

# Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

July 2010

Hello all,

Just a short update this time with news on the airport site and Delancey, plus forthcoming excavations, summer parties etc...

## Airport

The work at the airport site has been quite productive over the last few weeks. We're getting significant quantities of late Bronze Age pottery and flint out of several features, and we also



had a rather nice hearth, shown in the picture here. Interestingly the hearth is located 'within' the silt deposits – it must have been constructed in the dry summer months, on top of silt from previous years, and then it was in turn covered up by silt from the rains of the following autumn and winter. There was plenty of charcoal in the hearth so we should be able to get a useful radiocarbon date from it.

The longer I spend at this site, the more convinced I am that occupation can only have been seasonal – or at least in the

winter months the inhabitants must have moved quite a bit further up the slope, perhaps across the other side of La Mare Road and up on the airport plateau. It would have been just too wet down at this level. However, the silts washed down the slope are archaeologically important because they contain plenty of Bronze Age pottery and flint, right down into the bottom of the valley – or at least as far as Kit and Tracey have been able to dig without wetsuits...

The features in the trench as a whole are still rather few and far between, so I am planning to open up a larger area – probably about 12m x 12m – as soon as I can hire a mini-JCB to move the spoilheap and take away the topsoil. This ought to give us a clearer picture of what's going on here, and it should also increase your opportunity for some trowelling activity, both on the usual Wednesday mornings and hopefully on other days too. I will keep the regular Wednesday-morning group posted on the plans, and if anybody else fancies getting involved in digging just drop me a line.

## Delancey

George Nash and his team had a successful week at the Delancey gallery grave. This was very much a preliminary investigation prior to a more intensive piece of work next year. However it confirmed that there is still some archaeology to be had on the site, mostly on the northern side of the tomb beneath the (now removed) pine trees. A series of test-pits here cut

through what must have been the spoil heap from Miss Vera Collum's excavation of 1932, down to what may be the Neolithic land surface.

Clearing around the stones themselves revealed that many are partly propped up on small stones, which were presumably wedged in to support the boulders when Miss Collum encouraged her workmen to root around underneath them. The largest stones were probably not



moved, however, and so there is still some potential for intact archaeological deposits beneath those. We are also still toying with the idea of trying to re-erect three or four of the stones if we can be sure of the position of their sockets.

### Déhus

The latest issue of the *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* includes an interesting article about the Déhus, in particular the dating and analysis of some of the human remains found during the Lukis excavations of the mid-nineteenth century. For those who want to read more, the article can be downloaded from <http://users.ox.ac.uk/~arch0013/paradis.pdf>.

### Metal-detecting

By now many of you will have bumped into Mike Newman (on the left of the picture here) and Shane Le Page (on the right), either on site or in the store. Mike and Shane have invested a great deal of time and money in their detecting and I'm very pleased to have them work alongside us. All their finds are recorded here and the more significant discoveries added to the SMR. Below are a few of their recent finds.



The ring was found by Shane on Belvoir Bay in Herm, and it's a very fine little object – with a clever built-in method of enlarging its diameter, and some decoration possibly representing animals engraved on the outer face. I think it is early medieval but I'm still searching for exact parallels.



Guernsey people have been remarkably careless with their sterling silver spoons in the past. These three, from different spots round the island, include two from London (top: 1824, probably by Thomas Dicks or Thomas Death; bottom: 1821, by William Bateman). The middle one is perhaps from Sheffield but the marks are very difficult to read. All three spoons have initials – presumably of their owners – on the handles, but only the small one at the bottom is really legible, marked NLG.

### Dates for your diary

Lots of dates to tell you about. As far as excavation is concerned, Duncan Garrow and Fraser Sturt will be at L'Erée from **Sunday 29 August**, finishing on **Friday 17 September**. As in previous years they welcome involvement from the locals, so don't hesitate to get involved.

They overlap with Chris Scarre, who arrives for the last season of the current project on Herm on **Wednesday 8 September**; he'll be working there until **Saturday 25 September**. He's bringing a lot of students this time but there may still be some opportunity to get involved; more details closer to the time.



Closer to hand, Barry Cunliffe will be digging again on Sark in July. We have the opportunity to have a guided tour of the site on **Saturday 17 July**, together with a group visiting from the Société Jersiaise Archaeology Section. I will be travelling across with the Jersey group on the 1130 boat that morning and you are welcome to come along with us – I think we will probably go straight to the site when we get there (it's marked by the red dot on the map here). A word of warning – this coincides with the sheep-racing weekend on Sark and if last year is anything to go by, the boats will be packed, so it might be worth buying your tickets beforehand.

Now a couple of party dates: many of you should have already received an invitation from Jason for his party on the evening of **Friday 16 July**, from 7.30pm at 'Serenity', Beaucamps Road. RSVP to Jason, please, at [monaghan@cwgsy.net](mailto:monaghan@cwgsy.net).

Last but not least, on **Sunday 1 August**, there'll be a party at 'La Durande', 11 New Place, St Peter Port, from noon onwards: come and see what an excellent job Axelle is doing to the garden while I sit around in a deck chair giving orders. There will be a barbecue and we will do our best to provide gluten-free/vegetarian food for those who need it. RSVP by Thursday 29th July, please.

That's all for now – hope to see you soon!

Phil

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