



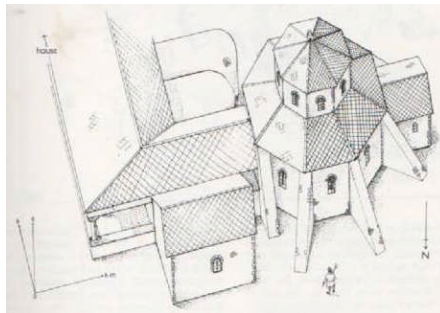
Yeovil Archaeological and Local History Society

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Newsletter: James and Sally Gerrard
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Newsletter

No. 19

January 2008



A reconstruction of the octagonal bath suite at Lufton (from de la Bedoyere's *Roman Buildings in Britain*)

Editorial

It's been a busy year for the editorial team and we're both grateful to Duncan for bringing out the last issue of the *Newsletter* for us.

As reported in the last edition of *Chronicle*, some major challenges face the Society. The most pressing issue appears to be the lack of members willing to stand as officers on the Committee. One wonders why this is. Committee membership and its 'responsibilities' are not onerous. The second major issue facing us is a declining membership. In the mid 1990s the Society had 120-150 members, now it has 70. Yet people are interested in archaeology and history locally. What can we do to increase membership and, perhaps more importantly, retain members? What are we doing wrong?

Finally, we've been thinking for a while about changing the format of the *Newsletter*. Currently, we're not receiving enough contributions to maintain it in its present form. The alternative may be to turn it into a twice yearly programme sheet.

If you have any thoughts on the issues raised above please feel free to contact us at: newsletter@yalhs.org.uk. Any attachments as Microsoft Word (.DOC) or TEXT (.TXT) files please.

James and Sally.

New Members

Welcome to: Jean Harper, Sylvia Vaughan, Hilary Doxford, Dorothy Frankland, Jane Russell, Nigel Harvey, Nick Kalnins who have all joined recently.

YALHS Programme

Programme 2007

All lectures take place at 7:30pm in Holy Trinity Church, Lysander Road, Yeovil. Visitors are very welcome and are charged £1.50 per meeting (not £1 as misprinted in the last Chronicle)

4th January 2008 *Member's Evening.* A collection of short and topical talks given by members of the Society

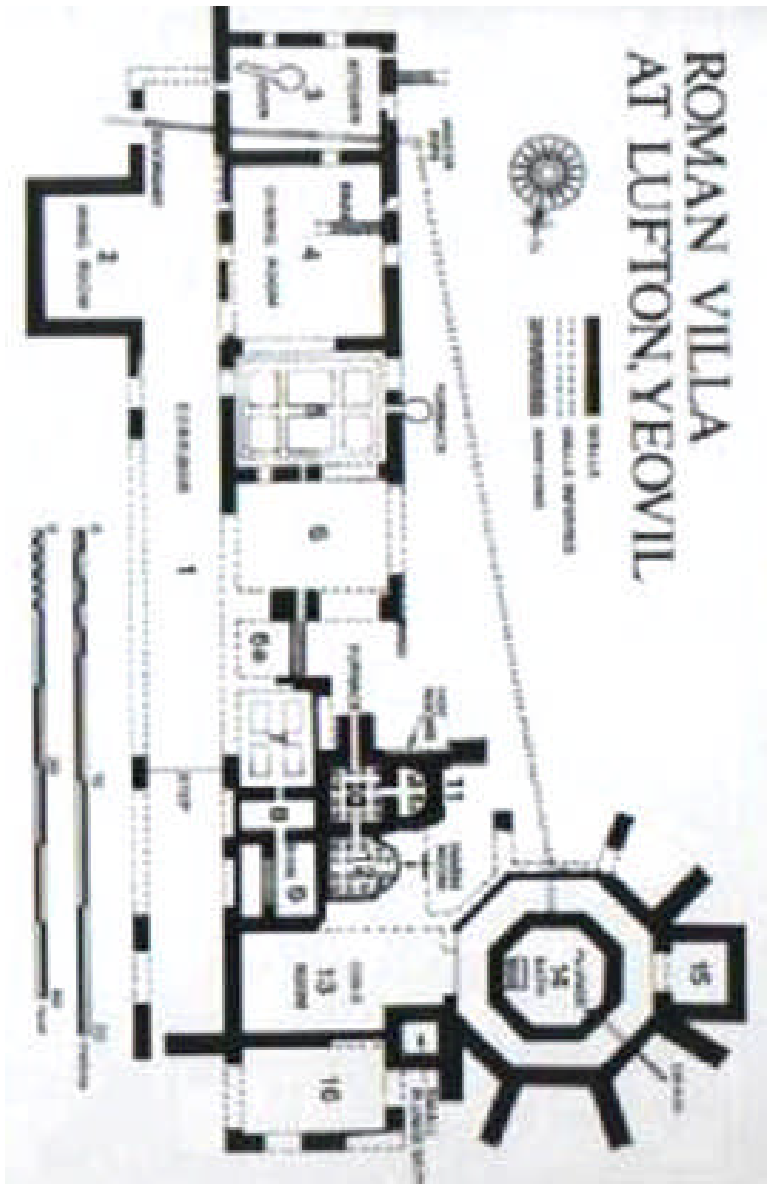
1st February 2008 *The Historic Landscape of the Quantock Hills* by Hazel Riley

27th February 2008 *Visit to the Museum of South Somerset's Community Heritage and Access Centre* Meet at CHAC, 7.00-9.00pm. Please note this is a Wednesday evening event

7th March 2008 *Thimbles* by Jennifer Gardner

4th April 2008 *The Archaeology of Salisbury Plain.*

?? July 2008 *Visit to Archaeological Sites on MoD property, Salisbury Plain.* A not to be missed chance to explore sites that are usually out of bounds



A Section 42 License has just been received to enable us to carry out the proposed work

Society Project: The Roman Villa at Lufton

It was reported in the last edition of *Chronicle* that preparations were being made to undertake some archaeological fieldwork in 2008. The site chosen for this activity is the Roman villa structure partially excavated by Leonard Hayward at Lufton.

The landowners have agreed to let us undertake a geophysical survey of the site and Chris Webster at the Somerset HER in Taunton is supporting our scheme of work. However, the site is a scheduled ancient monument so we are awaiting a Section 42 licence from English Heritage, which will enable us to carry out the work legally – a pretty important consideration! If the licence is forthcoming (and we have high hopes that it will be) and if one other hurdle is overcome then we hope to undertake the work late in August or early in September 2008.

My thanks to the members who have already expressed an interest in this work. If anyone else is interested in taking part then please drop me a line, my details can be found at the front of the *Newsletter*. Some of the research questions we hope this work will answer are listed below:

- Is the excavated structure the total extent of the building? Or is it one side of three ranges arranged around a courtyard?
- Was the building really founded *de novo* in the late third century? Is there evidence for earlier Roman phases of activity or settlement shift?
- Is there evidence of earlier prehistoric or later early mediaeval activity?
- Where are the associated ancillary buildings (barns, tenants houses etc)?
- Does evidence for the site's associated agricultural field systems survive? If so how do they relate to the modern field boundaries?

James Gerrard

From the Treasurer

Subscriptions are due on 1st January and if you have not already made a remittance it would be appreciated if this can be done. If members have a standing order would you please check that it's for the correct amount:

Individual £6.50 Couples £9.50 Family £11
Junior/Student £1

The Society will be changing their bank account towards the end of January and I will write to everyone who pays their subscription by standing order with details.

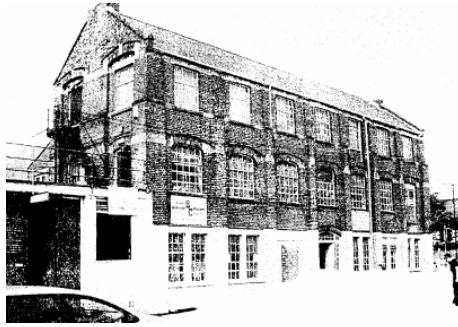
GIFT AID SCHEME

This enables tax to be reclaimed on all donations to a charity. Therefore it is now possible for the Society to obtain currently 28p in the £ tax refund on any donation to the Society including annual subscriptions if members are tax payers and sign a Gift Aid Declaration. An amount of tax equivalent to the amount to be claimed must already have been paid to the Inland Revenue. This would provide the Society with a considerable increase in its income without incurring any extra expense to members or to the Society. For any members not already participating in this scheme and would like to do so please contact the Treasurer for the relevant form.

Yeovil: the hidden history

The Society's publication – *Yeovil: the hidden history* – is available at a substantially reduced rate of £9.95+P&P from <http://www.yalhs.org.uk/hiddenhist.html>. All proceeds go to the Society and at 160 pages, including colour plates this handsome volume is a real bargain!

Foundry House Update



The successful campaign to save one of Yeovil's last gloving factories has been covered in this *Newsletter* and the local press. Over recent months details have emerged regarding the future of the structure.

The *Western Gazette* (15th and 22nd November) has reported that the building will be incorporated into a new £7.4m development, which will include a mixture of residential and commercial properties.

The campaign to save Foundry House attracted the support of 3000 individuals willing to sign their name to a petition. Clearly, a substantial proportion of the population of Yeovil has an interest in preserving the town's historic environment (or the fragments that survive). The Society has a role to play as a watchdog keeping an eye on our built heritage and maintaining and updating the Historic Environment Record. This would help planning officers and local government officials make more informed choices about buildings in the town. Foundry House received an eleventh hour reprieve but in this day and age the historic value of the structure should have been recognised much earlier in the planning process. Perhaps one of our tasks would be to ensure that this happens for other buildings in the town.

Hoard of Late Roman tableware from London



One of the most exciting archaeological discoveries of this year was made near the Bank of England in London on a site being redeveloped. The excavations by Pre-Construct Archaeology (the company I work for) uncovered a large part of a Roman streetscape in a part of the Roman City known to archaeologists as the Walbrook Valley.

The timber-lined well pictured above was constructed at some point after AD330 and possibly as late as AD350. At some point after AD380 a large hoard of nineteen copper-alloy vessels were deposited in the shaft. It is one of the largest collections of Roman copper-alloy tableware from Britain and possibly the most tightly dated. The column visible in the top left hand corner of the picture is a concrete pile for the 1960s office block that was being demolished prior to the redevelopment of the site.

The hoard is on display at the Museum of London and a brief report on the excavations can be found in the December edition of *British Archaeology*.

James Gerrard