

WASNEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WELWYN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

SUMMER 1993

There's no excuse for your not having a WASnews earlier, but there have been reasons. We kept thinking that we would send it when next season's programme was complete, but even when we had the full compliment of speakers there were problems of tying them down to dates. Meanwhile Merle and I went on another of our jaunts, collecting material for yet another project (I'm teaching industrial archaeology next season). We came back - and off I went on an archaeological emergency at the hospital site (see below).

A Dip Into The Past

Readers may be amused to read the cuttings enclosed. As you can gather, three of us went to Xanten to stoke the baths there. A good time was had by all. If you want to know more, come to my talk on October 29th.

Roman Building Trust

The Roman Building Trust, which is mentioned in the cuttings, has been accepted by the Charity Commissioners for registration. As soon as the documents have been signed the new Trust will have a number to put on its letterhead and will be looking for sponsors and donations.

I will shortly prepare a brochure setting forth our objectives. Principally they are to carry out research on Roman building materials and techniques. As most readers will guess, one goal is the construction and operation of a suite of Roman baths. I first want to have a small laboratory for testing materials, and will be looking for equipment. If anyone knows of any source (eg firm closing down) of top-pan balance, compressive strength rig (little one - proof-ring?), thermograph, temperature probes and recorder.....please let me know.

I think I may have received our first job this very morning. This chap down in Sussex wants to build a Roman villa.....

Oaks Cross

Work has continued throughout the summer, each Sunday, on the Hooks (or is it Oaks?) Cross excavation. Plenty of fairly late Roman occupational evidence, with so many oyster shells and broken pottery that it must have been an oyster bar; slag that it might have been a smithy; boot nails that it was a load of old cobblers.... The usual problem of finding the dustbin but not the back door. Jenny recently found the key and a stylus (for writing a note to the milkman) so we must be on the back doorstep.

Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital

Rescue excavation on the site of the "New Danesbury" hospital, next door to the Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital, School Lane, Welwyn has revealed a "Belgic" ditch. Traced and sampled across the site it produced lots of lovely pottery. The usual rules applied: At the north end there was a right-angled turn just beyond our section and at the south end and apparent kink in the alignment has just been shown, on excavation, to be due to the fact that there were two ditches, on almost the same line, ending at the same place (in the section again!), just overlapping, of different periods, so that one of them was dug after the other had been filled in. Prize for any explanation. I've been investigating this point before it gets

"landscaped" (landscraped?) away in the next couple of weeks. Oh - we have a "complex" of large postholes. Prize for anyone who can detect a pattern!

1993/94

The WAS Programme

Once again we are indebted to Daphne, who has, as usual, beavered to produce what promises to be another fascinating lecture season.

Many of you will recognise old (even very old) friends among the speakers. In one or other of these categories is certainly Peter Shorer, who is Mr Antiquity Reproductions himself. He always brings along a wide range of his work which is offered for sale. In good time for Christmas! Bring your chequebook on November 19th.

<u>October 1st</u>	The Globe Theatre	Robin Densem
<u>October 15th</u>	From Royal Palace to Breweries - Excavations at Abbots Lane Southwark	Richard Bluer
<u>October 16th</u>	<u>WASouting to Ironbridge Gorge</u>	
<u>October 29th</u>	X Marks the Spot	Tony Rook
<u>November 19th</u>	Jewellery, Metalwork and Casting Techniques	Peter Shorer
<u>December 3rd</u>	D-Day - 43 The Claudian Invasion of Britain	Mark Hassall
<u>December 17th</u>	<u>Annual WASparty</u>	
<u>January 21st</u>	Recent Archaeological Work on Ludgate Hill	Bruce Watson
<u>February 4th</u>	A Glimpse into Chinese Archaeology	George Cubit
<u>February 18th</u>	Excavations at Stanwick, Northants	David Neal
<u>March 4th</u>	Burebisto Kingdom	Kris Lockyer
<u>March 18th</u>	The Things We Did Last Summer (A look back at the past year of WAS) & AGM	The Director
<u>April</u>	<u>WASouting in search of Oysters?</u>	

St Albans Architectural & Archaeological Society

Members of WAS are entitled to attend meetings of the SAA&AS, to which we are affiliated. A copy of their programme to December is enclosed.

STOP PRESS !!!

→ October 16th

→ WASouting

THE IRONBRIDGE EXPERIENCE

The Ironbridge Gorge, one of Britain's 11 World Heritage Sites, is where the modern world began over 250 years ago. This was the Birthplace of the Industrial Revolution, and here were made the first iron rails, the first iron wheels, iron boat, cast-iron bridge, and even the first high pressure steam locomotive. Here too, fine china developed at Coalport, stunning tiles at Jackfield, and revolutionary transport systems. Even now the name Coalbrookdale brings to mind all kinds of beautiful iron castings.

Today the Ironbridge Gorge Museum shows 20th century visitors how and why these events took place, and what life was like during those momentous years.

The Museum is an independent educational charity: we rely on money raised by admission tickets and sales, to preserve and protect the resources of this remarkable valley. We hope you will enjoy your visit and that you will come back many times in the future. What is there to see?

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum comprises a series of main Museums which are described in the centre map. These are:-

- Museum of the River and Visitor Centre
- Museum of Iron, Darby Furnace and Elton Gallery
- Rosehill House, a restored Ironmaster's home
- Blists Hill Open Air Museum—a working Victorian town
- Jackfield Tile Museum—stunning examples of ceramic art
- Coalport China Museum—set in the original factory
- The Iron Bridge and Tollhouse

There are also some smaller sites for you to visit:

The Tar Tunnel, near the Coalport China Museum. Open in summer, allowing visitors underground.

Bedlam Furnaces, built in 1757 and made famous by Philip de Loutherbourg's painting 'Coalbrookdale by Night'.

Teddy Bear Shop and Museum, not about the Industrial Revolution but a local industry based in Ironbridge since the 1930s.