

# THE ARP ACTA



## Aylsham Roman Project Newsletter



Issue 1 November 2016

### Welcome to our very first newsletter!

We hope that this will become a monthly letter, depending on what we have, in which we bring you news of what has been happening, what is happening and what is going to happen!

As this is a community project we want you all to feel part of this, so you will find opportunities to contribute. More ideas to come. If you want to just read it, that's fine too!

### Who are we?

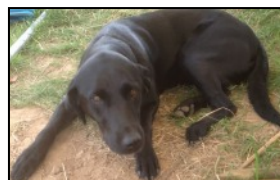


At Woodgate Nursery in Aylsham, landowner Peter Purdy has been digging up bits of pottery and tile for years. Now his dream has come true. A real, live archeological dig on his land, revealing some exciting structures and fabulous artefacts. Bringing it all together with their great expertise, patience and good humour is Britannia Archaeology.



Doing all the hard work, the community.

The Dig Mascot, Sable, what a dog!



### Exciting News



On Monday November 7<sup>th</sup>, Peter, Teresa and Catherine from Woodgate and Martin and Dan from Britannia went to the British Academy on The Mall to receive the Marsh Award for Community Archaeology.



Not only did they come away with this certificate but also a cheque for £1000. Let's hope this is just the start of fund raising in earnest for the years to come.

For news of all winners, check out the [website](#) of the Council for British Archaeology .

Read on for the full citation.

This project finished its first field season in August. The landowner, Peter Purdy, had collected thousands of Roman artefacts from his property over forty years, indicating the site of a villa. Wanting to find out more about the extent of the archaeology present, and ensure its protection for future generations, Peter commissioned a geophysical survey on one of his fields. The survey revealed extensive features including two

kilns. In consultation with local professionals, Peter gathered a small team of volunteers to take the project forward. After holding numerous public talks and open days at the site, the team has been able to hold its first community excavation.

The excavation took place over two weeks, with upwards of 175 individuals of all ages registering to take part in the excavation and finds processing, and hundreds more visiting for guided tours of the site. With training and supervision from Britannia Archaeology, volunteers excavated two Roman kilns with four associated rake out pits, three rubbish pits, a ditch and numerous Iron Age post holes. Historic England's science advisor believes that the kilns may be the best preserved examples in Britain. In addition, a small excavation area was opened specifically to allow children and young people to take part in the digging. Some 12,000 sherds of pottery have been recovered during the excavations, all of which have been washed and sorted by volunteers.

In the coming months finds processing and archiving will continue, with input from the relevant specialists. Training in geophysical survey is being organised for the volunteers, an interim project report will be produced for the Historic Environment Record, a pamphlet detailing the results will be disseminated to interested parties, and a talk will be given for the local community. It is hoped that the project will continue for many years to come, and plans are being put in place to build an archive and visitors centre at the site, with the results displayed in Aylsham Heritage Centre in the meantime.

The project has been the friendliest and most inclusive of excavations and the enthusiasm of everyone involved has been overwhelming. Despite the huge number of volunteers who were new to archaeology, the work has been carried out to an extremely high standard, and everyone has gained new archaeological knowledge. A huge number of people have been positively affected by the experience, and cannot wait to come back next year.



A reminder of what turned up in August!

Further great reports can be found at [ITV News](#) and [EDP](#).

**News...News...News...News...News...News...**

**New Email Address** If you are reading this then you have received the email about our change of address! There are still a few names we are not sure of, any help really appreciated.

**Bric-a-brac sale** Well done to Lynda and her helpers for arranging and running the Bric-a-brac sale at the Nursery on Saturday October 30<sup>th</sup>. Nearly £200 was raised and made all determined to do it again - once the weather gets warmer. Make sure you save any unwanted Christmas presents!

**Ladies, we need your old tights!** Most of the finds are now washed and being categorised but to ensure the pottery dries out properly, packets of silicone need to be added to the bags. Although these can be bought, it's cheaper buying the silicone loose and - putting it into stocking material. So, don't throw, wash them and bring them to the Nursery!

**Future Events...Future Events...Future Events...**

**Geophys with Britannia Archaeology.** An email has been sent to all of those who expressed an interest. Please reply by Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November.

**August 2016** We are already beginning to think about next year's dig and will be asking for your commitment. This year there will be three weeks digging. Email to come soon.

*Get involved:- let us know of any relevant events happening in the area.*

**Did you know?...Did you know?...Did you know?...**

You might be wondering where our newsletter name came from. The Romans produced a daily paper called the Acta Diurna, (translation Daily Acts) carved on stone or metal. Often referred to just as Acta or Diurna they included public notices and results about legislation or trials, plus births, marriages and deaths.

**Joke Time...Joke Time...Joke Time...Joke Time...**

Why did the Romans build straight roads? So the Britons couldn't hide around corners.

*Get involved:- any Roman or archaeology jokes better than this!*



**ARP....Getting the community into holes**



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