

Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

February 2010

Hello all,

Things are fairly quiet at the moment but here's an update on our work (or more accurately, lack of work) at the airport, plus news on the King's Road finds recently retrieved from the conservator, and a couple of other bits and pieces.



Airport

I don't think we're going to get back here until well into the spring. As you can see from this photo, the water table has risen far enough to flood the trench we've been working on most recently, to the extent that it now has not only resident ducks, but also pond weed! We may be able to do a little more work in the bigger field, but although the water table isn't as much of a problem there, all that stuff which has fallen from the sky in the last couple of

months is barely draining away, so we can't do much there either. I'll keep you posted as to if and when we can get back in there again. On the plus side, the airport director has told me that it is unlikely that any of the development work will start before 2011, so we are not yet under any pressure to vacate the site.

King's Road

Last week I went to Oxford to pick up the finds which we excavated at King's Road in December 2008. As ever Esther Cameron has done a fantastic job on what in some cases looked like very unpromising material. This is particularly true for the shield boss – it is quite difficult to believe that what came out of the ground looking like this...



... could actually be reconstructed into this...!



Esther discovered that beneath the shield boss was the shield grip – shown in the photo above – and under that was an iron knife or razor (photo to left). The razor may have been in a boxwood container lined with sheep's wool, since traces of both were found on it. The shield boss has traces of wood, probably lime, within it, and that was presumably the wood used for the shield. Both the boxwood and the lime could have

been present in Guernsey in the late Iron Age, although the boxwood would have been quite unusual and so might be an import (my thanks to Hazel for very helpful information on this point).

The sword from the same grave also came out very well, considering what our nasty acidic soil does to metal finds. This too had traces of organic material, including horn on the hilt and evidence that the scabbard had been wrapped in some sort of textile.

While we're on the subject of King's Road, Barbara McNee has been here for a week drawing some of the previous finds from the site, along with Roman material for the eventual publication of the Plaiderie and the Bonded Store. On the next page is her superb drawing of the bronze ring from King's Road which is currently featuring in the museum's contribution of ten objects to 'A History of the World':

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/GNZfpsJvRqe4hgwCXpfZ2A>



bronze bracelet
(smallfind 73) from
King's Road, 2005

As many of you will have heard by now, the owners of Stanley House on King's Road have applied for permission to build a swimming pool and associated pool house in their garden, so we will be doing some more work in there soon, I hope. The pool would be about seven metres from the warrior burial found in 1982, so there is a very good chance of finding more burials.

Other news

Don't forget to visit the foyer exhibition at Candie, if you haven't already seen it – Jenny Cataroche's excellent work on the bones from La Varde. The exhibition will be up until 28 February.

Those of you with decent broadband internet connections might be interested to see some of Chris George's latest panoramas, at <http://www.chrisgeorgepanoramas.net>; click on 'Gallery', scroll down to 'Museums and Places of Historical Interest' and have a look at the Déhus, that's a good one.

Finally, news just in – Duncan Garrow and Fraser Sturt have been given permission by the field owner to come back and dig a much bigger hole at L'Erée this year, so there should be plenty of digging to be done in September. I'll keep you posted.

That's it for now – though see the next page for an alternative view of the airport site, thanks to Richard Hocart for that!

See you soon, Phil



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