

Maundown Roman Village

Painstaking work to identify and preserve coin hoard

MANY readers may be wondering what has happened to the spectacular find of the Roman hoard seen by the four hundred visitors to the archaeological excavation at Maundown last month.

To make sure no evidence was lost during excavation, the pot containing the coins was lifted within its surrounding soil and immediately taken to Salisbury Hospital to be x-rayed.

The x-ray slide showed that despite the pot being broken it was still filled with bronze and copper coins. Archaeologists are now very cautiously remov-

ing the soil from around the pot under laboratory conditions, which is likely to take weeks of careful work (they're going to need very steady hands).

Once all the coins have been removed from the soil they will be transferred to the British Museum where they will be cleaned and treated to make them stable.

They will then be analysed by an expert (a numismatist) who will attempt to classify each one by identifying the Emperor who appears on the obverse side (Heads) and any image on the reverse (Tails).

The image can be a particular deity (such as Jupiter) or something symbolic (such as a soldier or a

personification of victory) and can often relate to particular wars or peace treaties.

By identifying the Emperor archaeologists will be able to date the coins and calculate when the hoard was buried which will in turn date the construction of the roundhouse where the hoard was found.

It is very rare for coin hoards to be found during archaeological excavations and even rarer to discover them within a building, which makes this find particularly significant.

We will probably never know why the hoard was buried under the floor of a house, or why it was never retrieved.

There are many theories concerning hoards, some involve the hasty hiding of savings prior to their owner being killed, others interpret them as ritual or religious offerings.

My favourite theory was put forward by an infamous academic archaeologist who suggested that perhaps Bacchus the Roman God of Wine was the reason hoards remained buried.

The theory goes like this - after burying his lifesavings 15 paces east and 12 paces north from the 17th oak tree from his farmstead, Iniscups (our Romano-Celtic ances-



The pot containing the coin hoard before excavation

tor) had a particularly debauched night of imbibing his favourite tippie, and gambling on how many steps a drunk hedgehog took before it fell over.

The following day, nursing a rather sore head, he found to his horror the only number he could remember was that a cider-fuelled hedgehog can only manage 14 (wobbly) steps and that you should never mix business and pleasure.

If you want to find out more about archaeology in Somerset then visit the County Council website and have a look at the Historic Environment Record which is a fully searchable map based record of all the known archaeological and historic sites in the county: www.somerset.gov.uk/heritage

Steven Membery
Development Control
Archaeologist



The stone lid which sealed the money in the pot

HAMILTON SECURITY SYSTEMS

INTRUDER ALARMS
SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS
GATE AUTOMATION
SPECIALIST LIGHTING

CALL NOW FOR A FREE QUOTE

01984 624107

1. Silver Street, WIVELISCOMBE

To advertise in the
Wiveliscombe Messenger
ring 01984 632731

Solar Hot Water ECO-EXMOOR Ltd and ROTH UK

Working in partnership
Your local suppliers and installers of solar
hot water systems

For a free, no obligation survey please call:

01598 763595 – Eco-Exmoor Ltd

01984 623982 – Roth UK



LOCAL COMPANIES WORKING WITH LOCAL PEOPLE

Young Country Person Award 2006



THIS summer saw a prestigious award brought back to Huish Champflower in the name of Oli Ghazala.

Winner of the Strutt and Parker Young Country Person Award 2006, Oli, 14, picked up the award in the 13-15 years category.

Run for the last three years, the purpose of the award is to find young country 'champions' who are involved in country matters for the good of the future of the countryside.

This can be in disciplines such as stock breeding, country sports, hedge laying, equestrian activities, dog training and the like.

Entrants are required to send in a portfolio of their work and why they feel they should be nominated. Oli put forward his portfolio based around his activities in Hunting, Beating and Fishing.

Unsuccessful in last year's competition, that did not put him off of trying

again, and in the year that passed, he had been able to develop his activities, including establishing two shoot days on his parents' and neighbours' properties which required him to negotiate permission with the land owners as well as devising cover crops and pens for rearing the pheasants. Oli even persuaded his school friends to assist with the beating!

Oli attended the Gillingham and Shaftesbury Show in August, and can be seen pictured here receiving his award from actor Geoffrey Hughes (Keeping Up Appearances, Coronation Street).

That's not the end of it for Oli though - despite his preparations for GCSEs he is also branching out and establishing a coarse fishing pond at home.

His aspiration is to go onto Hartpury College in Gloucestershire and qualify in Game Keeping, so there's no doubt that Oli's feet are firmly in the countryside!

THE BEAR INN



10 North Street, Wiveliscombe
Tel 01984 623537

Andy, Heather and staff welcome you to the Bear Inn

Specialising in Cask Conditioned Ales and good quality home-made Food with a friendly family atmosphere

THE DARTS, SKITTLES AND POOL SEASONS HAVE JUST STARTED. ANDY AND HEATHER WISH ALL THE TEAMS GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY PLAYING!

We are pleased to announce that we are in the CAMRA Good Beer Guide yet again for the 10th year running!

DON'T FORGET OUR TAKE AWAY PIZZAS, BURGERS AND CURRIES ARE AVAILABLE MONDAY TO SUNDAY - 6pm-9pm

SUNDAY LUNCHES – Choice of beef or lamb + 6 veg and roast potatoes: Adult £5.95 & Children £3.95

Families welcome
Large beer garden with children's play equipment

DOGS ON LEADS WELCOME IN PUB AND ON PATIO AREAS