

Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

October 2011

Hello all,

Apologies for the long gap since the last newsletter – it's been a busy summer and it's not getting a lot quieter just yet. However, here's a summary of what we've been up to for the past few months and some news about future events.

Airport site

We're still plugging away at the excavation west of the airport, taking advantage of this good weather before the water table rises. Every trench we've opened seems to be full of ditches, plus a few pits and postholes. While some are certainly medieval, others are much earlier. Hélène Pioffet, who has studied the Fouaillages pottery in great detail, believes that about 80% of what we have at the airport site is Middle Neolithic, in other words dating very roughly to 4500-4000 BC. The remainder is mostly late Bronze Age. The earlier prehistoric material is particularly important and so we'll continue on this site as long as we can, to get as much out as possible. In recent weeks we've had a couple of fine small-finds: a blue glass bead, possibly prehistoric, and a stone rubber in a distinctive green dolerite, almost certainly from a local source. Both of these fortunately came up before we had to say goodbye to Jenny Giddins, who did a great job of supervising the excavation during the summer and who has now gone back to study for a Masters degree at Reading. Thanks Jenny and good luck!



Herm

Professor Chris Scarre returned to Herm for his final season of excavation in September, working on three main sites: Kendrick tomb 15 (in the middle of the common), the tomb at Robert's Cross, and Kendrick tomb 13, which lies immediately to the west of Robert's Cross.

It was particularly interesting to see more of tomb 13, which has been all but invisible underneath bracken and gorse for many decades.

Here it is from the south-west. In the foreground (sloping down from the edge of the trench) is a huge collapsed capstone, possibly the largest of any of the Herm tombs.

In the centre of the tomb it was possible to identify Lukis's excavation of 1842, now filled up with pale windblown sand (picture below).



In due course more details of the Herm excavation of 2011 will appear on the project website, at <http://www.dur.ac.uk/herm/project/>.



L'Erée

Drs Duncan Garrow and Fraser Sturt finished their final season of excavation on the prehistoric site at L'Erée in September. This year they dug an even bigger trench in the field behind the eroding cliff face, but rather to everybody's surprise it didn't produce as many features as had been expected. There were large quantities of pottery and flint though, which

will now be analysed before the final report is written. In the meantime there are lots of photos of the dig at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/neolithicsteppingstones/>, and the 'Neolithic Stepping Stones' project of which the L'Erée excavation forms just a part is described at <http://www.neolithicsteppingstones.org/> /[Home.html](http://www.neolithicsteppingstones.org/Home.html).



Work underway at L'Erée

Coupée Lane

In the occasional quiet moment (?) over the summer we spent some time excavating on the curious site at the back of Martel Maides auction rooms, between Cornet Street and Coupée Lane. Essentially we seem to have been digging out somebody's eighteenth century basement, which had been filled up with 18th/19th century rubbish. After almost ten feet of this we finally had to give up, apparently on natural, although it's an odd kind of natural since it seems to be a very clean sand. The excavation did help to put in context the work done on the site by Bob Burns, in 1989 and 1992, and I will talk a little bit about this in the review of the year, which brings me to...

The review of the year!

Yes, a bit early perhaps, but on Thursday 10 November I'll be talking at Candie at 8pm on what we've been up to this year – I think it's safe to say that there will be a fair amount of bones involved. But I'll also talk a little bit about the airport site, Coupée Lane, and something else which has occupied us this year, the Lihou fishtraps...





Spot the intrepid archaeologist...

More socialising!

Jason would like to invite the group round to his house (Serenity, Les Beaucamps, Castel) on Friday 11 November for the 'premiere' of his half-hour film of this year's dig at the Nunnery, Alderney. Film at 8pm (and yes he used a tripod this year, so it's not so shaky). Chat afterwards. Wine and nibbles (bring bottle if you wish but not mandatory). Park at Douzaine room if the drive is full.

The same project is featuring in the December issue (#261) of Current Archaeology, which should be out in early November. There is also a trio of short films on [YouTube](#), search for 'alderney excavation'.

Christmas

And don't forget the Archaeology Group Christmas dinner, to be held at Les Cotils on Tuesday 20 December, 7.30 for 8pm, theme (for those who wish to dress up!) anything to do with bones/skeletons... more details about the meal to follow soon.

That's all for now. We will carry on digging at the airport site as long as the weather/Public Services Department allow us, so if you fancy digging and you're not already on the weekly what's on e-mail, just get in touch.

See you soon
Phil

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