

WESTON ROAD ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

About the project

During preparatory work for an all season sports pitch for the Royal Manor Arts College in October 2004 this Roman site was discovered. There followed a big public campaign in support of the further excavation of the site so that it can become known, as much as possible, exactly what had happened here anciently.

The Association worked closely with the Dorset County Council and the Royal Manor Arts College to develop a strategy to gain an understanding of the archaeology of the site and in December the Cabinet of D.C.C. recommended that the proposed sports pitch should be relocated and A.P.A. be given the opportunity to excavate the site. The Association successfully applied for a grant from the Local Heritage Initiative Fund to enable the project to go ahead.

It has been known for at least the past two centuries that the Romans had been involved with the native Iron Age people in quarrying and working the local limestone for various purposes, e.g. making elaborate coffins for their dead and for building their homes, Numerous other finds of the Romano-British period have been made on the Island and since 1872 it has been suspected that there must be a settlement site a little south of St. George's church. In that year a well full of Roman pottery had been discovered somewhere in the vicinity, clearly indicating the presence of an important site somewhere nearby. Although at least two other possible settlement sites are known to have existed on Portland (Southwell and Fortuneswell), this is the first, and perhaps the last, site to such a settlement where there is an opportunity for further excavation and research, As such the site presents a unique learning opportunity for Portland.

The features so far discovered include sturdy walls of several Roman buildings, a number of enigmatic Roman features, a ditch full of Roman pottery, the foundations of a round structure which could possibly be of the Iron Age and a substantial later dry-stone wall of a large rectangular building which may be early medieval. The exact nature and dating of these features will be revealed by further excavation.

A.P.A. is very keen that as many members of the public as possible should be involved in this exceptional opportunity which, it is hoped, will reveal a great deal of information about Portland's past. We would like this opportunity of thanking the many organisations and people who have supported us in this project.

For further information you can contact the Director of A.P.A. on 01305 861676

