

Guernsey Museum Archaeology Group Newsletter

May 2012

Hello all,

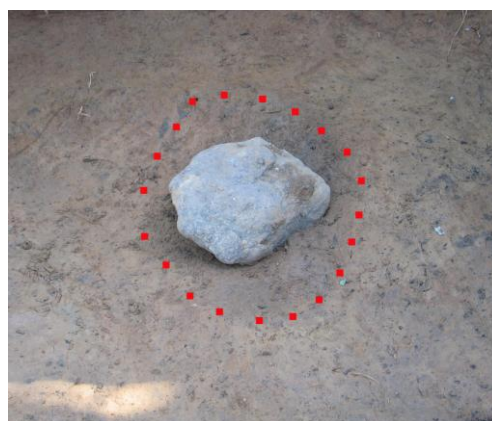
I'm pleased to say that we have finally completed our move into our new accommodation, on the ground floor of Grange House. We are awaiting delivery of a few more tables for work space, but otherwise this area is now complete. The contrast with the old office – particularly the much better light – is really noticeable. It's also surprisingly quiet, even though we are now directly on the Grange. Come and say hello if you're passing!



The final piece of the jigsaw should be put in place over the next few months, when we get a small room adjacent to these offices to use as a sort of holding area for the finds we are currently processing. For the first time in many years, virtually all of our finds are now just a few seconds away from our working area.

King's Road update

In June we are starting a new phase of work at Stanley House, where we excavated two Iron Age burials in 2009 and 2010. The initial plan is to dig a long trench (about sixteen metres) down the length of the garden, just over the wall from where the graves were excavated on the Pré au Puits site in 2005. There is obviously a strong possibility of encountering more Iron Age material here. If at all possible I would like to involve the volunteer group in the work, but we will need to make a start on the topsoil removal before I can judge just how much involvement is feasible. I'll keep you posted on that.



In the meantime, conservation work on the Stanley House finds from 2010 has now been completed in Oxford. I don't yet have the objects back, but I have Dr Esther Cameron's report on them, which makes for interesting reading. These items were found beneath the heavy (32kg) block of gabbro shown in the picture above, which I think was used as a grave marker. The grave is very small – about 70cm end to end – and so almost certainly for a small

child. The objects beneath it included two small, oval copper alloy bracelets, between 35mm and 45mm in diameter, and the completely corroded remains of what seems to be a silver ring, of about the same size. Tests are now taking place to confirm that this is silver, which is a very rare metal on this site and at this period of the Iron Age.

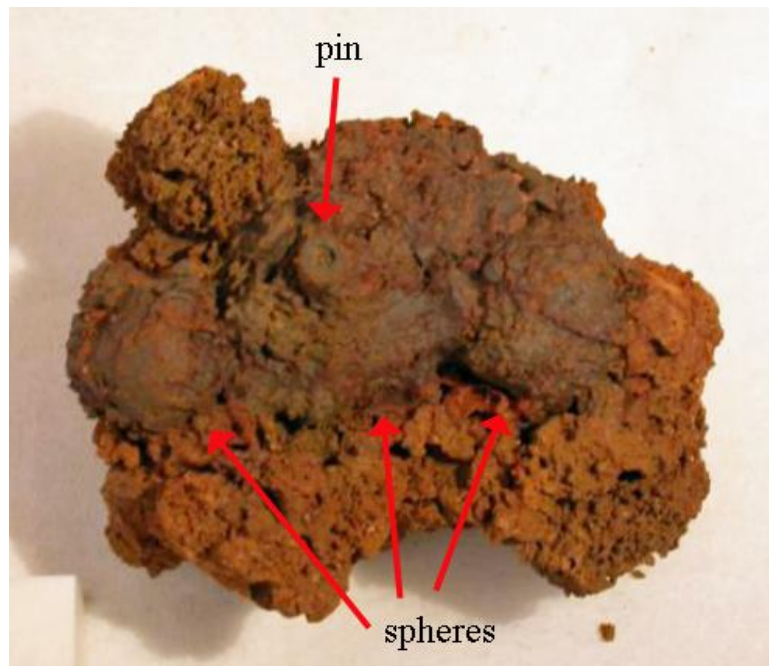
In the same grave there were three amber beads, two 15mm long and one slightly larger, at 18mm. Last but not least, there was a corroded lump of iron which after x-ray and cleaning can be seen to have a very strange form indeed. It seems to be formed of three spheres, each 14mm in diameter, either welded together or threaded on a pin. This is probably some sort of brooch, but it is not in a form which I have seen before. Further research is definitely needed on this item.



Two copper alloy bracelets and the remains of a silver bracelet



Three amber beads



Mystery iron object

Airport

We are still keeping an eye on Lagan's work at the west end of the airport runway, although our input there is nearly over. Most recently we went and recorded a brick well, probably nineteenth century in date, which had been built between the former barn and the glasshouses towards the north of the site. There has been a little bit more prehistoric material turning up, but nothing very spectacular – which is probably just as well.

Other sites

Two or three minor sites are in the pipeline for excavation: some test-pits near the Civil Defence buildings behind the PEH, possible work for the National Trust at the Ozanne Tower in the Castel, and work on a private property also in the Castel. At the moment we are not certain what will happen and when – most of these projects are still dependent on planning permission – but as with King's Road, if there is an opportunity to get people involved we will. The Canichers has gone quiet again at the moment following another planning refusal, although this won't affect the archaeological work if and when it happens.

Alderney

Jason is directing another short season of work at the Nunnery, from 27 July to 1 August. If you are interested in participating, please contact him directly at jason.monaghan@gov.gg.

Sark

Professor Barry Cunliffe is arriving on 9 June for another short season on Sark, where he is planning to do more work in the Tanquerel fields, north of the Mill. At some point during his fortnight on the island there should be an open day for visitors so I'll let you know the details of that when it's arranged.



Phil's 30th birthday

I know, I know, you thought I looked much older than that. However, on Thursday 26 July I will be celebrating my 30th birthday*. I haven't quite decided how to mark the occasion yet, but I do like setting fire to things so I'm looking at the possibility of a beach bonfire/barbecue on the evening of 26 July. Probably on the beach between Le Crocq and Fort Richmond, where there is relatively little chance of attracting unwanted attention from the fire brigade. I'll get back to you with more details once I've cleared this with Environment, but in the meantime please make a note of the date.

*30th birthday since I started digging, obviously... Castle Cornet, started work on Saturday 26 July 1982.

That's all for now, hope to see you soon

Phil

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