

ROMAN FINDS GROUP
NEWSLETTER X



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NEWSLETTER X CONTENTS

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November 1995

Data Protection Act

Under the terms of the 1984 Data Protection Act, The Roman Finds Group is required to ask its members whether they have any objection to personal data about them being held by the Society on computer. The person data consists of members' names and addresses used for mailing notices of meetings, and will be released only to archaeological organisations. If members have any objections to personal data about them being held by the RFG, could they please write to the editor

Editorial

First a note from the membership secretary. Angela Wardle writes

Many thanks to the large number of members who have paid their current (1995/6) subscriptions so promptly, and particularly to those who have also returned the questionnaire. We are digesting the results at the moment but there is no doubt that your comments and suggestions will help us to plan future meetings more effectively. Additional questionnaire forms are also available - your views are still welcome.

For anyone who has not yet paid, please send your annual subscription of £5 to Dr. Angela Wardle, 1, Stebbing Farm, Fishers Green, STEVENAGE, Herts. SG1 2JB

The new system of setting a copy deadline has proved very successful as you can see from the number of contributions. The deadline for the next Newsletter will be *March 31st, 1996*. All contributions gratefully received - including notes, news, reviews and notices of forthcoming attractions. I hope to include a report from the committee about the questionnaire. Please send all contributions to Hilary Cool, 16 Lady Bay Road, West Bridgford, NOTTINGHAM NG2 5BJ

Finally, look out for the new *Time Team* on Channel 4 in the New Year which will feature some reconstruction glass furnace firings which sound if they will be a revelation for anyone interested in Roman industry

The Leicester Unit have changed.

Here are the details of
their new incarnation.



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Gallo-Roman clay figurines: how to find your way around the literature

Do you want to read a general work on clay figurines, or to know what a particular piece is meant to be? Have you ever wanted to know how they were made? Do you want to try to interpret your find or finds? This short contribution is intended to suggest where, in all the literature, answers to these questions can be found.

The subjects here are the mould-made pipeclay figurines from the well-known workshops in the département of the Allier in central France, just to the north-west of the main area of Central Gaulish samian and colour-coat manufacture; in this country chiefly the *Venus Anadyomene* (Venus rising naked from the sea) and the *Dea Nutrix* (Mother-Goddess enthroned, with infants) types of figurines. Other Central Gaulish subjects occur, chiefly animals, but are rather rarer than the two main classes.

Rare also are clay figurines made in the Rhine-Mosel region, chiefly at Köln and Trier. These can be distinguished from the Central Gaulish examples, not only by the different subjects modelled and the employment of clays other than pipeclay, but also by the traces left on the figurines of the air bubbles in the plaster moulds used to make them.

While the fabrics of post-Roman pipeclay figurines can be identical to that of the Gallo-Roman ones, the subject matter is naturally, very different. This has allowed a correction of the date of some supposed Roman examples (compare Jenkins 1979 with Seewaldt 1990, 298-99).

Do you want to read a general work on clay figurines?

van Boekel 1983, 199-241 and 1986, 339-75

Rouvier-Jeanlin 1986 (and articles in issue 81 of *Les dossiers d'histoire et d'archéologie*, 1984)

There is a classified bibliography in Bémont *et al* 1993, 299-303, which can be updated using Colette Bémont's regular 'Chronique de la Céramologie de la Gaule' in the journal *Revue des Études Anciennes*

Do you want to know what a particular piece is meant to be?

Rouvier-Jeanlin 1972 (still in print): Central Gaulish

van Boekel 1983, 1985 and 1986: Rhine-Mosel especially.

Especially useful are two London catalogues by the late Frank Jenkins (1969; 1978) and a detailed study of mother-goddess figurines (Schauerte 1985)

Do you want to know how they were made?

Bémont *et al* 1993, 96-109

van Boekel 1983, 216-31

Rouvier-Jeanlin *et al* 1990

Production sites are covered on pp 15-93 of Bémont *et al* 1993

Do you want to say something about your find (or finds)?

The UK background is sketched by van Boekel (in Bémont *et al* 1993, 245-52), relying heavily on Jenkins' unpublished PhD thesis of 1977. See also Jenkins' 1950s and 1960s papers (1958, 1959, 1962 and 1963), one by Alcock (1981, 50-1, 53), and the two volumes by Green (1976, 15, 20-1, figs. 13-4 and gazetteer; 1978, 16-7 and gazetteer). Some of Frank Jenkins' site reports provide *corpora* of British finds of particular classes of figurine, e.g. busts (Jenkins in Partridge 1981, 276) or aediculae (Jenkins in Bird *et al* 1978, 492).

For the continent, see van Boekel (1986, 339-75) for the Netherlands, Vertet (1984) and Demarolle (1986) for Gaul and, especially, the following parts of Bémont *et al* 1993:

pp 139-42 - the results of Correspondence Analysis on the relationship between figurine-subjects and the contexts they occur in, from central and central-western France;

pp 143-216 - French background, in the form of regional reviews;

pp 217-45 - reviews of the evidence from Switzerland, south Germany, Austria and the Low Countries

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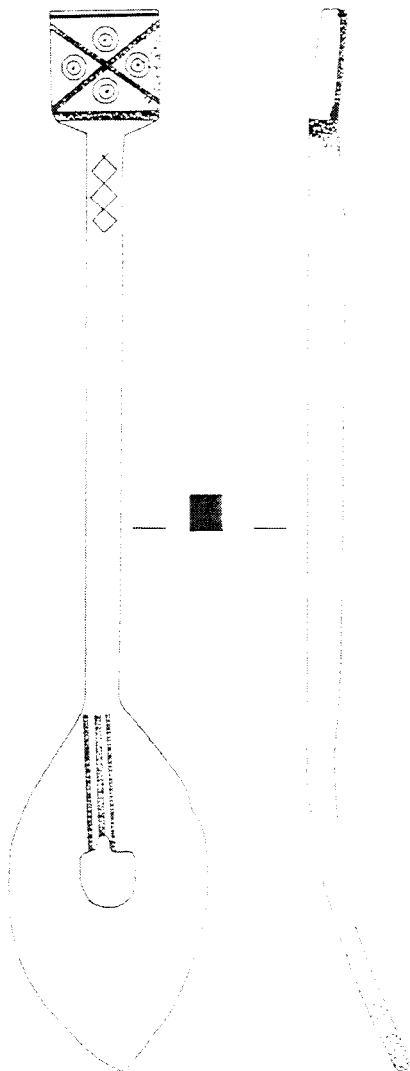
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Spoon brooches

I am currently co-editing a full publication of Victoria Cave, Settle, a few of whose Romano-British finds have long been known but most of which have never been published. I am presently assessing the bonework which is notable for the numbers of bone or antler so-called "spoon brooches" (outside Settle apparently fairly rare finds) it includes. "Spoon brooches" consist of a circular or rectangular-sectioned (or sometimes a 'barley sugar' spiral) shaft with a usually oval 'bowl' at one end and a decorative head at the other. The 'bowl' shows little or no dishing, though it is frequently rather hooked at the front, invariably has a central piercing and usually three grooves running up from the piercing. The heads vary from sub-rectangular with incised grooves, saltaires and ring and dot motifs, through openwork lozenges between bars to slightly stylised birds and even a ?spider. Their misleading name originated in the nineteenth century and functional identifications since have concentrated on a role in spinning, though I would propose that they are hair fasteners/ornaments.



Whilst I am aware of all the examples from Settle / Giggleswick sites and Dowkerbottom Hole Cave as well as the published examples from York, Malton, between Hartlepool and Seaton Carew, Great Chesters and South Shields in Collinge (1935) and Allason-Jones and Miket (1984). I would be very grateful for any information on any other examples, especially if they have any dateable associations.

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Scale 1:1

A fragment of Roman silver plate from Ratley and Upton

A fragment of a Roman silver plate was found by Mr D.J. Sabin while metal-detecting along the Edge Hill escarpment in September 1994. This area has previously produced evidence of Roman occupation in the form of coarse ware and samian pottery and brooches. The plate is badly damaged and consists of a triangular segment representing perhaps one-eighth of the original artefact. The segment preserves part of the outer rim, has two torn edges and has also been folded into three. The rim consists of a narrow flange slightly raised from the interior surface of the plate. On the under-side of the plate there is a shallow raised support ring with a rounded section. It is difficult to determine the original size of the plate, but the support ring may have a diameter of 15cm and it is possible that the total diameter of the plate was 39cm. The maximum dimensions recorded is 23cm from the rim to the furthest point of the fragment. It weighs 220g.

The plate is undecorated apart from a linear zone on the interior or upper side of the rim. This has moulded decoration in a 'barbotine' style. The surviving decoration consists of a crossed curvilinear motif, then a ? mythological beast, then a tongue moulding, then either a beast with two heads (one at either end) and a winged body or a winged beast and then a similar crossed curvilinear motif.

Preliminary metallurgical analysis by Dr. Graham Morgan of the University of Leicester indicates that the plate is made of very pure silver with only a trace of copper.

Further research is required to locate parallels from elsewhere in Britain for the striking decoration on this plate. The writer would be pleased to receive advice from anyone who can help in this search.

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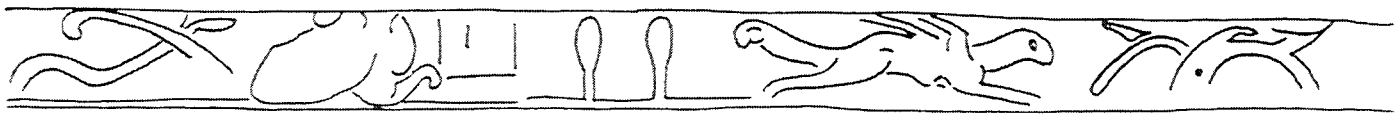
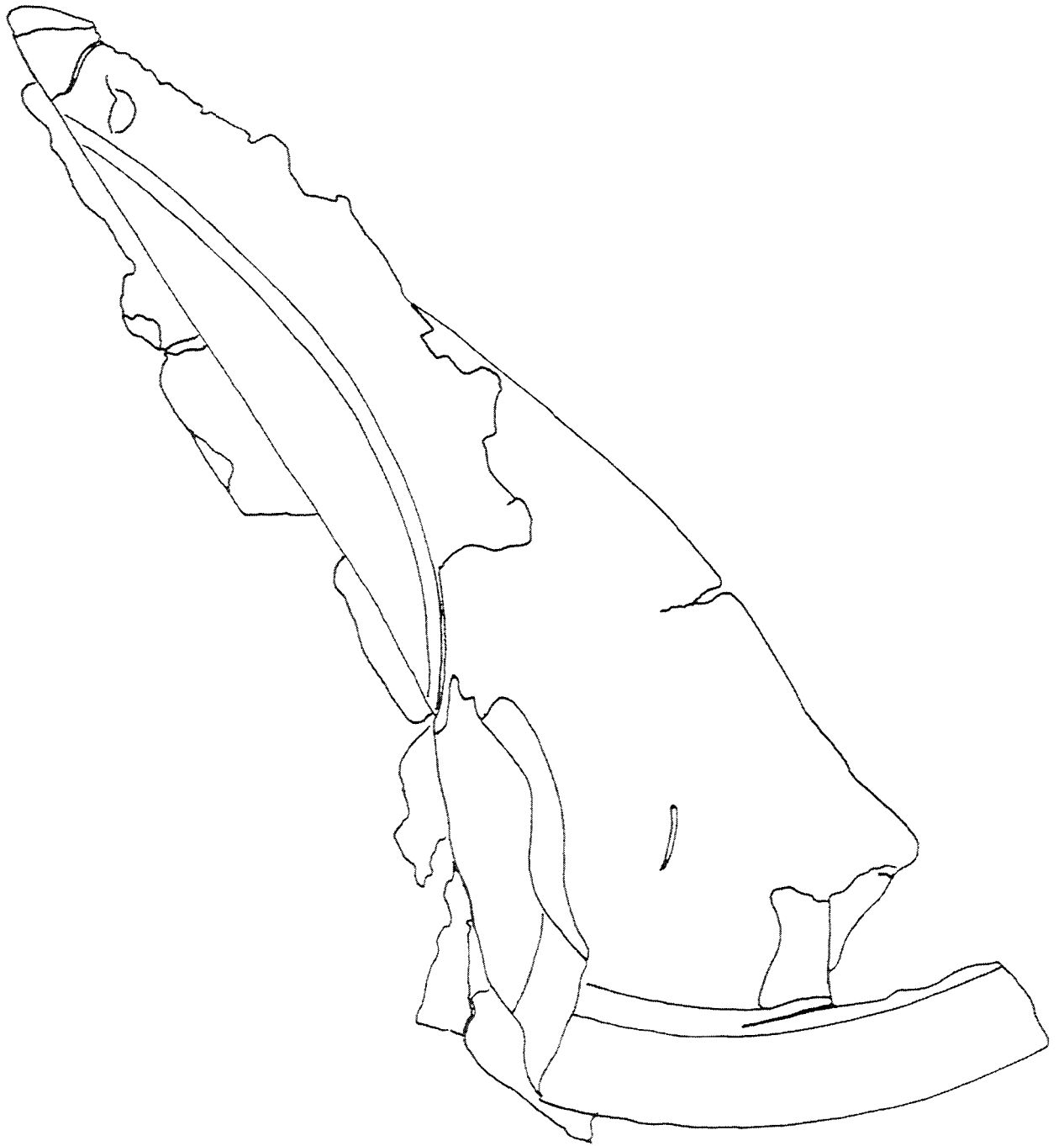


Plate from Ratley and Upton (Scale 1:1)

Early Medieval Leather and Fur Conference

Regular attenders of day meetings will know that whatever the topic under discussion, there is always much to be gained, even if your particular field of interest lies elsewhere. Working in small project groups, as many of us do, day meetings provide the opportunity to see what work is going on elsewhere, show 'problem pieces' round for comment, swop ideas with others and, all this academic worthiness aside, they give the chance to meet up with old friends and make new ones.

At the *Early Medieval Leather and Fur* conference organised by the Archaeological Leather Group and held at Oxford on Friday 22nd September there was as much to interest the Roman finds researcher, despite the perhaps unpromising title. Description of what sort of excavated features suggest you have a leather processing site on your hands (*Leather-working processes and production sites* - Roy Thompson and Steve Webster) and the type of bone assemblages indicative of the preparation of leather and furs (*Animal bones from the Viking town of Birka, Sweden* - Bengt Wigh) were of general interest, as were the descriptions of the extent of information which can be had from seemingly unpromising brown lumps of minerally preserved organic remains encountered on metalwork principally, but not exclusively, from burial environments (*Arms and Armour* - Esther Cameron and *Leather containers* - Glynis Edwards). The scholarly lectures on the early trade in fur (*Trading in fur, from classical antiquity to the early Middle Ages* - James Howard Johnston) and leather and fur clothing (*The search for Anglo-Saxon skin garments and the documentary evidence* - Gale Owen-Crocker) drew heavily on Roman literary sources while illustrations of Roman shoes recently excavated from Rouen (*Recent finds from Carolingian France* - Veronique Montemblault) emphasised the uniformity of the footwear throughout the North West provinces during the Roman period. In addition, there was even a beautifully made reconstruction of a third century latchet fastening shoe amongst the historic reproduction shoes and leather vessels available for examination (made by *Bjarni's Boots of Hebden Bridge, West Yorks*). All this and a splendid buffet lunch.

Esther Cameron who masterminded and hosted this event is to be heartily congratulated on providing an excellent meeting. The ALG hope to publish the proceedings at a later date for those who couldn't attend.

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RFG Spring Meeting 1996

The Spring meeting will be held on Monday March 4th 1996, at the Castle Museum, Norwich. The theme will be **Metal detecting and finds**, with an emphasis on the archaeology of Roman Suffolk and Norfolk.

Much of the meeting will consist of presentations by archaeologists from these two counties but, of course, the main theme in question has much wider significance to archaeological practice right across Britain. It is intended that the meeting will achieve two goals. We shall provide a forum showing the positive benefits resulting from the long-standing climate of co-operation between metal detectorists and archaeologists in our area. Speakers will also deliver presentations about important groups of finds, many of which come from Norfolk and Suffolk, largely resulting from the use of metal detectors. Although the day will be a very full one, it is hoped that broader issues concerning metal detecting will be aired by way of questions, both within the main meeting and during informal discussions during the day.

Speakers will include archaeologists currently working in Suffolk, Norfolk, London and a metal-detectorist discussing the results of his own survey work on important Roman sites (soon to be published). The following have agreed to give papers. Titles are still to be confirmed.

John Newman *Detecting on evaluations - an extra dimension*

Fiona Seeley *Recent metalwork finds from Suffolk*

Barrie Sharrock *Metal detecting in Swanton Morley and Billingford, Norfolk*

Myk Flitcroft *The use of metal detectors on Roman sites*

Ralph Jackson *Cosmetic grinders: a Romano-British enigma*

Jude Plouviez *Aucissa to Zoomorphic - the brooch assemblage from Hacheston, Suffolk*

David Gurney *A Romano-British pit-group from Billingford, Norfolk*

Depending on time available, I shall be pleased to give an introduction to our system in Norfolk, by which archaeologists in the Norfolk Museums Service work closely with metal-detectorists, on a daily basis.

It is anticipated that the main meeting will last from 10am to 5pm. We hope to keep the Archaeology Gallery in the Museum open later to enable a tour for members after this time. There will also be a presentation of finds at the meeting for a general viewing, which will include some of the items being discussed by the speakers and also any unusual and important artefacts that are loaned to us by local metal-detectorists at that time.

Booking forms for the meeting will be circulated in January.

It may be difficult for members to reach Norwich by 10am from some parts of the country. If anybody wishes to come early, I will be prepared to organise and accompany a visit to some of our best local Roman sites, at Burgh Castle and Caistor St Edmund, on the Sunday (3rd March). This will depend entirely on the interest that you show. If you would like to join in such a visit, please contact me in good time, in order that I can assess overall interest and arrange this.

John Davies
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NEWSLETTER IX

SOLUTION TO THE CROSSWORD

So how well did you do ?

ACROSS		DOWN	
1)	Despoina	1)	Demeter
5)	Meliboea	2)	Selene
7)	Egeria	3)	Ino
10)	Cat	4)	Atavgatis
11)	Titaness	6)	Boii
		8)	Rhea
		9)	Acte

Review

Jason Foss. *Shadesmoor*. Severn House Publishing (Sutton 1995) ISBN 07278 4784 8 £15.99

Those members who beguile their leisure hours with detective fiction would do well to look out for the books by Jason Foss. They feature Jeff Flint - Romano-British archaeologist and third century enthusiast, lecturer at the Central College of London and amateur sleuth. This, the third of his adventures, finds him taking up a new post at the University of North Yorkshire. There he is rapidly enmeshed in a tale of murder, mayhem, and developer funding. Aided and hindered in equal measure by his side-kicks, Tyrone Drake, graduate student with pronounced right wing tendencies, and Vikki Corbett, ambulance-chasing satellite TV journalist; Drake eventually brings murderer and miscreants to justice and the reader to an almost happy ending.

This is in part a satisfyingly old-fashioned whodunnit. It is nicely and honestly plotted with twists, turns, blind alleys and well-placed clues. It is also concerned with the Faustian bargains that may have to be struck in these post-PPG16 days. To what extent should we take the money and look the other way whilst theme parks traduce the past? In this story the scales are loaded against the developer, but then it is written by a professional archaeologist (Jason Monaghan - better known for his pot reports), and it is nice occasionally to indulge in some wish-fulfillment.

For the lay reader it will provide an interesting insight into British archaeology in the 1990's as well as being a ripping yarn. For the professional there will be wry moments of recognition as well. I would recommend both this and its two predecessors, *Shadows in the Corn* and *Byron's Shadow*. We all know that authors never put real people in books, but Romano-British archaeologists can play happy games with spotting the references and who would ever have thought that *Newstead* could be used as an offensive weapon!

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BOOK STALL

Another excellent cut-price offer for members of the RFG this time from the Canterbury Archaeological Trust.

Excavations in the Marlow car park and surrounding areas

The Archaeology of Canterbury Volume V

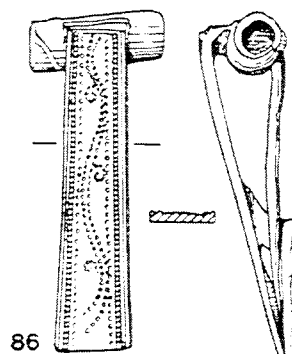
Blockley, K., Blockley, M., Blockley, P., Frere, S.S. and Stow, S.

This two volume set covers the excavations carried out in the centre of Canterbury between 1946 and 1982. Part I provides an interpretation of over 100 structures including the Roman public bath-houses, *portico* and *piscina*, with adjacent town-houses, shops and streets. Part II contains extensive reports on the finds including important groups of Late Roman, Anglo-Saxon and post-medieval pottery. Amongst the small find reports is a large collection of brooches dating from pre-Roman to Anglo-Saxon times; waste from a Roman bone pin workshop; a unique group of Roman horse harness equipment; and Anglo-Saxon bone combs. A large assemblage of glass including a fragment of a Roman chariot race cup is published, as well as specialist reports on building materials including painted wall plaster, marble and tile. Members will also be delighted to discover that this is the volume that includes 'Greep forthcoming' - the bone pin typology we have all been waiting for!

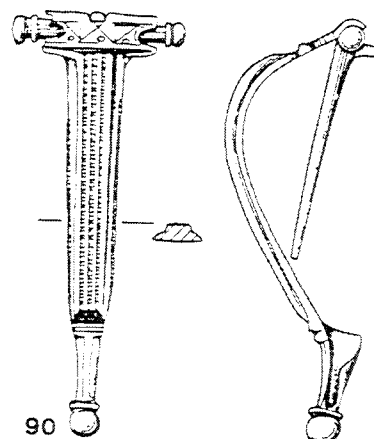
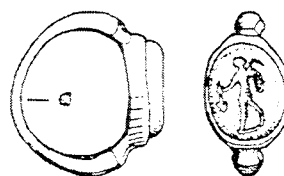
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