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NUNTIUS

The Newsletter of The Friends of Brading Roman Villa

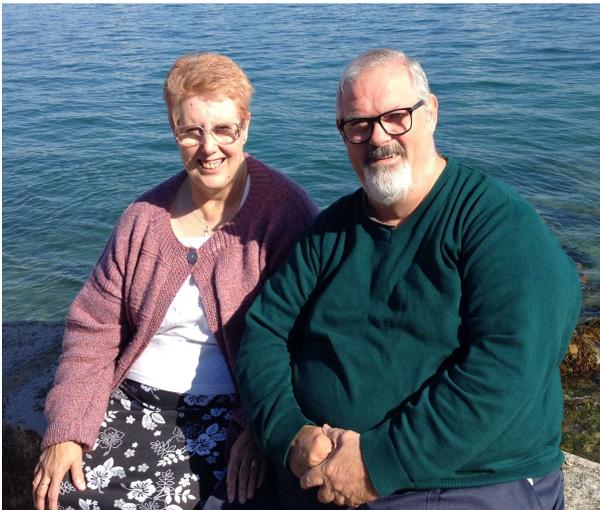


3D IMAGING

Work is well under way for producing Computer Aided 3D Design graphics but at present it is still a work in progress. These images are being designed as impressions of what the villa and site may have looked like during Roman times using current available data and factual records. We are very fortunate to have access to this cutting edge technology and offer grateful thanks to **Scott Church** for all his work on our behalf.

The top picture is a reconstruction of room 12, the bottom one is an artistic impression of the north range, the picture on the back page is a composite outside view showing Bembridge as a separate island and suggested sea route. Ed.

Introduction to the New Editor — Michael Whitfield



Hello readers,

My name is Michael and I just thought I'd take a few lines to introduce myself, although some of you may have encountered me (and my wife Christine) on our many visits to the Villa either Guiding or making use of the excellent café facilities. We have lived in Sandown for nearly five years, relocating from Taunton in Somerset. We have two grown up children, five Grand-Daughters and one Great Grand-daughter all of whom live on the mainland.

When I retired from full-time Ministry in the United Reformed Church, we decided to settle in the place where we spent most of our leisure time. We have both always had a keen interest in history although until recently our knowledge of Roman history had been

somewhat limited. That of course was before we met David Reeves!

As part of my science degree I studied modules in Geology and Palaeontology and I learnt a fair bit about Roman occupation in my theological studies, especially Biblical History.

I have had a computer since the late 1970's and have helped to edit a variety of community magazines and newsheets. I enjoy using graphics to create posters and flyers and in recent years produced study booklets for small groups.

I do not pretend to be a professional, more a willing amateur but hope it will be sufficient to make a contribution to the life of Brading Roman Villa. I will be reliant on others to provide stimulating articles for inclusion and those who have offered to help with proof-reading etc.

I look forward to getting to know many more of you and hearing your stories.

Michael Ed.

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Chairman's Report: Winter 2018

Dear Friends,

FBRV have traditionally used space on the ORT website and had our various email addresses attached to that website. Unfortunately earlier this year the ORT webserver was hacked into, resulting in the website and email addresses being corrupted, leading to our inability to send emails using that portal. At the time of writing we still do not have a direct link from the Villa website to the Friends. In order to access Friends information John Bryant (membership secretary) has set up our own standalone website: www.fbrv.org.uk This has given us the opportunity to put much more information up on to the internet.

We believe that as a result of the corrupted email system some members are still not receiving emails from the FBRV. If you know of anyone who is not receiving correspondence from me or our membership secretary, please ask them to contact me at: dreeves@btinternet.com All we can do is to apologise for any inconvenience this may have caused.

I'm pleased to tell you that we now have a professional librarian, Val Pitts, looking after our Research Library. Owing to generous donations of books, we have had to purchase a second bookcase. Both bookcases are now situated just outside of the restaurant door (See Val's report on 8). As well as our book library, we are amassing old and new archaeological reports for online viewing, opening up a much wider source of research material.

For the past 8 years John Bryant has been the editor of Nuntius, However, owing to other commitments, John has decided to step-down as editor and to hand over the reins to Rev Michael Whitfield. As well as being our new editor, Michael is an active guide at the Villa. I would like to take this opportunity to thank John for all the work he has done for the Friends in editing our Newsletter, and to welcome Michael as our new editor.

I reported in the last issue of Nuntius that the Signage Project has progressed to the point that we were ready to commission the printing and installation of the new signs, and that it was hoped that work would start sometime in July 2018. Sometimes the best of plans don't quite work out. One of the setbacks has been that the printing company who had quoted for the work was taken over by another company, resulting in a hold up and having to renegotiate the cost of printing. I'm happy to report that Jasmine Wroath (Curator) successfully negotiated a price very similar to the original quotation. Having received a further grant, we were able to extend the brief for the 3D CGI interpretation of the Villa and the landscape it sat in 1800 years ago. This in turn has extended the finish time by 3 months - but it will be worth the wait. There are stills from the project on the front and back covers of this issue of Nuntius

The coffee mornings held on the first Tuesday of the month at 11am continue to be well attended. Come along and meet other members of the Friends. It's worth it just for the cakes on sale.

I would like to end by thanking you for your continuing support of the FBRV and the Villa. I would also like to thank the volunteers/trustees who give their time and energy in many ways in order to help the Villa function as a first class museum and visitor attraction. I look forward to meeting you at the Villa.

David Reeves. FRSM.

Chairman FBRV.

New Consul takes the helm: Julian Hicks



It gives me great pleasure to introduce you all to our new Oglander Roman Trust Chairman, Mr Julian Hicks. Julian allowed me to encroach into his busy schedule to interview him in order to write this short article of introduction.

Julian is a solicitor and married with two teenage boys. They live on the island and have family connections with the villa. He took over the reins of leadership in April this year.

When I asked Julian about his vision for the Museum he quoted three important issues—**Survival, Stability and Growth**. The immediate challenge is to ensure the financial base is secured so that bills can be paid and the future safeguarded. Secondly, we need to stabilise the existing balance of staff, volunteers and visitor experience. Thirdly we need to look for affordable and sustainable growth. Ideas

are always welcome but may only be acted upon when finance and resources are available. Julian is eager to discover ways in which the museum can be relevant to young people about to leave school or go on to further education.

We talked at some length about the usefulness of say a S.W.O.T. analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) or trying to compile a 'Friends' skills register. Either could be useful but would need to be organised and carried out by a volunteer and without cost.

Julian enjoys a challenge, which is probably as well in the present financial climate and the need to increase footfall at all visitor attractions. However this challenge is not only his, but relies on a real team effort with Trust Members, Staff and Volunteers all committed to make the Villa a place of outstanding excellence.

In the final few minutes of this interview Julian expressed his sincere gratitude to the whole team and the many Friends of the villa and all they do to help deliver a wonderful experience, including the tasks of guiding, gardening, and fundraising. He also expressed a need to be hopeful, yes there are issues but we need to address the causes, not the symptoms. Together we can Survive, Stabilise and Grow.

Thank you Julian for this frank interview
Ed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Advance Notice

The next AGM of the Friends will take place on
Saturday 2 March 2019 at 3.30pm at the Villa.

Please make a note of this date now and
come along on the day to support your Trustees

SAD NEWS

Ann Proudfoot (22/05/32 - 28/10/18)

I'm sad to report the passing of Ann Proudfoot. Ann had been involved with the Friends for many years as a volunteer and guide. She supported the Friends fundraising events, going on trips to visit off Island Roman sites. I once made the mistake (as I got off the bus) of asking where we should go next; her response was Pompeii. So, Pompeii was our next trip. From then on she continually asked "when are we going to Hadrian's Wall"? Earlier

this year I started to plan a trip to the Wall. Ann was the first person I told about the planned trip, only to be told that she probably would not be able to attend because of her health. Ann will be sadly missed as a Friend, a friend, and supporter of the Villa. Our condolences go to her family and friends for their loss.

David Reeves.



MEMBERS FREE GUIDED TOURS OF BRADING ROMAN VILLA.

We are finding that longstanding members may not have visited the museum for some time and as a consequence may not be up to date with the Villa story.

Over the winter months, starting in January 2019, volunteers will be running Special Guided Tours of the Villa. The tours will be limited to paid up Members of the Friends of Brading Roman Villa and restricted to 20 people at a time. Hopefully new and old members alike will discover things unknown to them.

To start with the idea is to run two tours a month, one mid-week and another on a weekend. If there is sufficient demand we may be able to offer more tours.

At the moment we don't have any firm dates but will let you know once we have them.

David Reeves



POMPEII CONTINUES TO REVEAL ITS TREASURES

Enchanting new Roman Villa with writhing snakes and peacocks

The following is a précis of an article by Nick Squires which appeared in The Telegraph on 5/10/2018. Picture credits: CIRO FUSCO/ANSA—grateful thanks.

2000 years on since the catastrophic eruption of Mount Vesuvius Pompeii continues to reveal its treasures. Although the villa now dubbed ‘The House of the Enchanted Garden’ had been partially excavated in the 19th century, only now have they found a frescoed room which is believed to be a Lararium—a place where Lares (family guardians would be kept). The room is lavishly decorated and the walls are adorned with blood-red paint amazingly preserved.



The frescoes include writhing snakes, dogs hunting wild boar, peacocks, a horse and even a ‘dog-headed’ man.

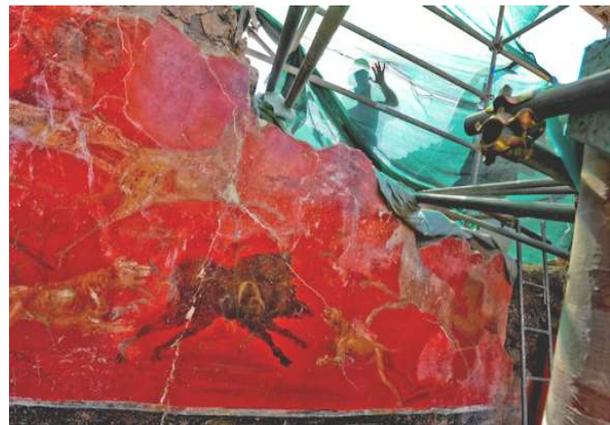


One of the walls contained a niche with an altar built into it guarded by two serpents to ward off evil spirits. It is thought that images of the Lares would

have been held in this room to protect the family that lived there. Bronze or marble statues of gods would have been placed in the niche and the altar shows signs of burnt offerings taking place.



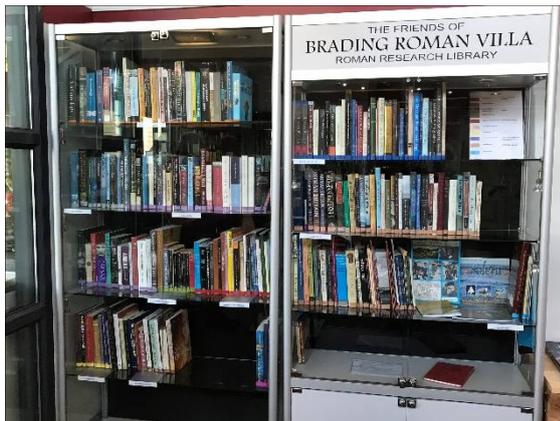
The two giant snakes pictured here were not only to ward off demons but also signs of prosperity and good auspices. Similarly the pictures of dogs chasing a black boar ‘seem to be symbolic of the victory of the forces of good over the forces of evil’.



The painstaking work of discovering and preserving this ancient site continues as part of the ‘Great Pompeii Project’ which includes areas that have never before been dug.

Ed.

FBRV LIBRARY



Friends visiting the Villa recently will have noticed that our library has both moved and expanded. The two smart cabinets now take pride of place next to the café entrance, meaning that they are always available for Friends to browse and borrow. The same key, available at the desk, fits both and there is still the red book to sign for any books that you take out.

The second bookcase has allowed us to expand the collection both in terms of numbers and subjects covered. While the main focus of the collection is all things Roman, there are also books covering other ancient cultures and periods represented on the Isle of Wight from the Iron Age to the Vikings. In addition, there is a growing collection of books on various aspects of Archaeology in general. All the books on the shelves are colour-coded by subject area.

On-line catalogue

Another exciting development is that I have transferred the catalogue to a system called **Libib** so that it is now available for you to browse directly on-line and will update automatically as new books are added. This makes the existing catalogue lists redundant and they will be removed from the library page of the Friends website. A link to **Libib** will be there instead.

To use the library system on your desktop, laptop, tablet or phone, type **fbrv.libib.com** into your browser (please note – **do not** put in **www.** first) and you will be taken to the Home Page at the start of the listing. A screenshot of what you will see is below:

The screenshot shows the FBRV Library website interface. On the left is a navigation menu with the FBRV logo and links for 'Libraries' (264), 'Followers' (0), and 'Following' (0). The main content area features a search bar (circled in red) and a navigation bar with letters A through R. Below the navigation bar, the 'Ancient History' section is active, displaying a book listing for 'Ancient Iraq' by Georges Roux. The book cover is visible, along with details: 'NEW EDITION', 'Ancient Iraq', 'Georges Roux', '1992 576 pages (Penguin Publishing Group)', 'Call #: Ancient History', 'ISBN 13: 9780140125238 ISBN 10: 014012523X'. A description states: 'This book provides an introduction to the history of ancient Mesopotamia and its civilizations.' Below the description are tags for 'Assyria', 'Babylon', and 'Sumer', and a 'Copy Link' button. At the bottom, a 'Celtic Britain' section is partially visible.

From here you can scroll down the whole list – the books are arranged in alphabetical order, firstly of the main categories (Ancient History, Archaeology etc) and then by title, or you can search for any topic or title of interest:

e.g. type **baths** over the word ‘search’ in the box at the top and press the enter (return) key to get the following result: (note – the descriptions are complete on the records!)

baths

4 results (0.575 seconds)

FBRV Research Library

Essential Roman Baths, The
Bird, Stephen
2006 48 pages (Scala Publishers Ltd)
Call #: Roman Britain
ISBN 13: 9781857594669 ISBN 10: 1857594665

The Roman Baths at Bath is the best-preserved ancient baths and temple complex in northern Europe. It emerge from deep underground, bringing health and vitality to this beautiful city. In the first century AD, Britain. At the Roman Baths, visitors can see in-situ remains and ornate architectural fragments of the [...]

Copy Link

FBRV Research Library

Roman Baths and Museum, The
Barry Cunliffe
1990 (Bath Archaeological Trust)
Call #: Roman Britain

An illustrated guide to the Roman Baths, The Temple of Sulis Minerva and the sacred spring which forme

Baths Religion Temples

Roman Building Techniques
Rook, Tony
2013 176 pages (Amberley Publishing)
Call #: Roman Way of Life
ISBN 13: 9781445601496 ISBN 10: 1445601494

Writing from the view of a building technologist as well as archaeologist, Tony Rook takes a practical approach in this introductory guide to the Romans. After a survey of the main building types and their features, military, public and private, he analyses Roman building technology from covering materials such as masonry, brick, mud and wood, as well as architectural features such as walls, roofs [...]

Ancient Rome Architecture Baths Building Construction Building Materials Villas Water Supply

Copy Link

FBRV Research Library

Roman Villas
Johnston, David E.
2004 76 pages (Omnibus Publications Ltd)
Call #: Roman Way of Life
ISBN 13: 9780747806004 ISBN 10: 0747806004

To many people villas symbolise the life of luxury in the countryside of Roman Britain: mosaics and wall paintings, dining rooms and sumptuous country houses of prosperous Britons who had learned the ways of Rome. Current research, however, is discovering another aspect: the villa : for market in the new towns, and revenue for the tax collector. The book describes the villa estate and how it was [...]

Farming Landscape Roman Britain Villas

i.e. 4 books with ‘baths’ either in the title, tags or description fields. You can search for authors too (e.g. try Cunliffe)

The entry in the '**Call**' field (a bit of library jargon) will show you which section of the Library to find the book (ringed in red above), so that two of the four books in this example are in the **Roman Britain** section and two in the **Roman Way of Life**.

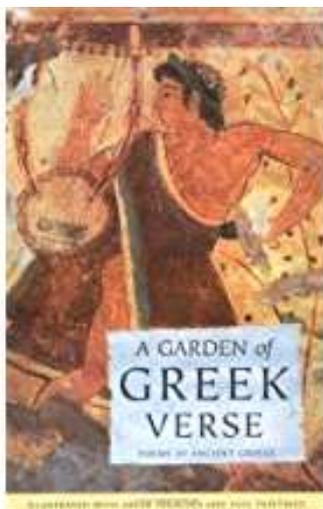
The tags, highlighted in orange above, are also links so if, for example, you click on '**villas**' in either of the bottom two book records, you will get a new list of relevant books. Try it and see ☺

To get back to the Home Page just click on **FBRV LIBRARY** below the 'Cocky' logo top left.

The site is easy to use, so please try it out and don't forget to bookmark **fbrv.libib.com** to go back to it easily next time.

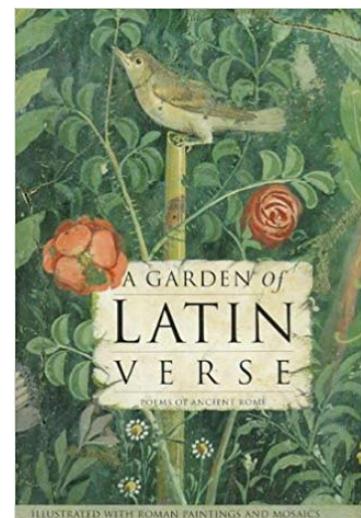
If you have any queries or suggestions, please get in touch valerie.pitts@btinternet.com

In future editions of Nuntius, I plan to do a regular feature on the books in the Library, but for starters here are two beautiful new additions to introduce you to the Literature section (descriptions courtesy the publishers):



In this anthology of Greek verse, poets from Homer and Sappho to Sophocles and Euripides provide a glimpse of the lost world of Ancient Greece. The original Greek verse is accompanied by the translations of celebrated writers such as Alexander Pope, W.B. Yeats and Oscar Wilde. Evocative frescoes and vase paintings from sites closely linked with Greek myth and history illustrate each page. Brief biographical information about each of the Greek poets, as well as a note on the art, complete the book.

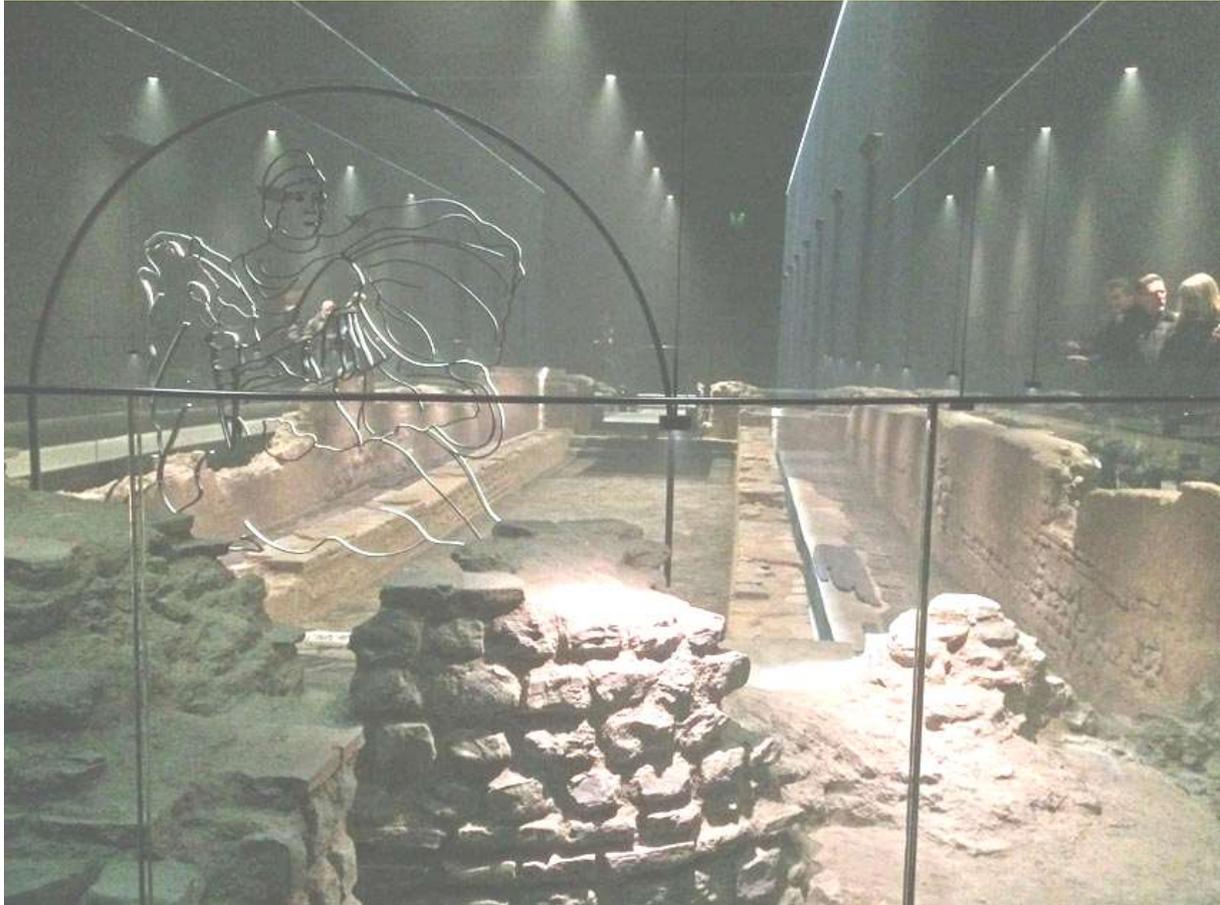
The poetry of Catullus, Virgil, Horace and Ovid has endured over 2,000 years. For most of that time it was read only in Latin, the language of its origin - but over the centuries celebrated writers, from John Dryden to Aubrey Beardsley to Ezra Pound, have been inspired to create their own translations. Each verse extract appears both in Latin and English, illustrated with a detail from an ancient Roman painting or mosaic - many of them treasures from Pompeii and Herculaneum, preserved by the volcanic eruption which destroyed the two cities in 79 AD. The images capture the spirit of the age in which this enchanting poetry was written and, accompanied by a biographical note on each poet, make a perfect introduction to the towering civilization that was Rome.



Christmas present idea?

Val Pitts
FBRV Librarian

A Visit to the London Mithraeum — Helen Jackson



It was on a sixth form trip to Hadrian's Wall that I visited the Mithraeum at Carrawburgh and became intrigued by the cult of Mithras that was apparently popular among Roman soldiers and administrators and so spread across the empire.

Over fifty years later I visited the London Mithraeum, which can now be seen beneath Bloomberg's new European headquarters.

After the remains were discovered in the city in the 1950s they were excavated and reconstructed after a fashion a short distance away. This was not satisfactory and did not meet modern expectations. They have now been returned to within a few metres of their original site and are presented in a much more sympathetic and authentic way.

Also during construction of the Bloomberg building archaeologists excavated fascinating artefacts preserved in the mud at the Walbrook site and some of these are also on display.

Comparison has to be made with Vindolanda where those amazing wooden writing tablets were found. Those found in London were of the more easily recognisable type with a base to support wax into which inscriptions were scratched with a stylus. We have replicas in the villa's handling collections.



Whilst the wax has mostly disappeared, some over-zealous writers pressed so hard that they scratched the wood underneath. Modern techniques have enabled experts

to decipher some of these writings. They have found the first known written evidence of Londinium and possibly the oldest financial contract yet found in Britain.

The artefacts are presented covering a wall so that the visitors are not all crowded round glass cases. You are given an iPad to enable a close study of

You then descend to the subterranean room where use of light and sound aims to create a sense of the mystery and impact of the ancient rituals which even now are not fully understood.

It is a bold and imaginative presentation that nevertheless treats the archaeology with due respect. I recommend a visit.



details and to read as much or as little information as you wish without blocking the view of others.

After that you descend to the next level where there are screens providing background and further information about the cult of Mithras and the temple you are about to visit.

The intention is that information boards and guides do not distract from the experience of the archaeology. So it is important to take this opportunity and make sure the rest of your party does so they don't bombard you with questions whilst you are trying to absorb the atmosphere!

The site is easily reached from Waterloo via the City line and a short walk. Entry is free. Allow about an hour for a visit. It can easily be fitted into a day you have already planned. Or you could take the 10minute walk to the Museum of London to see more fantastic Roman archaeology and learn about the early development of our capital city. For further information look at the website:

www.londonmithraeum.com

Solent University, Southampton.

We are a group of final year students of the Festival, Events and Tourism course at Solent University, Southampton. One of our units is a Consultancy project that responds to a live business problem. This offers a real life experience, thus providing us with material for our CVs and an interesting project to discuss as we progress in our chosen career paths. The University established potential partnerships with local businesses and the Brading Roman Villa was selected.

The focus of our visit at the Brading Roman Villa was to gather information and observe first hand customer experience through our own eyes and the customer's perspective.

Whilst at the Roman Villa, we were given a tour of the site to give us an idea of the space and all the facilities they have. David and the Friends of the Roman Villa offered us real insight into the history and development of the site. We had the chance to interview the CEO, Adam which allowed us to gain an in-depth understanding of how the business is run. This has given us an opportunity to respond to our brief which is to try and engage a new audience for the attraction through events and promotion and increase the profile of the museum.

We will use the information to help us think of ideas to be able to consult on areas of the business that we think have room for improvement.

Following on from our visit, we will be creating a report to highlight our recommendations and discuss ways to expand and develop the business. We will then present our findings and ideas to Adam along with the outcomes of our research.

We would like to say thank you to David, Adam, Bob, Helen and all of the friends at Brading Roman Villa for their kind hospitality on our visit and their honesty in our meeting and interviews. This is given us an insight into this interesting business which we are looking forward to working with over the next few months.

Blanche, Bridie, Emily, Izzy, Juri, Line & Raul



WENDY GANNON PRESIDENT'S FUND LECTURE

Guest Lecturer
Dr Will Wootton
Senior Lecturer In
Roman Art , Kings
College, London



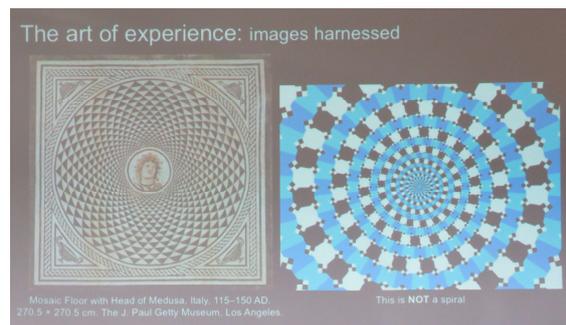
It was a great pleasure giving the Annual Wendy Gannon President's Fundraising Lecture on 29th September 2018. The title of the talk was, 'Making Roman Art'.



My intentions were threefold. Firstly to discuss some of the tensions between the discipline of Art History and the way that we might construct a history of making. The focus here was using Pliny the Elder and the surviving archaeological record to consider the purpose of art in antiquity, and the relationships between art and skilled labour on the one hand and between technical ability and 'genius' on the other.



The second part built on Pliny's own interests in artistic production to assess how certain media, in particular mosaics and sculpture, were designed to create and modify people's experiences. Attention was given to the makers themselves to avoid neglecting their own agency and to highlight the personal and human nature of production.



The final section returned to the present in order to think about how we interpret the past through the surviving archaeology and then reconstruct it for a variety of audiences. This also brought us back to Brading and the new work being done to re-imagine the villa through time.



My thanks to David Reeves for the invitation and to the Friends of Brading Roman Villa for their warm welcome.

Will

Gurnard Roman Villa: the 'odd one out'

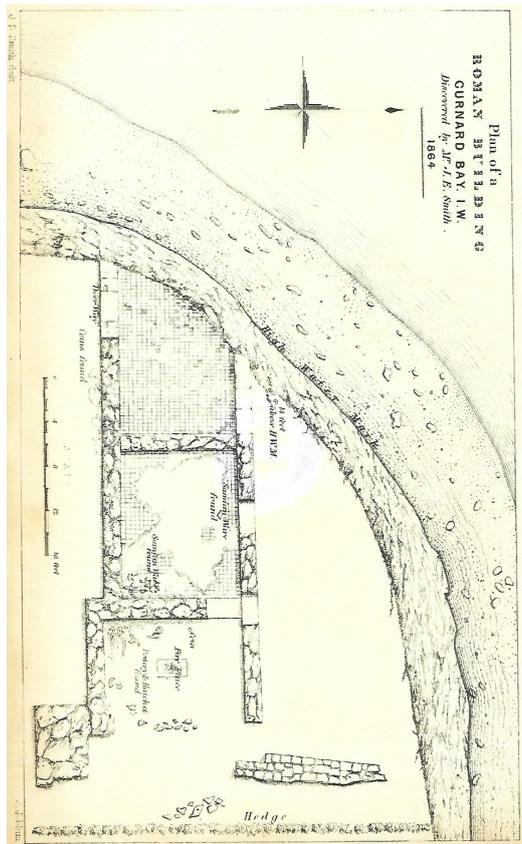
When telling visitors at Brading that eight Roman villas have been identified so far on the Island, I explain how they follow the line of the chalk ridge between Bembridge and the Needles. I then say that Gurnard is the 'odd one out', being positioned on the North coast on a small promontory by the Solent.

The obvious assumption is that this was for trade; boats can still beach close to this site at the mouth of Gurnard Luck and the northern end of Rew Street was probably just outside the building. Tradition

has it that Rew Street was an ancient route, possibly a Roman road leading to Carisbrooke, where, evidenced by some Roman masonry in the Castle perimeter, there may have been a fort, signaling station or store. It has also been suggested that the route continued to the south coast where, for example, remains of amphora found at Watershoot Bay could suggest trading vessels mooring. All this is highly speculative, but I thought I would throw these titbits into the mix!

The recorded facts are that the remains of the villa were spotted in the eroding cliff edge in 1864 by a retired seaman, Joseph Edwin Smith. He carried out his own excavations, but the actual report was presented to the British Archaeological Association by Rev. Edmund Kell. Edwin Smith was later able to extend the excavation after being permitted access to a nearby garden.

Within a few years all the evidence was lost to the sea, although some years ago an elderly visitor to Brading villa told me he remembered seeing the floor of the



Gurnard villa in shallow water. I don't think his memory could go back before 1930 so I was rather surprised! I know other local residents have made the same claim, but I wonder whether they were actually looking at some other structure or possibly even the remains of the small fort from the time of Henry VIII.

Edwin Smith also identified wooden piles and building material nearby which he suggested could have been a quayside or dockside buildings. He identified hexagonal roofing slabs (sounds familiar?); maybe that is

what my local visitor had seen.

The excavation and subsequent reports were limited by the expertise available and the fact that the site was already incomplete due to erosion. It seems, however, that the house was much more modest than Brading and there is no evidence of mosaics, just basic tessellated flooring.

The two phases of excavation revealed five rooms in all, some with hypocaust and one with a hearth. Smith identified one as a bathroom and one as a kitchen but we cannot know how accurate he was. There were plentiful finds, mostly now lost, and a midden produced remains of oysters and other shellfish, with pottery including New Forest ware and Samian ware. Perhaps most intriguing are reports of small bronze figures, one of which was identified as Mercury.

Bembridge limestone was used in the construction and there were probably limestone roofing slabs.

Coinage ranging from Hadrian (A.D. 117) to Gratian (A.D. 364) suggests the site was in use for at least 200 years.

It is frustrating to know so little about this unusual residence, but we must be grateful to Edwin Smith and Rev. Kell for seizing the opportunity to record what they could. The villa could so easily have disappeared completely before it was recognised and we may never have known of its existence. I wonder if any other sites on the Island

have suffered that fate.

If you wish to know more, there is a link to Rev Kell's illustrated report on the Friends' website. There is an article by CT Witherby in the Hampshire Field Club Proceedings. 1962, available online, and another by David Motkin in the Proceedings of the IOW Natural History and Archaeological Society Vol. 10, 1990.

Helen Jackson

A TALK BY PAUL CHAPMAN
Brading Roman Villa.
23rd February 2019 - 2-30pm
"The Propaganda of Ancient Rome as depicted on its coins"



With hindsight it is possible to see the gradual realisation by the Roman authorities that the coin, in addition to its monetary function, represented a form of media that was issued by the central authority and could carry a message to every citizen in the land. The survival of so many Roman coins allows a study of the actual propaganda and messages that were being issued from the early 2nd century BC to the final collapse of the Empire in the 5th Century.

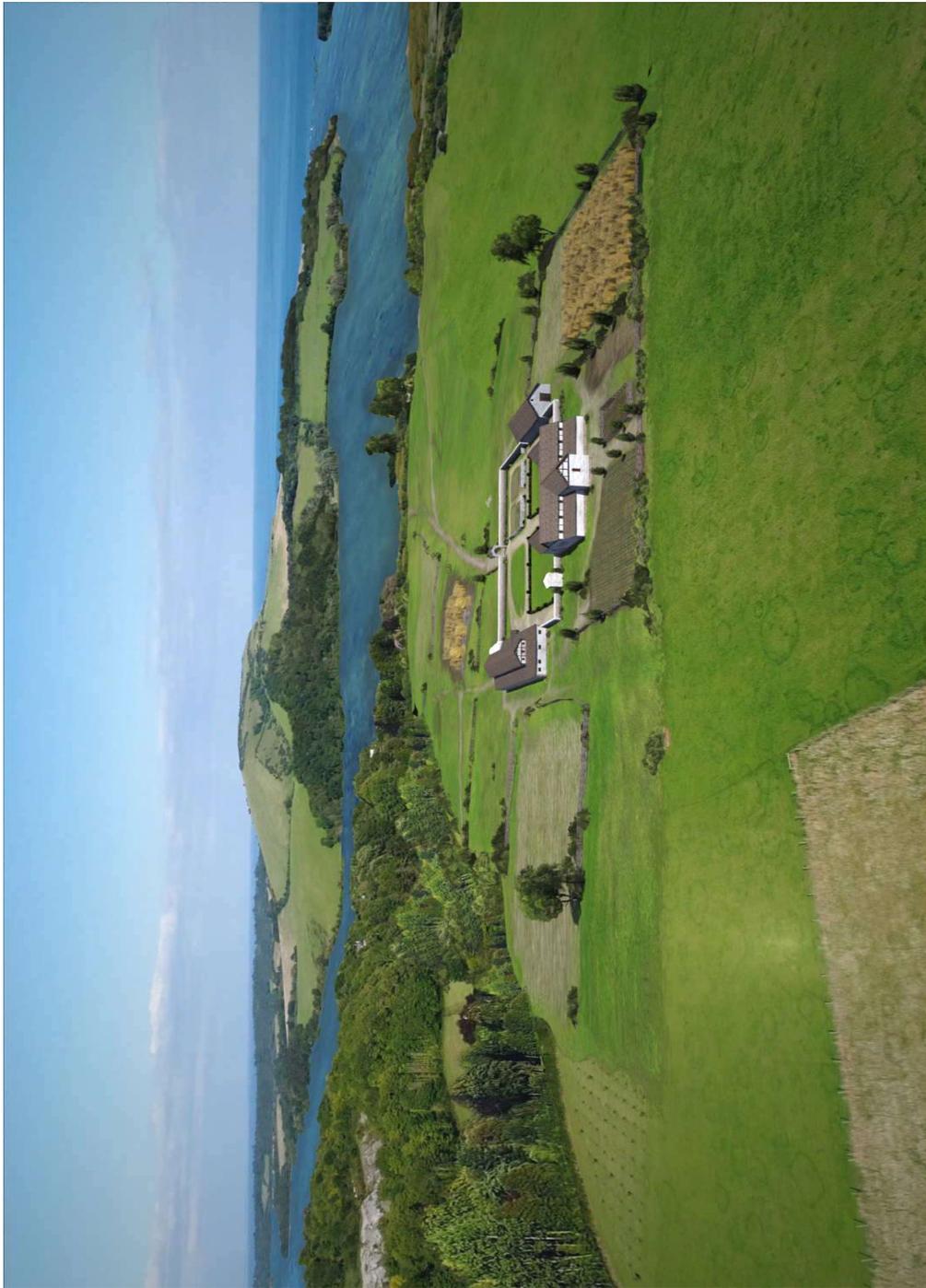
Paul's background is in Electrical Engineering. He was involved in the development of high speed machines for installation in central banks to sort banknotes and to identify counterfeits. He managed a company that produced electronic payment terminals and introduced the first electronic cash system and the application of smart cards in the UK.

He was a member of a team advising the Malaysian Government with respect to the introduction of a multimedia corridor to the south of Kuala Lumpur in which all government departments operated electronically without the use of paper!

Paul retired twenty years ago, resuming his hobby of collecting Roman coins. He now gives talks to many local organisations and associations.

Tickets will be on sale from January 2019.

Price: FBRV £5 non-members £6.



Scott Church



Telephone 01983612327 /

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www.bradingromanvilla.org.uk

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