

Realising the Research Potential of Developer-Funded Roman Archaeology in England

PROJECT NEWSLETTER 1: AUTUMN 2012

Welcome to our first project newsletter. The project has been running for just over 6 months now, and this newsletter introduces you to the team; outlines progress, and provides information on upcoming events. We welcome feedback and contact addresses can be found at the end. Background information on the project is available on the following websites.

<http://www.cotswoldarchaeology.co.uk/discover-the-past/>

<http://www.reading.ac.uk/archaeology/research/Projects/arch-mf-settlement.aspx>

The project has two principal strands: *The Roman Rural Settlement Project* and the *Romano-British Towns Project*.

The Roman Rural Settlement Project

Meet the team

Work on interpretation and analysis of the Roman rural settlement data is being carried out by a small team at University of Reading under the direction of Professor Michael Fulford, funded by the Leverhulme Trust. Additional work on the creation of a database and GIS is being carried out by Tim Evans of the Archaeology Data Service at the University of York.

Dr Alex Smith (Senior Research Fellow). Alex previously worked in the commercial archaeology sector for 11 years, helping to manage the publications and graphics departments of Oxford Archaeology South. He has been involved in the analysis and publication of many archaeological sites, including large numbers of Romano-British rural settlements, which is holding him in good stead for the current project.

Dr Martyn Allen (Research Fellow). Martyn is a professional zooarchaeologist, having previously worked for English Heritage on the regional review of the zooarchaeology of Roman southern Britain, as well as running a successful freelance business working on both animal and human archaeological remains. His expertise is of great importance for the current project, helping us to understand the intricacies of farming and hunting practices in Roman Britain.

Dr Tom Brindle (Research Fellow). Tom is a specialist in archaeological 'small finds' and coinage and previously worked as Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, first in Northamptonshire and then in Staffordshire and the West Midlands. Tom's skills and experience are enabling us to analyse the full breadth of material culture across Roman rural settlement in Britain, helping in areas such as identity, economy and status.

Progress on Data Collection

The response from the Historic Environment Records (HERs) has been overwhelmingly positive, and this has facilitated the rapid collection of data to augment that from the Archaeological Investigations Project (AIP). From these key datasets lists of relevant grey literature reports have been produced for each county. Where digital copies of these reports do not currently exist, PDF/A OCR copies have been made which offer high-quality digital reports with the capacity for internal searching.

Data collection by Cotswold Archaeology commenced in the East of England region, with Essex and Cambridgeshire the first counties completed, and we should have the whole region complete by November 2012. We will also complete the East Midlands region around the same



time. Our main focus will then turn to the data-rich London and South-East region, where Kent and Greater London have been completed. We intend to start data collection in the South West region in late summer 2014.

Progress on Data Analysis

The University of Reading Leverhulme team are now six months into the project, with Alex starting in May and Tom and Martyn joining in July. Research aims and data categories were soon set, and the first working database was up and running by July. Since then, the team have been steadily collecting and inputting published excavation data and poring through all the grey literature reports provided by Cotswold Archaeology. Significant areas have now been completed, including Kent, Cambridgeshire, Derbyshire, Essex and Hertfordshire, with Greater London, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Norfolk all in progress. Cambridgeshire currently wins the prize for being the most prolific county in terms of excavated sites included on the database (180), and we estimate that by the end we will have a total of over 3,500 records of Roman rural sites across the country.

The next stage is the most exciting, as we will have completed all the data collection and inputting for the East of England region by January 2013, and can then commence analysis. We will use the GIS to explore the dataset and start to address many of the research aims, and hopefully begin to revolutionize our understanding of Romano-British rural settlement.

Romano-British Towns Project

This module is funded by English Heritage and is being led by Michael Fulford and Neil Holbrook. Its purpose is to make an assessment of the contribution of commercial archaeology to the study of Romano-British towns. This will be achieved by case studies and review of published outputs; consideration of the grey literature lies outside of our current scope. The project has two principal outputs: a one-day conference at the University of Reading on 30 November 2013, and a published volume of conference papers.

Events

Saturday 16 March 2013. *Roman Rural Settlement: East of England Regional Seminar.* McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge

June 2013 date TBC. *Roman Rural Settlement: East Midlands Regional Seminar.* Leicester.

Wednesday 30 October 2013. *Roman Rural Settlement: London and South East Regional Seminar.* Society of Antiquaries, London.

Attendance at the regional seminars will be by invitation only. If you are interested in attending please contact Nathan Blick.

Saturday 30 November 2013. *Assessing the Contribution of Commercial Archaeology on the Towns of Roman Britain.* Day conference at the University of Reading in conjunction with the Roman Society. Further details and booking forms will be available in spring 2013.

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