



## **New Research on Finds from South and South-Western Britain**

### **Abstracts**

#### ***Alyson Tanner : Finds from three local sites in the Pitt Rivers Collection at Salisbury Museum***

Salisbury Museum holds the Pitt Rivers Wessex collection which comprises objects acquired during the last 20 years of Pitt Rivers' life and includes finds from excavations on Rushmore, his 27,000-acre estate on Cranborne Chase. There are about 15,000 artefacts in the collection plus numerous boxes of ceramics.

In 2014, the Museum was given funding for the 'Finding Pitt Rivers' project so that the artefacts could be catalogued and put on to Salisbury Museum's website. The Museum also holds a copy of Pitt Rivers' privately published excavation reports, and this together with easier access to the objects means that we can start to rethink Pitt Rivers' interpretation of sites in the light of modern archaeological ideas.

Three of the Roman sites excavated by Pitt Rivers at Rushmore were Woodcutts, Rotherley and Iwerne. Woodcutts was a settlement, Rotherley was a farmstead and at Iwerne, there was a villa. All are located on earlier Iron Age sites and are close to the ancient ridgeway track that links south Devon to the north Norfolk coast.

The artefacts from the sites vary from everyday objects like agricultural tools and spindle whorls to some lovely brooches, including La Tene I as well as later disc and P-shaped types. There are also furniture fittings and plaster from the villa as well as ceramics and coins. This presentation will look at what the artefacts can tell us about the sites in their landscape setting, possible connections between them and the people who lived there, and the economy of the study area.

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#### ***Sophie Hawke : What a Relief!: an assessment of the Romano-British relief fragment found in Bradford on Avon, Wiltshire.***

Situated at the edge of the Cotswolds, the Wiltshire town of Bradford on Avon is best known for its Saxon Church and Tithe Barn. However, there was once a prehistoric hillfort at Budbury, to the north, with a Roman villa complex and possible baptistery nearby. Few Roman finds have been discovered in the centre of the town itself, particularly south of the river.

However, in 2005, during renovations at a local restaurant in the town centre, a fragment of relief was discovered. It was identified as Romano-British by Dr Martin Henig and described as showing a mater (mother goddess), possibly Cuda, (the name which accompanies a similar relief from Daglingworth, Gloucestershire), with her attendant genii (godlings), although two of the usual three genii are missing. The fragment was subsequently donated to Bradford on Avon Museum, where it was put on display but it has not previously been published.

This paper will examine the fragment in detail and compare it with other similar reliefs showing a mater and genii found locally in the Cotswold region. Where might this Bradford on Avon fragment have originated? Might the relief be evidence for a local, rural cult?

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#### ***Eleanor Ghey : Recent Research on Coin Hoards from the South West***

The evidence for coin hoards from Iron Age and Roman Britain has recently been reassessed by an AHRC-funded project at the British Museum and Leicester University. Although coin hoards have traditionally been the preserve of numismatists, the project also studied them from an archaeological perspective. A dataset of over 3200 hoards has allowed us to build up a picture of their spatial and chronological patterning and reconsider previous assumptions about hoarding practice.

This paper will consider aspects of the coin hoard evidence from the South West region, which has produced some of the largest hoards from Roman Britain (eg Cunetio, Frome and Seaton Down). Examination of the archaeological context and content of the hoards provides some insight into the possible reasons for their burial and our wider understanding of the South West in the Roman period.

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### ***Justine Bayley Sarnia Butcher: a tribute***

Sarnia Butcher was well known to many Roman Finds Group members as she was a prolific provider of specialist reports on Romano-British enamels and brooches. However, she was not employed as a finds specialist but as an Inspector of Ancient Monuments. She died unexpectedly, just over a year ago at the age of 86. Her many and varied archaeological achievements will be outlined and her specialist interests then celebrated in the papers that make up the rest of the session

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### ***Anna Tyacke and Justine Bayley: Romano-British brooches – of Cornish origin?***

Less than ten years ago metal detectorists in western Cornwall were reporting Roman brooches of a most peculiar type to the Portable Antiquities Scheme. A total of six examples were found and, with Sarnia Butcher's help, were identified as examples of a type previously known only from three examples, two of them from Cornwall. The brooches are described and illustrated and parallels drawn with types to which they may be related. Scientific examination and analysis has identified both the ways in which they were decorated and the copper alloys used to make them. The tight spatial clustering of these brooches' findspots has raised the exciting possibility that they may have been made in the far south-west.

Tyacke, A, Bayley, J, and Butcher, S 2011 'Romano-British brooches of Cornish origin?' in S Pearce (ed), *Recent archaeological work in south-western Britain: Papers in honour of Henrietta Quinnell* (Oxford), 139-149.

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### ***Sally Worrell: Mapping Polden Hill brooches: new evidence from the PAS brooches recorded in the South-west***

The Polden Hill brooch is a major regional bow brooch type in the early Roman period. It has previously been noted that its distribution is focused on the West Midlands, but no recent characterisation of its spatial distribution exists. The objects recorded by the PAS offer a major new resource, but have so far not been evaluated.

In this paper, I want to investigate the distribution of Polden Hill brooches recorded on the PAS database from the South-west. Since 1997, the PAS has recorded a very significant quantity of 450 Polden Hill brooches found through metal detection. Using the significantly enhanced dataset compiled from 1997 on the PAS database, this project characterises the distribution of Polden Hill brooches in space (and time) in relation to the circulation of this brooch type. This work has required the 'cleaning' of records of this brooch classification from South-west England and Wales. The use of Mackreth's study has been essential here (2011), and the results are evident on the PAS database. Distributions are plotted against relief, drainage and communications. Mackreth (2011) cites a variety of subtypes; the study of which is interesting using the PAS data, particularly those from Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Glamorgan and Monmouthshire.

Mackreth, D. F. 2011 *Brooches in Late Iron Age and Roman Britain Volumes 1 and 2* Oxford and Oakville. Oxbow Books.

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### ***Justine Bayley: The brooches from Nornour***

More than 300 Roman brooches were recovered from two major excavations on Nornour, and the full collection has recently been published by Sarnia Butcher (2014). They were originally thought to have been made on the island but more recent work has identified multiple origins; they are now considered votives, deposited on the island by those sailing between Britain and the Continent. Many of the bow brooches originated in southwest Britain, and a large group of plate brooches were manufactured on the Continent. Over two-thirds of the brooches were enamelled, including most of the southwestern British and Continental examples. The variety of styles of champlevé enamelling represented will be illustrated and discussed in the context of Sarnia's earlier interest in enamelling as a decorative technique (Butcher 1976) and her collaborations with scientists investigating the nature of the enamel (eg, Biek et al 1980).

Biek, L et al 1980, 'Enamels and glass pastes on Roman-period "bronzes" found at Nornour', in E A Slater and J O Tate (eds), *Proceedings of the 16th international symposium on archaeometry and archaeological prospection* (Edinburgh), 51-79.

Butcher, S 1976 'Enamelling', in D Strong and D Brown (eds), *Roman Crafts* (London), 42-51.

Butcher, S 2014 'The Roman brooches from Nornour, Isles of Scilly', *Cornish Archaeology* 53, 1-80.

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### ***Louise Tunnard : How the Wessex Gallery was won***

An insight into the challenges involved in marketing the Wessex Gallery. This gallery opened in July 2014 and was specially created to showcase the museum's archaeology collections. The gallery represents a journey back through time, from the medieval period to the earliest evidence of human occupation in the Salisbury area. So how do you go about marketing the concept, work around the closure of half the museum and then get the word out about the new gallery once it has opened? All will be revealed.

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### ***Bruce Eagles : Penannular brooches in post-Roman Wessex***

In the fifth century some male Britons in eastern Wessex are identifiable through their large zoomorphic penannular brooches, which were worn singly, and apparently as a mark of rank, to fasten the cloak, in the Roman military tradition. There are six complete examples - from a Roman settlement, the sacred spring at Bath (an enamelled brooch), a Roman villa, a hill-fort and an 'Anglo-Saxon' cemetery - and two others are represented by their pins. It may or may not be significant that none of these brooches is yet recorded from either the *civitas Durotrigum* or the *civitas Durotrigum Lendeniensium*, but in the sixth-century the type G penannular brooch appears to have originated in north Somerset and may have then served to identify the local elite in that area.

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### ***Rachel Seager-Smith Finds from the Roman Cemeteries at Amesbury Down***

The Amesbury Down Romano-British settlement and cemeteries are located just south of the infamous Countess junction on the A303 and about 8 miles north of Salisbury. The area has been the subject of extensive archaeological investigations in advance of housing development (Bloor and Persimmon Homes) since the late 1980's and its most famous occupants are the Amesbury Archer and the Boscombe Bowmen, all of Early Bronze Age date.

Although currently less well-known, the Roman settlement covered approximately 10 hectares and was served by at least ten cemeteries, eight of which have been examined by Wessex Archaeology. In total, we have around 300 burials, with grave offerings occurring in about 20% of them. Few of these artefacts are intrinsically 'flashy', but differences in the nature of the burials, the health/stature of the individuals themselves as well as the range and quantity of grave offerings both within and between the cemetery groups, suggests that they represent different strata of society. Typologically, most of the grave goods and settlement finds indicate a late 3rd - 4th century AD date, although our radiocarbon dates sometimes say different... Furthermore, comparisons between the grave assemblages from broadly contemporary sites such as Poundbury and Lankhills, often considered 'typical' of Late Roman cemeteries in central southern England, highlight notable contrasts between these major urban centres and our more rural groups.

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### ***Dr David Roberts : The Roman Villa in the Deverills***

The Deverill villa was discovered by chance in early 2015, and rapidly investigated by a joint Historic England, PAsT Landscapes and Wiltshire Archaeology Service project, with further work by Archaeological Surveys Ltd. The villa appears to be a large and elaborate winged corridor villa, with additional structures to the immediate south which may form a second courtyard. This talk will introduce the site, and discuss what the finds from the small scale evaluation excavations undertaken can tell us about the site. In particular, a small midden in an outstanding state of preservation has begun to provide insights into life at the site in the second half of the fourth century AD, possibly including the manufacture of tesserae. Post-excavation work has reached the analysis phase, and we hope to share some new and exciting results with you by the time of the conference.

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### ***Richard Henry, Ruth Pelling and Michael Grant: The Pewsey hoard of late Roman vessels: wrapping, contents and time of deposition***

In October 2014 metal detectorists discovered a hoard of vessels intricately packed near Pewsey. Fewer than 30 Roman copper-alloy vessel hoards are known from Britain and the majority are antiquarian discoveries where the find spot and method of deposition cannot be further analysed. This find, therefore, offers an important insight into the deposition of such hoards. Inside the inner vessels plant remains, presumed to be packing material, were preserved by mineral desiccation due to copper corrosion products. The composition of the plant remains show that the hoard was packed during mid-late summer using vegetation (notably grasses, knapweed and bracken) derived from the local field margins or roadsides. The wider environmental setting is likely to have also included grassland and some arable fields. Pollen analysis from soil samples within the vessels shows that

the local environment (at the time of packing) consisted of areas of disturbed vegetation, as might be found by ditches, roads, paths or rivers. The exceptional preservation of packing material provides an extremely rare insight into, not only the environment of the area, but also the behaviours of the people who buried the hoard and the care they took to protect the contents. Although the Pewsey objects are Roman in form, radiocarbon dating of the packing material has indicated that the hoard was buried at the very end of the Roman period or early post-Roman or Anglo-Saxon period. This suggests that the hoard could have been buried in a period of instability, conflict and change or was contemporary with the community associated with the nearby early Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Blacknall Field. The initial analysis of the hoard raises a range of interesting questions about the deposition of copper-alloy Roman hoards as well as the value in prompt sampling for the recovery of botanical evidence from metal objects.

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### ***Mike Bishop : Lance, javelin, and spear: untangling the weaponry of Roman auxiliary cavalry***

One hundred and three years ago, the publication of G. L. 'Len' Cheesman's prize-winning undergraduate essay on the auxilia of the Roman army saw him present a state-of-the-art review of contemporary knowledge of auxiliary equipment. After his death only one year later at Gallipoli, the records Cheesman used to compile Auxilia passed first to Norman Whatley and ultimately to Eric Birley, and they now reside in the archives of Vindolanda Museum. Importantly, those records concern the units, not their equipment. Cheesman was no artefact specialist, although his work as a supervisor on the Corstopitum campaign of excavations at the Roman site at Corbridge is evident in the daily finds record books from the site.

Cheesman's chapter on auxiliary military equipment was, then, a summary of the work of others and was arguably founded upon the pioneering work of Ludwig Lindenschmidt in his *Tracht und Bewaffnung*. Since then, others have grappled with the subject of Roman shafted weapons, but no adequate or definitive answer to the question 'what is this?' ever seems possible when confronted with a spearhead.

In this paper, I am going to take one small section of auxiliary equipment – the shafted weapons of the Roman cavalry – and attempt to make some sense of the much larger body of evidence available to us. In keeping with the subject matter of the conference, I will principally (but by no means exclusively) focus on evidence from southern and south-western Britain in order to assess whether progress is possible.

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### ***Owen Humphries : Artefacts at work: The tools from Roman London***

The Museum of London contains one of the largest collections of Roman tools in Europe. Antiquarian zeal, decades of commercial excavation, and the excellent preservation of iron in the Walbrook valley, have created a collection of around 900 objects. This paper presents the results of a three-year collaborative PhD project between the Museum of London and University of Reading to identify and analyse these tools, many for the first time.

The tools represent a range of ancient activities, from delicate metalworking to hole-digging. Several types of tools may be unique in the country. By studying these objects as evidence of past practise, we can get a uniquely everyday look at the working, social, cultural, and perhaps even religious life of an ancient city.

By comparing these tools to those from elsewhere in the country, and to Continental collections, we can get a sense of London's place as a Roman, British, or European city; as both a production centre and a unique cultural setting.

Although the majority of the tools are unstratified, around 250 have good contextual information. By examining the context of deposition, we can get a better picture of how and when iron artefacts left circulation and entered the archaeological record, as rubbish, by accident, and as ritual deposits.

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### ***Miles Russell : The Face of Roman Britain***

Britain was a fully functioning part of the Roman Empire for nearly four centuries and yet the apparent absence of portrait sculpture here stands in marked contrast to other western Roman provinces such as Gaul or Spain. Why is this? Perhaps Britain's population remained unaffected by Roman culture or the provincial administration lacked the resources to publicly display their 'Roman-ness'. Recent work on damaged Roman sculpture, misidentified, misunderstood or simply forgotten, buried deep in the stores of many a British museum, has shown that there was in fact a large number of marble and bronze portraits in the province, most of which depicted emperors. By understanding these, a whole new 'portrait' of Roman Britain emerges.

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***Stephen Greep : More Regionality? Weapon Terminal ‘spoons’ from Frocester Court, Gloucestershire and Needle Cases from Lankhills, Winchester, Hampshire***

The regional distribution of artefact types has received increasing attention, particularly following Hella Eckardts’ Objects and Identities publication. This short contribution looks at two object types with a distinct geographic distribution. The first is a small group of flat bowled ‘spoon shaped’ objects with their terminals decorated with weapons – swords, spears and axes. They are a fourth century type with a tight distribution from Wroxeter to Frocester Court and south east Wales.

The second is an even more interesting group of objects – needle cases utilising sheep metapodia. Previously identified as handles, xrays of the examples from Moyencourt, France, and Lankhills demonstrates that these retained iron needles. The distribution of the British examples is predominantly western – striking in that because of soil conditions the majority of objects in bone and antler occur in the eastern part of the province. A possible late fourth/fifth century date makes these finds all the more interesting.

***Tatiana Ivleva : Glass adornments event horizon?’: In search for the origins of Roman-period glass bangles in southern Britain***

The paper revisits the emergence of glass bangles in southern Britain and suggests that their genesis should be seen as a part of changing attitudes towards the body in the Late Iron Age Britain rather than, as usually assumed, a one-off event starting after the Claudian invasion in AD 43. By placing the bangles’ genesis into a wider context of material culture development, societal and political changes in Late Iron Age to Roman period transition in the south, the paper shows that bracelets’ emergence is an expected result of the convoluted processes and amalgamation of various cultures in this transitional period.

The start of the production of the seamless glass annulars in Britain corresponds with the decrease in the circulation of these glass adornments on the Continent. In the late first century BC, the Continental glass bracelets gradually stopped being produced, yet the craft re-appears in Britain, which had no history of glass bracelets’ production prior to the mid-first century AD. The presentation attempts to answer the question as to where the inspiration and skills for the British glass bracelets came from by discussing the biography of a glass bracelet craft. Earlier research into their distribution and typology suggested that British examples stand out in their decorative and production technique compared to bracelets made on the Continent. However, close inspection of the British glass bracelet fragments revealed that some types of British bangles widespread in the south were developed directly from the Continental La Tène ones.



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