

E-newsletter 7

21 March 2021

Dear Roman Army Schooler

March is upon us and things are looking a little better than they were at this time last year, although we are still unable to meet up together in person. We hope that those of you who have been joining our online lectures have been enjoying them, we have three lectures left to deliver in this current run – more details below – and we hope that in 2022 we will finally be able to meet together again in Durham for a real Roman Army School session!

Our Online Lectures

Our programme of online lectures has been well attended and seems to be increasing in popularity. Our first lecture in December 2020 was attended by 15 people, the second in February had increased to 46 and a whopping 52 people attended our last lecture on 1st March.

Our next lecture is scheduled for Monday 5th April (Easter Bank Holiday) at 8pm and will be delivered by Marko Jelusic on "Transmission and Meaning of the Notitia Dignitatum (With Particular Reference to the Shield Illustrations)" 86 people are currently booked to attend but we still have spaces left, please sign up using the booking form on our website <https://www.ad43.org.uk/webinars.php> (this will also sign you up to the remaining lectures ensuring that you never miss an invitation).

A selection of previous lectures can also be viewed on our website – Currently David Breeze's lecture on 'Life in the Roman Fort at Bearsden on the Antonine Wall' is available although David's second lecture 'Roman Frontiers in the Landscape' will be made available shortly. Unfortunately we will be unable to provide a recording of Marta Alberti's fascinating lecture on the water system at Vindolanda, due to the Vindolanda Trust's requirement for the lecture to be given again at their own conference, however Marta has kindly provided us with a link to a 10 minute youtube video where she outlines 'Water at Vindolanda' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEg9dQKagj0>

Our final two lectures are: 'The Saxon Shore – A Frontier System – Fact or Fancy?' which will be given by Richard Bridgland on 3rd May. 'The Logistics of Agricola's Final Campaign,' which will be given by Prof. David Breeze 7th June.

We are currently discussing the possibility of a second series of lectures to be delivered later in the year and will update everyone with more details via our E-newsletter when we have more information.

Items of Interest

I'm sure that most of us will have noticed the amazing discovery made at Pompeii earlier this year. A four wheeled chariot with some rather racy roundels for decoration. A full description of the chariot and the circumstances of the find can be read here: <http://pompeiiisites.org/en/comunicati/the-four-wheeled-processional-chariot-the-last-discovery-of-pompeii/?fbclid=IwAR2ubP1ypVeleSun6xidF5YRfWoRfqNeQhwSqnJX86az4XR4AE-UrpeKIps> It may also be of interest to some of you, that a chariot of similar composition, (although not as fancy) to this one found at Pompeii is suspected to have been part of the tomb regalia for the Warrior Burial at North Bersted (A site run by a friend of mine 12 years ago!) more information on the warrior can be found at the Novium Museum website, where the finds from the site are on display. <https://www.thenovium.org/article/31831/Secrets-from-spectacular-Iron-Age-warrior-burial-will-finally-be-told>

It's not Roman but earlier this year Archaeology found itself in the public focus once more as Netflix released 'The Dig', a fictionalised account of the discovery of the Sutton Hoo Ship burial. Generally, it received good reviews although many people had expected to see more of the 'treasures', and some found it dull and decided to pick apart the historical inaccuracies, with a joke about inaccurate trowels becoming common among site archaeologists. Our Chair, Susan, penned her own review for her website, with an eye to pointing out what the film did right through the eyes of commercial archaeology. Anyone interested in this take can read the full blog here:

<https://www.smportherauthor.co.uk/blog/the-dig-a-commercial-archaeologists-review>

News

A note from Prof. David Breeze Archaeopress has agreed to take over the publication of the multi-language series of books on the Frontiers of the Roman Empire and will seek to keep all books in print and up-to-date and upload them online for open access. The full announcement can be read here: www.archaeopress.com Five books are currently in preparation: Egypt (Michel Redde), the Eastern frontier (Fawzi Abudanah, Mark Driessen, David Braund, Michaela Konrad and Simon James), Saxon Shore/Maritime Coast (Richard Bridgland, Sofie Vanhoutte and Tony Wilmott) and Wales (Peter Guest), all funded by Richard Beleson, with Dacia (Felix Marci) to follow. We are therefore close to circling the entire boundary of the Roman empire with the series of 20 books.

How to find your outpost on the Roman frontier

The latest edition of Current World Archaeology 106 (April-May 2021) contains an article seeking an answer to a question not hitherto asked: how did a Roman soldier find his post? How was it identified? By name, number or geography. All these possibilities are considered by a suite of authors experienced in studying Roman frontiers from Hadrian's Wall to the Euphrates.

Obituaries

The Roman Army School is saddened to report the loss of two long standing members of both the previous Hadrianic Society and its offshoot The Roman Army School. Ernest Black and Peter Hill. Short Obituaries for both are attached, however I'm sure our regular Roman Army School Attendees will remember Peter Hill's lectures on construction of Hadrian's Wall and how delightful it was to talk to him about his thoughts, theories and practical experiments in the bar afterward. Likewise, I'm sure many will recall one or two of the lectures given by Ernest which were heavily focussed on detail and nuance – Ernest was also a big fan of Terry Pratchett novels and spent a great deal of time at the 2019 RAS meeting trying to persuade our chair to read a Pratchett novel, (unfortunately the closest I've got is the Pratchett, Gaiman joint work, Good Omens – Chair).

Other items The RAS is always open to submission of articles or items of interest for our E-newsletter and we encourage those on our mailing list to send us their thoughts, musings or other items of interest. A recent addition to our mailing list is Dr Simon Elliott, who has just published his new work on the IX Hispana which may be of interest to a number of RAS members. https://www.amazon.co.uk/Roman-Britain-s-Missing-Legion-Happened/dp/1526765721/ref=sr_1_1?dchild=1&keywords=simon+elliott&qid=1616235995&sr=8-1

Don't forget our next lecture on the 5th April.

With best wishes on behalf of the organisers, Susan Chair – The Roman Army School

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