

Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

July 2011

Hello all,

Just a quick update on what's been going on for the past few weeks, and what's still in store later in the summer.

St Tugual's Chapel

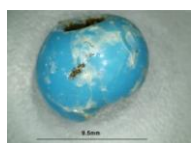
Work on the burials next to the Herm chapel finally came to an end in May. In all we identified at least 37 bodies in the course of the excavation, some of them left *in situ* but about half of them brought back here for further research. I think it's fair to say that after this experience, the Herm management team will be trying very hard not to dig any more holes in the lawn for the foreseeable future!



The last burial to be excavated – another child, like most of the Herm bodies – had been badly damaged by earlier phases of drainage work. In this case the head was probably removed when a drain was connected to the downpipe, and at some point the lower part of the body had also been cut away, so only the torso remained intact.

Delancey

Dr George Nash recently completed another season of work at the ruined gallery grave at Delancey. The results were perhaps not as good as we hoped, mainly because the site must have been quite badly damaged when it was discovered in 1919 and when Miss Collum got her hands on it in 1932. However some prehistoric pottery and flint was discovered, along with three enigmatic beads – it remains to be seen whether these are 1950 AD or 1950 BC, however!



Airport site

As I'm sure many of you have seen in the Press, we are working again on the large site west of the airport runway. This is turning up more prehistoric features, and for the first time on the site we have clear evidence of several phases of occupation. It is not always easy digging, and in particular after a few days sunshine it becomes very difficult to see the features, but as I write these words it is tipping it down outside so the conditions for digging should be better over the next few days. If you're interested in taking part, work will continue until Friday 15 July from 8am to 4pm each weekday. There will be a pause the following week and then it'll start again on Monday 25 July. Any queries, give me a call or phone Jenny Giddins, site supervisor, on 07781 131061.



Sark

Professor Barry Cunliffe has completed another short season of work on Sark, at two sites: the field near the Mill where the hoard was found in 1719, and the rubble cairn near Port à la Jument, in the north-west of the island. Both sites revealed significant traces of Bronze Age settlement and, in the case of the cairn, evidence of earlier (late Neolithic) occupation as well. From a pit beneath the cairn came these two beautiful flints. The source of the flint might possibly be the Le Havre area of northern France, although they need to be studied by a flint specialist before we can be sure.

Mrs Sims

I'm sure many of you saw the sad news of Madeleine Sims's death, aged 99, in the Press. Although Mrs Sims had not been active in the Archaeology Group for the last couple of years, she still came and collected flint from Port Soif with us when she was 96 or 97, which is an achievement that not many of us are likely to equal. Our condolences go to her daughter Mary.

Dates for your diary

As mentioned above, work at the airport will continue throughout the summer, with the exception of the week beginning 18 July. During that week the entire Museum archaeological team are going to be away from the island, so please don't find anything spectacular while we're gone!

We have been asked by the National Trust to carry out some excavation around the outbuildings of their restored farm at Les Caches, Forest (on the right hand side of the road leading down to the Gouffre). As soon as we have a clearer idea of what this involves I'll let you know.

The dates of the late summer excavations are now more or less finalized. Duncan Garrow and Fraser Sturt will be back at L'Erée for the third and final time from the Bank

Holiday weekend (27/28 August) for about three weeks (until 16 September). As in previous years they welcome offers of help from both experienced diggers and novices.

On 5 September Chris Scarre will be starting his final phase of work on Herm, which is scheduled to last until Friday 23 September. There should be an opportunity at least to see this excavation and I'll let you know when a date for a site visit has been arranged.

Last but not least, between 20 and 28 August we are planning to work on two sites in Alderney, and here's an appeal from Jason for help:

**Investigation of the Nunnery, Longy Bay
Phase IV, August 2011
Call for Volunteers**

Previous seasons have demonstrated that the Nunnery was probably originally a Roman fortlet or signal station with a substantial central tower. It is turning out to be the most important building of its age in the Channel Islands and probably the best extant example of its type in Europe.

The 2011 excavation will run from Saturday August 20 to Sunday August 28. This is a longer dig than in previous years, partly to allow us to ensure we have enough working time at Roman depth and partly to ensure we finish off the excavations this year. We will also be participating in a field project at Les Rochers, with both sites exchanging personnel as needs demand. Volunteers are welcome who can only do part of the week. We have both 'light' and 'heavy' tasks to perform, so all skills are welcome.

We will in particular be investigating the gate, the ramparts and the fallen wall this year.

Accommodation and ground transport is kindly being provided by our colleagues in Alderney. Lunches on site are likewise provided, but we go Dutch in the evenings.

Although I am aware of several people who have said yes already, please confirm to me whether you wish to come and what your dates will be. I will need to have a good idea of numbers before deciding how many trenches we can open and sustain. As there is a limit to how many flights can be funded, how much accommodation is on offer and how many lunches are to be provided, spaces on the project will be allocated on a priority basis. A number of volunteers have already agreed to fund their own flights and about half the team is expected to be from Alderney.

Please contact jason.monaghan@gov.gg

That's all for now, enjoy the rest of the summer and I hope to see you on an excavation or two...

Phil

tel. 700477 or 07781 102219