

## Roman Finds Group: Chairman's report 2017-18

The last year has been another action-packed one for the RFG as I shall outline below. Before I do so, I want to thank all those who returned the questionnaire we circulated last autumn. The replies were overwhelmingly positive and told the Committee that the new initiatives they have been developing have all been well received and that the 'old' benefits of membership are still welcome and meet members' expectations. That said, there were suggestions for further improvements and developments which I hope you will notice emerging as part of our exciting plans for the future. We have already followed up some of the offers to host meetings and write datasheets – but if you didn't send in your questionnaire it's not too late to volunteer!

One important issue which I would like you all to consider is the membership of the RFG Committee; they're the ones who do all the work! At our AGM later this month we will need to elect most of its members as under the constitution that we adopted three years ago (<http://www.romanfinds.org.uk/roman+finds+group+constitution>) all those elected then must now stand down. They are permitted to offer themselves for re-election (which I'm glad to say they have done) but in another three years they will not be eligible for re-election to their current posts. Thus, if no-one new joins the Committee, in three years' time it could cease to exist. In the past, when more people have offered themselves for election than there were places on the committee we have had a ballot at the AGM; I would be happy to see one again this year. If you would like to become a committee member, please put yourself forward. Even if you are not elected the Committee may invite you to join them as a co-opted member for one year. To stand for one of the Officer posts, or as an ordinary member of the Committee, please email me ([mail@justine-bayley.co.uk](mailto:mail@justine-bayley.co.uk)) by **Friday 16th March** saying which post you are interested in and include a biographical note of about 100 words saying what you would bring to the Committee which will be reproduced on the ballot paper.

During the year 2017-18 our membership numbers continued to rise and now stand at about 250, another significant annual increase and a new record high. The active membership of RFG has now doubled since 2013. The Treasurer's report shows our finances are equally healthy; the reason there is less money in the bank than a year ago is not because we are making a loss on our activities but because we have been spending the grants we received on making additional films – more on this below. Another area where our reach has increased is in visits to our website which has now been updated to allow all events to be listed as distinct pages, with the pages for conferences and meetings being simplified to improve access. In the last third of 2017 the site had visits from over 1,300 people, with over 10% of these visits coming from Twitter posts. The Twitter account too has gone from strength to strength being seen by thousands of people with an average of 1,000 views per post. The tweets from the Conference in October 2017 reached 22,000 people, and resulted in 80 new followers (more than the 50+ we normally get each month; we now have a total of 2,142 followers). We are always pleased to hear from the public and you, our RFG members, and continue to reinforce our links with other specialist finds groups, as well as with the Portable Antiquities Scheme and Historic England.

The meetings the RFG runs continue to be well attended with the size of meeting rooms often limiting the numbers we can accept – so do remember to book early if you want to be guaranteed a place at future events. In April 2017 the one-day meeting, *Verulamium and the Romano-British south-east*, was organised by Barbara Birley and hosted by the Verulamium Museum. All 64 delegates had free access to the museum galleries as well as hearing 10 speakers. A two-day meeting in October, *Finds from south and south western Britain*, was organised by Stephen Greep and Jörn Schuster in conjunction with the Salisbury Museum. There was an opportunity for early birds to tour of Salisbury Cathedral, and the Museum gave everyone free entry and a private after-hours viewing of the galleries and the special Terry Pratchett exhibition. With 83 delegates and 17 speakers at Salisbury, this means that during the year 147 people heard 27 talks on a wide range of topics concerning Roman material culture. The Salisbury meeting also celebrated 30 years of RFG and at a

special reception I talked about RFG past present and future. We also enjoyed a delicious celebration cake and cupcakes, made by Debbie Greep and decorated with the logo Jörn Schuster designed!



Our newsletter *Lucerna* goes from strength to strength, and regularly includes reports on our meetings so all members and not just those who attend them can get a flavour of the range of talks presented. Short notes and news, mystery objects as well as longer articles all contribute to the mix, alongside book reviews and notices of forthcoming events of interest to members. The other publication we produce is the series of datasheets which are a growing resource dealing with specific object types. The latest addition is one on weighing instruments; more are planned for the coming year.

As well as the dozen films available for viewing via our website (<http://www.romanfindsgroup.org.uk/roman+finds+group+films>), a further 19 have now been shot, funded by the Roman Research Trust and the Haverfield Bequest; the average cost of each film is £284. Once the new films have been edited and completed they will be added to the website, together with additional information about the objects depicted in all the films. A further group of films is also being planned.

Grants continue to be offered by the RFG and in the past year awards have been made to Richard Henry, towards illustration costs of a hoard of Roman vessels, an Irchester bowl and a decorated lead coffin, and to Tatiana Ivleva, towards the cost of drawings for her glass bangle typology.

Justine Bayley, RFG Chairman  
March 2018

### RFG Accounts 2017-2018

Income		Expenditure	
Subscriptions	£2789	Grants x 2	£ 500
St Albans conference	£ 409	Lucerna 53 (inc p&p)	£ 465
Salisbury conference	£ 795	Lucerna 54 (inc p&p)	£ 547
		Film project	£3081
		CBA subs	£ 62
		Committee travel	£ 241
		Website	£ 216
Income	£3393	Expenditure	£5112

Cash balance (as of 02.03.17): £9508

Jenny Hall, RFG Treasurer  
March 2018