

# Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

December 2010

Hello all,

A quick pre-Christmas update. It has been relatively quiet since I got back from Oxford at the end of October, but there are still a few bits and pieces to tell you about.



## Airport

I had hoped to wrap up work on the current trench before the cold and wet weather forced us off the site, but we didn't quite manage it, so there will probably be a little more to do in the spring. In the meantime we have processed most of the flint and pottery from the site, which has revealed a couple of interesting items, not least this rather oddly-shaped piece of amber-coloured flint. Initial opinion suggests that it *might* be imported Grand Pressigny flint, and that it *might* be part of a dagger – but we await expert opinion to confirm this.

As you may be aware from the Press, the development work at the Airport site is unlikely to start before the end of 2011, and there is still an outside chance that the fields where we have been working will not be built over. In either case we do have the luxury of being able to spend some more time there if we are not busy on other sites.

## La Varde

It's nearly the solstice, and Hazel has asked me to remind you all about going up to La Varde to see how the winter sunrise 'works' in the dolmen. You will need to be there by about 8am, and a clear sky to the south-east is necessary for the full effect. This should be working now through to just about the end of the month.



## Roman coin

Despite its attractive golden appearance, this is not gold but bronze, and it's probably a worn sestertius of Hadrian. It's difficult to identify absolutely precisely because of its condition, but it might be of the same type as the example shown overleaf, which is dated to 121 or 122 AD. It was found recently by Shane

with his metal detector on Vazon, and I'm grateful to him for bringing it in to be recorded. At least three Roman coins have now been found on Vazon – keep your eyes peeled!

sestertius of Hadrian, AD 121-122 (*RIC* 611b): IMP CAESAR TRAIAN HADRIANVS AVG, laureate, draped and cuirassed bust right / P M TR P COS III S-C, Minerva standing left, wearing crested helmet, sprinkling incense onto candelabrum to left and holding spear, to right rests a shield decorated with climbing serpent



### **Lihou fish-traps**

In the spring and summer of next year we are planning to do some concentrated fieldwork on the 'fish-traps' below the Priory on Lihou, with a view to giving a talk on the subject at a conference in Brittany in September 2011. Before the water warms up enough to spend several hours stumbling around on slippery rocks, there is one way in which you could add valuable information to this research. What I need are air photographs of the fish-traps. These are useful at just about any state of the tide except for high spring tides; what I am trying to work out is how these enclosures



might have functioned, and so it's useful to see how they trap (or let out) the water at different stages of the tide. Shown here is a photo that some of you will have seen on the wall in the store, taken from a Trislander (so it's nice and low). As you can see, this shows the stone structures quite clearly, even though they are below the surface of the water. On the next page is a shot from just a couple of weeks ago, on a flight to Gatwick (so we were a bit



higher up already), but it's still useful because it shows the structures at a different state of the tide and from a different angle. If you're flying in or out of the island over the next few months and you've got a camera to hand, please keep this in mind and take a few snaps – if you could get the pilot to open the window that would be even better 😊



That's all for now – it just remains for me to wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year. I look forward to seeing lots of you at the Christmas meal next Monday, and I hope to see you all on site or in the store in 2011.

All the best

Phil

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