be by craftsmen from the West Country. This is particularly evident by the enormous mosaic from Old Broad Street, London, which is very similar to some around Ilchester in Somerset and datable to after AD 350. It is a shame that nothing more is known of this building, perhaps the residence of an important late Roman official. On the other hand, a house from Verulamium (Insula XXVI, Building 2), much quoted as having evidence for the continuation of the town well into the fifth century, with mosaics laid at the end of the fourth century, has been shown to be much earlier. Nevertheless, the fine fourth-century mosaics from villas at Lullingstone (Kent), Bignor (Sussex) and Brading (Isle of Wight) are included, accompanied by lavish full-page coloured illustrations in this magnificent volume.

For further details and ordering, visit the Oxbow website: www.oxbowbooks.com

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A Guide to the Mosaics in the Corinium Museum

Corinium Museum publication
ISBN 978-0-904295-24-1
24 page booklet, printed in colour throughout.
£2.50 plus postage.

Review by Gavin Siddoll

This handy booklet is very useful in illustrating the majority of the mosaics on display in the Corinium Museum, Cirencester. It would be advantageous for any visitor proposing to visit the museum specifically to view the mosaics to obtain a copy beforehand, so that they might appreciate the finer points of the mosaics on display.

The Foreword, by Dr. John Paddock (Curator of Museums), sets out a potted history of the discovery of the mosaics from the Cirencester area, from the earliest, recorded in the sixteenth century, up to the present day. The text has been concisely written by Dr. Patricia Witts, a noted specialist in Romano-British figured mosaics. The description gives details of where found, the circumstances leading up to the discovery and a full interpretation of the iconography depicted on the mosaic.

There are 14 pages set out as ‘A Tour of the Mosaics in the Corinium Museum’, and this is followed by sections on lifting and preserving mosaics with half a page on the history of the actual Museum and how it was established.

The last few pages contain a short resource and reading list, a plan of the main mosaic discoveries in Cirencester and a map of the Cotswolds showing sites of Roman interest.

Altogether a well designed and thought out booklet, which could perhaps have benefited from printing on a higher grade matt art paper to give greater ‘lift’ to the illustrations.

SARCOPHAGI FOUND IN NEWCASTLE CITY CENTRE

Two substantial high quality sandstone sarcophagi have been uncovered by a team from Durham University in Forth Street, Newcastle. The inscribed sarcophagi are carved from single blocks of stone and fitted with gabled lids. They were found just outside the west gate of the fort of Pons Aelius. They would have originally stood by the roadside, closely side by side, and possibly in a funerary garden. There are indications that a third once completed what was probably a family group, but that it was removed in the Middle Ages. The sarcophagi would not have been buried but appeared rather in the manner of eighteenth century table tombs by the side of the road.

It is thought that the road surface uncovered may be Roman Dere Street which entered the fort here. The lids were found intact but the skeletons had decayed. One held the remains of a six year old child and an adult’s remains had been added at a later date; the child’s skull was missing. The second held the remains of another adult and was still sealed with iron pegs and lead; both sarcophagi were full of water. The east–west alignment and lack of grave goods suggest Christian burials.

The site also yielded military cremation urns and foundations of shops and houses.

Times – 15.08.2008
ANTHONY BEESON RETIRES AS BRISTOL’S ART LIBRARIAN

After 37 years in Bristol as the city’s Art Librarian, ARA Trustee Anthony Beeson has taken early retirement and is leaving the Library service in September. Having previously worked at the Courtauld Institute of Art’s library and two reference libraries, Anthony moved to Bristol in 1972 to take up the appointment of Fine Art Librarian and to run the recently founded specialist library based at the city’s Central Library. Over the years Anthony developed this into one of the finest collections of books on all forms of the non-performing arts, collectables and crafts available to the public outside of London. It became a much loved and respected institution and spawned imitations in other towns, both in Britain and abroad. Many people, now in high places in the art world, have fond and grateful memories of Anthony helping them whilst they were students.

As a staunch defender of culture and the City’s heritage, Anthony has had to fight against much corporate stupidity since the 1980s. The cry that art was ‘elitist’ and only of relevance to the wealthy amongst certain local councillors in the mid 80s resulted in the Art Library reluctantly dropping the ‘Fine’ part of its title as a defensive measure. Popular outrage at an attempt to close it around this time resulted in a hasty reprieve. The library lasted intact with its specialist staff until 1997 when a pogrom against the Central Library’s specialist departments saw the Commercial Library, the Music Library and the Art Library robbed of almost all their specialist staff and Bristol of years of specialist knowledge and expertise. The reason given to the media by the head of committee for the wiping out of this expertise was tragically comical:

“It’s no good having all these people, is it, at the end of the day with all this knowledge in their head, which isn’t written down anywhere or isn’t anywhere else? All this knowledge can go into that computer”.

As no one had explained to the Councillors that the city’s IT department was not yet at the necessary stage for brain transfers, the city was denuded of years of expertise overnight and the once vibrant Music library left without any staff who could read music!

Although much valuable art stock was lost to the public at this dark time and the Art Library split between floors in the building, Anthony tenaciously survived as the City’s Art Librarian. Further extended outrages by successive heads of libraries and their masters against him and other professional staff were generally beaten off by public anger from art and library supporters in the city. Anthony’s years of devotion to his work and to the public have resulted in a loyal following amongst many Bristolians who are always willing to rise to the defence.

A man of many specialisms ranging from English ceramics to designing anatomically accurate toy dinosaurs, Anthony’s devotion to the ancient world, and particularly that of Greece and Rome started at the earliest age through Greek myths. It was compounded by Hollywood when at the age of seven he saw the film Helen of Troy. It was an event that influenced his subsequent life. After that experience he read and collected everything he could on the art and architecture of the Aegean, Egyptian and Classical world. He was greatly interested in Roman sculpture, architecture, archaeology, painting and mosaics and joined ASPROM within a year of its founding in the late 70s where he met Bryn Walters and our myself (Editor). An early member of the Friends of the Roman Research Trust, Anthony was also in at the founding of its successor, The Association for Roman Archaeology.

Amongst the many benefits the public has from Anthony’s tenure as Bristol’s Art Librarian is a splendid stock of books on the art of the ancient world. He has written and lectured on the art of Roman Britain and appeared on Channel 4’s Time Team. In recent years Anthony has published two books. Charles Holden and Bristol Central Library (2006) and this year Bristol in 1807. Anthony’s retirement will be mourned by many colleagues and members of the public in Bristol who nevertheless wish him all happiness.

David Gollins

A NEW SHRINE TO JUPITER DOLICHENUS DISCOVERED AT VINDOLANDA

Excavations this year just inside the ramparts adjoining the North Gate at the fort of Vindolanda on Hadrian’s Wall have discovered what appears to be a unique shrine to the eastern deity Jupiter Dolichenus. Usually such shrines are found without the walls, but this had been cut into the rampart mound. Traces of animal sacrifice and what has been interpreted as remnants of religious feasting have been identified. The remains of two altars have been found. One is massive and stands some 110 cms high and weighs about 1.5 tons. The top has been smashed in antiquity but the sides and inscribed front, with its inscription, are well preserved. On one side the utensils of sacrifice, the jug and patera are carved, whilst the other bears a relief of the god in his traditional pose, standing on the back of a bull and brandishing an axe and a thunderbolt. The altar had been dedicated to the god by Sulpicius Pedens, Prefect of the fourth Cohort of Gauls, who is already known to us from another altar found built into the mediaeval tower of Staward Pele, near to Vindolanda.

Jupiter Dolichenus originated from Doliche (modern Duluk) in southern Turkey and was originally an ancient weather god. Under Rome he was equated with Jupiter Optimus Maximus and his worship spread all over the Roman world, only failing when the ancient sanctuary was sacked by the Persians in the AD 250s. A recent find of an inscription from Chesters on the Wall proves that worship was still continuing on Hadrian’s Wall as late as 286. Juno Dolichenus, the eastern equivalent of the Roman’s Juno, was portrayed, like her consort, as standing on an animal. In this case it was a heifer. A fine but broken statue of the goddess was discovered, again at Chesters.

Only the bottom half survived of the second altar discovered this year at the Vindolanda shrine, but enough remained to show that this was dedicated by a prefect of the Second Cohort of Nervians. This regiment was subsequently moved to the fort at Whitley Castle in the third century.
ROMAN CYPRUS:
SALAMIS AND OTHER NORTHERN SITES

The History of Salamis

Legend states that Salamis was settled in the eleventh century BC by Teucer, disowned by his father King Telamon of Salamis in Greece when he failed to prevent or avenge the death of his brother Ajax at Troy. The city might also have been settled by people moving from the nearby Late Bronze Age city of Enkomi, relocating after a natural disaster or because their port silted up.

Salamis was recorded on a stele as one of several kingdoms submitting to the Assyrian King Sargon II in 707 BC. Rule over the kingdoms of Cyprus passed to the Egyptians (c. 570 BC), then the Persians (545 BC). Alexander the Great won Cyprus from the Persians; after his death, generals Ptolemy and Antigonus battled for the island. King Nicocreon of Salamis sided with Ptolemy, who eventually won victory in 294 BC. The Ptolemies made Salamis their capital in Cyprus; this honour later passed to Paphos. In 58 BC Cyprus became a Roman possession; it later passed back to Cleopatra, but returned to Rome after the Battle of Actium (31 BC).

The original city made use of a natural harbour to the south of the archaeological park; this silted up, and the city was rebuilt further to the north. Construction work was done after an earthquake in the time of Augustus, and the city was rebuilt after another quake in AD 76. An inscription refers to repairs to the roof of one of the cold baths under Trajan. During the Jewish Revolt (AD 116) Salamis was heavily damaged. A dedication to Hadrian, the ‘benefactor of the Salaminians and Saviour of the World’ was found when the theatre was excavated.

The city was hit by an earthquake in AD 332; a second quake in AD 342 was accompanied by a tidal wave. Emperor Constantius II rebuilt the city on a smaller scale and renamed it Constantia. After a series of Arab raids (from AD 647) the city was gradually abandoned, and Famagusta became the area’s main town.

Salamis Archaeological Site

Salamis, St. Barnabas and several other sites in north Cyprus provide free guided tours in English. I recommend this service; before visiting you might want to contact the North Cyprus Tourism Centre (www.northcyprus.cc, 020 7631 1930) to check when a guide is available. The English-speaking guide for Salamis, Ms Serap Kanay, is friendly and helpful; the site has another guide who gives tours in German.

The ticket office sells a few books and bottled drinks, and can provide a leaflet describing the site. In north Cyprus there are currently no site-specific guide books, as there are fewer tourists than in the south. There’s a decent café by the car park outside the site. The site has good toilet facilities near the entrance (Fig. 1).

The palaestra and baths, the most impressive buildings on the site, were excavated in the 1950s. Dr. Vassos Karageorghis, the lead excavator, studied under Sir Mortimer Wheeler at the University of London. The majority of Dr. Karageorghis’s labour force were women from local villages, employed because they could be paid a lower wage than men.

The palaestra is a large courtyard surrounded on all four sides by stoae (Fig. 2). Dr. Karageorghis arranged for the Byzantine era pillars to be re-erected around the palaestra – a very striking sight. The east stoa, adjoining the baths, was probably built in the Augustan period. The narrower stoae on the other three sides of the palaestra were added later. The courtyard was originally used as a gymnasium and had a sand floor, but in the Byzantine era opus sectile was laid. A statue of Augustus once stood in the centre.

The east stoa’s opus sectile flooring includes slabs with whole and partial Latin and Greek inscriptions. Beneath it, earlier pebble flooring is exposed. Karageorghis excavated beneath the flooring at the north end of the stoa, and revealed masonry that he believed dates as early as the fourth century BC. At either end of the east stoa is a room with a small rectangular swimming pool: the remains of an earlier oval pool are visible in the room at the north end of the east stoa. During excavation, statues were discovered in drains under the east stoa and nearby. Some are now displayed in the Cyprus Archaeological Museum.

Fig. 1. Map of Salamis site.

Map: © Rich Hogben.
at Nicosia, while a mix of original and replica statues surround the north pool.

Rooms lead off from all sides of the palaestra; those on the north and west sides are overgrown. In the south-west corner, behind a water feature, there is a marvellous semi-circular latrine with seating for 44 (Fig. 3). A smaller and more opulent latrine to the north of the baths is known as the 'royal' or 'women's' latrine.

From the east stoa, you can enter the baths through two small square frigidaria with octagonal cold pools. Between them is the west hall, a rectangular sudatorium. The floor in the west hall has three levels (most of the lower level has collapsed, revealing the hypocaust) and in a niche above the southern entrance is a vivid fresco of Hylas and the nymph, from the Argonautica (Fig. 4).

To the east of the frigidaria and west hall are three large rectangular halls with apsidal east ends. The north hall and south hall are sudatoria; the hall between them is a caldarium (Fig. 5). There are mosaic fragments in alcoves in these chambers, protected when they were blocked up in the Byzantine period. The best preserved mosaics are in the south hall: one portrayed Apollo and Artemis killing Niobe's children, the other shows Eurotas and the swan from the story of Leda.

To the south of the baths are two large cisterns, one of them vaulted (Fig. 6). They sit at the end of an aqueduct which runs on a ridge from the west. The stepped south wall of the larger cistern was once part of a stadium (Karageorghis described it as a xystos, or running course). While the area is overgrown, other traces of the stadium can be found – I discovered what appears to be the base of a round tower.

The sub-structure of an oval amphitheatre, built on the site of the east end of the stadium, is also visible (Fig. 7). An inscription found at the theatre states that Servius Sulpicius Panicles Veranianus, who lived in the Flavian period, repaired the amphitheatre, perhaps after the earthquakes of AD 76.

Salamis's theatre, to the south of the amphitheatre, was probably built in the Augustan period (Fig. 8). It once
had 50 tiers of seats and seated 15,000 people. The current theatre, reconstructed in the 1960s, only has 19 tiers of seats, and only a handful of the original white limestone-dressed seats remain. The walls of the 40 metre wide stage are visible, while the remains of the walls of the massive prosenium are overgrown. At either end of the diameter of the orchestra is a cylindrical statue base (re-used funerary cippi); they have inscriptions in honour of Marcus Aurelius Commodus, and the Caesars Constantius and Maximianus.

When the scena front was excavated, they discovered the inscription to Hadrian and several statues, including those of Apollo Musagetes (leader of the Muses) and Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy. Debris and ashes were found around the outer wall of the theatre and between the radiating walls of the auditorium's sub-structure; Dr. Karageorghis believed this was from wooden houses, built in the collapsed outer structure of the theatre by squatters, which were destroyed by Arab raids in the seventh century.

To the west of the theatre is an area known as the fish market, which is currently under excavation by a joint team from Ankara University and the University at Famagusta. On the east side of a small colonnaded square is a rectangular chamber with two counters. Inset into the counters, three on each side, are shallow white semi-circular basins, heavily restored (Fig. 9). The excavators believe these were used to display fish.

To the west of the fish market are the high-walled remains of a solidly built bathhouse. Three large rectangular chambers and part of a fourth have been excavated, and there are still pieces of marble on the floors and walls.

Running south from the square is a colonnaded road, also recently excavated (Fig. 10). Two levels of road have been exposed – the second century road is well preserved as it was protected by the fourth century street. To the west of the road are the remains of a three-chambered cistern.

Further south, to the west of the colonnaded road, are the remains of the small villa. This is thought to be the Roman house with baths excavated by Max Ohnufalsch-Richter in 1882; he claimed to have found an Orpheus mosaic. Two praefurniae and two tiny pools are visible in rooms at the north end of the building, but sadly the mosaic is not.

To the south-west of the small villa is the start of the Byzantine wall, which you can follow almost as far as the agora; to the south-east is a Byzantine cistern. The guide told me that she'd been in there once, but that it wasn't safe to enter as it is occupied by snakes. My guide book from 1970 states it has faded paintings, including an aquatic scene, and inscriptions from the sixth century.
Further south-west is the large fifth century villa, excavated by a French team in 1969. This two-storey mansion has an apsidal reception hall, an inner courtyard, living quarters and a well. There are small sections of painted plaster on the walls of one corridor, and fragments of carved stone panels around the courtyard. The building was later used as an oil mill: in the reception hall there is a big olive press and a strainer (Fig. 11).

South-west of the large villa is the Kampanopetra basilica, comprising two courtyards, a three-aisled church with rooms running down either side and apses at the end, and behind the apses, baths. The better preserved courtyard is surrounded by rooms and has a well in the middle. There are empty sarcophagi in the southern aisle of the church. In the nave's apse there is a synthonon – a semi-circular platform, stepped like a theatre, for the clergy's thrones. The well-preserved opus sectile flooring in the baths includes a marvellous circular shield pattern made from triangular pieces (Fig. 12).

It is only a short walk from the baths to the sea. The site of the harbour is nearby; visitors arriving at Byzantine Constantia from the sea may have visited the basilica and its baths for ritual purification before entering the city.

To the south of the Byzantine wall is an overgrown area known as the granite forum, due to the number of massive columns made from Egyptian granite lying around the area; their presence was recorded by Richard Pococke, who visited the site in 1738. Nearby is a deep octagonal feature of uncertain purpose; my 1970 guide book speculates that it might have been a water clock.

The Basilica of St. Epiphanius, the largest in Cyprus, is said to have been built while St. Epiphanius was bishop of Constantia (AD 386-403). The original church had seven aisles: a wide nave and three narrow aisles on either side, with apses on the nave and two inner aisles. The nave's apse has a synthonon; behind it runs a semi-circular passage, joining the two aisles that flank the nave. There are strips of mosaic floor in a structure to the north-east of the nave. Geometric mosaic is also visible on the floor of a later, small chapel, to the north-west of the basilica's nave.

The great cistern, or vouta, to the north end of the agora is an impressive structure. The soil has been cleared from half of the building, revealing three rows of square pillars, which would probably have supported a vaulted ceiling (Fig. 13).

The agora is also called the stone forum, to distinguish it from the granite forum. One column stands at the north end, near to the cistern. The agora is overgrown, but at the south-east end the remains of buildings, perhaps shops, are visible, and lower drums from columns that would have colonnaded the agora are in place.
The Temple of Zeus (Fig. 14) is probably the temple to Jupiter in Salamis providing the right of sanctuary, mentioned by Tacitus in book three of his Annals. Trees now grow on the podium, and column drums and capitals, larger than those of the agora, lie nearby. During excavation, evidence was found that the existing Roman temple was built on top of an earlier Hellenistic one, and a capital decorated with bulls’ heads and caryatids was found and transported to the British Museum.

**Other nearby sites**

A short distance to the south-west of Salamis archaeological site are the Royal Tombs (Fig. 15). These date from the eighth century BC; St. Catherine’s Tomb was re-used in the third and fourth century AD, and in the medieval period it was used as a chapel. The tombs were excavated in the 1960s, mostly by Karageorghis, who identified parallels between the finds at the tombs and the burial ritual of Patroclus in the Iliad. The early burials involved the sacrifice of horses, buried with their chariots; skeletons of some of the horses are in situ, under protective glass-paned frames. The museum on site has reconstructions of a chariot and a hearse; the original horse trappings and chariot decorations are on show at the Cyprus Archaeological Museum at Nicosia.

Further west is St. Barnabas Monastery, which houses an Icon and Archaeology Museum. Most of the items on display in the archaeological section date from the Geometric to Hellenistic period, and are well worth viewing; there are some Roman glass flasks and bottles.

Further west again is the Late Bronze Age site of Enkomi (Fig. 16). It’s an intriguing site, with buildings laid out in a neat grid pattern (suggesting that it was rebuilt after a disaster), surrounded by a town wall. Finished bronze items and unworked copper were found when the site was excavated. The site gets few visitors, and has poor toilet facilities.

The Guzelyurt Museum is on the road from Kyrenia to Soli. As at all the museums I visited in Cyprus, most of the items on display are pre-Roman. For me it was worthwhile visiting to see a second century AD marble statuette of Ephesian Artemis (Fig. 18). When I visited, finds from tombs excavated near Soli were also on display.

The Roman theatre at Soli dates from the end of the second or start of the third century AD, and was built on the site of a Greek theatre. Unfortunately, in the nineteenth century the remaining stone seats were used to construct quays in Port Said, so the theatre is heavily restored. On the slope below are remains of the third century ‘agora’, portico and nymphaeum, in need of preservation. Also on the site is a

Peter Varley’s letter in ARA News, Issue 20). Near to Kyrenia is the site of a Roman harbour (Fig. 17).

**Other north Cyprus sites**

There are several other interesting classical sites in north Cyprus. Kyrenia castle is home to the Shipwreck Museum, housing the hull and contents of a c. 300 BC ship (for more details, see
fourth to seventh century AD church, which has good condition opus sectile and mosaic floors, including mosaic images of a swan, other birds and dolphins.

The palace and temples of Vouni sit on a hill overlooking the sea; the views are spectacular. The remains of a large shrine to Athena (fifth century BC) look down on the palace (498 - 380 BC); the latter incorporates bedrooms, bathrooms, a latrine, kitchens, storage rooms and several courtyards. There are pits for amphorae in the floors of two storerooms. In one courtyard stands the stone that once held the pulley for the well; its origins are uncertain, but to me it looks like a re-used Hathor capital.

**Practicalities**

Don't be deterred from visiting north Cyprus because of the political situation. If you fly to north Cyprus you have to go via Turkey, and you will not be allowed to cross the border into south Cyprus. However, if you fly to south Cyprus you are permitted to cross north and back again. International car rental companies let you hire a car in the south and take it north. You must purchase insurance for the north at the border crossing; you can buy this insurance in advance if you hire from Avis.

Currently you can drive across the border at Bostanci, Metehan, Beyarmudu and Akyar (in Greek, Astromeritis-Zodhia, Agios Dometios, Pergamos and Strovolia). Locals cross back and forth, but the Greeks I met disapproved of tourists travelling north. I crossed north at Agios Dometios and returned south through Bostanci. I found the crossing quick and easy: it took no more than ten minutes. If you go, remember that you are crossing into another country, with a different currency, restrictions on duty free, a different mobile phone network, etc. The locals are friendly, and the sites are well worth visiting.

**Suggested reading**


**Glossary**

*agora* – a market or public meeting place in a Greek city.

*amphora* (plural, _amphorae_) – a tall pottery vessel with two handles and a pointed base (or ‘foot’).

*caldarium* (plural, _caldaria_) – a hot bath room.

*cippus* (plural, _cippi_) – a short column or post used as a memorial or boundary marker.

*frigidarium* (plural, _frigidaria_) – a cold bath room.

*nymphaeum* – a water-filled shrine, dedicated to water nymphs (female water spirits).

*opus sectile* – floor or wall decoration made of cut stone tiles.

*palaestra* – an exercise yard.

*portico* – a porch, often with supporting columns.

*praefurnium* (plural, _praefurniaë_) – a furnace, usually an arched hole through which the fire was stoked.

*sarcophagus* (plural, _sarcophagi_) – a stone (sometimes lead) coffin.

*scenae frons* – the rear structure of a theatre stage, often ornately decorated.

*stoa* (plural, _stoaë_) – a covered colonnaded walkway.

*sudatorium* (plural, _sudatoria_) – a hot, dry room for sweating, like a sauna.

*tepidarium* (plural, _tepidaria_) – a warm bath room; strangely no room in the large baths at Salamis is identified as a tepidarium.

_Nich Hogben._
**Archaeological Round-Up**

**Superb millefiori bowl discovered in London**

Excavations in Prescott Street, Aldgate, by L-P Archaeology, have uncovered an exquisite second or third century millefiori glass dish. The 2008 dig was on the site of the large eastern cemetery that sprawled for an unknown but considerable distance beyond the city walls at Aldgate. The dish was found at a depth of 2.5 meters and formed part of a cache of grave goods consisting of pottery and glass perfume flasks deposited next to a decayed wooden chest that held the ashes of the deceased. The area was intensively used and suggested perhaps a family plot with later cremations inserted above. Evidence of stone mausolea was also found.

The mosaic-like surface of the dish originally consisted of hundreds of blue and white interlocking ‘flowers’, or canes, embedded in a bright vermillicion glass matrix. The vermillicion hue was still present when the dish was first uncovered but has faded with its drying out, leaving only traces around the rim. When the dish was discovered it appeared intact but was actually held together by the soil around it. It has been painstakingly restored by the Museum of London’s conservator, Liz Goodman.

Several fragments of millefiori vessels have turned up in excavations in Britain previously, but the true rarity of this find is that it is intact. The state of preservation is said to be unprecedented in Western Europe. Millefiori dishes are generally believed to have been made in Egypt, although D.F. Grose has argued that some forms were produced in Italy. They were true luxury items in the Roman world and the owner is likely to have been extremely wealthy.

The dish is now on display in the Museum of London, Docklands.

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**Did Boudica burn Calleva? Excavation uncovers a precursor to Roman Silchester**

Excavators from the University of Reading’s Archaeology Department, led by Professor Michael Fulford, believe that they have found evidence of an Iron Age town with a planned layout beneath the later Roman town of Calleva Atrebatum, modern day Silchester. There appears to be clear evidence that the settlement was planned, unlike the pre-Roman communities found beneath other Romano-British towns and had a grid aligned northeast-southwest. The Romans seem to have imposed a completely new street grid on it at a later date, after an extensive fire devastated the settlement.

The conflagration that took place at some date between AD 50 and AD 80 may be of great significance. If the town was not devastated by an accidental fire, the possibility must be considered that it fell prey to the Boudiccan revolt of AD 60, which is something that was never suspected before. Classical sources tell of three cities destroyed by the revolt, Verulamium, Camulodunum and Londinium. To include Silchester would spread the area of devastation further south and substantially increase the seriousness of the rebellion.

BBC – 15.07.2009
Times – 29.09.2008

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**A huge religious complex suspected at Southwell, Nottinghamshire**

Excavations at the site of the former Minster school at Southwell, Nottinghamshire have uncovered a spectacular wall, said to be 20 m long by 2 m high. It is believed to be first century and forms part of a Roman religious precinct or ritual bathing complex. The wall of large dressed sandstone blocks has been tentatively identified as belonging to a temple.

Excavations in 1959 at the same site uncovered superb painted wall plaster showing a marine scene with fishes, figures and a cupid, which is now displayed within the Minster. At the time it was believed to have ornamented a villa bath suite but the new excavations now suggest that, just as at Lydney, the complex was provided with baths and guest houses for pilgrims. The remains of wooden scaffolding found at the site await carbon testing, but an extremely early date of AD 43 is being claimed for the initial development. It is suggested that a pre-Roman shrine existed here and was adopted and embellished by the newcomers. The Minster is believed to have been sited where it is because of the existence of the religious complex. Many temples in the empire were converted into churches with the onslaught of Christianity. Presumably the main temple or sacred pool now underlies the building.

It is claimed that the new excavations will re-write the history of the Romans in the area and the way in which the invasion was managed. Excavations are planned to continue in 2009.

Notts Evening Post – 09.12.2008
southwellarchaeology.org.uk

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**Bignor Roman Villa**

Members should note that the Roman villa at Bignor, West Sussex, may not be opening again in the New Year. The owners of the site are planning a new management policy, but details were not available at the time of going to press. Should any member be contemplating visiting the villa in 2010, we strongly advise checking the web pages in advance for an update on the situation.