

B & DAS newsletter

October 2014

Dear Members,

The Annual Dinner at the Babbling Brook in Shurton went well despite my reservations about the place. We had a walk round the hamlet beforehand which made me realise how many old buildings we have.

The Silchester expedition was a great success despite various hitches with the travel arrangements. At Reading Museum Jill Greenaway gave us an excellent introductory



Dinner in the conservatory at the Babbling Brook



BDAS excursion to Silchester. Our Chairman is in the front row third from left, and I am in the back row, holding my long prod. (Actually it is the Soc. of Antiquaries excavation, 1900)

talk about their magnificent Roman collection, most of which came from Silchester. Sadly new finds from the current excavation will now go to the Hampshire County Museum. In the afternoon we eventually managed to get the coach into the car park at Silchester. It is a long walk to the site and Amanda Clarke, site director, kindly laid on a minibus to take those who did not want to walk. We were privileged to have Prof. Michael Fulford as our guide. The main excavation is vast and has been going on for a number of years. Consequently they are now working about two metres below the current ground surface, and are into the iron-

age settlement that predated the Roman town. We also saw a newer dig that was in the Roman layers.

EDF are resuming their site preparation works for Hinkley C Station and part of these is the construction of the Cannington bypass. Archaeological assessment of the route has been going on for some time and has proved most interesting. EDF put on an Open Day on

July 31st. and Roy Pumphrey went along. He tells me that the County Archaeologist guided visitors round the excavations. Most impressive was a three-roomed external Roman bathhouse with pilae and evidence of a hypocaust. There was plenty of concreting and a mix of good- and poorer-quality wall remains. Sadly, no mosaic or trace of the villa that must have accompanied the bathhouse has been found. An outside bathhouse means the build can be accurately dated (100AD?) as they were only current for a brief period before being incorporated in the villa itself. There was also evidence of Bronze/Iron Age round houses with post holes. Since then the Roman villa has been located and they have also found a Saxon road in a dig near the western roundabout on the existing Cannington bypass. We have approached both EDF and Cotswold Archaeology asking for a BDAS visit, but there has been no response so far. Jane Hill will talk about the finds at the Bridgwater Library on October 23rd.

Final excavations at the power station site have found a Saxon burial ground - exciting and most unexpected

TREASURER

Sadly there was no response to our appeal in the last Newsletter. The Society is being run by a diminishing number of ageing people: If you want it to continue, please help. If you would consider becoming Treasurer or can suggest someone who might, please let Alan Hudson know. It is not very onerous task, but it is important to the smooth running of the Society.

Thank you

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Thursday, October 16th. 7.30 p.m. in the Blake Museum.

Susan Clelland, Wessex Archaeology. 'Discoveries at Lyde Road, Yeovil'.

Thursday, November 20th. 7.30 p.m. in the Blake Museum.

Dr. John Ogle, 'Working with the Leakeys in Africa'.

Thursday, December 18th. 7.30 p.m. in the Wembdon Community Centre.

Christmas meeting with Bob Croft, County Archaeologist, as our guest.

OTHER MEETINGS

Thursday, October 9th, 7.30 p.m. in the Museum of Somerset, Taunton

Prof. Chris Dyer 'Who made the Mediaeval landscape?' Mick Aston Memorial Lecture
Tickets £8, £6 conc. Tel.: 01823 255088

Thursday, Oct.23rd. 2.30 p.m. Bridgwater Library. 'Discoveries at Cannington.' Jane Hill, Somerset Heritage. Booking essential at Library

Saturday, Nov. 1st. 10.00 a.m. Strode Theatre, Street

Mick Aston Celebration Day organised by Bob Croft with Tony Robinson, John Gater et al.
Tickets £18, £14 conc, from www.Strodetheatre.org.uk or tel. 01458442846