Surviving without that helmet

INTRODUCTION
Way back in 1964, the passing of the Libraries and Museums Act suffered a seemingly minor hiccup when someone commented that while all local authorities certainly needed a national standard for their libraries, not all councils maintained or actually needed museums. When libraries were then distinguished as a Statutory Service it all seemed so reasonable and innocent in those days of boundless optimism.

As the years passed and new library buildings were erected, the first tremors of unease ran through the dusty corridor of the old museum building. When museum rags wore thin, there sometimes arrived a charitable handout from the library budget. We had assumed our libraries were legally protected but events over the last year have now shown that this is not the case. Libraries have been closing all over the UK and those which have survived so far are having their professional staff replaced by volunteers. What hope can there be for our museums?

When Roman antiquities were unearthed by local building contractors, volunteers, 'amateur archaeologists' and school-children still rallied round under the banner of 'Rescue' to help retrieve a deeply felt common heritage. Even when excavation teams from professional archaeological units arrived with their new incomprehensible terminologies and taphonomies, there had still remained a role and common cause for all. Finders still donated their discoveries with generosity and enthusiasm while others would opt for that 'long-term loan' that both parties implicitly knew could eventually become permanent when the predicted 'new museum' emerged from those municipal plans. When the pages of the Museums Journal displayed yet more glossy pictures of posed handshakes in front of stark new galleries for contemporary art, was this the point when museum credibility, along with the curating of Roman Britain, finally tipped towards terminal decline?

Well, today we face nothing short of museum apocalypse and the plight of our prehistoric, Roman and medieval collections is nothing short of dire. The catastrophe starts in the field, where a growing body of metal detectorists are searching not for that common and enlightening heritage, but for the thrill of discovery and reward. As the economic recession bites and unemployment rises, so family 'investment' in metal-detecting and darker interests in trespassing and night-hawking inevitably grow in the face of a government heritage policy that it is in obdurate denial. While battling with its own recession, our local farmer has found he can charge £10 per head per day for permission to search his land. A good rally weekend could bring 50 or more detectorists, so business can be good.

We should not take our eye off the artefacts arriving on the museum table. The contents of the 'Treasure Annual Report', produced by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport shows a frightening quantity of British antiquities being prised from the ground. Here, we are surely abandoning our children's right to see and admire a finite heritage vanishing in a final and poignant swan-song. In a public statement a government minister has proclaimed the finders 'true heroes', but why? In reality, the situation is hardly heroic. 'We now have the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), the government-funded initiative to record antiquities found by the public.' But with precarious funding and now on 'reduced time', our PAS's Finds Liaison Officers are hopelessly overloaded with cases, so it is no surprise that these objects cannot always be photographed in anything other than groups. In soil they had stayed together for two thousand years but with our local museum ranked as no more than a non-statutory encumbrance to bewildered ratepayers, the road to dispersal and eBay was inevitably set. Meanwhile, one particular local authority is so keen to show its commitment to business-plan reform that it is negotiating with its neighbouring county with a view to 'outsourcing its archives and cultural collections'. It is also drawing up a sliding scale of charges to punish anyone with the temerity to ask to see the stored objects that have been donated into the council's care. Inside local government, this solution to the cultural problem is led by the frightening application of 'What-if analyses' whereby a well-bled patient is announced healthier and cured when he has actually died on the operating table. Since this proposed 'solution' was recklessly discussed in the public council chamber, one important and much admired long-term loan has already been snatched back after twenty-five years amongst the Romano-British exhibits. More knocks at the museum door will surely follow.

At this point, nothing would be more appropriate than to look at a recent case, referred in the press as a 'saga' and 'sensation', indeed, nothing less than the discovery and fate of the remarkable Roman artefact, the Crosby Garrett helmet (cover picture and Fig. 1). Let us reflect on how the 'system' as it operates at present, has dealt with the nation's attempts to display it in one our major museum collections of Roman antiquities, the Tullie House Museum, Carlisle. What are the lessons to be learned from this?
The Crosby Garrett Helmet

Discovery
The helmet was reported as found in May 2010 by a young man from Peterlee, Co. Durham, with a metal detector. He had apparently been detecting with his father for some years on pasture fields farmed by Eric Robinson at Crosby Garrett, Cumbria. Sally Worrell, the National Finds Advisor of the PAS, first saw the fragmentary remains on June 4, when they were delivered to the Christie’s auction house in London in a plastic box. The site was visited by the local Finds Liaison Officers of the PAS with the finder, when the refilled hole was still visible. It is close to a Roman road and surrounded by earthworks. The face-mask was reported to have been found face-down, more or less complete, 25cm below the surface, but the helmet proper was in many pieces. Christie’s commissioned Darren Bradbury to restore the helmet for sale. Worrell asked that restoration await a full archaeological and scientific examination, as this would have answered important questions as to what had happened to the helmet before it was buried, but this request was not responded to. Ralph Jackson of the British Museum was able to visit Christie’s to inspect the find during restoration and Worrell visited on two further occasions. Ruth Fillyer-Travis analysed the metal (see below). News of the discovery became public in mid-September when Christie’s announced the antiquities sale for October 7. The helmet featured on the Christie’s catalogue cover and was estimated to fetch £200–300,000. Interest was immediately strong.

Description
When the helmet first came to the attention of archaeologists it proved to be a damaged but near-complete Roman cavalry sports or parade helmet of a type consisting of two major parts, both of bronze or copper alloy. These were the face-mask visor, and the helmet proper, hinged together at the centre of the brow. The most striking part is the face-mask which was found almost complete. It consists of an idealised ‘Greek’ or classical youthful male face, clean-shaven, with three rows of corkscrew curls below the helmet. The openwork eyes have irises formed of delicate perforated rings.
the upper and lower lids have incised lashes, and the eyebrows are also incised. In addition, the nostrils are pierced and the lips parted. The lower edges of the face have remains of iron rivets on either side, probably for the attachment of a leather strap for fastening around the neck (see Robinson 1975, pls. II and III, figs. 139-142). The mask has traces of tinning on its surface, showing that originally it would have had a striking silver appearance in contrast to the golden yellow bronze of the helmet proper.

The helmet proper consisted of about 70 broken and distorted fragments before it was restored by Christie's. It is exceptional because of its unusual restored shape. It is in the form of a so-called Phrygian cap. The back edge of the helmet has a raised ridge, terminating in incised button finials and decorated with pairs of vertical lines, a row of hair curls emerging from underneath. The back and sides are decorated with five rosettes. The narrow flared neck-guard is pierced in the centre and left corner. The helmet appears to have been surmounted by a solid bronze cast winged griffin, which was found detached from the other fragments. The metal of all three major parts was analysed by Ruth Fillery-Travis of the Institute of Archaeology (University College London) with a portable X-ray fluorescence spectrometer. She found the helmet and face visor to be 82% copper, 10% zinc and 8% tin. This contrasted with the griffin, which was found to be of quite a different alloy — 68% copper, 4% zinc, 18% tin and 10% lead. Perhaps this was cast from scrap metal, but its composition is almost unique for Romano-British copper alloy. The bronze winged griffin was clearly, in the opinion of Ralph Jackson, originally attached to the top of the helmet — the curvature of the griffin's base-plate together with the remains of solder on its underside, correspond exactly to the curvature and patch of solder preserved on the crest of the helmet. The griffin is seated on his haunches, with finely incised details of the fur and mane, an attachment loop on the back of the neck, his wings outstretched with incised feather detail, his right paw raised and resting on the rim of a fluted amphora, and an oval recess below with a pierced loop at the tip.

Restoration
The restoration of the helmet was carried out for Christie's by Darren Bradbury, an independent conservator and restorer. He says that his goal was to repair the helmet for display, but not to over-repair it, with traces of cracks still visible and the lightly cleaned surfaces retaining some earth. He reported that the repairs can be reversed. The badly fragmentated helmet proper was held together with cyanacrylate and reinforcing resin. One and a half missing coils of hair were restored in resin from casts of the genuine coils and a hole in the chin was filled with resin, oil-gilded with silver leaf and distressed. The hinge was found to have remains of an iron pin and there were traces of ancient wear and repair. Like the Ribchester helmet (see below), the underside of the neck rim was found to bear what appeared to be an artisan or maker's mark: in this case, four scored nicks.

Parallels
Many, familiar with the marvellously informative reliefs on Trajan's Column in Rome, will recognise this type of helmet as worn, but if we are looking for tangible remains it is worth noting that this remarkable example is one of only three discovered in Britain complete with face-masks. The face-mask corresponds to those of Robinson's Cavalry Sports Type C (Robinson 1975, 114-7) and those of Kohlert's Type V (Kohlert 1978, 23-4) which date from the end of the first to the mid-third century AD. This group of masks, some of iron, but more of bronze, is characterised by the type of face already described. The distribution is wide — from Algeria to Romania and from Syria to Britain — with the largest number in Germany and the Netherlands, above all the sensational discovery at the fort of Straubing in 1950, which included four 'classical' as well as three 'oriental' masks. Another mask of similar character to the Crosby Garrett example has almost identical eyes. This is probably from Eastern Europe and is to be found in the collection of the Moungins Museum of Classical Art, Provence, France (Merrony 2010, fig. 3).

One mask from Aintab in Syria is in the British Museum collection. The British Museum also has a Type E mask from Nola, Italy, and the celebrated Type B helmet from the fort at Ribchester, Lancs. (Fig. 2). The fine iron Type C example from the fort at Newstead in Scotland, one of three sports helmets from the fort that can be seen on display in the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh (Curle 1911, 164-173), is unusual for preserving both parts of the helmet. The head piece or helmet proper of all forms of cavalry sports helmet survives intact far less frequently than the mask. This is why the current restoration of the Crosby Garrett helmet in the form of a Phrygian cap is so significant.

Robinson has identified a fragmentary helmet of Phrygian style, discovered at Ostrov in Romania (AD 150-200). From the same region, and dated to the second or third century AD, is another splendid helmet of Phrygian cap shape but combined with being in the form of the neck and head of an eagle. It has cheek-pieces but no face mask and is also in the Moungins Museum (Merrony 2010, fig. 4).

If we are looking for parallels of the winged griffin on the Crosby Garrett helmet, further examples in military contexts include those from the forts of Strageath, Scotland (Frere and Wilkes 1989, 149, fig. 74, no. 50) and Trawsoed, Wales (Davies 1987). More significantly we can look to the celebrated Ribchester helmet (Fig. 2). This was found as part of a hoard of military equipment, including horse eye-guards and phalerae, discovered in 1796 (Jackson and Craddock 1995, 75).
Although the antiquary Charles Townley secured the hoard, now in the British Museum, he failed to obtain "a sphinx of bronze, which, from the remains of solder on the lower side, and also from its curvature, appeared to have been attached to some convex surface, probably the top of the helmet." The 'sphinx' was subsequently lost, but it is conceivable that a griffin was confused for a sphinx. At all events, although some Roman cavalry sports helmets are surmounted by repoussé eagles, as, for example, that from Tell Oum Houran, Syria (Garbsch 1978, pl.16, 2-4), Ralph Jackson is not aware of any other surviving example that retains a figure of the Crosby Garrett type.

The survival of the Phrygian cap head-piece and the griffin raises interesting questions. The griffin was the companion of Nemesis, goddess of vengeance and fate, an appropriate association for an elite cavalryman, but more often for gladiators in the arena. Could the face mask and helmet represent anyone? Suggestions have ranged widely and include the gods Attis, Mithras and Jupiter Dolichenus, and the hero Perseus. Alternatively the cap may have been intended to represent a general eastern Mediterranean appearance.

Simon James has suggested a Trojan identity for a sports enactment of the Greek-Trojan war.

Cavalrymen

This idea brings us to the question of how these helmets were actually used. They were certainly not for combative use, but worn for hippika gymasia – cavalry sports events. The Crosby Garrett helmet with its two-coloured metal surfaces, would have been an impressive sight in itself. In addition, colourful streamers may have been attached to the rings along the back ridge and on the griffin crest. Arrian of Nicomedia, a provincial governor under Hadrian and author of a history of Alexander the Great, provides us with the only surviving contemporary source of information on cavalry sports events. He describes, in an appendix to his Ars Tactica (Technē Taktike), how the auxiliary cavalrymen were divided into two teams that took turns to attack and defend. He suggests that the wearing of these helmets was a mark of rank or excellence in horsemanship. Participants would also carry a light, elaborately painted shield, and wear an embroidered tunic, thigh-guards and greaves. Both horse and rider would have been resplendent in richly decorated suits of equipment. These events would have accompanied religious festivals celebrated by the army, or put on for the benefit of military commanders and emperors. They would only have involved elite cavalry units, undertaking complex manoeuvres on horseback and mock battles. Unlike their combat gear, with which they were issued and required to return at the end of their period of service, cavalry sports equipment is likely to have been commissioned and purchased by individual soldiers. Certainly it appears to have been among their personal possessions, as the helmets, especially the masks, are found not just in and around forts, but often in graves and other non-military contexts (Garbsch 1978, 61-78).

Sale

When Christie’s announced the sale of the Crosby Garrett helmet and published their catalogue, there was an expectation that such an object should be legally classed as ‘treasure trove’ and protected from the open market. However, no single find of non-precious metal, and only prehistoric groups of such finds, are so defined under the current Treasure Act. The way was open for the anonymous finder and the landowner to sell the helmet as they pleased. The press and particularly the internet were rife with discussion, speculation and conspiracy theories. Paul Barford, an independent archaeologist based in Poland, set up an internet blog, putting forward the suggestion that the helmet might have a provenance in Eastern Europe rather than Cumbria. However, the work of the PAS confirmed its precise Cumbrian provenance, and Ralph Jackson of the British Museum reported that “the form of the helmet, its condition, patina, corrosion products and soil accretions appeared entirely consistent with its former use, demise, burial and re-discovery in Cumbria and I see no reason to doubt its given provenance” (Jackson 2010).

This made it acceptable for museums to bid for it and Christie’s quoted the PAS reference for the find. The main collection of Roman antiquities in the region is, of course, the Tullie House Museum and Art Gallery, Carlisle, and this institution immediately launched an appeal, arguing that the helmet should remain in Cumbria and would make the perfect centrepiece to a new £1.5m Roman Frontier Gallery to be opened at the museum in 2011. Local representatives, including MP Rory Stewart, joined the campaign urging an enthusiastic public to contribute to the museum’s fund. The museum had in fact known about the helmet since June but Christie’s had requested an embargo. Preparations had begun behind the scenes and so in the three and a half weeks before the sale, £1.92m had been raised – astonishing in the midst of a recession and severe government spending cuts. The appeal’s success owed much to the pioneering use of social media, such as Facebook, which took the campaign worldwide. Certainly, Christie’s photos of the restored helmet and its face had a major effect. The National Heritage Memorial Fund gave £1m. The Headley Trust and Monument Trust (Sainsbury family charities) offered £300,000. The J. Paul Getty Jr Charitable Trust gave £75,000.

Meanwhile, James Ede, a valuer for the Treasure Valuation Committee, and Sally Worrell (PAS) offered to facilitate a private treaty sale for the Tullie House Museum; Lords Renfrew, Howarth and Redesdale, representing the All Party Parliamentary Archaeology Group, wrote to Christie’s urging such a private sale. All approaches to the finder and landowner failed. On the day of the auction, the higher estimate was passed within seconds and the helmet was sold to an anonymous phone bidder (he is a UK resident and fine art collector) for a full bill of £2,330,468.75, a hammer price of up to ten times the estimate.

As Georgianna Aitken, Head of Antiquities at Christie’s told Minerva, “Antiquities are now starting to make the prices they deserve. In the economic downturn, people who may have lost faith in markets and financial products and are looking to diversify: investing in art is a tangible way of doing that. Antiquities are a hugely rewarding and enjoyable investment and as exceptional objects become scarcer, I see the upward trend continuing.” (Merrony 2010).
Obviously the outcome exposes a real loophole in the treasure law. Lords Renfrew, Howarth and Redesdale wrote to The Times noting that a "review of the Treasure Act was due in 2007 and is now clearly overdue." An object of this archaeological importance, they said, "should go to a public museum." This view was shared by the Council for British Archaeology, the National Council for Metal Detecting, Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Communications and the Creative Industries, and numerous contributors to the press and internet. The dominant reaction in the UK of dismay that the helmet had not been declared 'treasure trove,' would, perhaps, have occurred a few years ago. Clearly the law needs to be changed, so that the definition of treasure includes non-precious metal objects found in association, and of the Roman period as well as prehistoric artefacts. As British Archaeology put it, "it would be absurd to think that even a group of seven bronze helmets would not legally be treasure" (Worrell et al. 2011). To further strengthen the Act could mean a radical change in the proven system of trust developed by the PAS in the UK. It is a system that has provided us with important information about the helmet; we have a provenance, archaeologists have been able to examine and record it and Christie's has allowed public access to the restoration records. On the other hand, archaeological conservation and detailed scientific study would have revealed more about the object and its loss to the public in Cumbria and beyond is strong.

Discussions have continued. They were instigated in November 2010 when the archaeologist Lord (Colin) Renfrew asked in Parliament whether the helmet's sale might encourage the government to review the Treasure Act. "It is strange" he said, "that a national treasure can be sold at public auction by an anonymous vendor to an anonymous buyer...will the government consider reviewing the law on antiquities at sale by auction in favour of some transparency?" Baroness Rawlings replied that such transparency without the buyers' and sellers' consent would be a "breach of the principles of confidentiality and data protection." A spirited discussion followed.

On a brighter note, the Tutii House Museum and the PAS are discussing with the farmer the options for geophysical survey and excavation at the find site. This could produce vital information about the context and make far more sense of the find. These discussions continue. The new Roman Frontier Gallery: Stories Beyond Hadrian's Wall, has now opened with additional loan artefacts from the British Museum. Pride of place is the exhibition of a fine late first-century Roman cavalry sports helmet with silver and gilt decoration. This is on loan from the Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen, in the Netherlands. The Tutii House Museum intend this to be the first of many prestigious loans.

CONCLUSIONS
So yes, by all means, we must lament the sale and loss of the Tatil House Museum's first Roman cavalry sports helmet but let us now focus upon the true nature and magnitude of our national disaster. Our fragile and buried heritage is being raked out every day for a quick sale, the antiquated Treasure Act is not working, and our Heritage Lottery Fund has hopefully neglected the modest funding that our county and provincial museums desperately require to save those metal-detected antiquities that add colour, identity and wonder to our local sense of community and place. Worse still, the vital funds provided by the Museums, Galleries and Archives Council and administered to provincial museums through the V & A Purchase Grant Scheme, has been drastically cut at the very time when the operation of metal-detectors is reaching a semi-commercial level.

Worse still, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport is casting our Museum, Galleries and Archives funds into the hands of those old enemies in the Arts Council where an institutional contempt for what is dismissed as 'dead art' has always been its raison d'être. As the emperor changes his clothes, a truly great city museum like Bristol has already closed and removed the permanent display of its exceptionally fine regional archaeology collections. At Leicester the Jewry Wall Roman Museum teeters, Truro Museum has issued a public questionnaire that shows that it is clearly shaking in its shoes, and Alton and Malton hang in the balance.

When King Henry VIII's Act of Supremacy was circulated in 1536, the nation's great cultural archives and its keepers were all doomed to auction, bonfire or the vagrant's road. Meanwhile, the road to promotion lay in new Tudor management-speak for unquestioning obedience to a greedy and pitiless 'new order'. With Curators out, and Collections Managers in, ask not for whom the bell tolls.

REFERENCES

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DISCOVERING A NEW ROMAN VILLA AND MOSAIC AT COBERLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, WITH TIME TEAM

by Anthony Beeson

Anthony Beeson describes his experience appearing and advising on Channel 4 TV’s Time Team programme, first broadcast in 2008, and assesses the importance of a ‘new’ Roman villa and mosaic. A shortened adaptation of this article has preceded its publication here and appears in Mosaic (35, 2008).

In September 2007 I was contacted by Time Team and asked if I would like to take part as a mosaic specialist in a programme based at Coberley near Cheltenham in the Gloucestershire Cotswolds. There the field named Whitelands was believed to be the site of a Romano-British settlement (RCHME 1976, 34) and work undertaken by fieldwalkers Don Sherratt and Dave Hutton resulted in the discovery of part of a mosaic in 2003. Gloucestershire County Council Archaeological Service then extended the sondage and uncovered a portion of a panelled mosaic which was subsequently photographed and drawn by David Neal. A geophysical survey suggested that the room was at the westernmost point of the southern wing of a great courtyard villa facing to the east. The Time Team excavation (Wessex Archaeology 2008) later showed that one, if not both, of these wings ended to the east in huge apses. The fieldwalkers told me that more tesserae had also been found near to what appears to be an entrance building facing the main building higher up the hill to the east. The mosaic (Fig. 1) consisted of a red grid surrounding square decorated panels. The grid was laid on a grey background and bearing a line of poised grey squares. Around the border of the mosaic the outer triangles of this grid were found to be white instead of red and were also bordered by an outer plain band of this colour. Within the grid, three panels of what turned out to be the western edge of the mosaic, were first uncovered. The central square panel bore a small damaged but identifiable cantharus of slightly mediocre appearance (Fig. 2). Only the top was preserved but enough remained to show that it had a D-shaped mouth, double looped handles possibly ending in snakes’ heads, and had outlines in red as if to represent a gold or bronze original. The remains of what may have been a square panel of buff tesserae on the neck of the vessel survived and a tapering of red representing gadrooning on the belly of the vessel remained on the right hand side. The cantharus was bordered by guilloche strips inside bands of black poised triangles on white. The square panels either side of the cantharus panel held stylised lotus flowers with their petals in different stages of unfurling within circular bands of grey tessellation or guilloche.

The first day of the Time Team excavation, led by Neil Holbrook of Cotswold Archaeology saw the site of the previous excavation located and the trench reopened. Work concentrated on finding the width of the floor in order to determine the likely size of the complete scheme and the orientation of the room. It was found that the borders to the scheme were of red tesserae and were small in size, in fact identical to those used in the body of the pavement. In the Cotswolds this is generally an
indication of a second to third-century pavement as later in the Roman period the border tesserae are larger and more often of natural stone rather than terracotta. An interesting fact was that the border tesserae had been made of recycled flue tiles and had not been ground down to a smooth finish, so that occasionally they still bore the marks of the combing by which wall plaster would adhere to them. Blackened tesserae had been included in the plain borders probably for the same reason that modern mosaics often introduce odd colours into large plain areas of tessellation, in order to lighten and enliven the surface. Aesthetics were possibly also the reason for the existence of the combed tesserae. The mosaic was scarred in several places by plough-like grooves that had been tragically inflicted on the floor within the last decade by one of the farm workers who confessed to me that he had been trying out a new piece of machinery before the existence of the mosaic was known.

That day it became obvious from the greater width of the western border that the room was orientated roughly east-west and that one could thus expect the mosaic pattern to be a six, nine or twelve panel scheme or indeed even larger. On the southern side, the outside wall had been robbed away, but the size of the robber trench indicated that it had been of very substantial proportions and probably supported an upper storey. Opposite to this, a robbed threshold in the north-west corner showed where a doorway from the adjoining room had been. Beyond this was a tantalising border of small grey tesserae. Alas, no amount of suggestion by the author as to the benefits to mosaics studies in the Cotswolds that a diagonal trench across the room would afford, actually resulted in one; so the function of the apartment, whether corridor or reception room, and the design of the pavement, remains a tantalising mystery.

The second day’s work further enlarged the original excavation and resulted in the discovery of square panels holding a lovely open lotus flower on the northern side and a Gordian or Solomon’s knot to the south. Between the two was a panel of which only the square frame and round grey inner circle remained. The choice of this inner frame reminiscent of the edge of a clipeus or shield, suggested to me that it may once have held figured work, possibly a bust. I was asked ‘on camera’ to describe what might have featured in this panel and I suggested that Bacchus would have been a good choice, especially if the panel directly to the north of it had held another cantharus. To my delight this was indeed found to be the case when the trench was enlarged on the third day. This time the panel holding the cantharus was in perfect condition (Fig. 3), and it soon became obvious that this vessel was the work of a master mosaicist and was quite different from the first one found. This time the panel holding the image was larger and the framing much simplified and reduced to bands of red and grey tesserae. On the wide border, broken white lines rather resembling false masonry enlivened the surface. The cantharus panel itself is masterly and may possibly have been prefabricated in the workshop and brought to the site for fitting. This time the narrow necked vessel is depicted as if made in silver with jewelled or gold additions to the scrolls of the two handles. Although quite simple in design it must surely rank amongst the premier Romano-British depictions of a cantharus for its aesthetic appeal. The mosaicist has successfully used bands of colour in the bellied body of the vessel and the baluster foot to depict the reflection of the coloured bands surrounding the mosaic cantharus and thereby giving it a far more realistic appearance than is generally achieved.

Neither cantharus on this pavement is of the normal type associated with fourth-century mosaics, which is another suggestion that the mosaic dates from an earlier period.

Beyond the cantharus the eastern tessellated border of the mosaic was discovered proving that the floor was originally a nine-panel scheme. The room turned out to be c. 5.5 m square. A putative
later west range suggested by ground surveys as adjoining it’s western wall turned out to be spurious and so one might imagine this reception room as having fine views down the hill to the River Churn and across the beautiful valley to the south and west. It seems likely that the place of honour in the room was in front of the fine cantharus looking due west. There was no indication that a central door had existed in the wall directly beyond it to the east.

What had soon become obvious on the final day was that the room must have undergone a transformation into a place of work at some later stage as the tesserae were quite worn away or had been shovelled off the opus signinum north of the cantharus panel. This was quite different from the damage inflicted on the area of the central panel, which I believe may have been iconoclastic. Here the area had been dug out and filled with stones in order to erase the image but form a working surface.

Somewhat maddeningly for the mosaic lover were the constraints of the televised three-day excavation format and the wish to discover what the geophysical survey suggested was a later wing. This resulted in the south-east corner of the mosaic room being left unexcavated. It seems likely however that this will survive in good condition and one might expect another roundel with a lotus flower to occupy the missing square.

The design of the mosaic is indeed interesting and its nearest parallel in Britain can be found in the first-century black-and-white mosaic from the room south of the so-called audience chamber in the west wing at Fishbourne Palace, excavated in 1987 (Fig. 4), (Cunliffe, Down and Rudkin, 1996, 82-4, Neal and Cosh, 2009, 536, fig. 501, Mosaic 403.18). That mosaic again has the banded grid enlivened by poised squares but the panels are geometric and not filled with circular or floral motifs. A variant on the grid design but further removed occurs in a large house (mosaic 9 in building 8, insula IV) at Verulamium, which has been dated to the second or early third century (Wheeler and Wheeler, 1936, pl. XLIII, Carr, 2007, figs. 6 and 7, Neal and Cosh, 2009, 328-331, fig. 303, Mosaic 348.23D) (Fig. 7). The close first-century Fishbourne parallel combined with the small size of the red border tesserae and the opus signinum bedding suggest an early date, perhaps in the late second or early third century, for Coberley also, which is unusual as most mosaics of this era in the region are to be found in townhouses. The site was occupied from the first century and the discovery of tile kilns, strange rectangular earthworks and part
of a moulded terracotta acroterion suggest it was unusually important. There is also reason to believe that the mosaics from the nearby complex at Great Witcombe are also earlier than many found on rural sites in Gloucestershire. As we know that at least one other adjoining room in this new villa had a good quality mosaic it seems possible that Coberley may in future provide a corpus of early designs.

The interpretation of the complex suggested that in the fourth century a terrace or outer corridor had been constructed along the rear of the villa to enjoy the view and a new wing had extended the northern one of the earlier villa. Perhaps at this time or later, the excavated room fell from favour and gradually was used for agricultural or industrial purposes. I identified fragments of painted wall plaster, found in the search for the fourth-century wing, as coming from a black candelabrum motif and panelled scheme as had once survived in room 2 at nearby Great Witcombe. This was pure serendipity as I had previously advised Victor Ambrose, Time Team’s artist, that this would be a suitable scheme for him to use for his reconstruction painting of the room! (Fig. 5). It was great fun to assist with the suggestions for the computer reconstructions of the appearance of the main building (Figs. 6 and 7) and of the complete mosaic floor (Fig. 8) used in the programme. The final interpretive reconstruction of the mosaic used the contemporary Bacchic figure from the Dyer Street mosaic at Cirencester for the missing central roundel and repeated some of the lotus panels for the lost or unknown design in the damaged or unexcavated areas (Fig. 8).

REFERENCES


Wessex Archaeology, with the support of Wiltshire County Council Archaeology Service, undertook two further seasons of a continuing archaeological excavation and outreach programme to provide more information about the recently discovered Roman bath-house at Truckle Hill, North Wraxall, Wiltshire. In 2009 further support came from the Association for Roman Archaeology, together with the Chippenham Civic Society and English Heritage. The results of the first season’s work were outlined in the last issue of ARA (Andrews 2009a) and have subsequently been published in the county archaeological journal: Wilthshire Studies, The Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Magazine (Andrews 2009b).

Previous work at and in the vicinity of the Truckle Hill Roman bath-house, culminating in the excavation of 2007, uncovered a particularly well-preserved structure, arguably one of the best surviving rural detached bath-houses in the country, and also one of the largest. Subsequent conservation work was followed by targeted excavations in 2008 which revealed that the cold bath (cold bath 1) within the frigidarium to be unusually deep – a plunge pool rather than a bath, with an associated flight of steps.

The most significant and unexpected discovery in 2008 was an earlier building beneath the bath-house. The high status of the building was indicated by the exceptional quality of some of the painted wall-plaster (Figs. 1 and 2), the remains of a mosaic floor, a few fragments of window glass and a probable column base. A splayed and plastered window opening was also found in its south wall (Fig. 3). Too little of this building was exposed in 2008 to ascertain its extent, layout and function, though a late first or early second-century date can now be provisionally suggested for its construction.

Excavation in 2009 revealed more of this early (period 1) building’s extent and layout, including part of a second window opening, but its function remains uncertain. A bath-house now appears very unlikely, as does a detached summer dining room associated with the villa. Subsidence at the east end remains the most likely cause of...
A further important realisation in 2009 was that what has been previously assumed to be the 'front' (east side, facing down-slope towards the stream) of the period 3 bath-house was in fact the 'back' and the 'back' (west side, facing up-slope where the villa was located) was the 'front'. This has important implications as it now almost certainly links the use of the bath-house to the villa, and has also led to a reconsideration of the layout and function of the rooms within the bath-house. The entrance is now seen to have been on the west side, with the so-called 'entrance corridor' to the east a later development (related to the operation of the period 4 crop-dryer), and what previously was understood to be the caldarium (Andrews 2009a and 2009b) can now be interpreted as the tepidarium, and vice versa. This reversal of use solves the problem of the 'missing' furnace, for the annexe to the smaller room, now the caldarium, would have been the praefurnium, housing the furnace, the flue arch having been destroyed and the doorway to the exterior disturbed, probably during antiquarian investigations in more recent times.

Finally, the 2009 excavations clarified further the layout and date of the period 4 crop-dryer. These revealed a typical T-shaped arrangement of Roman date, but with the stoke-hole and flue to the west, not east as previously thought. Pottery from the crop-dryer confirms a likely fourth-century date, and a post-Roman use can now be ruled-out.

The sequence of deposits investigated in 2008 on the promontory to the north of the bath-house, has been interpreted as deriving from lime-mortar preparation, and, if so, represents a rare discovery of what must have been a commonplace feature on many villa and other sites that had substantial stone structures. Although a Roman date has yet to be confirmed for these deposits, it does seem most likely.

In 2010 proposals are to reveal the north-west corner of the newly-discovered period 2 building and clarify several details concerning the internal layout. In 2011 it is hoped to investigate selected features revealed by geophysical survey on the top of Truckle Hill, overlooking the bath-house, to provide more information about the setting of the villa as well as possibly revealing something of the pre-existing Iron Age landscape (Sabin and Donaldson 2009). In 2012, a post-exavcation programme is proposed which will bring together the results of the 2010-11 investigations, integrate them with the results of the 2007-9 investigations, re-examine the evidence from the nineteenth-century excavations of the Truckle Hill (North Wraxall) villa, which lies on its elevated site overlooking the bath-house, and place the whole in its context of late Iron Age and Romano-British settlement in this part of the Wiltshire Cotswolds.

As in 2007 the success of the project in 2008 and 2009 has owed much to the support of the landowner and especially, the large number of highly motivated and very competent volunteer excavators it has attracted.

Editorial Note: In 2009 the project was supported by a grant from the Association for Roman Archaeology. A more detailed interim report on progress and the most important discoveries of 2008 -9 will appear in the next issue of ARA.

REFERENCES


The discovery of the ‘Staffordshire Moorlands’ or Ilam Pan was reported in the Editorial of issue 17 of ARA (2006) where it is described, illustrated, and its remarkable inscription recording the names of the Roman forts at the western end of Hadrian’s Wall, is discussed. Here Martin Henig puts forward a fascinating new interpretation of this remarkable object. He re-examines its relationship with Hadrian’s Wall and puts forward his own suggestion for the original purpose of the Wall itself.

One of the most exciting finds of 2003 was a second or early third-century enamelled bronze pan, actually a trulla lacking its handle (Fig. 1). Although discovered near Ilam in Staffordshire it bears around the rim the name of forts at the western end of Hadrian’s Wall, like the Rudge Cup (Fig. 2) and Amiens Patera, though unlike them the body of the vessel is ornamented with a curvilinear design in the manner of Celtic art rather than with a stylized rendering of the Wall. The occurrence of names of forts situated only at the west end of the Wall, and not at the east (Fig. 3), suggests that region was more accessible to visitors and further points to these vessels being made in Carlisle (Luguvallum) which seems in any case to have been a thriving town, the most northerly in the Empire, and a centre of manufacture serving both the communities along the Wall as well as travellers from the south. That visitors did, indeed, make the long journey to the frontier region from the south is confirmed by the three vessels cited as well as by an example of a similar trulla from the sacred spring at Bath which bears a stylized representation of the Wall although it lacks any legend (apart from a later inscription dedicating it to Sulis). It is very likely that other enamelled vessels like the fragment from Beadlam in Yorkshire derive from the same source of manufacture, Carlisle, although this cannot be proved. The Ilam trulla bears the name of ‘Draco’ (or possibly ‘Aelius Draco’ if the name Aelius does not merely qualify the word ‘Vallum’) but it is uncertain whether this was the name of the manufacturer or the owner. If the latter, it would show that such objects were personalized, which one might have suspected from the choice purchasers would seem to have had between Roman style and insular art. The diagrammatic representation of the Wall is after all something one finds in many Roman depictions of towns and other fortifications, illustrated here by two Flavian examples, a painting from Pompeii and a mosaic from Fishbourne (Figs. 4 and 5) although this way of depicting walls continues into Late Antiquity and well beyond, for instance in the representation of Carthage in the early fifth century Vatican Virgil.

The general assumption is that the vessels under discussion were manufactured as souvenirs but two factors argue strongly against this: in the first places trullas, more often than not, have a religious context as they were designed as libation vessels and, secondly, ancient travel was seldom, if ever, conducted simply for its own sake as it is today, and the motive more often than not was pilgrimage. Pausanias’ famous guidebook to Greece was essentially written as a guide to the foremost ancient temples and sanctuaries of Classical Greece which a learned and pious Antoinian pilgrim would want to visit. In western Asia Minor a very famous example of a pilgrimage centre was the great Temple of Artemis at Ephesus where Demetrius the silversmith who was engaged in making little shrines containing images of the goddess which people could buy, whether to dedicate in the temple or take away with them, stirred up a riot against St. Paul whose new faith, he believed, would damage the trade in votives. Perhaps Demetrius’ shrines were rather like the little lead shrines containing images of deities, found for example at Dorchester, Dorset (Minerva) or Wroxeter (Venus). 

Fig. 1. Bronze trulla with champlévé enamel inlay in various colours, with inscription recording the names of forts at western end of Hadrian’s Wall. Rim diam. 89.5 mm. Found in 2003 at Ilam, Staffordshire.

Photo: © The British Museum.

Fig. 2. Bronze trulla with traces of the original enamel inlay in various colours, decorated with a schematic representation of a crenellated wall and with an inscription recording the names of forts at the western end of Hadrian’s Wall. Rim diam. 90 mm. Found in 1725 in a well at the Roman villa at Rudge near Ramsbury, Wiltshire. In the possession of HG The Duke of Northumberland, Alnwick Castle.

Photo: © Society of Antiquaries of Newcastle upon Tyne.
but other types of votive are possible including silver vessels (for example one from Capheaton, Northumberland seems to depict on its handle in relief Sulis Minerva presiding over her sanctuary at Bath and another in the Backworth Treasure in the same county is actually dedicated on its handle to the Matres).\textsuperscript{11}

Why the Wall? This brings to the fore not merely the nature of the group of vessels under discussion, but the actual purpose of Hadrian’s frontier itself. For military archaeologists it has often been seen in defensive terms, while for some economic historians it served with the Vallum as a Customs barrier. Both suggestions seem to me to betray rather a modern outlook on the monument, and I have always regarded it as far more of a symbolic barrier, the product of Hadrian’s own intellectual ideas, albeit firmly based on Roman and, indeed, Greek traditions.\textsuperscript{12} Two clues are provided, first by the fragmentary inscription from Jarrow and then by one of the two small votive inscriptions on bronze plaques from York. The Hadriani inscription declares that Hadrian built the Wall ‘after the necessity of keeping the empire within limits had been laid down to him by divine precept’;\textsuperscript{13} the York plaques which have often been taken to be dedicated in Greek by the same grammarian Demetrius of Tarsus who accompanied Agricola to Britain, but may be later in date, are inscribed first ‘to the deities of the governor’s residence’ and the second ‘to Ocean and Tethys’.\textsuperscript{14} The latter echoes Alexander the Great’s dedication at the mouth of the River Indus in 325 BC, the limit of his expedition.\textsuperscript{15} Beyond the frontiers of the Roman Empire, symbolized in Britain by Hadrian’s massive mural frontier lay the stream of Ocean, which surrounded the oikoumene (the inhabited world). Primaevau chaos still held sway here and protection against its dark forces could only be provided by the gods who were also very near to those who sought their aid in such liminal places. Even though in actual fact there was a Roman presence in Scotland both in the Flavian period and the Antonine period, the symbolism of Hadrian’s Wall as the fines, the very frontier of civilization was palpable, and it is most likely that in Carlisle itself, if very near, there was a temple where pilgrims could invoke the gods who protected the Empire, together with the necessary inns which would have been required to provide pilgrims with accommodation. Whether or not the inscription dedicated to Mars and Victory associated with a ‘triclinium’ seen by William of Malmesbury in the twelfth century marked the site of such a sanctuary or whether there was another, is not certain.\textsuperscript{16} Assuredly Jupiter, the premier god of Rome, would have been a candidate for a major sanctuary here, for no other reason than that it was he who had hurled down the giants and made the world safe for mankind and eventually for the Empire of Rome?

Although the Wall may have been regarded as the limits of Empire, there was at least one important pilgrimage site north of it at Bewcastle. Interestingly this sanctuary, evidently dedicated to the
native god Cocidius as its name (Fanum Cocidii) implies, also served as an outpost fort so access to it may have been restricted and, in any case, it does not appear amongst the list of Wall forts on any of the enamelled vessels. The site at Bewcastle had a life which continued well beyond the formal end of Roman Britain and was spectacularly Christianised in the eighth century with the erection of the famous Bewcastle Cross.

Virtually clinching evidence for this hypothesis of a major pilgrimage site or sites on the Wall is provided by another important sanctuary at the western 'end of the world', the temple dedicated to Hercules (the Punic Melqart) outside Cadiz, beyond the 'Pillars of Hercules', visited by, amongst others, Hannibal and Julius Caesar but continuing to attract pilgrims such as Avienus until at least the fifth century AD.

The trulla bought by the pilgrim was thus no mere trifle like the unwanted knick-knacks brought back by tourists to the Taj Mahal or the Great Wall of China but an object suitable for use in cult far away, a perpetual reminder to the owner of his or her pilgrimage and proof that the Roman Empire and its frontiers were established as much by faith and piety as they were by the Imperial army.

**FOOTNOTES**


2. RIB II, fasc. 2 Nos. 2415.53 for references.


4. RIB II, fasc. 2 No. 2415.60 (Bath); 2415.54 (Bedlam).

5. e.g. the late third style (Vespasianic) 'Fall of Icarus' painting from the House of the Priest. Amandus at Pompeii. J. E. Nyenhuis, 'Daidalos et Ikarois' in Lexicon Iconographiae Mythologiae Classice III (Zurich and Munich 1986), 313-321 at p. 318 No. 38, pl. 240 and R. Ling, Roman Painting (Cambridge 1991), 116 ill. 116 where the city is probably Knossos; D. S. Neal and S. Cosh, Roman Mosaics of Britain. III South-East Britain (Society of Antiquaries of London 2000), 538-40 No. 403.24 ill. 506.


8. An excellent translation by Peter Levi was published in two volumes as Pausanias, Guide to Greece (Penguin Classics, Harmondsworth 1971).


11. M. Henig, Religion in Roman Britain (London 1984), 46 ill. 8 and 50 ill. 11.


13. RIB I No. 1051.

14. RIB I Nos. 662 and especially 663.

15. Diodorus xvii, 104.


18. Ibid. Henig, pp. 18-23.

Corbridge is well known as the site of a fort given up in the second half of the second century and overlain by a town which lay 4 km behind Hadrian’s Wall. In the centre of this town, enclosures or compounds for legionary detachments, and buildings to do with military supply, overlay the area of the old fort. Occupation of the town continued until the end of the Roman period.

My reason for reconsidering Corbridge is a large group of architectural and sculptural fragments, found in excavations before the First World War. These were mostly found packed into a fourth-century resurfacing of the main road running through the centre of the Roman town. The stones excited the interest of one of the directors of the pre-1914 excavations, W. H. Knowles, who was a professional architect. His reports illustrate and describe the architectural fragments with greater care than was usual for the time. Since then the stones have been neglected and few have considered their significance, with the notable exception of the late T. F. C. Blagg who gave a brief treatment in his thesis (published by BAR in 2002) on Roman architectural ornament in Britain. Twelve years ago English Heritage commissioned Tyne and Wear Museums to carry out a preliminary study of these stones. Now funding has been obtained through the North East Regional Museums Hub to continue and publish this study. The full study will appear in the Arbeia Journal during 2010.

The stones include a large number of decorated cornice fragments (Figs. 1 and 2). These fall into a number of groups representing different buildings. It can be demonstrated that both horizontal and raking cornices are represented. The stones therefore come from a group of classical buildings with pediments, doubtless temples. A number of column shafts, bases and foliate capitals in the collection are of the right order of size to be associated with these buildings. The fragments can be used to reconstruct one of the temple facades in some detail (Figs. 3, 4 and 6). Long known at Corbridge is a series of stones carrying a repeated decorative motif shaped like the letter S (Fig. 2). The motif is known elsewhere in the empire, most commonly used on the raking cornice of tombstone pediments. The Corbridge examples are too large for such a purpose. They have usually been thought to have formed a decorative screen, or frieze, but between the S shapes are upright pointed finials, and it is clear that these stones formed a bold decorative crest, certainly on the raking cornice of a full-sized pediment. This is confirmed by the occurrence of an exact parallel of identical scale, complete with acroteria, from the pediment of a classical temple outside the fortress at Vindonissa (Germania Superior), and therefore probably of later first or of very early second-century date. This largest of the Corbridge buildings would have had a frontage up to 7 m in width; a surviving block from the tympanum, also carrying the S motif (Fig. 2, 206B), establishes the remarkably steep angle of the raking cornice of this example (paralleled however at the Temple of Sulis Minerva at Bath). Around half a dozen individual classical temples can be identified from the cornice groups at Corbridge.

When are these temples likely to have been constructed, and where at Corbridge would they have been? Those familiar with the site will think immediately of Ian Richmond’s classic paper of 1943, ‘Roman legionaries at Corbridge, their supply-base, temples and religious cults’. 
is not convincing. Not only is Richmond’s account of their remains sketchy, but their siting is hardly plausible: a strange back-to-back arrangement that would have blocked the frontages of two of the temples lying to the south. Richmond recorded clay and cobble platforms, revetted by rough blocks at temple sites I and II and interpreted them as *podia*. But in fact this form of construction can be found in quite ordinary buildings elsewhere on the northern frontier. In *vicus* 2 at *Vindolanda*, ordinary strip buildings, certainly of third-century date, were raised on identical foundations of massive split-faced sandstones. The *cella* wall which Richmond claimed to have found in temple I is also reminiscent of double-front walling seen in the *Vindolanda* examples, doubtless indicating different phases of construction. Richmond’s reconstruction of a quite unclassical pentastyle colonnade was quite unconvincing: the features he described as ‘seatings for columns’ have the appearance of sockets for timber work. He described temple I as a clearly defined platform with its sides laid out to a ratio of 4 : 3, in contrast to the usual elongated appearance of strip-houses. But buildings of such proportions may also be found in the *vicus* at *Vindolanda*. His evidence for the other supposed temples at Corbridge was even more doubtful and has been questioned in the past.

In this paper he used the many fragments of religious sculpture found with the architectural fragments to reconstruct the cults, official and unofficial, to which legionaries, known to have been based at Corbridge in the third century, were devoted. He also identified a number of buildings in the centre of the site as the temples that housed these cults (Richmond 1943). Richmond asserted the existence of seven temples lying in enclaves respected by the legionary compound walls (Fig. 5). All these he identified as temples in the classical tradition. The fact that the architectural fragments demonstrate the existence of a number of classical temples appears at first sight to offer a remarkable corroboration of Richmond’s thesis.

Unfortunately the archaeological evidence for the buildings he identified as temples...
It is true that the bulk of the architectural fragments, sculptures and inscriptions that must once have been associated with actual temples came from such a short distance away - in fact from the upper level of the road immediately adjacent to the 'enclaves'. But amongst these finds was an inscription, certainly from a temple, which was of particular significance in being closely datable. This was dedicated by the Sixth Legion to Sol Invictus under Calpurnius Agricola, governor in the mid-160s (RIB 1137). It seems reasonable to group this stone with the architectural and sculptural fragments found with it and to suggest they came from a common source - a temple zone. The inscription shows that this temple area must have been in existence by the 160s. Its establishment was probably linked to the stationing of legionary vexillations at Corbridge following the evacuation of the auxiliary fort, for a detachment of the Twentieth Legion is attested under-taking a major building programme at exactly the same time.

Scrutiny of excavation records from Corbridge, published by Bishop and Dore (1988/9), reveals a phase of building, domestic or industrial in character, that is later than the fort (decommissioned no earlier than the 160s) but which underlies the buildings described by Richmond as temples. This means the so-called temples cannot be as early as the 160s, and did not in fact originate until the third century. Originating in the 160s, the temples attested by the inscription (RIB 1137) and the architectural fragments cannot therefore have been in this area, but are more likely to have lain some distance away. Richmond's so-called temples would be better interpreted as third-century buildings for storage or commercial purposes. In fact they lie close to the great market or stores building, Site XI, and a massive pair of granaries. One objection might be raised against the suggestion that the 'temples' of the central area have been incorrectly identified: the fact that the third-century legionary compound walls so carefully avoid the areas containing these buildings. Surely, the argument runs, only building plots of sacred importance would have been so carefully respected. Yet important commercial or storage buildings would require a main street frontage, and this could just as well have been the consideration behind the planning of the legionary compounds.

A sacred area away from the centre of a site is paralleled at the legionary fortress at Carnuntum (Pannonia Superior) where an area of temples to oriental cults has recently been excavated, some 700 m away from the main fortress. A zone dedicated to temples has also been identified within the canabae at Aquincum (Pannonia Inferior), Budapest. It would have been a typical arrangement for such a zone to have contained temples dedicated to more than one oriental cult; at Corbridge, as well as Sol Invictus, Panthena-Cybele, Heracles of Tyre and Astarte are attested on altars.

Richmond himself stressed that the key importance of Corbridge was that it was a rare example of a base for permanently outstationed legionaries. We have one direct and contemporary parallel in Britain, at Carlisle;
Corbridge and Carlisle are alone in Britain in producing inscriptions indicating a permanent presence of sizable legionary vexillations (with the recently recognised exception of another northern site, Piercebridge). But outposting of legionary detachments in permanently fixed and specially planned establishments of this kind is rather hard to parallel on other frontiers. We know, of course, of fortresses used by vexillations during the conduct of particular military campaigns, such as Carpow in Severan Scotland, or Eining-Unterfeld on the Danube, base of half of Legio III Italica during the Marcomannic Wars, but these are a different phenomenon.

Some parallels for Corbridge and Carlisle can be found. There is abundant epigraphic evidence of outposting from legions normally stationed along the Lower Danube in Moesia Inferior to various Greek cities on the north-west coast of the Black Sea and on the Crimea peninsula, and here the site at Balaklava has recently produced a range of architectural fragments associated with a temple of Jupiter Dolichenus that is reminiscent of the material from Corbridge. Other examples of distant legionary outposting of this kind can be cited from Dura-Europos on the Euphrates and in Tripolitania, Africa, (modern Libya), where we find a number of permanent posts for detachments of Legio III Augusta, whose permanent base lay at Lambaesis, Numidia (modern Algeria) hundreds of kilometres to the west.

What these examples have in common is the sheer distance from the main bases to the outposts. It seems probable that the reason that we do not see examples of this on the Rhine and Danube is that there the legionary bases were themselves right up on the frontier and evenly spaced along it. In Britain two of the legionary bases, those of II Augusta and XX Valeria Victrix, lay a long way behind Hadrian’s Wall, and if detachments had to serve on the Wall they needed permanent bases, as did the soldiers of III Augusta in the Libyan oases, or the soldiers of I Italica in the Crimea. Or to put it another way, Legions XX and II found it necessary to open a northern branch. Thus Corbridge and Carlisle seem to be products of

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Fig. 5. Richmond’s 1943 plan of the centre of Corbridge, showing the supposed sites of the temples (Richmond 1943).

Fig. 6. Artist’s impression of the original appearance of the S-motif temple within a probably undiscovered sanctuary at Corbridge. Drawn by Roger Oram. © TWM Archaeology.
the curious British situation where military bases were perpetually retained in an area of considerable depth behind the northern frontier.

By the later-fourth century Corbridge no longer housed legionaries of the kind familiar from the Principate. The legionary cults of the third century had lost their significance. It is most likely to have been at this time that the outlying religious enclave, perhaps already long abandoned, was demolished, and the Sol Invictus inscription and many architectural fragments carried into the centre of Corbridge to be used in the repair of the main road running through the late-Roman town.

This circumstance, the incorporation of the fragments into a late-Roman structure, explains the rare survival of the group, which did not see the light of day again until revealed in the summers leading up to the First World War.

Editorial Note: The author of this article has published a brief summary of the evidence of the Corbridge temples for last year’s Pilgrimage of Hadrian’s Wall (Hodgson 2009, 97-101). A full study will appear in the Arbeia Journal (Hodgson forthcoming).

REFERENCES:


SOUTHWICK VILLA, SUSSEX – AD 150

by Anthony Beeson

This interpretative reconstruction in pen and wash, was based on the ground plan published in 1932 by the excavator Samuel E. Winbolt in volume 73 of the Sussex Archaeological Collections. It was executed by the author one winter’s afternoon in 1966-7, out of a desire to see just what this palatial early villa might have looked like. With the excavation and publication of Fishbourne Roman Palace we now know that Southwick itself was obviously from the hand of the same architect and was just one of a series of remarkable buildings that were erected in the Sussex landscape during the last years of the first century AD. Gilt glass tesserae found by Winbolt suggest that wall mosaics may have been a feature of this grand building.

Southwick’s Roman palace has, alas, had a tragic history and much of the villa is now built over, but in January 2010 I entered into correspondence with Giles Standing, a local professional archaeologist and ARA member, who had done a recent excavation adjacent to the main villa site. In the course of this correspondence I sent him my old reconstruction and was delighted with his enthusiasm for it. Now the drawing has been adapted as a postcard and is on sale at the Southwick Society’s Manor Cottage Heritage Centre, which stands very close to the villa site. It also forms the centrepiece of a public interpretation panel that was erected this summer at the site of the villa (see ARA News 24). This worthy project to illustrate and inform the public of one of the lost treasures of Roman Britain was undertaken by Giles Standing and the Southwick Society.
Roman and Native in the Central Scottish Borders
by Allan Wilson
BAR British Series 519
Archaeopress, Oxford, 2010
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164 pp., 24 pp. of line drawings and black and white plates.

Review by Percival Turnbull

Allan Wilson gives us an assessment of the interactions between Roman and native cultures in an area concentrated in Peeblesshire, Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire, the territory usually assigned to the Selgovae, considering also some material from the adjacent domains of the Damnonii and of the Votadini. A review of the matter has long been due: as recently as 2004 D.W. Harding was able to write ‘...archaeological evidence for the effects of the Roman presence upon native settlement is remarkably sparse, but this is in no small measure a product of past priorities of archaeological research: the present work goes much of the way to put together such evidence as is known.

It is no longer possible, as once it was, to carry on a conversation about ‘Romanisation’ and assume that everyone is more or less ad idem about what the concept means. Before he goes on to consider his evidence, Wilson points out some of the different ways there can be of interpreting the evidence of Roman-native interaction, most of them inevitably influenced by some sort of ideology, and indicates some of the traps into which one might be led by too easy assumptions (to what extent, for example, is the presence within a territory of military installations a signifier of conflict?). Given that the Selgovae are usually assumed to be more or less ‘hostile’ natives, Wilson now proceeds to examine a considerable body of material – sites and artefacts – in order to reconstruct the development of the local society and culture before, during and after direct contact with the Roman world.

Much of this depends on the ‘Inventory’ of Roman material from the study area: this takes up the bulk of the volume, and its compilation is a considerable achievement in itself (the Inventory is not claimed to be an exhaustive corpus: the sheer numbers of finds from a site like Newstead would make that overwieldy, so Wilson has selected material which can be considered useful in exploring his theme. It is hard to disagree with his approach).

Wilson reaches some fairly general conclusions about the socio-political structures of the local native people, based on a few linear earthworks and on the hillforts, which are almost entirely unexplored. Although the pattern is much like that of the rest of southern Scotland (and, arguably, of much of Northumberland and Cumbria), some regional characteristics are identified, and a network of local ‘core-periphery’ hierarchies is suggested. This is all supported by a mixed farming economy within a landscape in which deforestation was well under way in the pre-Roman Iron Age, and on which the Roman arrival may have had little impact. There may have been an increase in cattle farming, and possibly of horse-breeding, to supply Roman demands.

There is little evidence for the continuation of hillforts and other defences during the Roman period, and some evidence of dismantling, but this trend towards open settlement seems to have begun in the pre-Roman period. Romans and natives appear to have lived side-by-side at Eildon Hill North. The quantity of Roman material circulating in the area, as noted by the Inventory, is striking; interesting, too, is the high-quality, high-status nature of many of the goods which seem less like ‘drift’ or loot than official gifts to prominent locals. The impression of generally good relations between Roman and native is reinforced by Antonine military dispositions, which appear to be addressing possible conflict in Dumfriesshire and Upper Clydesdale without worrying overmuch about the Selgovae. Native craft industries received a boost from the availability of Roman markets, and native art styles enjoyed something of a revival which probably contributed to the survival and development of ‘Celtic’ art in the post-Roman period.

Palaeoenvironmental evidence indicates economic recession after Roman troops were withdrawn at the end of the second century. By the third and fourth centuries, the flow of Roman goods has slowed to a trickle, with the material turning up mostly on elite native sites. The emergence of native kingdoms by the fifth century is seen as a development probably encouraged by the Romans; it provided a series of buffer states against Scots and Attagotti. Identification with the Roman world and a sense of Romanitas may have been encouraged as a matter of policy, and became an important and permanent fact with the adoption of Christianity.

Allan Wilson has succeeded in bringing together a great deal of evidence (the research attested by the lengthy bibliography is truly impressive). He has certainly shown that casual assumptions about Romans and natives are hard to justify, and that relationships were not only more complex but also developing through time. If his conclusions continue to involve some speculation and assumption, that is not his fault, but simply in the nature of the evidence.

D.W. Harding has written: ‘The fact that the Roman occupation made so little impact upon Scotland really should occasion little surprise, for the simple reason, though seldom acknowledged overtly, that it was both politically and militarily a failure’. Allan Wilson has helped us to put that remark into perspective.
The province of Britannia had a long history of rebellion, which started with Boudica in AD 60-61. However, eight years later the province was drawn into the civil wars of AD 68-69. The aim of this article is to consider the numismatic evidence from Britannia for this brief, but very turbulent period in the empire’s history.

**Historical background**

Cassius Dio, in book 63 of his *Roman History* noted that in 68, as a result of Nero's oppressive taxes the 'inhabitants of Britain and Gaul... were being more vexed and inflamed than ever'. These events were part of a widespread rebellion which precipitated Nero's downfall and suicide in June 68. During this rebellion Galba, the governor of Iberia, had been proclaimed emperor by his troops; his reign was to be brief as he was assassinated in January 69, and Otho was immediately proclaimed emperor. However, in the same month, Vitellius, governor of Lower Germany, had also been proclaimed emperor by his troops. His armies invaded Italy and defeated those of Otho at the first battle of Bedriacum, near Cremona, in April 69. After Otho's suicide, Vitellius was recognized as emperor (Salway 1993, 94-95).

According to Tacitus, the legions in Britannia initially took no part in this civil war and 'conducted themselves with greater integrity' than those in other provinces (*Histories* I, 9). However, this situation soon changed as the governor of Britannia, Trebellius Maximus, had quarrelled with the commander of the Twentieth legion, Roscius Coelius, and this dispute caused the British garrison to mutiny. Tacitus' version of subsequent events is unclear; he states that, after the mutiny, Trebellius fled but later returned to office and governed on sufferance or, in another version, that he fled abroad to join Vitellius' forces, leaving the province to be governed by a committee of legionary commanders dominated by Coelius (*Histories* I, 59-60, *Agricola* 16). The three legions (the Second, Ninth and the Twentieth) stationed in Britain showed their support for Vitellius by sending a levy of eight thousand troops to join his army (*Histories* II, 57). Vitellius sent a new governor, Marcus Vettius Bolanus, to Britannia. He also returned the Fourteenth legion, which had previously defeated the Boudican rebels. However, more recently this legion had supported Otho and been on the losing side at the battle of Bedriacum (*Histories* II, 65); so this posting was presumably intended to isolate or punish them for their disloyalty. As the other army units in Britannia had supported Vitellius, relations between them and the new arrivals must have been strained.

Meanwhile, in July 69 Vespasian had also been proclaimed emperor at Alexandria and quickly gained the support of the east Mediterranean provinces (Salway 1993, 95). Vitellius promptly asked Bolanus to supply troops for a campaign against Vespasian. However, Bolanus prevaricated, perhaps concerned about the risks of rebellion or mutiny. Meanwhile Vespasian had contacted the Fourteenth legion to seek their support (*Histories* II, 86, 97). Interestingly, the Second legion had been commanded by Vespasian during the invasion of Britain and was still stationed there, so its troops were probably sympathetic towards the new ambitions of their old commander. More recently, too, Vespasian's eldest son Titus had served as a tribune in one of the legions stationed in Britannia (*Suetonius The Twelve Caesars* Titus, 4), so there were good reasons why some of the Britannia garrison would have supported Vespasian. However, other soldiers in Britannia who had been promoted by Vitellius apparently remained loyal to him (*Histories* II, 44).

The Danubian legions which had declared for Vespasian invaded Italy, and defeated Vitellius' forces (which apparently included the earlier levy of British troops) at the second battle Bedriacum in December 69 (*Histories* II, 22). Shortly afterwards Vitellius was murdered and Vespasian was recognized as emperor (Fig. 1). He soon recalled the Fourteenth legion from Britannia and, in 71 sent a new governor to the province; clearly he did not trust Vitellius' appointee (*Histories* II, 68).

**The Countermarks and currency**

During this period the mints responded to the frequent changes of emperor by quickly producing coinage bearing the portrait of the new ruler. Galba, Otho and Vitellius all issued coinage of various denominations (Fig. 2). This money would have been minted to pay the army, but it would also have served to remind the troops of the identity of their new paymaster. During Galba's reign, mints in France, Spain, Carthage and Rome issued a variety of coinage. During Otho's four-month reign, only the Rome mint appears to have issued new coins. However, it is considered that during Vitellius' reign, mints at Lugdunum (France), Tarraco (Spain) and Rome all produced precious metal coinage (Carson 1992, 20-26).
In the absence of a comprehensive list of Roman coin finds from Londinium and Southwark, it is currently impossible to list with any certainty all the finds of coinage issued by these three emperors. However, a sestertius of Galba is known from Londinium and two more examples are known from Southwark (Wheeler 1930, 192). In 1834-41, among the several thousand coins recovered during dredging of the Thames on the site of the Roman London Bridge were two denarii of Vitellius (obverse - head of Vitellius, laureate; reverse - CONCORDIA P R 'seated female figure') (Rhodes 1991; Smith 1841, 160). More recently at 60-63 Fenchurch Street in the City of London another denarius of Vitellius (reverse - Pont Max) was discovered (Cooke 2009, table 6).

Since Roman coinage circulated freely in the Western Empire at the time, this underlines both the scarcity of these emperors' coinage in even a major city such as Londinium and the fact that their presence cannot in itself be used to substantiate any support for any particular contestant for the purple.

Countermarking of Roman coinage predominantly took place during the first century AD. Finds are mainly limited to Britannia, Hispania and Gaul, and mostly occur on coins of Augustus, Tiberius and Claudius, demonstrating the continued usage of old coinage during this period. This practice appears to have represented a revaluation, or revalidation, of earlier coinage under Nero and the rebel emperors of 68-9 (including Vindex in Gaul), as well as by Vespasian in the east Mediterranean provinces during the civil war. However the actual significance of countermarks, and particularly the extent to which they indicate a revalidation of coins of earlier emperors, must remain an open question, since such a minute proportion of the coinage circulating at the time bears a counterstamp.

Carson (1992, 255) considers that worn Claudian aes which had lost weight by wear were validated by Neronian countermarks, the main reason for this practice being a shortage of 'small change', which resulted in old, low-denomination coinage being retained in circulation, particularly in militarily active provinces such as Britannia. These countermarks normally consisted of an abbreviated form of the emperor's name. For example, Lugdunum-minted Neronian sestertii were countermarked during Vitellius's reign with the ligatured letters VTE(llius) (Mattingly 1923, xxxi, xxxvii).

**Counterstamped coinage of Vitellius in Britannia**

There is an example of an unstratified sestertius of Nero from Southwark (site code CB80) bearing the VTE countermark (Hammerson 1992, 138). More recently excavation of deposits dating to c. 50-70, at 20-30 Gresham Street in the City of London revealed an irregular Claudian as or dupondius (produced c. 45-65) (site code GH700 <2677>) with the same countermark. Interestingly, there are only four other examples of this countermark known from Britannia: one from Verulamium; an unprovenanced find in the Ashmolean Museum; a coin in the Hall collection, believed to be from Lincoln; and another coin believed to be from Bath (Hammerson 1992, 138; Mattingly 1923, 37). The late Dr. Colin Kraay (pers comm.) was of the opinion that all these coins were countermarked in Britannia, which implies a greater degree of official support in the province for Vitellius's regime than was shown towards those of his two contemporaries.

What is therefore of principal interest for this discussion is that, although the epicentre of Vitellius's activities was the Rhine area, none of the known VTE counterstamps are from there, while most of the very few provenanced examples are from Britannia. The quantitative evidence is, however, extremely small, and whether this should be interpreted as evidence of official support for Vitellius in Britannia is debatable.

Against this must be set the argument that very few countermarked coins indeed are known from Britannia. It seems clear that:

1. The shortage of new coinage (caused by the cessation of minting of new coinage between the beginning of Claudius's reign and the middle of Nero's) was made up not by counterstamping earlier coinage already in circulation, but, in Britain at least, by the production of large quantities of often poorly-made copies, mainly of the Minerva issues of Claudius. These not only greatly outnumber the official issues found in excavations in both Londinium and Southwark, but varied significantly in size, weight and crudity of design, and virtually none, either of the official issues or the copies, were counterstamped, suggesting that counterstamping may not, in Britain, represent either a revaluation or a revalidation of the extant coinage (Hammerson 1978).

2. The revalidation/revaluation argument must be further undermined by the fact that the stratigraphic evidence shows very clearly that the Claudian copies remained in circulation long after the end of the Civil Wars, up to at least the late Flavian-Trajanic period (c. 90-120) (Hammerson 1978, 588-90). New Flavian issues were brought into the province in large quantities (judging by site finds) to supplement the existing coinage. However the continued importance of the Claudian imitations is underlined by the fact that they constitute the commonest individual category of coin finds from Southwark until the mid-third century (Hammerson 1988, 418). Does this mean that they were, for much or the first century, a familiar medium of exchange, or that they were accepted as of such low value that they were
readily discarded, or not searched for when lost? However, it may be queried whether the extreme scarcity of issues of Galba, Otho and Vitellius in Britannia reflect low levels of distribution of their coinage, or perhaps a deliberate policy of the later withdrawal from circulation of the issues of rebel emperors? The fact that they occur similarly in small quantities in post-civil war hoards in Britannia, may only indicate that individual savers retained the few that had been, or remained, in circulation for their silver value and were not overly concerned about which emperor was represented on them.

Conclusions

The present evidence suggests that, during this period, the population and the army in Britannia simply carried on using the existing currency, as finds of coins of Galba, Otho and Vitellius are uncommon in the province. However, the counter-stamped coins of this period are scarce, and it is unclear why so few coins were in fact so marked. The presence of six examples of counterstamped coins of Vitellius in Britannia nevertheless seems to suggest that his regime had a greater degree of official support in the province than those of his two contemporaries. It has been argued that the first-century coin pattern from Southwark echoes that found on conquest-period military sites in Britannia (Hammerson 1978, 1992 and 1996), which implies there was a military presence in Southwark during this period. In support of this suggestion there is the growing body of evidence for a military presence in Londinium in the immediate aftermath of the Boudican revolt (Wilson 2006, 260). This evidence includes a short-lived Neronian fort (Dunwoodie et al. in prep.), the construction of a new port facility during 63 (Brigham et al. 1996, 36) and, at the same time that the port was being built, a deep timber-lined well with a water-lifting device was being dug at 30 Gresham Street (Blair and Swift 2003; Blair et al. 2006, 10). This well was almost certainly part of a new civic or public water supply. The impression is that the army were either constructing or directing the construction of urban infrastructure in Londinium immediately after the Boudican revolt. At the same time new civilian buildings were also being erected. At 72-75 Cheapside, one of the oak stakes for the foundations of Building 9, produced a tree-ring date of 62-63 (Hill and Woodger 1999, 16).

There are thousands of Roman coin finds from the Greater London area, some ancient, some modern and their number continues to increase. At the moment the recent finds are only being analysed and published on a site by site basis, and sadly, many of the earlier finds have never been published. The complete absence of any synthesis or data base for the Roman coinage from Greater London makes answering such basic questions as whether the presence or absence of counterstamped coins of these three emperors indicates any levels of support for them (let alone determining their changing statistical frequencies) currently impossible. It is hoped this article will stimulate further work to help make good these deficiencies in the capital’s heritage.

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Alan McWhirr will be remembered for his major contribution to Roman studies in Britain. Based at Leicester (Roman Ratae Coriellavorum), his most important work was his direction of the exciting annual excavations in Corinium Dobunnorum (Cirencester), the second city of Britannia, and their publication in a series of impressive volumes. He also generated much new research into the neglected world of Roman brick and tile production, which had become the poor relation of pottery studies. This article reviews Alan’s life and also chronicles the ‘Golden Years’ of excavations which have done so much to illuminate one of the great urban centres of the Roman Britain.

The archaeological profession has been profoundly saddened by news of the death of Dr. Alan McWhirr from cancer at Leicester on 14th April 2010, at the age of 73. Alan combined his achievements in archaeology with a personality which was generous, outgoing and humorous. We will all miss him, but he has left us a great legacy which will continue to be of benefit to Romano-British studies for years to come. Both authors of this article have personal memories and were associated with Alan in the early days of his work in Roman archaeology. BW first came to know Alan when he was one of the stalwart officers of the former Cirencester Archaeological Committee. This involved travelling up from Swindon to Cirencester on a daily basis with family and friends to assist in the spectacular excavations Alan directed there from 1965. Alan also did much to advise and encourage a young GS in the mid 1970s in his excavation, research and publication of a major Roman brick and tile factory on the south coast, at a time when Alan was deeply immersed in brick and tile studies himself. Alan was born in St. Albans in 1937. His father ran the fire service there and Alan served as a part-time fireman when he was digging with Sheppard Frere as a teenager paid worker on his major excavations at Verulamium. At the sound of the siren he would jump from the trench and run off from the site. It was here in 1955 that he met his friend and mentor John Wacher (now Emeritus Professor of Archaeology at Leicester University) who was working under Sheppard Frere as a site supervisor. Alan entered Leicester University in 1957 where he read a general degree which offered mathematics and chemistry, but also archaeology, a subject then in its infancy in the History Department. Alan later reckoned that at that time “it was a small and friendly university.” His experiences at Verulamium led Stanley Thomas, the first lecturer in British Archaeology at Leicester, to put Alan in charge of one of the first student field courses to be undertaken by the Department on the Roman villa at Tixover Grange, Rutland (1958–59). In his published report on the excavations, Alan referred to an earlier excavation of 1932 conducted by S. E. Winbolt, the results of which were not fully published. However, “fortunately, a teenager, Graham Webster, kept a notebook of what took place, and this included sketches of the mosaic floors.” Twenty-seven years later Dr. Graham Webster (who later, of course, became the ARA’s Honorary President) was able to supply Alan with the notebook! He also took part in the excavations at two Leicestershire hillforts, Burrough Hill and Breedon-on-the-Hill, work which he illustrated in his contribution to the recent book Digging up our Past (2008), and published a detailed piece of fieldwork on the Roman road from Leicester to Mancetter. Retaining his strong interest in Roman archaeology Alan went on to direct the major series of excavations at Cirencester from 1965 until the mid 1970s, supported by the then developed Department of Archaeology at Leicester University, a link which had already been established by John Wacher (see below for further details of all these excavations, and see also the Bibliography at the end of this article).

Alan’s professional career began teaching maths and chemistry at Gateway School, Leicester (1960-1968), enabling him to join excavations during the summer holidays. Also, from 1960 to 1988 he worked as an occasional tutor for the university’s Department of Adult Education, eventually running the Certificate in Archaeology course in the early 1970s. He then became a lecturer in Environmental Studies at Leicester College of Education (later Leicester Polytechnic), continuing to dig in the vacations. Following early retirement from Leicester Polytechnic, Alan joined the Department of Archaeology at Leicester University in 1988 on a part-time basis, where he was an inspiring teacher. When the Cirencester Excavation Committee (CEC) handed over its responsibilities to the Cotswold Archaeological Trust in 1989, Alan remained as a continuing link between the old and the new bodies as one of its voluntary directors, and served as President of the Cirencester Archaeological and Historical Society (CAHS) from 1987 to 1997. Indeed, it was Alan’s contribution to the revelation of Roman Cirencester that was the most important phase in his archaeological career and will probably be his most lasting legacy. This work however, needs to be seen in the context of post-war archaeology in the town. Corinium Dobunnorum had long been seen as a vital component in the understanding of Roman Britain. It was, after all, the largest town after London, the tribal capital of the Dobunni, and in the fourth century the capital of
Britannia Prima. Over the years sporadic discoveries and limited systematic excavation had produced remarkable sculptures, fine architectural remains and splendid mosaics, now displayed in the Corinium Museum. There was also the large forum and basilica, the street grid and the defensive walls, and indeed the whole town had been scheduled as an Ancient Monument (See Fig. 1 for an up-to-date plan of the Roman town and the location of the sites mentioned below, where their insula numbers are given as Roman numerals). Important excavations were directed by Mary Rennie in 1952 on the defences at Watermoor (VIII) and by Graham Webster in 1957 at Dyer Court (XVIII, 2, now the Forum car park), backed by the Ministry of Works. This impressive excavation of no less than forty-eight trenches, revealed a Roman street of buildings and the street itself produced a full stratigraphic sequence of twenty-four surfaces down to 6 m below modern ground level! Graham was later to direct the major Birmingham University training excavation at the Barnsley Park Roman villa just northeast of the town (Fig. 2). Further planned development in the town led Mary Rennie and Sheppard Frere to initiate the Society of Antiquaries.
into establishing the CEC and in 1958 the Ministry of Works, Mary Rennie and her team, assisted by the CAHS, excavated parts of four further high status Roman buildings in Parsonage Field, Watermoor Road (IV). Professor Ian Richmond became the first chairman of a CEC made up of some well-known names. He had just started work excavating at Chedworth, the major Roman rural site seven miles north of the town. The first season, directed by Katherine Richardson, assisted by Mary Rennie, went well, but when Richardson left, Richmond thought to replace her with Sheppard Frere. When Sheppard Frere withdrew at short notice he invited John Wacher to take over as director of the CEC in 1960. John Wacher had directed his own excavations at Brough-on-Humber and Leicester in 1958 and at Catterick in 1959 assisted by Alan. All the signs were that development would continue in Cirencester and so the ‘Golden Years’ of excavations from 1960 to 1974 were about to unfold. Sheppard Frere decided that annual interim reports on the CEC’s work would be published in the Antiquaries Journal, following Verulamium’s example, together with an annual lecture to the Antiquaries in London. So from 1960 Alan became a site supervisor at Leaholme Gardens where the Roman forum basilica and the underlying fort were discovered (I, V). Alan was appointed the supervisor of this excavation. Work in 1962 focused on traces of the possible theatre in Coxwell Street (XXX) and the large Police Station site south of Market Place (XVIII, 1), which revealed more of the street plan and buildings adjacent to Ermin Street, and at City Bank in the far southwestern corner of the town (IV/VI). The first ‘research’, as opposed to ‘rescue’ excavations were undertaken in late 1962 and 1963 at the Amphitheatre on the west side of the town, work that continued to 1966. In 1963 there were also excavations at King’s Head Yard, two sites off Lewis Lane (XIV/XV), Parsonage Field (IV) and in Watermoor Hospital Gardens (V/ VIII). In 1964 trenches were dug in Silver Street at the Gaumont Cinema site (XXVII), Ashcroft House (XII, 1) and Chester Mews (IX), while in the following two years sites such as the northern defences off Spitalgate Lane and Dollar Street (XXVII) were investigated. The period between 1964 and 1966 was dominated by investigation of the site of Cirencester Abbey (XXVI) following proposed development, but in 1965 John Wacher was taken ill in the middle of the dig and had to be relieved of the directorship. In this crisis Alan took over as director in conjunction with David Brown and so began his most involved period of association with the town. The Abbey site produced remarkable evidence of a huge Anglo-Saxon church and so the CEC invited David Brown, a Saxon specialist, to direct the excavations there, and Alan concentrated on the Roman sites. However, by 1967, the threat to the Abbey site diminished and David withdrew, as he had just been appointed to a post as Anglo-Saxon specialist in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. Alan therefore assumed sole charge of the excavations and through the later 1960s and early 1970s masterminded a series of high profile projects closely tied to the rapid expansion of the town and the threats posed by major developments in its historic core. In 1967 this included work at the Station Yard, Watermoor School, and sites at Midland Pond and the Sands in the south-east corner of the town (VIII, IX, X). 1968 saw work at the Waterloo (XVII), the Avenue (XIV/ XV, 2), and Victoria Road (XIV/XV, 3), all of which added yet more detail to the town plan and began to focus attention on the probability that Roman occupation across the walled area was uneven in its intensity and date.

Alan had met Helen Sherwin in Leicester and they married in 1964. She became a Latin teacher and they had a son and a daughter. Helen soon became roped into the annual cycle of excavations at Cirencester, joining the team in the processing of the enormous numbers of finds being generated by the excavations now under Alan’s command. Although between 1969 and 1975 he directed a number of small investigations across the town, his work with the CEC focused mainly on three classic excavations whose results still figure predominantly in the text books on Roman Britain. In 1969 plans for the construction of the western relief road led to the start of excavations at the Bath Gate Roman cemetery which were to continue until 1974 (Figs. 3 and 4). On the opposite side of the town excavations between
1970 and 1973 at Beeches Road (Figs. 5 and 6) uncovered two very well-preserved town houses (XII/ XIII, 1, 2), one of which (1), revealed the iconic mosaic depicting a hare which was rapidly adopted as the logo of the Corinium Museum (Fig. 7). Indeed, it was soon installed in a prominent place at the museum for visitors to admire (Fig. 8). Richard Reece, another distinguished archaeologist closely associated with the town, was appointed by Alan to direct the final stages of the excavation in 1973 after the main season had finished, which allowed a full building plan to be recovered. Richard also identified every coin the CEC excavated, a monumental undertaking, whose listings ran into the tens of thousands. His publication of this work in *Cirencester Excavations V* in 1998 with Peter Guest, put the town at the head of coin reporting in Britain. The final site involved the excavation of a strip through St. Michael’s Field (VI) between 1974 and 1976 in advance of a (never constructed) road link. The excavation, known as Admiral’s Walk, uncovered the substantial remains of houses, shops and part of a large public building, as well as further evidence of early military activity. All three of these projects involved extensive open-area excavations with teams of up to a hundred volunteers and students from Leicester. Throughout the Golden Years Cirencester became part of the ‘digging circuit’ and between 1960 and 1976 Alan was closely associated with a number of up-and-coming archaeologists who cut their teeth in Cirencester. He suggested they had come for “an annual dose of archaeological masochism.” All were eager for the opportunities and training afforded by the high-profile work under John Wacher’s and Alan’s direction. They included such well-known names as Timothy Darvill, Mark Hassall, Tony King, Henrietta Miles (later Quinell), Martin Millett, Steve Roskams, Scott Anderson, Roy Canham, Chris Catling, Geoffrey Dannell, Rosalind Dunnett (later Niblett), David Viner (who became curator of Corinium Museum), David Wilkinson, Bob Zeepvat, Bob Downey, Tony Pacitto, and wives Anna Wacher and Helen McWhirr. During these years the excavations attracted thousands of visitors and members of the CAHS acted as guides. There were also close links with the Corinium Museum and its curator David Viner. Alan spoke up for the need (long anticipated but slow to mature) for a substantially upgraded museum in the town, to properly care for and interpret Cirencester’s rich heritage. It was extended, refurbished and reopened to visitors in 1974.
A research seminar on Cirencester was held at the museum the following year, leading to a series of valuable papers published in 1976.

In 1973 the Committee for Rescue Archaeology in Avon, Gloucestershire and Somerset (CRAAGS) was created to administer funding from the Department of the Environment and carried out two excavations at the Bath Gate cemetery and St. John’s Hospital, directed by Roger Leech. By this time the CEC under Alan’s leadership was concentrating on post-excavation. The tenth and last interim report, for 1973-6, was published in the Antiquaries Journal for 1978, but work was now in hand to publish the Cirencester Excavations volumes. The writing-up process was a long period of struggle to assemble resources, expertise and funding, a process in which Alan showed, as David Viner has put it “the steady hand of quiet determination, cajoling a succession of project grants” from various public bodies to bring the series of six volumes to completion over a quarter of a century from 1982 (see Bibliography). These alone form a significant memorial to Alan’s work and it is fitting that volume VI was dedicated to him and presented to him at the Society of Antiquaries in London in 2008 “in recognition to his service and commitment to the archaeology of Cirencester.”

Alan continued as overall director of excavations for the CEC until 1989. Important but small-scale excavations and watching briefs continued in the town and there were numerous threats of impending large-scale developments which came to nothing. CRAAGS and its later incarnation, the Western Archaeological Trust, went into voluntary liquidation in 1985. In 1989 it was agreed to reconstitute CEC as a professional unit, the Cotswold Archaeological Trust, and Sheppard Freere retired as chairman and Alan retired as director. The Trust took on Christopher Gerrard as its archaeological manager and chief executive. Neil Holbrook took over this role in 1991.
Alan gained his PhD for his study of the Roman brick and tile industry in Britain, an important subject which had previously been somewhat neglected by scholars. Although, in fact, some fieldwork and excavation on kiln sites had and was taking place after the pioneering work of Goodchild at Cranleigh, Surrey, and Grimes at the legionary factory at Holt in North Wales in the 1920s and 30s, it had always remained the poor relation of Roman pottery studies, so useful as a cultural indicator and in dating and phasing stratified levels in excavations. More attention had been given to stamped tiles and bricks, particularly by epigraphists concerned with military tile-stamps. Alan, working with Timothy Darvill and David Viner, studied the civilian products and their stamps found in the Cotswold area around Cirencester. In 1977 Alan gave a lecture to the Society of Antiquaries, and the interest which followed this event led to his organisation of a major conference at Leicester Polytechnic on the Roman brick and tile industry in April 1979. Many important papers on work in progress were given and much enthusiasm and interest was generated (Fig. 9). Practicing archaeologists, such as one of us (GS), who had carried out excavations on a rare factory site at Crookhorn in Hampshire, were much encouraged to complete publication. Also, further fieldwork on the extensive production site at Minety, near Cirencester, by Michael Stone, Bernard Phillips and others, was given new impetus. The papers from this conference, including Alan's own gazetteer of kiln sites, were edited by Alan and published as an International British Archaeological Report in 1979 (see Bibliography). This volume proved to be an incentive to further work in Britain and neighbouring Roman provinces.

In 1987 John Wacher took early retirement from the University and was succeeded in 1988 by Graeme Barker. With John's departure, Alan took on the teaching of the Roman elements of the course. In 1996 it was decided to initiate distance learning courses in archaeology and heritage. The obvious person to take on this task was Alan. With his extensive experience, skills and professional contacts, along with help from colleagues, he produced distance learning materials for courses and qualifications first for an MA and then a Postgraduate Certificate in Archaeology and Heritage, followed by PhDs and then, to meet a growing demand, for Certificates in Archaeology. The courses became incredibly popular and the School of Archaeology and Ancient History in the University became the world leader in archaeology courses by distance learning. Alan promoted the courses far and wide; for example, on one occasion David Brown (himself promoting his own archaeological publishing company, Oxbow Books) remembers meeting up with him at an archaeology convention in Seattle. Alan himself said that distance learning had introduced him to "a wide range of students from over 15 countries." Alan also initiated the School's important Monograph Series in the early 1990s, doing much of the editing, production and marketing himself. He formally retired from the School in 2004.

Throughout his life as a lecturer in Leicester Alan worked hard in a voluntary capacity to promote public awareness of the historical environment. This included running his own programme Digging up the Past for Radio Leicester. His lifelong interest in rugby football also led him to broadcast commentaries on matches of the Leicester Tigers. Not content with his role in Cirencester, he played a major part in the running of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society from 1964, serving in a variety of senior posts. It was clear that Alan loved committee work and his uncomplicated way of simply getting on with things was an enormous help to many such bodies. He was largely instrumental in producing publications such as the Newsletter, the Leicestershire Historian, and the society's Transactions, as well as such independent publications as Leicestershire and Rutland Heritage. The Leicestershire Museums, Arts and Record Service also played a major role in Alan's life and he served on their numerous committees and advisory panels. His concern for the future of the city's museums led in 2000 to his establishment of the Museums' Supporters Group. Leicester's spectacular Roman heritage is of course best shown off at the public display of the surviving remains of the Jewry Wall Roman baths in the centre of the city, and the adjacent Jewry Wall Museum. This fine museum, although illustrating the entire ancient history of the area, obviously gives over most of its space to the Roman period, and is a vital resource for the region. In 2004 the Friends of the Jewry Wall Museum

Fig. 9. Examples of brick and tile stamps from the N. Wilts. area, on display at the Roman Brick and Tile Conference organised by Alan McWhirr at Leicester, 1979. Photo: © Grahame Soffe.
was formed, and although Alan never served on its committee, he did much to support the Friends, and the battle to keep the museum going and open to the public. When the county’s archaeological unit was dissolved in 1995, he was also largely instrumental in persuading the university to take it on, leading to the establishment of the University of Leicester Archaeological Services, which has played a major role in archaeological work in the city, county and beyond as one of the largest and busiest archaeological units in Britain.

Alan also became very heavily involved in the preservation of the historical fabric of churches throughout Leicestershire. From the 1980s he was particularly concerned with the welfare of the important city church of St. James the Greater, and served as Chairman of the Leicestershire Historic Churches Trust from 1988 to 2006, remaining a trustee until his death. More historic churches survive intact today in the county than would otherwise have been the case and undoubtedly his skills and efforts have ensured that the people of the county are aware of and proud of their architectural and ecclesiastical heritage.

In November 2008 Cotswold Archaeology (the renamed CAT) staged a celebration and reunion of fifty years of Cirencester archaeology at the Bingham Hall, Cirencester. This memorable event was attended by Alan, Sheppard Frere, many of those mentioned above and many more young archaeologists who are now involved with the unit and with Cirencester (Fig. 10). This was the last time the present authors were to meet up with Alan. In the same year a book, Digging up our Past, jointly edited by Alan was published, describing the history of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History at Leicester University (Fig. 11). The following year saw one of Alan’s last memorable efforts in disseminating his knowledge and enthusiasm when he led over one hundred people on a tour of the Burrough Hill hillfort, Leicestershire, as part of the Festival of British Archaeology. Indeed, Alan led a very full and active life with not a moment to spare. It is his contribution to Roman archaeology and especially that of Cirencester that Alan will be remembered for, most particularly by readers of this Bulletin. He was an unassuming, popular and friendly man, who was able to get things done – a lesson to many of us, and he will be sadly missed by his friends and colleagues.

**Editorial Note:**
The School of Archaeology and Ancient History (Leicester University) and the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society joined together in a celebration of the life of Alan McWhirr at Leicester University on 23rd October 2010 with 10 speakers.

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**BOOK REVIEW**

**Latrinae et Foricae: Toilets in the Roman World**

by Barry Hobson

Duckworth, 2009

ISBN 978 0 7156 3850 7

Paperback £14.99

192 pp., 142 illustrations in black and white.

**Review by David Bradbury**

There have of course been books about Roman water supply and drainage, but as far as this reviewer knows, this is the first to concentrate on one particular aspect: Roman lavatories. The earlier omission is perhaps surprising, given that plumbed-in lavatories are readily identifiable archaeologically. Indeed, it is an area where the Romans clearly made good provision by ancient and medieval standards, and must have been aware that efficient waste disposal was vital to public health. Dr Hobson is therefore to be congratulated for helping to fill an obvious gap in the literature, and for getting his publisher to agree to a less than glamorous subject.

Although the book relies considerably on archaeological study of the physical remains, especially, but by no means exclusively, those of Pompeii, this not its sole source.

It also draws on literary references, artistic representations and graffiti. The scope too, is not simply about lavatories in private homes (latrinae) and public buildings (foricae), instead, it talks more generally about Roman attitudes to this basic need in life, in such areas as privacy (or lack of it), dirt, smell, water supply, the use of chamber pots, the disposal of sewage, and the classes of people who used the lavatories. On this latter point the author argues (pp. 81-2) that the usual location of the toilets at Pompeii, in the 'working' parts of the household, may have precluded their use by the elites, who instead used chamber pots. Also valuable is the chapter devoted to upstairs lavatories, for obvious reasons evidence that could easily be missed in the archaeological record.

If there is a complaint about this book, it is that the author seems a little uncurious about the evidence, both literary and archaeological. For example, he cites several sources for the use of chamber pots, clearly proving their importance, but a number of these references seem to refer to nocturnal use, for example, a jocular graffito blaming an incident of bed-wetting on the landlord's failure to provide a pot. Is there not a chance that for many Romans, chamber pots were used as our Victorian ancestors used them, as a means of avoiding getting up after dark to reach the one lavatory in the house? Likewise, one assumes he has visited Oplontis, as the photo (Fig. 126) is not credited to anyone else; in this large villa, the latrine has a small screened-off area able to accommodate only a few people at once. On the modern analogy, he suggests the division is between the sexes, but it seems obvious to the writer of this review that it is between one part used by the owner's family and the other for the household staff. This must be a unique feature, but he does not remark upon it.

Despite these cavils, this is indeed a book that fills an obvious gap in the literature. The cover illustration, incidentally, is of an elaborately carved lavatory seat from the Baths of Caracalla, now on display at the British Museum.