

WEAG NEWS

www.weag.org.uk

November 2008

From the NEWSLETTER editor, articles for this years edition required SAP

Remember Remember our Social Evening on the 19th January. Please bring any old books for sale. Any subject welcomed, not exclusively archaeological, paperbacks or leather bound Proceeds go to WEAG funds

13th Oct 2008, lecture given to WEAG by Alison Telfer- Museum of London Recent Excavations at St. Martins-in-the-Fields

The excavations were undertaken from 2004-2007 by MOLAS. The Church was built in 1726 by James Gibb and Saxon remains were discovered when building the portico. There was an earlier church on the same site. The Church's surrounding vaults were demolished in 2006. Headstones used in their construction were rescued. Bodies were reburied at Camden. Three pits were found under the floor containing coffin fixtures but no human remains, a mourning ring and a set of false teeth made from real teeth. Area 4 was a previously undisturbed area. Here were found 17th and 18th Century cellars and a 16th Century Tudor cellar wall underneath which a burial was discovered, one of nine medieval burials found. Grave goods consisted of a 7th Century hanging copper bowl with attachments which had contained hazel nuts and a glass bowl. Nearby were two 7th Century amethyst beads, three opaque beads and six fragments of silver wire. A Roman sarcophagus dated 390-410 AD was also found. Made from limestone it weighed 1 ½ tons and contained a complete skeleton and some extra toe bones but no grave goods. Under the Victorian vaults, Saxon pits were discovered containing bone, antler, a spindle wheel and a large loom weight. Area 7 revealed the remains of a Saxon building below which were traces of either an Iron Age building or a Sentry Post. A maroon/white/yellow bead dated 556-600 AD was found. In a vault area a Roman Tile Kiln was found which was last fired 400-450 AD. The kiln had a double flue, rare in Britain, and was made of stacked tiles surrounded by chalk for insulation. A pot was found dated 430-480 AD. Reporter B.S. McClory

WEAG are having a walk around Ongar and its environs on Sunday 23rd November 2008 at 10.00 am.

Meet at car park (free) next to Ongar Public Library, High Street, Chipping Ongar, CM5 9AB. at 10.00 am.

Come off M11 at junction 7. Take right turning to Chipping Ongar / Chelmsford. At 3rd roundabout turn right to Chipping Ongar. Library Car Park half a mile on left.

Walk round Motte and Bailey, past many old and interesting buildings in the High Street to Greenstead Church and beyond. 3 - 4 miles. Opportunities for short cuts. Two places for meals next to Library :-

Cock Tavern 01277 362615 full menu, snacks, starters, mains, no Sunday Roasts. No need to book. Turn up anytime.

Clock tower - Tel: 01992 575707 full menu, Sunday Roasts £9.95. Booking advisable. Lunch up to 5.00 pm.

News from the Research & Excavation Committee

Digging at Copped Hall (near Epping) in 2009

All WEAG members are invited to join our excavation in **Whit week** running from **Saturday 23rd to Sunday 31st May**. No prior experience is needed, but if you would like to play an active part you will be expected to work for at least one whole day in a disciplined manner as a member of the WEAG team. We will be carrying out a variety of tasks – digging, finds processing, surveying, displaying finds in the Archaeology Room, etc. Or, if you would like to come as a visitor, the Copped Hall Trust will be holding an **Open Day on Sunday 24th** with tours of the mansion and gardens, and we will be glad to give you a personal tour of the archaeological site.

More details will be available nearer the time.

In August we plan to hold a 5-day Training Dig for absolute beginners (or for people who would like to take a thorough refresher course in excavation and recording techniques) in the week beginning **Monday 10th**. While most of the training will be in the trench, there will also be some trench-side sessions designed to give an introduction to field archaeology. In the following week (from **Monday 17th**) we will hold a 5-day Field School, as pioneered in 2008, for people who know the basics but now need a chance to try out what they have learned, to improve their techniques etc. More information about these activities see future issues of WEAG NEWS.

At our first meeting in September, Steve Dyer told us about recent activities at Butser Ancient farm. It began in 1971 with Peter Reynolds, Jack and a golden retriever growing cereals and pulses, ploughing with cattle and building iron age houses on the top of Butser hill. It is now in its third site and there is less investigation of crop growth (the soil is becoming exhausted) but it is very active in its education programmes, teaching children and adults, practical workshops with metalwork and pottery. The great house collapsed in 2006; the site was carefully excavated and a new one built and thatched. Steve told us about the decay of the posts, the roofing angle, and problems with the thatch. The old house lasted about 10 years with a fire burning all the time but the soil was only burnt a few inches down. The other construction is the Sparsholt villa with the hypocaust series of painted rooms and a copy of the mosaic. We will have a visit in the summer.

More to do:-

British Museum Babylon Myth and Reality from Thurs 13 Nov 2008 - 15 Mar 2009

11 Dec. 18.30 lecture Babylon in Art and Culture £5 lots of lunchtime talks at 13.15

Society of Antiquaries 13 Nov. 17.00 Doggerland. 10 Dec. Iron age midden. Also all the meetings in the last NEWS

8 Dec. WEAG meeting: Essex or London? The Archaeology of the Roding Valley John Shepherd, Inst. Archaeology