

March 2009

Contents

<i>Local News</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Romano-British Glass Bangles</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>A Classical Cruise</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>From the E. Riding Forum</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Excavations at Thwing</i>	<i>10</i>

ERAS LOCAL NEWS . .

Big Flint Event at Southburn

A booking form is enclosed for the flint knapping event, which is being re-organised for May 16th. The event was held last year, but as the flint specialist broke down on his way from Norfolk, there was no knapping demonstration or workshop - not that that prevented everyone consuming the wonderful 'Roman' food, or handling the collections loaned by Scunthorpe Museum. This year the event will be hosted by Southburn Archaeological Museum, so it will be an excellent opportunity to have a look at the Southburn exhibits as well as taking part in one of the flint-knapping workshops. Refreshments this time will be in the form of cream teas.

Book donations

Many thanks to Pat Norfolk for the donation of books belonging to his late father, Tom Norfolk, a former ERAS treasurer. There are over 50 volumes of *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, going back to 1946 and 13 *Medieval Archaeology* volumes, plus other individual titles. The books will be on sale at the usual ERAS get-together after the AGM and lecture in April. If anyone would like to buy any before then, please contact the editor.

Thanks also to Terry Manby for donating a copy of *Patterns of Quern Production, Acquisition and Deposition*. to the ERAS library collection. The volume covers beehive querns from N. Yorkshire and S. Durham, work on the East Yorkshire querns, including those from Easington Barrow site, still being in progress.

Treasure House Display

Romano-British glass bangle fragments studied by Richard Campbell are currently on display in the café area at the Treasure House in Beverley. In April, Richard is to give a talk on the project at the Treasure House (see Diary Dates).

Renewal of Subs

Treasurer Lesley Jackson has been far too busy gadding about with her 'Chauffeur' looking at classical sites, to send out the renewal notices yet, but be assured, if you haven't paid your ERAS subs for 2009, you will eventually get a letter of reminder. Best pay now (see page 16).

Book Fair at Holy Trinity, Hull

ERAS will be having a stall at the local history book fair on Saturday 25th April in Holy Trinity Church Hull. If you would like to help, please contact any of the committee.

AGM

If you would like to have more of a say in how things are organized at ERAS, please ask someone to put your name forward for the committee, either at next month's Annual

General Meeting or prior to the meeting. The AGM is at 7pm before the normal lecture at 7.30pm.

SMR / HER new assistant

Victoria Brown is the new assistant, replacing Liz Chamberlin at the Historic Environment Record (HER) in Northumberland Avenue, Hull (formerly known as the SMR). Victoria did her Archaeology and Prehistory degree at Sheffield and worked with West Yorkshire Archaeology Services (WYAS) as a site supervisor for three years. With her background in West Yorkshire, Victoria is now getting to grips with the East Yorkshire archive so has a wide knowledge of the whole area. She loves the variety of the work in which she is involved and is very happy to help with any of your enquiries for archive information on Hull and the East Riding.

Big Makeover for the Yorkshire Museum.

Those who attended the recent CBA Symposium at the Yorkshire Museum, in York will have heard plans for *Letting in the Light*, a major upgrade of the exhibition space and displays, involving removal of some internal walls. If you have any comments on what you would like to see included, in the new displays, have a look at the website www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk Plans might also be afoot for upgrading Tempest Anderson Hall, where the CBA meetings are held. CBA meetings are usually worth attending, with short presentations on a variety of periods and topics and have always been well supported by ERAS, but there was a noticeable lack of our members at this last Symposium. Perhaps the title *symposium* is a little off-putting or do we just need to publicize the meetings more widely? If you are a new ERAS member, and don't know about other events taking place in the county, please don't hesitate to ask any of the committee.

600th Anniversary of North Bar, Beverley

ERAS is hoping to be involved in celebrations planned for July, so watch out in the local press for more details.

Volunteering at Thwing

Prof. Martin Millett will be doing further fieldwork at Thwing during the coming year, but cannot confirm any dates yet. If you are interested in helping, please email me and I will notify you when I have further details.

Michael Mayne

In October, 'Doctor Mike' (as he was affectionately known at the Arram dig) sent his best wishes to old friends at ERAS and said he would never forget the friendship offered to him, in the years after the loss of his wife. He moved to Dunblane, to be near family and told me in a letter that he was one of the younger members of his local Archaeological Society!

Newsletter editor

Results of recent chemical analysis of Romano-British glass from Thearne, near Beverley.

Richard Campbell

Following the article *Possible evidence for the manufacture of Romano-British glass bangles*, in the last ERAS newsletter, several pieces of the glass involved in the original study have been analysed at the University of Hull's Chemistry Department by Tony Sinclair, as part of a wider project and the results are presented below.

The pieces were analysed using a Carl Zeiss EVO60 Scanning Electron Microscope, fitted with an Inca Energy Dispersive X-Ray Spectrometer, manufactured by Oxford Instruments. The microscope used in the analysis looks at a very small surface area, measured in microns. Five adjacent areas were scanned on each sample, to give an average figure and ensure the readings were stable. The surface of the glass when magnified at this intensity is very rough, which can affect the readings taken. As all the analysis was to be non destructive, readings were taken from some surfaces which were as found, whereas fresh fractures would have given more balanced readings.

Each piece was selected for its colour and clarity and possible relationship with other bangles. For this analysis three bangles were loaned by Scunthorpe Museum and one loaned by Humber Archaeology Partnership, the remaining pieces being from the site at Thearne.

The pieces analysed included a blue Type 3 bangle from North Cave (NCE), another blue Type 3 bangle from Old Winteringham (WGMXXX94SM) and a blue Type 3 bangle from Thearne (RF204), as well as two Type 2 bangles which both had red as one of the colours in the applied cords - (SFWE190SM) from South Ferriby and (2409CSM) from Epworth, both in Lincolnshire. These latter two were included in order to compare the red glass with that found on a piece of cord from Thearne, as examples of red glass are very uncommon. Along with these pieces one more bangle piece was analysed from Thearne which had a yellow, amber and white cord (RF222), three pieces of blue and white cord (RF224, RF239, RF223), and a blue white and yellow piece of cord (RF225).

Prior to analysis each piece was cleaned with a cotton wool bud soaked in isopropyl alcohol, to remove any chemical residues on the surface, resulting from handling. Pieces were then mounted onto standard aluminium sample mounts using 'Sellotape mini fixers'. Each sample was analysed in five different places and the figures shown in Table 1 are the mean results of these analyses.

The aims of the analysis were:

- To define that it was Romano-British glass
- To see if any of the pieces had identical results
- To find out what the composition of the opaque white glass was
- To look for similarities in the opaque red glass
- To check whether the opaque yellow glass matched earlier samples
- To compare the amber glass used in the cord with vessel glass tested earlier

Most of the glass samples fell within the average parameters obtained earlier, from other Romano-British glass tested under the same conditions and using the same equipment, which led to the conclusion that all the material tested was of Romano-British origin.

The opaque white glass

All of the glass sampled had antimony (Sb_2O_3) as part of its composition. This does not occur in the typical blue/green glass and indicates the possibility this was used to colour the glass. The values of antimony were the highest in all the glasses tested.

Three of the samples, bangles 2409CSM and SFWE90SM and cord fragment RF225 came out with similar results. The potassium (K_2O) reading was higher for RF225 and SFWE90 had a trace of copper (CuO). The composition of the opaque white glass from nineteen samples tested under the same conditions revealed the highest readings were for silica (SiO_2), between 60-80%, followed by calcium-lime, (CaO) with values between 4-14% and sodium (Na_2O) with values between 0.7-10.6%.

The amber/yellow-brown glass

One piece of cord on bangle RF222 was analysed and the results were compared with two previous cords on bangles, RF126 and RF150. Apart from some minor variability the results from the cords were similar, however when compared with the vessel glass RF146 and RF162 (possibly from a conical or convex 1st-2nd century jug) there were marked differences - most notably, higher sodium levels and lower silica levels. One explanation for this could be that the recycled glass used for making the cords was mixed with the more common blue-green glass, which would enable a greater number of coloured cords to be manufactured. This discrepancy between vessel and re-used glass also occurs in the blue glass analysis.

The red glass

The red glass on two bangles 2409CSM and SFWE90SM, was analysed to see if it bore any relationship to the piece of cord RF115 found at Thearne. The cord is cobalt blue with an opaque white and an opaque red twisted trail around the outside. Cords of the same colour occur on both of the aforementioned bangles, a colour combination that is quite rare. The results showed that there were strong similarities between all three examples.

The yellow glass

Two samples were tested - RF222, the yellow cord on a bangle and RF225, the yellow trail on a cord. The results showed closer similarities with RF114, a yellow spot on a Type 3 bangle and RF222 the yellow cord on a Type 2 bangle, both of them having high lead (PbO) values. One possible explanation for RF225 not showing similar results is that the glass was very thin and poor quality.

The blue glass

Two of the three blue bangle pieces, NCE and WGMXX94SM, had a similar composition, whilst the other, RF204 from Thearne had a lower sodium (Na₂O) and higher silica (SiO₂) content, but was otherwise not too dissimilar. Analysis from another area on the bangle could have given a different reading as we have previously found in the body of another bangle which gave three different readings. The explanation for this is partly related to the temperature at which the glass was re-melted. Also, without mechanization, a truly homogenous mix of glass would not be achieved, resulting in the variability of element values in the glass matrix.

The colouring of blue glass was usually created by the addition of cobalt oxide at c.0.25 %, or cupric oxide and iron oxide combined (Henderson 1985), but in these samples cobalt oxide was not detected.

The four cords analysed revealed similar values with the exception of RF223 which had very high levels of aluminium (AL₂O₃). The blue glass in the bangles came out with similar compositions, the exception being RF204 which had low levels of sodium (Na₂O).

Discussion

To understand the limitations of this type of analysis using a scanning electron microscope it is necessary to look at the factors which can influence the results:

Pre-analysis;

- Condition of the glass – quality
- Depth of colour being analysed (thin trail applied to surface or thick cord?)
- Size of area being analysed
- Requirement for analysis to be non-destructive

Post analysis;

- Understanding that glass not fully homogenized
- Choice of area analysed
- Whether analysis was carried out on clean fractured surface or rough, worn surface

Given the above criteria, it is important to have these points in mind when drawing conclusions and it is better to view the results as indicators of possible composition. When comparing these results with other analyses of Roman glass, the percentages of the key elements, lime (CaO) and silica (SiO₂) and some of the lesser elements, iron (Fe), copper (Cu), lead (Pb) and antimony (Sb), bear strong resemblances. The exception was sodium (Na₂O), the average in Roman glass being 12 - 18%, whereas in most of the samples analysed the average was about 5%. The explanation for this anomaly is that the standard element used to measure the sodium levels against was stibnite, which in our analysis has resulted in lower readings. However set against the previous analysis carried out at Hull University these results do reveal some interesting relationships within the colour groups. They also indicate that the possible source for the glass was broken, recycled vessels, which could have been a traded commodity. Results also indicate that the glass was not re-melted at very high temperatures, thus making it difficult to achieve a homogenous mix. The analysis has shown that the blue bangles were made from diluted blue and blue/green glasses.

There are still many unanswered questions relating to the manufacture of these bangles and cords, such as whether they had any tribal significance. Were they worn by many people or were they special symbols of high status? Did the twisted cords have any significance or were they merely decorative? Where were the ingredients to make the white glass obtained?

I would like to thank the following for their help; Graham Evans, Jennifer Price, Tony Sinclair, Hull University, Lisa Staves, Scunthorpe Museum, Lisa Wastling, Humber Archaeology Partnership, Ruth Walters, and the East Riding Archaeological Society.

Bibliography

Henderson, J. 1985. The Glass from Castle Dore: Archaeological and Chemical Significance. *Cornish Archaeology* 24.

You can see the original pieces and some good colour photographs in the café area of the East Riding Treasure House, Beverley. If any other members would like to contribute their own research or dissertation topic in a short article, we would be very interested.
Editor.

A Classical Cruise By Lesley Jackson

Last November, The Chauffeur got fed up with driving and booked a cruise along the coast of North Africa. Little did he realise that the Romans had got there first, so there were plenty of ruins for him to endure. We started in Alexandria, where most of the passengers went off to Cairo for the pyramids, sphinx and museum, but having been there already, we decided to explore Alexandria itself.

Our highlight of Alexandria was a street market near the port. It started off simply, with stalls on either side of the road. As we went further in the stalls got closer and closer together and the street became increasingly decrepit. Judging by the architecture, this was once a fairly prosperous area but poverty and a lack of maintenance have had a severe impact. The top storeys of a number of the buildings had been abandoned and were in a precarious state of decay. It did give you an impression of how parts of the Roman cities might have slowly decayed whilst still being used until they became too dangerous. The fresh fruit and vegetables were of a very high standard and there were some amazing fish and shellfish stalls. In an attempt to keep the flies at bay, a number of stalls had huge incense burners amongst the produce, I don't know if it helped but it certainly added to the exotic atmosphere.

Despite its great age and history, the city has comparatively little in the way of antiquities. The Kom el Showkafa catacombs are worth a visit, although no bones remain. There are a number of interesting carvings and paintings which combine both Greek and Egyptian style and symbolism. I understand why this was done, but in my opinion it does justice to neither tradition. Qait Bay Fort now stands on the site of the ancient lighthouse of Alexandria, but we found it disappointing, as the fort has been restored and looks new, and there was no feel for its previous importance. One replacement building which is worth a visit, for its sweeping modern architecture, is the new Bibliotheca Alexandria, which commemorates the famous Library of Alexandria.

Our next stop was Libya for some serious archaeology. The first trip was to Cyrene, a Greek city for most of its life and our first glimpse of it was the enormous Temple of Zeus. What strikes you is not only the size of the buildings but the extent of the site. Our guide pointed to a distant hillside and said they were excavating more of the city. Like all our guides in Libya, he was very knowledgeable, not only about the specific site but in all associated archaeology,

the remains, giving a lovely scent on the warm air. I will spare you the list of individual buildings, but of particular interest was the large gymnasium, a main road lined with statues of Hermes and Hercules, and many temples. In the agora there was a huge pit used for bull sacrifices, and an equally large altar for placing the carcass on. The Artemis and Mithras temples also demanded bull sacrifices. (There is a lot to be said for just passing around a collection plate during the service.)

On a more gentle theme, the temple of Demeter was a circular building with four large statues and a fountain. Cyrene was founded by Greeks, who were told by the Oracle at Delphi to search for a place where the mountains come down to the sea and there they would find a spring that would never dry up. Not very precise instructions for these SatNav days, but the city founders persevered and eventually got lucky. Called the Fountain of Apollo, the spring still flows out of its cave today. Back on the ship, I was somewhat distressed to overhear a woman say that she was disappointed in Cyrene, because, "it was only ruins". Embarrassingly, she was English.

After a day at sea to recharge, our next stop was Leptis Magna (or Lepcis in some sources). How can I describe it without falling back on that terrible word 'awesome'? Even after Cyrene to acclimatise you, its sheer size and grandeur is overwhelming. It dwarfs anything I've ever seen, and makes the sites in Southern France, that I've previously raved over, seem like a few tumbledown shacks. Before I start on the archaeology; in case you hadn't noticed, I loved Leptis Magna. As it was designed to, it takes your breath away. Even The Chauffeur was impressed.

The emperor Septimus Severus came from Leptis and consequently a lot of money flowed back into the city. No doubt he would be delighted to know that nearly two thousand years later, visitors are still exclaiming, like country yokels, at the architecture. Founded by the Phoenicians in the tenth century BC, it became a Punic city before becoming part of the new Roman province of Africa in 23BC. At its height, Leptis Magna was a large and prosperous city, with an estimated population of 100,000. The city was largely destroyed by an earthquake, but as this was at a time when it was already in decline, very little was rebuilt. The Byzantines took over parts of the city but it was abandoned at the time of the Islamic conquest and the remains, happily, left for us. Walking down some of the

streets you do get the impression that the earthquake has happened just recently.

We started with the hippodrome, which is rapidly disappearing into the sea, and which was home to far too many large black ants for comfort. From there we entered the amphitheatre, through the same tunnels that the assorted victims would have used. It was an excellent way of entering the amphitheatre, through the 'tradesman's' entrance, going from the cool dark tunnels out into the heat and glare of the arena. The acoustics were incredible; no doubt carefully designed so the screams of the victims and the crunching of bones could be heard over the crowd noise. When the guide spoke in the centre of the arena it sounded as though he was using a loudspeaker. The more romantic of us imagined what it would have been like, to have been led out in chains to a painful death. The Chauffeur dismissed such fancies, and said it was just like entering onto a football pitch to the roar of the crowd. Maybe so, but normally the players on both sides leave in one piece regardless of how badly they play.

The main site is dominated by the Triumphal Arch of Septimus Severus. About thirty percent of the structure has been restored. Always a controversial action, I'm never sure whether I am for it or not. At Leptis I did feel that it was sympathetically done, but I'd hate to see any further rebuilding. The arch is very ornate, and from it you have excellent views along the main roads which lead to slightly smaller arches. It had rained heavily the night before, so parts of the site were underwater. This lent itself to some artistic photography and made the marble lined baths and plunge pools look particularly good. The Hadrian Baths were the largest in North Africa and were inlaid with every type of marble, all of which was imported and thus more expensive and prestigious.

The forum is large, as you'd expect, and is littered with masonry. Medusa is from Libya and the inhabitants of Leptis seemed to be particularly fond of her. The forum was covered in carvings of her head, all with slightly different faces. Her head, though, is said to be buried in Cyrene, where her image was conspicuously absent. A favourite place of mine was the huge Basilica church. It was originally a temple to Bacchus and there are many detailed carvings of vines, grapes and maenads. It feels like a cathedral and, despite the debris and crowds, retains a sacred and grand atmosphere. The building was three stories high, clad in marble and lined with marble columns. What looked like bullet holes on the walls, turned out to be the holes for the pegs used to hang the sheets of marble. It reminded me very much of some of the Baroque style churches we've visited in France.

A small temple of Ceres in one of the lesser forums had also been converted into a church. It contained a large

baptismal font, in the form of a cross, for total immersion and a dedication inscription in Greek, Roman and Punic. At the exit from the church were several early Christian gravestones. As with Cyrene, the city was full of temples to every god and goddess you could think of, as well as the obligatory temples to the deified emperors. It was nice that part of the old Punic centre of Leptis Magna remained with its forum and shops. The shops all had marble counters - obviously an area renowned for designer shopping.

There is a good on-site museum stuffed full of Phoenician and Punic finds as well as the later Roman ones. There are an inordinate number of statues and pots. Of particular note were some inscriptions using the Punic script, and some Roman measuring devices. The Weights and Measures police were active then, even if Health and Safety weren't. An inscription lists the severe penalties for cheating on customers. One slab was marked with rectangles of varying sizes, and was used for checking lengths of cloth. Liquids and grains were measured using a stone slab which contained holes of the appropriate size, fitted with a bung at the base. It is quite an old fashioned museum, but none the worse for that. The entrance hall to the museum is dominated by a two storey high picture of Colonel Gaddafi; I'm sure that Septimus Severus would have approved.

Leptis Magna might have had the oldest theatre in North Africa, but the most spectacular belonged to Sabratha, which was our third excursion in Libya. The site was considerably smaller and low key, but after Leptis Magna anything would be. The theatre (right) was built around 200AD and seats about five thousand. It is very ornate, the front of the stage being covered with marble engravings of the muses and associated theatrical images. The stage is backed by a beautiful three storey colonnaded wall, built of a pale-orange stone. As you'd expect, the acoustics are excellent, a person talking quietly on stage was audible even in the cheap seats at the back. As you'd also expect, there was the inevitable man on stage doing a very bad rendition of, 'Friends, Romans and countrymen'. Fortunately he was booed off stage fairly quickly.

There were, as always, plenty of temples; a huge one for Bacchus (Libya has not always been a dry country) and an impressive Byzantine church converted from a former Basilica of Apollo. An unusual feature was a huge olive oil press. The city was built from sandstone and a soft limestone, and consequently the ruins are badly eroded in parts, particularly near the coast. One difference from the other two sites, was the number of birds around, much to the delight of some frustrated birdwatchers. Shrikes were common and they enjoyed grandiose perches on top of the marble columns. The mosaics from Sabratha are said to be the finest in North Africa, however the museum was closed for renovation so we were unable to verify the boast.

Libya is an interesting but strange country, only just venturing into tourism. In the small area that we covered, the roads were good (just to distress you, petrol was only a few pence a litre) but everywhere was littered with plastic bags and rubbish. We did manage to 'jump ship' in Tripoli and spent the afternoon wandering by ourselves. There was a museum and the remains of one triumphal arch, small but with well preserved carvings. What The Chauffeur and I really went ashore for was the souq, as we always enjoy wandering around traditional markets. Like all souqs it was divided into sections, and I was quickly drawn towards the silversmithing area by the sound of the hammering. We weren't sure of the reception we would get, being so obviously Western and me the only unveiled woman around. Much to our surprise we were ignored, no one seeming remotely interested in us; even the shopkeepers didn't move when we stopped to look in the window, a stunning difference compared with reaction of Egyptian and Tunisian salesmen.

From Libya, we sailed to Malta. As we only had limited time on the island, we stayed in Valetta and admired the legacy of the Knights of St John. The inelegantly named Co-cathedral was a fascinating masterpiece of ostentation, all to the glory of the Knights rather than to God. The Grand Master's Palace is also worth a visit. Malta has its fair share of modern history, as well as much Neolithic archaeology, so in no way did we do the island justice.

Then it was on to Tunisia, to see the great enemy state of Carthage, of which little remained. Unlike the cities of Libya, Carthage was not abandoned and much has been built over and robbed out. It now lies under a very desirable suburb of Tunis. From the coach we saw many splendid houses, some modern, others renovated, all with the characteristic brilliant white walls and sky blue shutters and paintwork. Orange trees and jasmine hung over the garden walls, making it a very pleasant area. Our first stop was the Tophet with its gruesome past. It was here that babies were sacrificed to Baal and Tamit. (Some are now suggesting that this was enemy propaganda and the burials are merely a reflection of a high infant mortality.) The ground is full of tiny stelae, one for each urn buried. The guide tried to console us by suggesting that the sacrifice might only have occurred during times of hardship. A sad place, which we were glad to leave.

The port of Carthage had an ingenious design, consisting of an artificial circular island in a partially enclosed bay, allowing a huge number of ships to be handled at once. The land is now privately owned, so you can only catch a glimpse of the surviving outline, from the road. The Roman Antonine baths were the third largest in the world, but were destroyed by Vandals, so only the underground structures

remain, though these are still impressive. About 85 miles of aqueduct brought in the water and some 20 miles of this survives in the countryside. The city of Tunis still takes its water from the spring which the Romans used. Unlike the Libyan sites, this one was very crowded, and at times chaotic with numerous guides competing with each other in German, French, Italian and English. It was hard not to follow the wrong leader. A short drive brought us to the remains of the amphitheatre, where only the arena and a few underground rooms survive.

The mosaics from all the scattered sites are held in the Barda museum in Tunis, but by now The Chauffeur was pleading Roman fatigue and so we passed them by. Our guide said that there were a number of much better Roman sites further inland. (Do I see a possible foray coming up?) The ship then left the coast of Africa and headed for Spain and Gibraltar and more modern history. If this summary has inspired anyone to visit this area, we sailed with Voyages of Discovery on their 13 day North African Treasures cruise. The wide range of excursions was supplemented by a good lecture program. Also, for those with an interest in World War II in this region, there were a number of excursions to war sites and cemeteries, such as El Alamein and the Commonwealth War Graves in Libya. I certainly enjoyed the trip, especially the Libyan sites. The Chauffeur must have felt the same, for despite his complaints of 'ruin fatigue' he has already booked next



FROM THE E. RIDING FORUM

The East Riding Forum is an informal meeting held in Beverley 2-3 times a year to give those involved in archaeology in the region an opportunity to exchange news and views and generally disseminate information. The following is a brief summary of some of the items covered at the March meeting.

DMV Database

With a Maurice Beresford bequest, the University of Hull is setting up a database of DMVs in England and Wales, accessible via a website.

Lack of Storage Space

Archive storage space at ERYCC's Sewerby site is rapidly running out and temporary accommodation in Goole is being considered, pending a permanent solution. The storage charge is likely to increase to around £70 per box. Other museums, including Hedon, are similarly affected by lack of archive space.

Curator of Archaeology at HERM

After some organizational changes, Paula Gentil is now Curator of Archaeology (rather than Keeper) at Hull and is planning a full programme of events for the coming year. See Diary Dates for details.

Training Days

Andy Hammon of English Heritage gave notice of two training days coming up soon. One on 19/20th century finds and materials and one on archaeological conservation.

Recent Work in Beverley

Ed Dennison of EDAS Ltd reported that excavation inside the Beverley playhouse had finished after reaching the natural at about 3m down. Features dating back to the 12th century had been recorded and the interim report is awaited. At the former Burgess's site inside North Bar, 17/18th tanning pits had been recorded, along with Medieval features at lower levels.

Prehistoric Pottery Research

Terry Manby is working on pottery from excavations at Heslington, and is also looking Bronze Age pottery from the pipeline near Preston. He was concerned that evidence from Prehistoric sites is so vulnerable and so fragmentary in this area. Terry continues to work on the publication of the hillfort at Thwing.

Problems with Bankruptcy

Concerns were expressed about the lack of legal clarity in the case of a building developer going out of business between the excavation stage and the publication stage of planning-related archaeological work. In some cases, this can even mean that because the planning conditions have not been fulfilled, the houses may not be sold. There appears to be no consistency in defining what is meant by *publication* and whether the lodging of a report with an HER is sufficient to fulfill the planning condition. It was noted that financial problems are likely to get worse in the

near future. Another aspect of the economic downturn is that it is also affecting commercial archaeology companies, particularly in the south of England. It has been estimated that 20-45% of the profession has been made redundant in the past few months.

Heritage Protection Bill

This has now been dropped after being 'savaged' by a select committee, due to inadequate wording and high costs. Although it attracted all party support, had it gone through, it would have required 98 separate pieces of government legislation. Further discussion and a policy statement is expected in May on PPS15 which is to replace PPG15 and PPG16. The policy will represent major changes for archaeology and how it relates to local authorities.

On Secondment

Ruth Atkinson, is on secondment from her post at the HER for six months and will be working with English Heritage in connection with scheduled monuments.

ERAS Geophysical Survey

Four members of ERAS carried out a small survey using the resistance meter on farmland at Mowthorpe, near Sherriff Hutton in conjunction with the local history and archaeological group, after extensive finds of Medieval and Roman pottery and cropmark evidence. Features were starting to show up, but rain made the ground too wet for the survey to continue without damage to the crop.

Brown Bear Jawbone

A Brown Bear jawbone had been found by a farmer in the North Cave area and it was pointed out that archaeologists should always be aware of the possibility of Palaeolithic sites in the region, particularly as part of the Bielsbeck river system is in a potential quarrying area..

Vernacular Buildings Group

Dave Evans reported that subject to a lottery funding bid, the Yorkshire Vernacular Buildings Group might be doing a three year study of specific buildings, including the dating of timbers, in Beverley, Hull and E. Riding.

Fieldwork

Dave Evans reported that fieldwork was completed, in progress, or about to start on sites including - The Burrs, Brough; Queensgate, Beverley; Ganstead pipeline westwards; North Cave quarry; West jetty, Hull; White Hills gas facility, Aldborough; Routh quarry; Easington to Paul pipeline.

Cropmarks at Kilnsea

Large circular cropmarks were reported close to Kilnsea Warren. This was to be checked - possibility of wartime remains, fairy rings, Iron Age round houses etc.

Market Weighton Wold

Peter Halkon mentioned the possibility of carrying out a small research excavation on a limited area at the intersection of the Wold and the lowland this summer, if funding became available.

Fieldwork and Excavation at Thwing, East Yorkshire, 2008

Rose Ferraby, Paul Johnson. Martin Millett

Survey and excavations in 2004-07 investigated a concentration of Roman pottery ploughed-up in a field close to the pond at Thwing (TA 699058). This work revealed details of the layout and evolution of a pre-historic ladder settlement and led to the full excavation of a well-preserved stone structure. In summer 2008, excavation continued with the aims of completing the exploration of the building and investigating the pre-building stratigraphy including the central ditch of the ladder settlement. The work was undertaken over 4 weeks in July – August and involved reopening the southern part of the area excavated in 2006-07.

The excavated areas covered the southern part of the building including the whole of the southern most room and pavilion as well as part of the central room. Backfill was removed by machine and hand to expose the structures to the same levels as previously excavated. Excavation then continued with four principal foci: the main southern room of the building, the pavilion and corridor to the east, the deposits along the western wall, and a section across the Iron Age ditch sequence immediately south of the building.

Completion of the excavation enables a final sequence to be presented with the preliminary analysis of the pottery providing a chronology. There were two principal phases of pre-building activity. The first is represented by the central ditch of the ladder settlement, previously identified in the geophysical survey. A section cut through this revealed a substantial Iron Age land-boundary, c. 1.5m deep by c. 3 m wide with a complex sequence of infilling. The edges of this ditch were marked by a series of post holes and small pits, one of which produced a bronze scabbard chape and a fragment of iron blade. Some of these secondary features contained pottery dated to the first/second centuries AD.

The ditch was largely infilled before a series of enclosures representing the second phase was constructed cutting across it. The ditches defining these contained rich midden deposits of second century AD date, and had been partially back-filled before the construction of the stone house probably in the late second-early third century AD. Initial assessment of the material from these Iron Age and earlier Roman deposits strongly indicates a mixed farming economy rather than one focused on specialist pastoralism.

The Roman house was a finely built and substantial construction, initially rectangular in plan. It survived remarkably well with *in situ* rubble protecting the floor levels so that architectural details – including door ways – were preserved. Subsidence at the front necessitated its remodelling, with the main eastern wall being moved back to create a ‘winged-corridor’ plan. The interior was divided into three rooms, a main central hall, with smaller rooms accessed from it at either end of the building. The larger, at the south and was apparently a reception room. Later remodelling of the frontage resulted in further narrowing of the main rooms. In this phase the south room was decorated with painted wall plaster and was heated by a fireplace with a chimney stack – and a decorated chimney pot which was recovered from the destruction rubble. In the final phase the pavilion rooms on the front of the building were demolished with that to the south covered by a midden rich in sea food remains. The pottery evidence suggests that this phase probably dates to the early 4th century AD. It was probably at this stage that an iron smelting furnace was constructed within the main room of the building, close to the door into the southern room (which was apparently still in use). Preliminary analysis suggests that ore and fuel were brought from distant low-lying areas (probably the Vale of Pickering) for the smelt.

The building subsequently collapsed with the rubble sealing the floor levels and protecting them from plough damage. There is considerable evidence for stone robbing with some indications that this may date to the medieval period.

Overall, the evidence from the excavation provides a wealth of new material for understanding the nature of the rural landscape in this remote area of the Roman Empire. Equally, it provides key evidence to challenge a series of assumptions about the use of Roman buildings.

Acknowledgements

We are extremely grateful to Julie Scruton and Stephen F. Stubbings for allowing us to excavate on their farm again, and for providing considerable help. Tim Moore was also extremely kind and generous in managing the farm around us and providing all kinds of help, while Stevie Thomas was again enthusiastic in his support.

The excavation work was financed by grants from: the Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge; the

McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research; The Society for the Promotion of Roman Studies, and the Roman Research Trust. The excavation team was supervised by Rose Ferraby and Paul Johnson. Belinda Crerar organized and supervised the finds processing. Lacey Wallace acted as site assistant and James Hales led the team excavating the wall-plaster. Excavators included Cambridge University students and volunteers from the East Riding Archaeological Society. Rachel Ballantyne organized the palaeobotanical sampling and analysed the resulting material, and Krish Seetah recorded the animal bones. Phil Mills examined the ceramic building material and Jerry Evans the pottery. Metal-detecting was undertaken by Roy Doughty and David Haldenby.



Excavation at Thwing, 2008. (Looking SSE)

Lacey Wallace acted as site assistant and James Hales led the team excavating the wall-plaster. Excavators included students from the University of Cambridge and volunteers from the East Riding Archaeological Society. Rachel Ballantyne organized the palaeobotanical sampling and analysed the resulting material, and Krish Seetah recorded the animal bones. Phil Mills examined the ceramic building material and Jerry Evans the pottery. Metal-detecting was undertaken by Roy Doughty and David Haldenby.

GLADIATOR DAY!
AT HULL AND EAST RIDING
MUSEUM, HULL
SATURDAY 30TH MAY 11AM – 3PM

SEE GLADIATORS FIGHTING
IN THE ARENA
TALK TO SOLDIERS ABOUT LIFE IN
THE ROMAN ARMY
WATCH A POTTER AT WORK
FIND OUT WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO
LIVE IN EAST YORKSHIRE
IN ROMAN TIMES
TRY ON A ROMAN HELMET
MAKE YOUR OWN SHIELD
TO TAKE AWAY
ALL ACTIVITIES FREE

