

NUNTIUS

The Newsletter of The Friends of Brading Roman Villa



Orpheus mosaic

Chairman's Report: Summer 2017

Dear Friends,

It was with great sadness that I had to report the death of our President Wendy Gannon, who passed away on 21st February 2017. She has left behind a great legacy; it is because of Wendy's dogged determination that the Friends of Brading Roman Villa has survived as the much respected charity that it is today. It has been decided that we will put together a special edition of Nuntius to celebrate Wendy's life, and if you knew Wendy and would like to share your experiences/photographs with fellow members, please contact John Bryant at www.membersatbradingromanvilla.org.uk

The role of President involves working with the Chairman, on occasions representing the Friends at functions, officiating at our AGM, and offering advice where possible. Wendy is a hard act to follow. Fortunately for the Friends, Neville Carr, one of our Vice Presidents, has stepped up to the task. Neville has a long association working with the Villa and the Friends. I'm also pleased to tell you that Professor David Tomalin has filled Neville's vacant post as a Vice President. David also has a long history of working with the Villa and the Friends.

To honour Wendy's contribution to Brading Roman Villa and her involvement in several other aspects of IW History, a Presidents fund has been set up in her name. The aim of the fund is to help Island students who are studying History, Archaeology or related subjects. You will find full details on page: 7.

The Signage project has progressed to the point that we are now ready to commission the printing and installation of the new signs. It is hoped that we can start work sometime in July.

The FBRV have helped to acquire 2 brooches for the Villa collection. One is a Roman Silver Enamel Brooch shaped like a bird. The other is shaped like a Roman Temple, the Temple Brooch is a fake, you can read the full story on page: 3.

We have also helped to acquire a hoard of over 400 Roman coins that have been found on the Island. At the time of writing the coins are with the British Museum being conserved.

We now have a defibrillator installed at the Villa. I would like to thank Dominic Howard who for 18 months has worked on behalf of the Friends in order to obtain the defibrillator. Dominic was the Coordinator for the NHS first responders on the Island. I would also, like to thank The British Heart Foundation who donated the machine for free. We will be holding a grand unveiling of the defibrillator on Friday 16th June at 1pm. As well as the volunteers who did the training all are welcome to come along for a cup of tea and a slice of cake.

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 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.

The picture on the front cover is a computer generated image of the Orpheus mosaic in room 6, as it may have looked originally

I look forward to meeting you at the Villa.
David Reeves. Chairman FBRV.

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A Cautionary Tale

Auction houses and the internet are awash with antiquities for sale, and whilst the majority are genuine, there are an increasing number of fake or stolen artefacts coming onto the market. Before buying any antiquity you should always ask about the provenance. Auction houses and genuine dealers are more than happy to supply you with any information they have regarding a sale item. Before you buy from online auctions always ask the seller where the item came from. If you are not happy with their answers don't buy it.

In 2016 we were informed by Richard Hobbs BSc PhD FSA Weston Curator of Roman Britain, Britain, Europe & Prehistory at the British Museum, that a (possible) second century Roman Temple Brooch purporting to have come from Brading Roman Villa was for sale by auction. After finding the auction on line, the trustees of the Friends of Brading Roman Villa decided to try and acquire the brooch for the Villa's collection.

The photographs shown on line were of a brooch attached to a piece of card. Printed on the card is what looks like a good provenance, giving an explanation as to the origin of the brooch.

(See photographs below)



87mm including card, brooch: 33mm (1 1/4")
© David Reeves

At face value this looked like an opportunity to acquire a lost artefact originating from Brading Roman Villa. I harboured ideas that it could be associated with the domed building depicted on the mosaic in room three.

The top of the brooch is tantalizingly similar to that building. There have been several theories put forward as to the purpose of the domed building; unfortunately there are no other buildings on British mosaics to



Price and Price 1880

compare it with. One theory is that it is a Temple building. However, something was bothering me about the brooch and I could not put my finger on it. The more that I looked at the brooch the more uneasy I became, and then it struck me. The card that the brooch is attached to looks very old, the type face looks as if it is from an old typewriter however, there is a statement on the back of the card that mentions that the brooch was published in Hattatt 1989.

The auction house had put a footnote with the description of the brooch: *Richard Hattatt, Ancient Brooches and Other Artefacts, Oxford, 1989, item 1625. Footnote: "The brooch-type figures in Hattatt's book (items 1625A,B) but both examples are noted as having been found in northern France. Neither is a match for the present example"*.

My concern was that the type face and the card is intended to look old, but because of the 1989 reference, the card cannot be more than 27 years old. Why is the card and type face made to look older? My concern was that they were meant to deceive. Also, as the two examples in Hattatt do not match the Temple brooch; led me to think that Hattatt is only mentioned in order to give the brooch an air of respectability.

Before contacting the auction house I decided to investigate further. I could not find anybody connected with the Villa present or past who knew of the existence of the brooch. The general consensus was that no-one, from the Victorians to the present day, would give away such an important artefact. I can find no mention of the brooch in any of the archaeology reports dating from 2010 back to 1879.

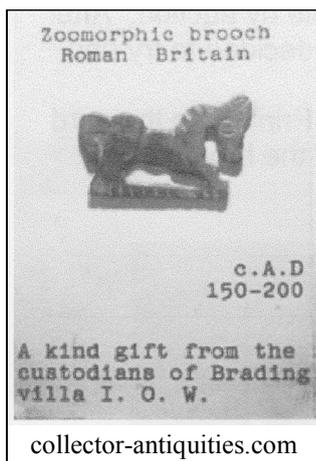
A search on the internet found an identical brooch for sale on ebay, and whilst this brooch did not have a card attached to it, you could see that it had come from the same mould. I contacted the seller and asked him where he had acquired it. He said that he bought it from a detectorist in Cyprus. I find it strange that 2 identical objects would show up in such a short time. At the time of writing this article another two have shown up on eBay, one of them in the USA. The seller in the USA describes his

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

is a copy. Another search produced a dealer's website that has pages dedicated to exposing fake artefacts.

The site is operated by Dr Bron Lipkin. Contact was made with Dr Lipkin for his comments about the Brading brooch. He suspects that the fakes are being made in Bulgaria. On his site is another example of a Roman brooch claiming to have come from Brading Roman Villa. This example is a zoomorphic horse brooch with the same printed legend as the temple brooch. If you visit: www.collector-antiquities.com have a look in the Real or Fake section. Once I had collated my evidence I contacted TimeLine Auctions, who were very helpful. They examined the card and brooch under a microscope and found that the printing on the card was done on a laser printer and that the patina is modern. The brooch was then withdrawn from the market.



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I contacted Richard Hobbs at the British Museum to inform him that the brooch had turned out to be a fake. Richard suggested that we try to acquire the brooch in order to make sure that it was permanently taken off the market, ensuring that no-one in the future would be deceived by it. I put this to the MD of TimeLine Auctions. Once again he was very helpful, agreeing that the brooch would be better off at Brading Roman Villa. I'm happy to say that the brooch is now in the safekeeping

of the Oglander Roman Trust. People have asked why we would want to keep a fake. Under normal circumstances we would not touch a known fake, but because this particular one was given a (false) provenance purporting to come from Brading Roman Villa, it has become part of the story of the Villa. It will be used to educate people on how much effort is put in to making well-crafted fakes and how easy it is to deceive.

Richard Hattatt

From: collector-antiquities.com

He was a collector in the UK who between 1982 and 1989 published four books describing the brooches in his collection. The volumes contain nearly 2000 brooches illustrated mostly by his own well done drawings, ranging from the Bronze and Iron Ages through the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods to Medieval. Most are from Britain with others from the continent and the Near East.

There are also some comprehensive brooch date charts, and a section summarising the types and distribution of some types of brooches. The second part of the 4th volume contains several hundred other artefacts, mainly items of personal adornment, toilet articles, dress fasteners and ornaments, seal-boxes and locks, surgical and dental instruments, votive models and many other artefacts.

His large collection was broken up and sold some years ago. A very large number of his pieces were mounted on double sided card stands with typed and annotated descriptions.

R.Hattatt Ancient and Romano-British Brooches, Dorset 1982 R.Hattatt Iron Age and Roman Brooches. A second selection from the author's collection, Oxford 1985. R.Hattatt Brooches of Antiquity: a third selection of brooches from the author's collection, Oxford 1987 R.Hattatt Ancient brooches and other Artefacts. A fourth selection of brooches...., Oxford 1989.

David Reeves. FRSM. Chairman:
Friends of Brading Roman Villa.
01/03/2017.

The Shefleet 2nd century Roman Bird Brooch.

The Friends of Brading Roman Villa have helped to acquire a late 2nd century AD Roman Silver plate brooch for the Villa, the Brooch was found at Shefleet. The Zoomorphic brooch is in the form of a bird (probably a water bird) with a bulbous head and slightly hooked beak. The tail of the bird and the pin, originally hinged, is now missing. The bird has a single rib running down the centre of its back; on either side are two sets of cells following the lines of the wings. These are inset with orange enamel inlay, missing in the case of one of the cells.

Whilst the Brooch is on the small side you can see that it was a valuable piece when first made, the dimensions are: Wt.: 4.25g L.: 258mm W.: 15.5mm Ht.: 9.8mm

Butcher, S. 2014. *Roman Brooches in Britain: a technological and typological study based on the Richborough Collection*, Society of Antiquaries, London.



As the Brooch is more than 300 years old and composed of more than 10% precious metal it qualifies as treasure as stipulated in the Treasure Act 1996, and because it is classed as treasure it has been given a value of £300 by the British Museum. The Friends have donated £100 towards the purchase.



Discussion: for a discussion of the type, see Bayley & Butcher 2004, 174-5.

Reference: Bayley, J. &

Application to join

THE FRIENDS OF BRADING ROMAN VILLA

Reg. charity no. 1110720

Morton Old Road, Brading, Isle of Wight PO36 0PH

Name 1:
(min. age 18 years)

Name 2:
(min. age 18 years)

Address:

.....

Post Code:

Telephone:

Email:

YOUR ACTIVE HELP WOULD BE VALUED.

COULD YOU JOIN OUR VOLUNTEER TEAMS? YES NO

FRIEND OF THE VILLA MINIMUM Free entry to the Museum for
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION £15 the year; newsletter; 10%
discount in the Villa Café and
Shop.

JOINT MEMBERSHIP MINIMUM As above, for 2 adults living
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION £21 at the same address.

SINGLE DONATION £..... Thank you!

PLEASE MAKE PAYMENT BY CASH OR CHEQUE, PAYABLE TO FBRV

I am not a UK taxpayer

I am a UK taxpayer and I would like The Friends to reclaim tax on my membership and any other donation I may make until I withdraw this authority. I confirm that I pay UK tax to at least the value of tax on my membership and other donations, and I will advise The Friends if my tax payments are less than that to be reclaimed.

Signed: Date:

DATA PROTECTION: The information you have provided may be held on the Friends' database and may be used to send news and further information about The Friends and Brading Roman Villa. Your details will not be shared with any other organisation. If you do not wish to receive such further information, please tick this box

FBRV Aug 2012

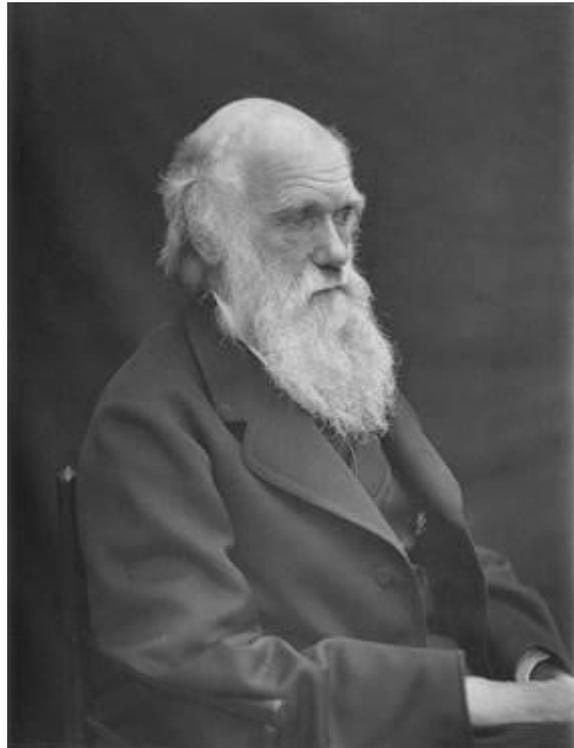
Charles Robert Darwin, FRS. FRGS. FLS. FZS.

Charles Darwin spent long periods of time on the Isle of Wight. In 1881 whilst staying at the Ocean Hotel in Sandown High Street he was just putting the finishing touches to his book ***The Formation of Vegetable Mould through the Action of Worms, with Observations on their Habits*** (sometimes shortened to *Worms*).

When on hearing about the Villa that had just been found at Brading, he sent his eldest son William Erasmus Darwin to visit the site to find out about the soil structure covering the Villa, this was incorporated in to the above book. It was his last scientific book, and was published shortly before his death. Exploring earthworm behaviour and ecology, it continued the theme common throughout his work that gradual changes over long periods of time can lead to large and sometimes surprising consequences.

You can read chapter 4 of the book describing the part worms play in the burial of ancient buildings, including Brading on line at:-

<http://www.fbrv.org.uk/darwin.pdf>



The Friends' AGM

The AGM was held in March and our thanks to all who attended.

Before the formal business of the meeting commenced Neville Carr gave a moving tribute to Wendy Gannon.

Whilst the formal business is short and doesn't change much from year to year there are a couple of items which are mentioned here for those who were not at the meeting:

1. The elected Committee for the following year is

Chairman	David Reeves
Vice-Chairman & Head Guide	Pat Barber
Treasurer & Membership	John Bryant
Secretary	Christine Elliott
Gardens	John Hardy
Training	Helen Jackson
Volunteers	Alan Swanborough

- 2 Under Any Other Business the Chairman raised the question of emailing of formal documents to members. The meeting was pleased to agree that in future AGM notices and reports would be sent to members by email wherever possible in an effort to reduce the cost of postage and printing. Of course those members who don't have access to email will continue to receive paper copies as they do now.

Christine Elliott
Secretary

Wendy Gannon President's fund.



Below are extracts from Presidents fund guidelines. You can find the full terms and conditions and application forms on the Friends website: www.fbrv.org.uk

Part of the aims and objects of the FBRV are to education the public and to increase the public awareness of the Villa site. Wendy Gannon our past President received a BEM for her work in fulfilling these aims. To continue the work started by Wendy and in line with our objectives to educate and increase public awareness of Brading Roman Villa the board of Trustees of the FBRV have authorised the setting up of a Grants Committee (GC). The function of the GC is to oversee the distribution of the Wendy Gannon President's fund, to vet applications, and to make recommendations to the board regarding the awarding of grants to students, and the amount involved.

The purpose of the fund is to draw the FBRV to the public's attention, and by so doing to raise awareness of Brading Roman Villa, by offering (Educational) grants to residents of the Isle of Wight undertaking higher education in History, Archaeology or related subjects at sixth form/college or university level. The sixth form/college does not necessarily have to be based on the Isle of Wight.

The Grants Committee consists of three people:

1. The President of the FBRV, Neville Carr. (Chairman).
2. A Trustee of the FBRV, Helen Jackson.
3. Vice President of the FBRV, David Tomalin

As and when the funds permit, grants up to a maximum value of £200 are available.

Grants are to support such things as the cost of books, equipment, travel, field work and lecture fees for lectures not covered by the applicant's normal curriculum but relevant to their studies. Grants can be made to help with publication costs of reports or a book relating to the applicant's studies.

Whilst the fund is set up to help students in higher education studying History or Archaeology, there may be occasions when the objects may be better served by making a

grant to a relevant sixth form/college department for such things as a field trip or books.

Successful applicants will be expected to submit a short (illustrated) report on their research or the use of the grant, suitable for publication in the FBRV Newsletter, or an agreed alternative such as a talk/presentation. The applicant will be expected to supply the FBRV with a copy of any report or book resulting from any financial contribution, and an acknowledgment of the financial contribution from FBRV should be included in any such publication.

The GC will decide if a grant application is suitable to receive a President's Fund grant, and suggest the amount. The Trustee member of the GC is responsible for putting forward the recommendations to the FBRV Trustees for the final decision by the board.

If you know someone on the Island who may be eligible for a grant, please point them towards the Friends website, where they can download the application forms. The FBRV operates a non-discriminatory policy; any grants awarded will be given to individuals who meet the funding criteria and the academic relevance/merit regarding their application.

The fund is meant to be self-financing, the executors of Wendy's estate very kindly asked people to give any donations to the FBRV in lieu of flowers, to date we have received £385 in donations. In addition, from the £385 donations we should receive somewhere in the order of £87 back from HMRC as gift aid. This has been rounded up to give a total of £500.

Wendy Gannon memorial lecture:

To maintain the fund an annual Wendy Gannon memorial lecture will be held, after any expenses all of the remaining revenue will go to the fund. Sir Barry Cunliffe has done us the honour of agreeing to give the first lecture in October 2017. The date is still to be arranged. If you would like to give a donation to the fund, please contact the Treasurer John Bryant or any Trustee.

'When Time team came to Brading' by Helen Jackson

Doesn't time fly – it was in 2001, over 15 years ago, that Channel 4's Time Team visited the Isle of Wight.

Although the programme is no longer produced, repeats of old shows can still be viewed and we guides are often asked if the team came here. I point out of the drum tower window and tell them about the dig at Gander Down at Yaverland.

So I thought friends who have joined us since then might like to know more of the story, and even those with their own personal memories might have been frustrated by the lack of a comprehensive report on the dig.

As we all know, Time Team would spend 3 days on a site, but dozens of islanders formed the advance guard and backroom support, field-walking, metal detecting and processing finds. Before that, it was Kevin Trott's watching brief during pipe-laying that had identified artefacts and building evidence of possible Iron Age / Roman occupation.



View from the Villa

What was the connection with the Villa? Is the fact that the West Range front door looks straight across to the small hill just a coincidence? If you visit the site, now a RSPB reserve, use your binoculars and you have a glorious view of the whole Villa site, including the car park and field where the Iron Age farmstead stood. Or stand in the Villa car park and look across to Gander Down

as those British farmers would have done.

The outlook may have been different back then; I wonder, if the trees were cleared, could you have seen the waterway and monitored the boats approaching your safe mooring or the entrance to the River Yar? Certainly Gander Down would have been in a strategic position in Roman times, with the river estuary curving round and a creek providing access on the eastern side.



View from Gander Down

Although Channel 4 did not produce a final report, Kevin Trott did provide a summary. Despite Tony Robinson's desperate wish to find a Roman villa, the results were perhaps less glamorous but equally interesting.

There was some kind of Iron Age occupation with ditches and earth banks round part of the hill. Coming down the track from Culver Down in suitable light conditions, you can still see the remains of the earth banks.

At the foot of the hill you can see the remains of the creek, now silted up and full of plants, that provided access to

a Roman period workshop. The cobbled floor had been noted by Kevin Trott and finds from the dig suggest it may have been used for recycling metal and glass objects.

In the Anglo-Saxon period another building was constructed nearby but whether this was a home, workshop or storage is not known.

It was perhaps not surprising that there was evidence of a Bronze Age burial mound on top of the hill. The big surprise was the discovery of a human skeleton in one of the Iron Age ring ditches; this was subsequently carbon-dated to the first century BC. Was this an execution or a sacrifice or placed here for some other reason? We will probably never know.

Small finds included a range of pottery, including Samian ware, nails, glass and some jewellery. There was a particularly nice copper disc brooch (pictured).



Brooch

So we have a story of two sites within clear sight of each other but separated by a water channel. Both were busy places during the Iron Age and Roman eras. How close was the link? Were they owned by the same man or by rivals or by friendly neighbours? There are so many untold and unknown stories about the Villa; Time Team added to the legacy.