

Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

April 2008

Hello all,
Quite a lot to catch up with this time, so here goes...

Wednesday mornings/Thursday evenings

I've got a couple of trips away in the next few weeks and so there will be no Thursday evening sessions until 15 May. On Wednesday mornings we will continue digging at Vale Church, if weather permits. However the excavation there will probably be cut short because the Church cannot afford to build the Sunday School as planned. I will keep you informed as to whether there is work to be done on the site or whether we should meet in the store.

As many of you know we have been working through the boxes of antiquarian finds for some months now, taking photographs, rebagging finds, adding local findspots to the SMR and basically performing a very useful stock-take on the collections. This is nearly at an end now, and I'd like to thank everybody who has helped: more than 2500 items have been photographed, and I'm now slowly putting everything back on the shelves in new boxes. This exercise has also freed up some valuable space, which means that we can move some of the more vulnerable material from the cold, damp police garage to rather more healthy surroundings.

Houmet Paradis

Last September a member of the public spotted the rim of a Normandy Gritty Ware pot poking up out of the soil on Houmet Paradis, one of the small islands north of Bordeaux Harbour. We have received permission from the National Trust, who manage the island, to excavate this pot before it gets further damaged by the sea. Because we will only be digging a very small area (about 1m by 1.5m) this is not going to be an excavation for maximum volunteer participation. However, you are very welcome to come and see what's going on. We are obviously constrained by the tides as to when we can work there, and so the 'opening times' for the excavation are as follows:

Monday 5 May: 12.30 – 2.30pm

Tuesday 6 May: 1.00 – 3.15pm

Wednesday 7 May: 2.00 – 4.00pm (if we haven't finished by Tuesday)

These times are approximate – unlike Lihou, we do not have exact information on when the tide clears enough to reach the island, so please be careful and don't get stranded!

Pulias

Hazel has identified a possible prehistoric occupation site just west of the Pulias pond, which was exposed after the recent storms shifted a huge mass of shingle. She will be keeping a close eye on what erodes out of the surface, and time and Environment Department permitting we may put a small trench in the exposed land surface, perhaps in mid or late May. More details on that to follow.

Museums Month/A Night at the Museum

May is Museums Month, which means that there are extra talks at Candie Museum between 12th – 30th May, mostly at 11.15 in the morning. There will be more publicity about this in due course, but as advance warning I'll be talking about Iron Age Guernseymen (and women) on Friday 16th, and about stone tools on Wednesday 28th. Jason will be talking about Roman Guernsey on Monday 12th, and Tanya will be talking about the prehistoric pottery from Le Tombeau du Grand Sarrazin on Tuesday 20th. There will be other short talks by other members of staff during the month so keep an eye out for details of those.

On Saturday 17th May the Museum will be open (free) from 5pm to 9pm with all sorts of stuff going on – string quartets, more talks, Wallace and Grommit films in the Frossard Theatre, and the café will stay open. I'm due on at 7pm with a repeat of the Iron Age talk and again there will be other short talks throughout the evening. More publicity will follow.

Nunnery Excavation, Alderney

Jason Monaghan will be leading a small excavation and photographic exercise this summer at the mediaeval and putative Roman site at the Nunnery in Alderney. This is being done under the auspices of the Alderney Society and will involve a number of their members. A small number of Guernsey section members would be welcome to join the project, particularly if you have accommodation on offer in Alderney and are able to fund the trip yourselves. It may be possible to help some people find accommodation or flight costs but we can't guarantee this at the current stage. The proposed date is between 21 and 27 August, embracing the bank holiday weekend and two week days to be confirmed. At the moment, Jason only needs expressions of interest, so please contact him (jason.monaghan@cultureleisure.gov.gg) for further details.

House-warming party

As some of you know I finally have a home to call my own, at 'La Durande', 11 New Place, Vauvert. To celebrate this I'll be having a house-warming party on Sunday 25 May to which you're all invited. In the hope that we can take advantage of the sunshine and the garden, this will start around 11am and there'll be lots of food (and drink), so don't eat too much breakfast. There is no parking to speak of in New Place so I'd recommend trying Victoria Road or (about five minutes walk) the Odeon. It would be useful if you could RSVP by 23 May so that I have a rough idea of numbers. I look forward to seeing you, and apologies in advance for the mess...

Another party

On Saturday 14 June Jason will be holding a party at his house. More details to follow.

That's all for now. Any questions, phone me on 700477 or 07781 102219. Hope to see you soon,
Phil

PS If anybody would like to buy Tamara's car – VW Polo, 24400 miles, nippy little mover, good for the Kev Run or the family shop at Checkers – please get in touch!