



# Colchester Archaeological Group NEWSLETTER

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## CAG Members Winter party

37 members gathered and spent a pleasant evening socialising and “catching-up” at the Hawkins Rooms, St Botolph’s Church. This was followed by a quiz set by Francis and the traditional raffle. A big thank you to all those who helped to organise the event.

## The Google Earth plus study day. Geoff Lunn

Applications of Online Imaging Tools to Archaeological Desktop Research

On 16<sup>th</sup> November, Tim Dennis (with the assistance of myself) led a one day seminar on the applications of “online imaging tools” (primarily Google Earth) to archaeological desk based research. The seminar, was attended by 12 members of CAG, came about as a result of the gradual realisation within our Cropmarks, Roman Roads and Villas to Parish (V2P) study groups, that Google Earth and other online applications were becoming increasingly essential in conducting desk based research into georeferenced historical terrestrial features, that is to say, the investigation of cropmarks and other anomalies using aerial photography, old maps, geological maps and heritage environment records.

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Tim focused primarily on the use of Google Earth and its features, which is basically a complete set of satellite images of (most of) the whole world, in surprising detail, with historical images of the UK dating back as far as 1945 in some cases, providing snapshots of archaeological sites over the intervening years, at different times of the year, showing corresponding differences in crop development. Thus, one is able to compare cropmarks e.g. In the summer of 2018 (a particularly good year for cropmarks), with other years, which sometimes yield very different results, depending on the state of development of the crop.



Tim also covered some of the very powerful tools within GE that can be used for recording features in a very simple, yet easy to use way. This includes the simple marking of the location of features (with attached notes), to drawing paths along roman roads and around enclosures, and overlaying images such as Lidar plots and archaeological plan drawings accurately (so called “georeferenced”) relative to the ground. In this way, feature locations can be referenced to various mapping coordinate systems such as Latitude / Longitude, Ordnance Survey and Global Positioning Satellite (GPS), which many of us now use for navigating our way across the UK road network on smart phones.

The first seminar was so successful that a second one was organised two weeks later for those who had missed the first, again well attended, and Tim and I would be very happy to organise another one if there is sufficient demand.

## **All-day coach trip to Cambridgeshire**

Friday 9th August: We left Colchester by coach and reached Elton Hall, near Peterborough, at about 11.00am. We were met by Guides who split us up into two parties and then we toured the Hall with them telling us of it's history. The Hall contains work from the 15th, 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and has an exceptional collection of art collected by the family, these including Constable's view of Dedham Vale and a vast library of books including Henry VIII's bible.

We then were left to tour the immaculate Gardens and then some of us found time to visit the Tea room in the Garden Centre.

On arrival at Cambridge we walked to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology. Amongst the fascinating exhibitions were items collected from the prehistoric Star Carr site. Time was limited and we would have liked to spend more time there, but had to return to the coach and were home by 6.30pm. Thanks to Anna and John for organising this interesting trip.

## **Fordham site open evening**

Tuesday July 23rd. The members visit was one of four that had occurred that week and the week before including Fordham History Society and friends of the Colchester Archaeological Trust. Members were given a tour of the site and updated on our progress.

## **A talk from Professor Nicolas Balbi**

Professor Balbi talked of his excavation of an Inca temple in the Andes, together with the history of the Inca people, their beliefs and their road system and their relationship to the site. He talked of the techniques he had to employ in digging in temperatures up to 50°C (122°F). The event was well attended and there was plenty of interest from the audience and questions were asked when the talk finished. CAG are grateful to Professor Balbi for the time and effort he put into his lecture.



Anna showing the 2019 Winter Solstice Watchers photos of the sun rising on the 2013 Winter Solstice (above)

## Winter Solstice walk. Neil Short

**21<sup>st</sup> Dec 2019**

It was a cool and very, very wet morning as I pulled into the Crown Pub car park early in the morning of the 21<sup>st</sup> December 2019. At 07:30am those present began the discussion of whether or not the walk to the cursus should be attempted. The general view was no, a “sort of” decision to drink coffee at the pub and await breakfast. The walk needed a champion and in stepped Anna Moore. A decisive and commanding tone and a clear statement of “well I’ll going as I’m here” soon swayed 10 further brave (or fool-hardy) souls to join her.

We set off in the rain; the general belief in seeing the sunrise (it would be a first since 2013) was, to be blunt, low. Fortunately, the rain eased and stopped by the time we reached our viewpoint – the west end of the Neolithic cursus. We turned east at the required time (informed to be 08:20 to cover the rise above the higher ground) and, well, we saw cloud. Undeterred, Anna described, using photographs from 2013, just what we were missing. A few of us remained for a few minutes as the skyline looking to brightening and, indeed, at 08:35am (15mins late but who’s counting) sunlight broke through.

Our return to the pub was supported by increasing brightness and eventually the sun’s orb became clear. Not quite the full Solstice experience but a close-run thing. The full English (or something apparently called a “vegetarian alternative”) was enjoyed all the more. Many thanks for an enjoyable time in the company of fellow walkers, fellow breakfasters (?), organisers and, of course, Anna for adding the required decisiveness to make the walk happen. Here’s to a happy 2020,

## Diggers Dinner

38 members of the Fordham diggers met at the Officers Club in Colchester for their now annual traditional Christmas Meal and social evening. It is interesting to see everyone dressed up and not covered in mud. Thanks to Denise for organising the evening and her unconventional version of “Secret Santa” and her interesting quiz which had us all thinking.

## Lecture series

The Winter lecture series remains popular with members and friends. The last of the present series is on Monday 2nd March. Members are welcome to approach Christine with ideas for speakers for this year’s series.

## Up-coming events

### Proposed Field walking Study Day

Arrangements are under way to hold a Study Day at Roman Circus House on 22nd February 2020. See the Prehistoric Cropmark study group report for more details.

### 2020 CAG Weekend away

It is hoped there will be a Colchester Archaeological Group weekend away in the first weekend in May 2020, staying at the Gibside Hotel, near Newcastle, where we have stayed before. It is about time we explored the area and Hadrian’s wall again. A few members have shown interest in this trip. The costs should be similar to last year including coach (£300?). Please let Barbara know on [butlerbarbara.46@gmail.com](mailto:butlerbarbara.46@gmail.com) or 07808 968766 if you would be interested in joining this weekend away.



# FIELD-WORK REPORT

## Fordham site update. Alan Chaplin

After a summer of good weather excavation continued at the site over the winter period. The site then had to be closed over Christmas and New Year due to this being waterlogged and to protect it from being damaged. We have progressed to the north of the area which we believe, so far, to be the extent of our building. The layout continues to show a complex structure which has seen a numbers of major rebuilds in its life. As it is likely that we should complete the excavation of the main building this year discussion is taking place on other areas of interest within the site.

So far we have recorded over 1,000 small finds and over 3,500 bags of general finds from the site. Of the many interesting finds were three items made of Jet, part of a bracelet, a spinning whorl and a pin which is shown below. The only known source of Jet is from Whitby and it is very unusual to find such items. This helps indicate that the residents of the building were possible of high status. (See also page 11: Bone inlay article by Frank Lockwood).



It is good to see that this year has seen a number of enthusiastic new diggers to the site to add to our regulars. Also the continuing support of the Fordham History Group.

## PREHISTORIC CROPMARK STUDY GROUP

### Sally Bartrum and Anna Moore

The PH Cropmark Study Group continues to meet every 6 weeks approx. Membership of the Group has increased to 15, with 12 regularly attending meetings. New members are always welcome. Our next meeting will be at the Wormingford Crown at 10 30am on 22nd January.

**Visit to Long Melford:** on 10<sup>th</sup> July several members of the group enjoyed an interesting morning as guests of Kenneth Dodds at the Long Melford Heritage Centre. Kenneth was able to show aerial images of many cropmarks he's identified in and around Long Melford. This was followed by much discussion about likely prehistoric monuments in that part of the Stour Valley.

**Practical Archaeology:** on 17<sup>th</sup> July members of the group met in a shady spot at Little Ropers Woodland Campsite to spend a day hand building 'neolithic style' pots. We first made various inclusions to add to the clay including crushed burnt flint, 'grog' (crushed fired clay) and crushed oyster shell. We all had a great time and produced a number of authentic looking pots which were taken home to await 'bonfire firing' later in the year.

#### **The Experimental bonfire firing, 9<sup>th</sup> Oct 2019**

Previously, a group of people had met in a clearing in the woods at Little Ropers Farm, Bures to make pots by hand-building. The clay was commercially bought, some red earthenware and some light grey grogged stoneware. We added our own inclusions, either crushed burnt flint or crushed shell. Each potter managed to make one or two pots which were left for several weeks to dry out. The potters were: Adrian Paris, Andrew White, Anna Moore, Carol Wheeldon, Denise Hardy, Nick Rowe, and Sally Bartrum.

Several more pots were made on a later occasion including one test slab which had knotted reeds pushed into it to try to replicate a neolithic type of decoration (Sally). All together, fifteen pots were brought to the bonfire firing.

**The Firing:** We met in the morning of Wed 9<sup>th</sup> Oct at Little Ropers Farm. A pit was dug and the earth heaped up on the sides, creating a dip of about 20cm. A preliminary fire was lit in order to warm up the earth and create a layer of ash. The pots were placed on the earth bank to heat them prior to placing them in the bonfire. The fire was then allowed to die down and the resulting ash spread evenly on the bottom of the pit. After the ash had been

allowed to cool a little, the pots were placed in the bottom of the pit and the second fire built up by placing bundles of twiggy wood and light pieces of wood on top. It was a dry windy day and although the second fire was initially reluctant to get going, once it had caught it burnt very quickly with lots of smoke and flames. One or two of the pots cracked almost immediately. The fire was fed for about an hour and a half, with larger pieces going on last (an enormous amount of wood was used). Then the flames were covered by a layer of earth, bark, moss etc to damp it down, then it was left for twenty-four hours

The following day, the fire was raked apart and found to be still smoking and very hot. We could see that most of the pots had shattered and after a while we could take them out to see what the damage was. Only about four had survived intact, the others had suffered various degrees of damage.



The successful pots were a) small and quite thick, b) had rounded bases and c) were made by the pinch or thumb method. The stoneware pots appear to have survived better than the earthenware. The larger pots and those made with coils or straps were the most vulnerable, presumably, as they were more likely to have several weak spots. We weren't able to measure the temperature of the fire, however only some of the pots seem to have fired well enough to have reached ceramic change (i.e. the clay had irreversibly become pot). Bizarrely, the knotted reeds in the test slab were still intact and had not burned away.

**Points to note:** Make the pots quite thick with as few coils or straps as possible in order to avoid vulnerable spots. The main problem was not having enough control of the bonfire. If the temperature had been able to increase more slowly, more of the pots would probably have survived. This is how modern kilns work. How can it be achieved in a bonfire?

**Cheese:** As a side experiment, Anna attempted to make some cheese on the bonfire. A litre of raw unpasteurised milk was put in a pot and placed by the side of the bonfire to warm up. Once it was hot (not boiling point but too hot to touch) it was removed from the fire and three tablespoons of vinegar mixed with a little water was added. The milk started to separate into curds and whey, and after about 10-15 minutes it was strained through a double layer of muslin. The muslin was squeezed to get as much whey out as possible (which was then discarded) and the curds were left to drain for about an hour. The result was similar to modern cottage cheese, not particularly tasty but with the addition of some flavouring (salt, pepper, herbs, olive oil) made a very decent lunch.

**Ongoing Research Bowdens Cropmarks and Proposed Field Walk:** Richard has continued his study of the cropmarks in the Bowdens area of Wormingford. As a result of his findings, and following on from our walk in May, the group has used aerial photos and Lidar images produced by Tim to identify an area where we believe a field walk could produce results to help us to date the monuments there.

The landowner provisionally gave his consent to a fieldwalking session taking place in the Spring 2020. Unfortunately the cereal crop drilled in the autumn has been adversely affected by the many inches of rain during the latter part of the year and the resulting flooding. Further liaison with the landowner will be necessary as it's likely the land will be redrilled in the spring. If we are able to arrange a fieldwalk we will advise all CAG members who will be given the opportunity to take part on a 'first come' basis.

**Proposed Fieldwalking Study Day:** arrangements are under way to hold a Study Day at Roman Circus House on 22nd February 2020. CAT's Howard Brooks and Adam Wightman will give participants an overview of how to set the field out; how to identify worked and burnt flint and other likely finds; and how to assess, sort and record finds. More information and a booking form will be sent to all CAG members very soon. Numbers will be limited and again allocated on a 'first come' basis.

**Winter Solstice Watch 2019:** Despite an unfavourable weather forecast eleven hopeful Solstice Watchers gathered at the western end of the linear cropmark on Metlands at Wormingford (see page 25 of CAG Publication 'The Stour Valley: A Prehistoric Landscape'). Any chance of seeing the sunrise appeared unlikely as Anna led the



walk from The Crown, however the sun made an unexpected, but perfectly timed appearance, as it rose above Lodge Hill amid a turbulent sky. The watchers returned to the Crown to share the experience with the dozen or so fellow breakfasters, who may have regretted their decision to stay warm and dry at the pub! You can find Neil Short's first hand report and pictures on page 3.

## ROMAN ROADS GROUP

### Evidence for Roman Roads in the Box Valley

Geoff Lunn, Dec 2019

As you probably know, Stratford St Mary (SsM) lies on the important Pye Road, running from Colchester, north to Venta Icenorum near Norwich, and is reckoned by many (including myself) to be the site of the "lost" Roman staging post of Ad Ansam, although evidence for this is pretty scant on the ground. It is also known that at least one Roman road led from SsM to Ixworth, NW of Bury St Edmunds, presumably following the Brett Valley for part of its route. I have not had time to investigate this road further, but will be doing so hopefully with the help of Jonathan over the coming months.

So, I wanted to share with you Jonathan's findings in the Box Valley, without really having done any further research into other sources of information concerning the possibility of a Roman Road running somewhere along the valley, just because I find it interesting, and I hope that you will too.



As you will no doubt know, wherever one encounters a place name, or a road in the middle of nowhere, with the words "Street, Stone, Stane", or "Strat or Stan" as part of the name, this usually indicates that there was at one time a stone road, most likely Roman, in the vicinity. Jonathan has taken these simple guidelines and searched the area around Hadleigh and a little beyond on various old and new maps, for likely culprits. Obvious ones would of course be Stratford (St. Mary), Stone Street, and our very own Stanway. Add to this routes marked on old maps as being Roman, and we get the map shown below, with possible Roman routes and places marked in yellow on the Google Earth background. There are various caveats in all of this of course – not all "Streets" are likely to be of Roman origin, as the word "Street" has been adopted in more modern times to mean, well, a street! Whereas, the "Streets" that we are looking for are derived from the old English word "Straet", meaning a stone or metalled



road, most likely to have been made by the Romans. It is also sadly the case that our map making ancestors were sometimes a little over zealous in attributing straight sections of road to the Romans, when in fact it is highly unlikely that this is the case. Beware the words “Roman Road” on an OS map, especially older versions, as it may simply be untrue.

Another misleading assumption that I (and I’m sure others too) have made is that the primary road running through a modern village named “XYZ” Street, must follow the route of the original Roman Road from whence it gets its name. Not so. The RRG recently found a section of Roman road which crosses the modern road through the village of Horsley Cross Street on the Tendring Peninsula at right angles! In fact the Roman road is nowhere to be seen, as it is buried under fields behind the houses that now line the modern road, and can only be glimpsed by the trained eye on Lidar plots overlaying Google Earth.

So, lets have a look at Jono’s yellow placenames and routes in the Box Valley. Hopefully you can see how the various places and routes along the valley marked in yellow sort of line up. I say “sort of” because the various locations and paths certainly don’t line up in a nice straight line as we would tend to expect from the Romans. This I believe is also intriguing. From the number of instances of Roman-like names and suspected routes along the valley, including Thorington Street, Scotland Street, Whitestreet Green, Calais Street, Sherbourne Street and Edwardstone, it seems highly likely that there was indeed a Roman Road running up there. And I almost forgot to mention, that if one extends the route beyond the top of the valley, one is heading via the Waldingfields almost straight for Long Melford, that very well known Roman settlement. A Roman road between Stratford St Mary and Long Melford? Why not? But if so, where is it, where are the traces on the ground, and why isnt it straight, or even just straightish?

Well, I for one have no idea, but I certainly intend to try and find out more over the next few months, and if I find anything interesting I will let you all know. And of course, if anyone has any additional information on what the Romans were up to along the Box Valley, then please do let myself or Jonathan know. I am quite prepared to find that a route is already known and that neither I nor Jono have yet unearthed it, but somehow I suspect not

## **VILLA TO PARISH (V2P) Sub-Group**

### **Neil J Short**

In February 2019 CAG, following a task challenge from Philip Crummy (CAT), formed the “Villa to Parish” sub-group. This “V2P” Team was challenged to look for correlation in Roman site locations and those of early medieval settlements, in particular early religious sites (hence the “Villa to Parish” title) all within an agreed section of the Colchester Borough region. In the intervening period the V2P Team, 34 CAG members of which some 12-15 members meet for the meetings at Roman Circus House (roughly every 2-3 months). The action within the Challenge appears straightforward; to locate all Roman building/villa sites in the area, locate the sites of church churches (together with an evidence of earlier church locations) and map the two together. If the locations are common – we have correlation. In the intervening time since start-up, the V2P has initially struggled to delivery this action plan; largely through lack of or quality of documentation evidence. Valued support from Dr Jess Tipper, Archaeology Advisor at Colchester Borough Council, in particular access/awareness of the Colchester Heritage database, identified a clear message of the limits of roman finds within our search area. The challenge is afoot.

One clear start-point is to examine the upstanding religious buildings (churches) in the area and search for roman material in the fabric. Whilst this material can have a wide range of “history” in its place within current churches the view is that it is likely to denote a “close” proximity of roman settlement to the church. The V2P has and continues to address this issue (examples in photographs) and identifies most, if not all (old/medieval) churches in the area contain some roman material. A bigger challenge lies with the location of roman sites. Very few Roman villas are “known” in the search area. Historic England lists only 3-off, the known of Great Tey and the possible near Abberton and Mersea.





Re-used roman tile and septeria in Stanway Church

Current activity within the Team is looking to identify “likely” sites near to current churches and/or whether cropmarks and roman finds suggest settlement/building. Identified areas of interest are to be targeted for field walks, probably in Spring 2020. To date, areas of interest are being developed/researched within Fordham parish, both the current “villa” site and one near to Archendines, together with sites in Wakes Colne, Chappel and (potentially) Marks Tey parishes.

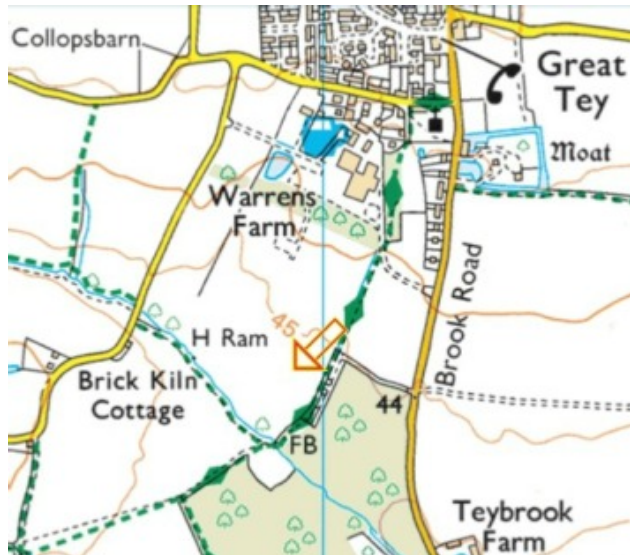
Finally, both storage of the potential considerable amount of developed information and intra-Team working has been considered and both a Drop-Box system (Storage) and a Group Forum has been set-up. Overall, good progress is being made with the hope of confirming new and exciting action and understanding in the coming months.

Remember, any CAG members are welcome to join: contact Neil J Short (V2P Lead) [njs.int@btinternet.com](mailto:njs.int@btinternet.com)

## GREAT TEY ROMAN VILLA

John Moore

As part of the V2P (Roman Villa to Medieval Parish) project I researched the parish of Great Tey. The most important Roman remains located there is the villa, on farmland belonging to Warrens Farm. It is today a Scheduled Monument and no trace of the villa can be seen as it was back-filled after excavation and the remains are buried well below the current field surface. However, despite two excavations and several visits by CAG to the site for field-walking, metal-detecting and a geophysical survey - covering a period of over 50 years, I was struck by how fragmented the information about the site was, and therefore decided to pull together all the pieces I could find to tell the story of the villa from discovery to the present date.



The villa site (arrowed), location from the English Heritage Scheduling record



The full extent of the Scheduled Monument

In 1953, whilst deep ploughing a field south-west of Warrens Farm, Great Tey, Mr Fairs, the farmer, unearthed a large quantity of Roman material, mainly mortar, painted wall-plaster and tile (mostly hollow flue-tile). He also picked up a Constantinian coin and two pot-rims. This discovery was reported in the 1954 edition of the ‘Journal of Roman Studies’, the UK’s premier publication on all matters Roman. Two years later, in 1956, the site was partially excavated by a prominent local amateur archaeologist, Maurice Campen. Campen concluded that it was a winged corridor villa, and his excavations focused on the corridor, which he originally stated to be some 30 feet long and 4 feet wide, paved with red tesserae. Further excavation revealed that it was actually 33 feet long and 8 feet wide, and was thought to be the longest Roman corridor known at the time in Britain. Recorded finds from the site included window glass, painted wall plaster, C4th coins of Constantine I and II, Magnentius and Decentius



and a Samian stamp of Borillus, all of which appear to have been retained by the excavator. Campen is not known to have produced an excavation report, but he did submit seven photographs to the Ministry of Works. These photographs, now held by Essex County Council, cannot at present be reproduced due to issues with copyright, but they all show the corridor, which appears to be extremely well-preserved. Incidentally, in 1960 Campen joined CAG, but I can find no record of him excavating with other group members.

The villa was partially excavated again between 1965 and 1971 by a group calling itself 'Colchester Archaeological Research Group'. This was a fairly short-lived group of local amateur archaeologists which was set up in the early 1960's, before the 'Colchester Excavation Committee' (the fore-runner of Colchester Archaeological Trust) was re-constituted in 1963. CARG was not connected with CAG, although its leader, John Blyth, was himself a CAG member. The only other documented excavator at Great Tey was Mr R. Peterson, who lived in the village, although both Philip Crummy and Howard Brooks of Colchester Archaeological Trust are known to have excavated there. These excavations confirmed that it was a corridor villa, and they also revealed a substantial masonry building towards the northern edge of the site. This building incorporated tessellated floors and a hypocaust heating system. To the south lay a yard area which was believed to have contained further ancillary timber buildings. The villa was first built in the mid-to-late 2nd century AD, probably replacing an early Roman farmstead on the same site, as it overlay a boundary ditch dated by pottery to the mid-1st to mid-2nd century AD. The earliest phase of the villa appears to have consisted of a single west range, but by the early-to-mid 3rd century AD it had developed into a much larger winged corridor building. The interior of the villa was finished to a high standard, with floors of red tile tesserae and opus signinum, painted wall plaster and window glass. Its disuse was dated to the mid-to-late 4th century by the coins of Magnentius and Decentius (350-353AD) found in its demolition rubble during the first excavation. The whereabouts of the finds from this second excavation is unknown.



Illustration of a winged corridor villa © English Heritage

As with the earlier excavation, details were published in the 'Journal of Roman Studies', and Blyth also produced a documentary record of his work at the end of 1965, variously stated to be a plan or a report. This was not published, but the papers were deposited with Colchester Museum and have been used on a number of occasions for reference purposes during later excavations in the Great Tey area. Unfortunately Colchester Museum is currently unable to locate this documentation, so regrettably it cannot be used as a primary source of information for this article. It is believed that all of Blyth's personal records were destroyed by a fire at his home.

Of course, all villas require access to a road. In 1975, CAG member Ida McMaster was examining some aerial photographs and noticed crop-marks south of the villa site indicating a possible Roman road, leading off the existing Little Tey to Great Tey road at a dog-leg close to Little Tey House. Excavations by CAG in 1990 and 1991, led by James Fawn, proved the existence of the road, and James led further excavations throughout the rest of the 1990s and into the 2000s, concluding in 2006, to establish the northern extent of the road. Physical evidence of the road ceased around 240 metres south-west of the villa, where its depth made it impossible to continue excavations. However cropmarks on the same alignment at Countess Cross, White Colne, 7 kilometres to the north-west, indicate that the road continued well beyond Great Tey. There is soil-mark evidence that there was a spur from this road leading directly to the villa.



The line of the Roman road



Cropmarks showing the line of the Roman road to the west of Teybrook Farm

In autumn 1993 James Fawn organised a field-walking survey of the villa site, which revealed a dense concentration of Roman tile. The tile covered an area of 145 metres by 130 metres, which coincided with a terraced platform in the gentle slope of the valley side. This terraced platform is believed to have been the full extent of the villa complex.

Two years later, in November 1995, 24 years after excavations ceased, the villa site and its surrounding area were designated a Scheduled Monument. One is led to the conclusion that James was personally instrumental in securing this designation.

The following year, in late 1996, CAG member Peter Cott performed a geophysical survey of the site, employing both resistivity and magnetometry. Schedule Monument Consent from English Heritage was required, and permission having been granted, Cott surveyed 9,600m<sup>2</sup> of ground. Following the survey, he reported to English Heritage that the resistivity survey showed only ridge and furrow patterns, but that the magnetometry survey was more promising, showing a number of ditches, some being parallel to each other. However, he found no conclusive evidence of a building. This does seem surprising, given the results of the two partial excavations, especially the photographs.

The villa did not exist in isolation – it was the epicentre of a considerable estate. This was established in early 1998, when Essex County Council Field Archaeology Unit was monitoring the construction of a new water main between Cressing and Great Horkesley. West of Great Tey village, about 800 metres north-west of the villa, excavators recorded a sequence of Roman ditches, trackways and enclosures containing corn-drying kilns, as well as a large amount of pottery. The occupation period covered the mid-1st to later-4th century AD, contemporary with the villa site, and the excavation team concluded that this area was indeed part of the villa estate.

The final recorded visit to the villa site was made in 2005, towards the end of the Roman Road excavations, when metal-detecting by CAG members in the vicinity of the villa unearthed more C4th coins.

In writing this article, it has been somewhat frustrating that first-hand information from the three primary sources cannot be incorporated in it: Campen's photographs being unavailable for illustration purposes, the only documentation (Blyth's report/plan of his excavation) being 'lost' in Colchester Museum's archives and the whereabouts of the 'finds' from both of the excavations being currently unknown - although over the years the farmer himself has collected and retained a number of Roman artefacts. Presumably the remains of the villa still live on under the field, but for how much longer? In the current 'Heritage at Risk Register', published in October 2019, you will find this entry:



SITE NAME:	Roman villa 450m south of Warren's Farm, Great Tey		
DESIGNATION:	Scheduled Monument	LIST ENTRY NUMBER:	1013516
CONDITION:	Extensive significant problems	TREND:	Declining
PRINCIPAL VULNERABILITY:	Arable ploughing	NEW ENTRY?:	No
OWNER TYPE:	Commercial company	CONTACT:	David Kenny 01223 582760

To end on a happier note, however, a visual reminder of the villa is still available for all to see, in the fabric of the Church of St Barnabas, Great Tey, especially in the three pre-Conquest stages of the tower.



Church of St Barnabas, South side



Close-up of the pre-Conquest tower, South side

#### Sources:

Journal of Roman Studies, Vol 44, 1954, British Library  
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 Composite photograph of Teybrook Farm, RAF (Old Series), courtesy Don Goodman  
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 "Notes on Great Tey Roman Road Excavations", John Mallinson, CAG Bulletin Vol 53, 2013  
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 Additional information from Philip Crummy, Colchester Archaeological Trust, 2019

## Intriguing Fragments of Bone Inlay from the Roman Villa Site at Fordham in Essex

**Frank Lockwood**

The first fragments of bone inlay were found in the apse area of the 4th Century Villa footprint in the early days of the excavation at Fordham and seems to depict a female figure with wild hair and a bolt of cloth. A continuation of the building's excavation started early in 2019 and remarkably more fragments have been discovered. The context these items were found in is a destruction layer/horizon that extends across the building from the eastern side and is also in the fill of the robbed out hypocaust room on the western side. This destruction layer certainly results from the very last useful days of the building and perhaps the final Roman robbing that extensively destroyed what had remained of the building in the late 4th and perhaps early 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Although further robbing in the post roman period certainly took place, which is testified by the CBM found in the local All Saints Church in Fordham.

It is hoped that more bone inlay fragments will be found when this work is completed.

There are so few fragments of bone inlay found on archaeological sites, which may be testament to the rarity and fragile nature of the pieces, and what there is would seem to have a more symmetrical design.

These fragments from Fordham are remarkable in that they seem to be depicting animals, human figures, possible structures and what could be plants and pots. On first inspection they seemed, to my untrained eye, more akin to Celtic art rather than Roman but they have been attributed to a 4th century date or later and although seemingly very rare they are not unique as is illustrated by a fragment of bone inlay found at the Roman Temple site in Chelmsford in the early 70's. Ref. [https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-281-1/dissemination/pdf/cba\\_rr\\_075.pdf](https://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archiveDS/archiveDownload?t=arch-281-1/dissemination/pdf/cba_rr_075.pdf)



A similarity in design from a fragment of bone inlay found at the Chelmsford Temple site to the Fordham fragments in the scrolls and sharp incised lines of the design.

Could these items have come from the same artist/workshop, artistic style?

Illustrated are most of the fragments so far discovered from the Fordham site. I have shown them in the groupings that I consider they may belong.





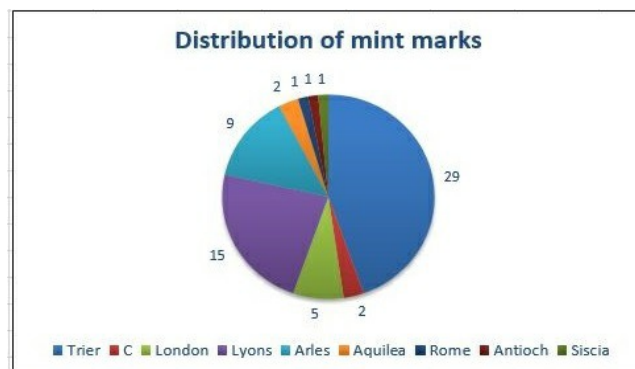
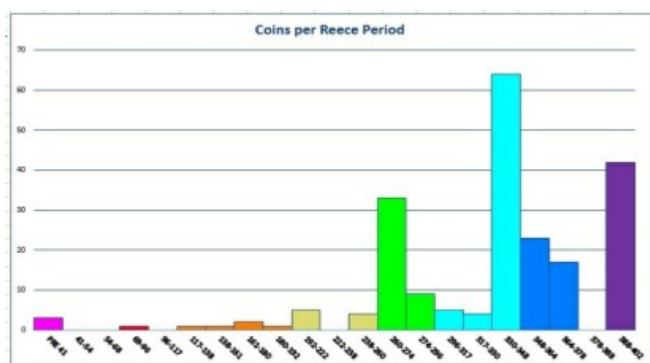
It cannot be known if these fragments were set in Roman furniture or a box/casket, perhaps even the remains of a plaque.

The design seems naïve but forceful set on a background of small squares (cross hatch) which are almost mosaic in appearance certainly the work of a competent craftsman.

It can be hoped that new fragments will be discovered in the course of the excavation perhaps indicating more fully the motives and themes of the complete work and would enable a much fuller report that these remarkable items undoubtedly deserve.

## Coin distribution update from Fordham

Peter Lancaster



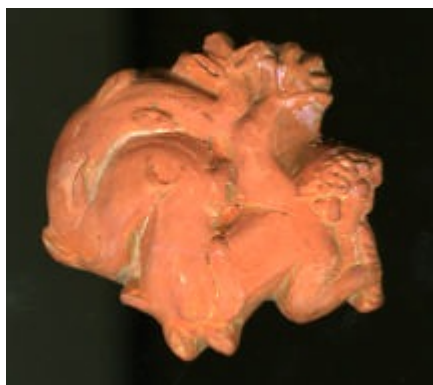
The distribution is based on date and readable mint marks up to November 2019. The hypothesis put forward, based on certain finds, is of a link the site may have with Roman Germany. By far the most common mint mark is from Trier in Germany 44.62%. The second most common is Lyons 23.08%.

The most noticeable change in the coin finds histogram is the large growth in the last period.

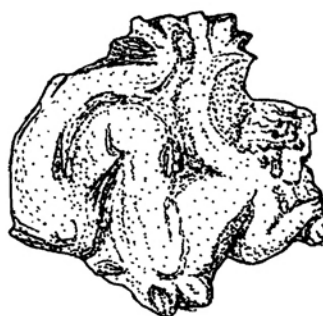
## An explanation of the CAG Logo

Anna Moore

The first CAG Bulletin was produced in 1958 in order to publish the fieldwork carried out by the recently formed Colchester Archaeological Group during the previous year. At first, the annual Bulletins appeared with the cover illustrated with the Borough and County coats-of-arms and both faces of the Camulodunum coin depicting the wheat-ear and the horse. From 1967 the Bulletins, which were by then smaller, had a plain cover with a border in



Original potter's stamp (6cm wide)



Drawn by Anna Moore (2007)



Interpretation of stamp for logo by T Moyses

a Greek key pattern, but later it was decided to adopt a logo. The design chosen was taken from a Roman potter's hand stamp, drawn by a member of the group, and it first appeared on the title page of Vol. 22, published in 1979. In that year, our then Chairman, Kath Evans, wrote a description of the stamp. The extracts from the article are reproduced below. The current version of the logo was drawn by T. Moyses and dates from 1991.

### **Extracts from A Potter's Hand Stamp by Kath Evans**

The potter's stamp illustrated on the bulletin cover was found on Hilly Fields, Colchester. It is now in the Castle Museum (acc.no.11.1957) and we are grateful for kind permission to reproduce it. The stamp is mushroom shaped with a somewhat bossed or raised centre to fit the interior curve of a bowl. It is in strong relief and depicts Triton blowing a conch and the figure is so arranged that it approximately fits into a circular space. MR Hull (1)

considers it typical of the work of the Colchester potters which, at times, had a fine disregard for detail and accuracy. For example, the disproportionate size of the hands. At the back of the stamp is an almost cylindrical handle and the whole is made of a particularly fine grained clay which is very hard (2). One other such stamp with a leaf design is also preserved at Colchester and there is a possibility that a third was found though its whereabouts are not now known.

#### **Method of using hand stamps:**

The stamps were used on moulds for decorated sigillata (samian ware). A mould to reach the sides of a bowl to the limit of any decoration on it was prepared in soft clay, and after turning but before drying, the stamp was impressed on the inner side of the mould. When the mould was fired, clay for the bowl was spun into the mould by the wheel, thus a positive version of the stamp was taken on to the outer surface of the bowl, the inner surface of which was finished by wheel. The mould was then left until its contents had shrunk sufficiently to be removed easily (some moulds had a central hole to facilitate this). Once removed from the mould the bowl was given a rim and a foot-ring. Stamps and moulds could be used many times.

(1) Hull, M.R. *The Roman Potters' Kilns of Colchester* (1963) 50

The full report can be found in CAG Bulletin Vol. 47 which can be found on our website.

#### **So who is Triton?**

Triton, in Greek mythology, a merman, demigod of the sea; he was the son of the sea god, Poseidon, and his wife, Amphitrite. According to the Greek poet Hesiod, Triton dwelt with his parents in a golden palace in the depths of the sea. Sometimes he was not particularized but was one of many Tritons. He was represented as human down to his waist, with the tail of a fish. Triton's special attribute was a twisted seashell, on which he blew to calm or raise the waves. *From Encyclopaedia Britannica.*



## **Colchester Young Archaeologists Club News**

**Barbara Butler**

The Young Archaeologists finished an eventful year by making star mosaics, playing Shakespeare monopoly devised by one of our teenage volunteers, making Christmas cards, playing Aquila and creating things out of Lego. We enjoyed a mulled fruit punch, mince pies and snacks and treats too.



The picture shows members of the Young Archaeologists' club activities at their December meeting at Roman Circus House.

**Page 15: Publications, Committee members and Notices has been deleted  
due to maximum web download restrictions**

**A. Chaplin (Editor)**