

Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

December 2009

Hello all,

Thanks to everybody who came to the lecture last week, it was good to see so many of you. Here's an update on the latest news...

Christmas party, Saturday 12 December

The Christmas party is approaching fast – please contact Tanya with your menu choices as soon as possible, preferably by Friday 4 December. The cost is £17.95 (cheques payable to Fleur du Jardin) and can be paid on the night. Here's a reminder of the menu.

Cream of Pea, Pear and Watercress Soup with White Truffle Oil

Tian of Prawns on a bed of Rocket bound in a Marie Rose Sauce topped with a Rosette of Smoked Salmon.

Homemade Chicken Liver and wild Mushroom Parfait served with Red Onion Relish and salad garnish

Garlic and Salami Mushrooms en Croute

Roast Norfolk Turkey served with Chestnut and Bacon Stuffing, Chipolata and a Thyme Gravy

Pan Roasted Rack of Lamb with Ratatouille Finished with a Red Currant, Rosemary and Mint Jus (served pink) (£1.00 supplement)

Fire roasted stuffed Pepper Filled with Rice, Cheese, Cherry Tomato and Spring Onion Finished with a Bloody Mary Dressing.

Grilled Fillet of Salmon topped with Crayfish Tails Finished with a white Wine Chive Beurre Blanc

All the above are served with a selection of Vegetables and New Potatoes

Warm Christmas Pudding served with Brandy Sauce

Lemon tart served with Raspberry Coulis

Baileys Cheesecake topped with Chocolate Sauce

Coffee and mini Pies to follow [mini? Mince? Ed.]

Don't forget the theme for those who wish to dress up is anything to do with flying... air hostess? Superman? Joey? And for those who really want to make a night of it, the Fleur du Jardin is offering bed and breakfast at £40 per person per night, I know a few people will be taking advantage of that.



King's Road (1)

I mentioned in the last newsletter that we would be doing some work in the back garden of Stanley House, next to the Pré au Puits site on King's Road. We've now finished the first phase of this, and we have one more Iron Age grave – the stones surrounding it are visible on the left side of this picture.

The grave contained three bronze rings or bracelets of varying sizes – probably around the neck, wrist and ankle – and a small iron object, probably a brooch, just below the neck ring. As usual with our prehistoric bronze the objects are in very poor condition, but I hope that Esther Cameron in Oxford can work some magic on them.

There may still be more to come from this grave: as you can see we don't have the full length of it, and when Mike Newman checked out the trench with his metal detector there was a strong signal from the baulk here, so there could be another object currently just out of reach. In due course we should get to extend the trench to find out. We will also extend in the other direction (the right hand edge in the photo above), where there is a tantalising hint of another grave, with a couple of stones just emerging up against the baulk.



King's Road (2)

Esther has nearly finished her work on the objects we excavated last Christmas, from beneath the former Pré au Puits house. She has made some exciting discoveries in the course of her work. Beneath the iron shield boss was a piece of iron rod, which was probably part of the shield handle, and beneath that an iron lunette (crescent-moon shaped) 'razor'. The razor has traces of wood on one side and animal hair on the other, and we'll get more precise identifications of these in due course.

Airport site

We've done a little bit more work at the airport site in recent weeks, but as at King's Road the weather has really been against us – the water is either pouring from the sky or rising up from the ground! We will try to keep going here but I suspect that it may simply become too wet to do very much over the winter.



Delancey

Dr George Nash has received permission from the Environment Department to excavate three trenches across parts of the Neolithic gallery grave in Delancey Park. This should happen next June, but I'll let you know the precise dates as soon as I have them. We are still waiting to hear whether we can remove the two pine trees which are damaging the north side of the site.

Gold!

OK, it's not quite the Staffordshire treasure... but it's not often that we get gold on Guernsey. This is a 'franc à pied' of Charles V or his son, Charles VI, issued between 1365 and 1385. It was found recently on Belgrave Bay and brought in to the Museum for identification. The only



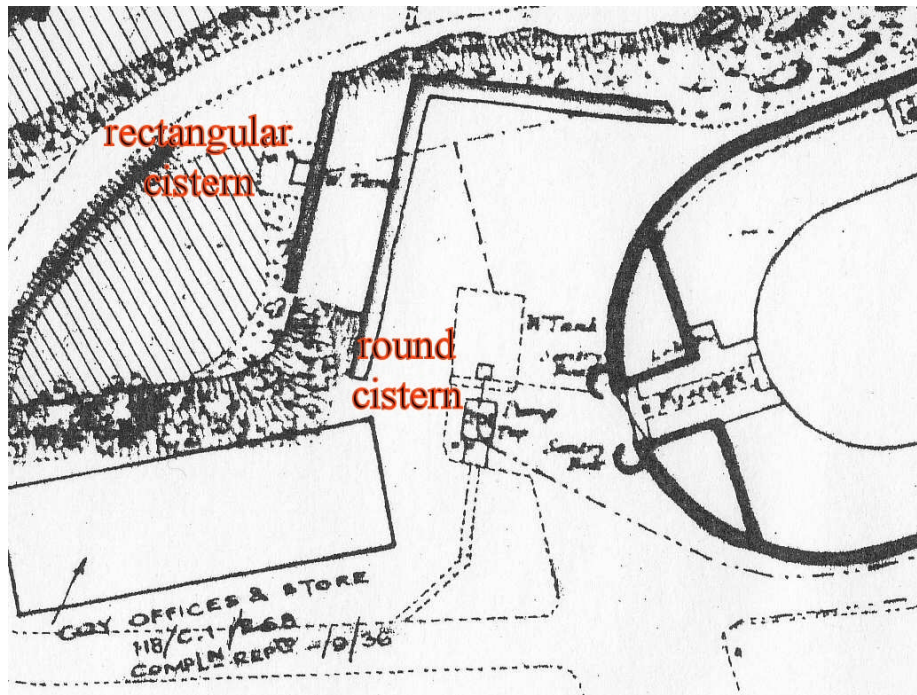
other gold coin I can think of offhand was the one found with the skeleton in Castle Cornet, so it is a rare find for the island. Keep your eyes peeled if you're walking on Belgrave!

La Varde (1)

As some of you will know, Jenny Cataroche recently received a Distinction for her Masters degree at Durham, for her dissertation on the bone remains from La Varde. Congratulations to Jenny for a splendid piece of work based on what looked like rather unpromising material. Some of the findings of her research will be displayed in the foyer showcase at Candie when the museum reopens after the Christmas/New Year break, and I hope you'll come and take a look.

La Varde (2)

For the last couple of years Hazel and Dave have been investigating the winter solstice at La Varde, on L'Ancrese. Here is Hazel's message with details of this year's viewing times:



The late Victorian War Department map of Fort George, showing the two water tanks near the Magazine. The photo below has the entrance to the upper tank in the foreground, and the hatch for the lower tank is arrowed.



And finally...

As well as the Iron Age finds from Stanley House, we've had a great deal of Victorian material from the topsoil layers, some of it quite interesting and unusual. Among the finds is this splendid glass bottle stopper in the form of the head of Napoleon – from a bottle of Napoleon brandy, perhaps? I'm not sure about this, since the few sherds of glass which seem to have come from the same item are very fine and not like usual bottle glass. Any comments gratefully received...

See you soon,
Phil