

# THE ARP ACTA



## Aylsham Roman Project Newsletter



Issue 6 April 2017

Welcome to our April edition. To start this month, here is a message from Peter.



The nursery is very busy, and I am completely immersed in watering plants, potting on, ordering stock etc etc, and someone mentioned to me that in less than 100 days the mechanical digger will be here to start opening the trenches for this year's community excavation! Help! I then received a call from Martin at Britannia, for him and Dan to meet at Woodgate to mark out the dig areas.

It really is that close. And I have to say, I can't wait to see what more we will learn about this amazing site. Of course, I then start thinking about the cost of the dig, and we are doing quite well, with some very generous donations from local people. Many thanks to Maggie and William Vaughan-Lewis for producing the 'Nona' book which has sold incredibly well, with every penny going to ARP, over £1000 so far. Thanks also to those who organised the 'bric a brac' sale, raising £270.

Lots of you have also become friends of ARP, and paid to dig in August. Thank you so much. We have also signed up new friends, at the various events we have attended.

So a begging cry to anyone who is yet to become a Friend and register their interest for August. We do need every penny we can get to make this wonderful experience happen.

Thank you to you all, and see you in August. Peter.

*Full details can be found [here](#) on our website page *Become a Friend!**

### Who are we?

This month we are focusing on Dan McConnell, Britannia Archaeology, whose end of day talks were not to be missed!

When he was growing up and on holiday, his parents took him to hillforts, henges and castles. He became obsessed with digging up and collecting 19<sup>th</sup> century bottles and clay pipes. However his school, although he said one of his interests for work experience was to be an archaeologist, ignored this and sent him to a data entry business. He declined, went to the



then County Council archaeological unit and, as they say, the rest is history! (Although, if he wasn't doing this, and could choose, his dream job would be a blacksmith, he's always wanted to be one!).

His advice to any young budding archaeologists out there is to try everything - digging, drawing, volunteering, academic stuff etc - and find what you really enjoy. Most of all, get as much fieldwork experience as possible, essential to be able to interpret sites - and you get a great tan! (Mm, not in December, Dan, as those who did geophysics here know!)

If he had to describe archaeology in five words it would be - too fun to be work.

If he wrote a book it would be called after the British archaeologist: Mortimer Wheeler, his part in my victory.

His most treasured possession is the great memories of his old dog Zyló.





Another thing for the Civil Defence to think about, because Dan's favourite drink is anything gin and tonic related. His choice of roll filling is cheese and pickle as he is, in his own word, a vegetable!

He didn't take part in the ice bucket challenge as no-one should ever see him topless getting covered in water! (Looking at the photos, think we need to get him to buy one of our t-shirts so he can wear a different colour!!) Thanks Dan

## Beaver Amulet

Such amazement when Julie Curl took a close look at what was thought to be bone and turned out to be beaver tooth shaped as an amulet. Aylsham has done it again, as this is the first Roman evidence for beaver from Norfolk, although it doesn't necessarily mean it was living in Norfolk. It could have been brought here by a travelling potter, for instance. Teeth were thought to have protective properties and were worn. Might it have been worn in our dog Gronmoad's collar, she had bad teeth and her master may have sewn it into her collar.

We will never know but it's a nice thought. Julie's full report is on the [website](#).

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

**Bric-a-Brac Sale** Many thanks to all who helped out on Easter Saturday, Peter banked £270 - fantastic. We now have postcards for sale, too, thanks to Sara, so make sure you buy along with your t-shirt and pens! Next chance to buy June 10th and 11th at Woodgate Spring Show.



**Breaking News...Breaking News...Breaking News**

We have just had confirmation from Tesco's Bags of Help Grant Scheme that **ARP's application has been approved** and we will be put to a customer vote against two others, in Aylsham Tesco store during May and June. Make sure every time you shop there, you ask for a blue token, then save them for May when our turn comes around. There will be a display showing the three to vote for and you drop your token in your chosen one - ours of course!! Depending on how many votes we get, we either get £1000, which would be great, £2000 which would be fantastic, or a whopping £4000 which would be absolutely BRILLIANT.

**Video of the month.....Video of the month.....**

Another suggestion from Catherine, try this YouTube link to - [The Roman Empire. Or Republic. Or...Which Was It?](#)

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

Binham Local history Group - Of Ice and Men: Norfolk's Ice Age Coast 27th April. Check out the details [here](#).

NAHRG Conference Roman East Anglia 22nd July More details [here](#)

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

A favourite form of execution was smothering the victim with honey then angry bees - ouch!

Don't forget to regularly check our website for any news, what's been happening, new reports and, of course, how many more days until the summer experience!

*And finally... Remember last August? No? Well, read on for a poem written by one of our volunteers that will bring it all back.....*

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

Don't forget to check out our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) links plus our [website](#)  
<https://aylshamromanproject.com/>

Email us at [ayshamromanproject@gmail.com](mailto:ayshamromanproject@gmail.com)

## Aylsham Roman Dig

The bluest of vast Norfolk skies,  
The greenest of beech and oak  
Make a backdrop  
For history unearthed.

Square and straight of sides,  
With people kneeling in a line,  
Scraping carefully.

Buckets and barrows of earth.  
Deeper and deeper they dig  
As the hot sun warms their backs  
And bakes the exposed earth.

Earth walked upon and used,  
Holding footprints of the past.  
Invisible echoes silenced by time.

Anticipation.  
Excited voices,  
Shovelling, washing, sorting.  
And a black dog watching.  
This is today.

Now.  
Driven by a need  
To know.  
To have contact,  
However tenuous,  
With these ancients,  
These immigrants  
Who came  
And live and worked  
To bring progressive ideas  
To this land.

They made their pots  
With patterns, with skill.  
Their kilns of wood and clay,  
The imprints of their fingers.

They are here.  
We see them as we work.  
We feel their effort.  
The never ending  
Moulding, forming,  
Firing and raking out  
Of rubbish.  
This was their lot.

We are fascinated.  
We want to know.  
But we can never know  
Their struggles to live.  
Their strife,  
Their life as invaders.  
Unwelcome immigrants  
Who brought so much,  
Who shared their knowledge.  
Who left...  
And were forgotten.  
Until now.

Under the hot August sun  
We discover  
The sherds of their being  
And at last  
We appreciate them.

M Bewley August 2016

