

WASNEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WELWYN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

CHRISTMAS 1993

The weather seems determined to break new records; it's always the driest, wettest, coldest...since last time! I hope that all WASmembers are tucked up comfortably for the winter, and wish you all a very happy Christmas followed by a good New Year.

FIELDWORK

Even if you haven't been able to make it to our lecture meetings (weren't they good?) you won't need to read this to guess that we've not been doing much digging recently. We have been going for walks every Sunday, and logging suspected dormouse' (doormouse's? doormice'? doormice's?) breakfasts. One important find: a stamped rimsherd from a Roman mortarium (grinding bowl) picked up by Jenny W. in a ploughed field. It could have been you! If you want to join us any Sunday, phone me (Tony).

We have an invitation to cut a section across the Roman road in a garden near the QVMH site (see below). I'd welcome the help of two or three able-bodied diggers. Must be done before the spring. Offers, please.

"QVMH"

The Queen Victoria Memorial Hospital is up School Lane, Welwyn. A new hospital, replacing Danesbury, has just been built. As reported in the last WASnews, a few of us spent a very profitable time on the site. A wide boundary ditch was found; at first we thought it might belong to the Roman cemetery on the allotment site which we dug a couple of years ago at School Close; remember the face-down skeleton, now in Mill Green museum?

What we found were Belgic ditches (around about Claudian date) postholes (big ones, not datable) and another ditch of Middle Iron Age, all dug in chalk. Its fascinating the way sites keep turning up along the Roman road towards Verulamium.

HOMEWORK

On the Friday evenings, when there's no lecture, we have been processing (washing, marking, sorting, restoring, storing) finds at the Old Rectory. We've almost completed all the Iron Age pottery from the QVMH site. I took the oldest bits up to show Val Rigby at the British Museum. They were welcomed with enthusiasm. Its lovely handling finds like these. There's lots to do; phone me if you'd like to help.

ROMAN BUILDING TRUST

The Roman Building Trust has now been recognised as a charity. The three trustees are: Mark Hassall (our speaker next week), David Johnston of Southampton University (you met him last year) and our oldest digger, Bill Taylor.

The Trust will investigate Roman building technology, with (of course!) the aim of constructing and operating a small suite of Roman baths. We would like to hear whether you think there would be support for a "friends" organisation for people interested in supporting its work. What could it offer in return? Newsletters, site visits, blood, tears, oil and sweat baths?

We would be grateful for donations to help "pump-priming" - putting together a sum to finance advertising and seeking sponsors. So far all the expenses have been met by the Director (Tony Rook!). Cheques payable to The Roman Building Trust to 23 Mill Lane, Welwyn.

RAFFLE

The raffle which Bryan has been organising at WAS meetings has added a little spice to life and funds to WAS. We are most grateful for the gifts we have had as prizes. If you have something suitable, please let Bryan (or me) know.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Don't forget that subscriptions were due at the beginning of this lecture season. If in doubt, have a word with the Treasurer or Secretary, or phone the number on the membership card. If you haven't got a membership card it's probably because you haven't paid! Brian is (0438) 714304 and Daphne (0707) 335729.

WASPARTY

Even if you haven't been able to come to meetings, don't miss out on the annual party at The Old Rectory. This is on FRIDAY 17th December from 8pm to whenever everyone goes home. The tickets, limited in number by floor loading, cost £3.50 for which you get a full evening meal and quite enough to drink, the annual wallgame and lots of Good Company. Send SAE with money to 23, Mill Lane, Welwyn. You'll receive a map to help you find us!

EXTRAMURAL ACTIVITIES

We have two ideas for unprogrammed activities. First: a Sunday afternoon outing by car to the British Museum to see the Hoxne treasure and meet old friends (and finds): The Welwyn Chieftain Burial (1966), Welwyn Mother Goddess (1967), Lullingstone busts and plaster (1949), Aston Mirror (1980). If there's enough support for the idea, we could take a small coach. I'll ask at the next meeting. Remind me.

Second: An evening meeting to see Bryan's video record of our visit to Xanten, (1993) coupled with mine of the excavation of Building 1 at Dicket Mead (1968) and the Welwyn Roman baths and their preservation (1969 - 72). Any one able to borrow a school classroom with a video, or similar? Depends on numbers. Let me know if you'd be interested.

SITE VISIT - EGYPT!

I have details of a suggested trip to Egypt, scheduled for the end of next September, for cooler weather but before the beginning of adult classes. Nine days, two centres (Cairo, Luxor). £785 sharing, £112 single-room supplement. Guided site visits. Let me know if you want a copy.

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Tony Rook