

Recent Roman Finds

At our meeting in March John Salvatori came along to talk about the recent archaeological finds on the site of the former St Loyes College in Topsham Road. He has been involved in local archaeology since the 1970's and it is sad that the Archaeology Field Unit will soon cease to exist after 40 years. It has done a lot of useful work since the excavation of the Roman bathhouse on Cathedral Green and the domestic buildings site behind the Guildhall.

Recently some of the buildings of St Loyes College were demolished prior to redevelopment and traces of Roman occupation of the site were found in the shape of two deep trenches which had been infilled when the Second Augusta Legion pulled out in AD 75. There were also traces of Iron Age occupation.

Although there were a ring of defensive ditches there were no watchtowers so it is unlikely that it was a fort. Because there is evidence of metal working it is suggested that it was a supply depot situated halfway between the main fort in Exeter and the smaller one at Topsham. (It is probably a coincidence that

St Loye is the patron saint of metalworkers.)

Remains of a workshop or 'fabrica' built on wooden posts set in a ditch were found. It may have had a tiled roof and clerestory windows for light.

Numerous finds were made including half of a Samian bowl stamped 'Nestor fecit' probably made in France and also fragments of a wooden tablet used for messages, originally covered in wax which could be re-used time and time again.

The layout of the whole site appears to resemble a site in Scotland called Elginhaugh excavated in 1986. Our site is still partially covered by two of the 19th century college buildings which are being retained.

Summing up John opined that it was an important base during the Roman occupation and could well have provided logistics for much of Devon.

Frank Potter

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Heavitree Local History Society



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The next meeting of the Society will be held on **Tuesday, 26th June**, commencing at **7:30 pm**. It will be held in the **Rifford Room**, which is entered at the east end of St Michael & All Angels Church, Church Street, Heavitree.

The guest speaker at this meeting is Professor Todd Grey, who will describe his top 50 Devon churches. Copies of the recently published book on this subject will be on sale at the meeting.

Diary Dates

History Society Meetings

Tuesday, 26th June, 2012

Wednesday, 5th September, 2012
(Annual General Meeting)

Monday, 27th August. Fun Day in
Heavitree Pleasure Ground