

FRIENDS OF FISHBOURNE ROMAN PALACE

NEWSLETTER

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The Palace – what happened next?

We are familiar with the striking model of the Palace in its prime that greets visitors in the North Wing, but what did it look like later? In the Museum there are models of the Palace as it was in the 1st and 2nd periods (up to around 75AD). There is no model that shows the 3rd Period (75-280AD) and the decline of the building associated with the later stages of the building's life. This gives the visitor the impression that the Palace was "set in aspic" and did not change after its early heyday.

Until now. Curator Rob Symmons was approached by Jules Rinterknecht, a student at Bournemouth University, with an idea to create one for his coursework. Rob agreed, and approached the Friends for a small grant to cover some materials. This too was agreed, so Jules began.

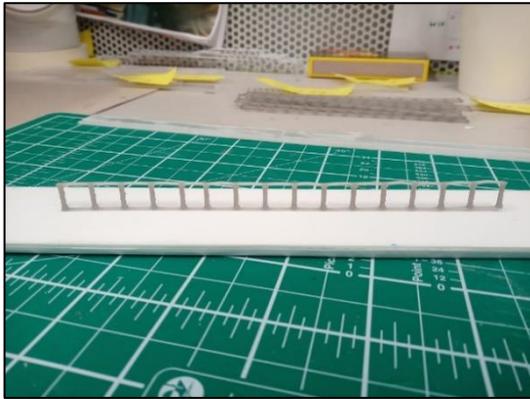


The finished model

His first task was research. He wanted the model to be easily understood, but also as historically accurate as possible. Using Barry Cunliffe's excavation reports and drawings he was able to extract pretty much all the information he needed. He started by reading about the site and establishing what the Palace would have looked like in its heyday when it was in full use from around 80AD to 200AD.

Then he made a list of all the modifications that occurred up to the point the Palace was destroyed by fire. Then starting with the original Palace he applied all the changes he had read about to end up with what the model he was going to be building would look like. He made several drawings and plans during this process to help visualize the Palace.

The model he has made depicts the Roman Palace in its worst state before the fire that destroyed it completely. In the third period only the west wing, the remaining North wing, and the East wing north of the entrance hall were still in the use and the rest of the Palace had been abandoned to the elements. The central gardens had suffered a similar fate and were left to grow as they wished. Rubble from demolitions and restructuring littered the grounds. Unused areas of the Palace had been turned into tips for the residents' waste and the entrance hall roof had collapsed. The Palace was in a sorry state.



The technical drawings in the excavation reports formed the basis of a preliminary model that Jules made. The existing models of earlier versions of the Palace also helped him visualise what his own model would be like. There were a few challenges, such as making the columns - too fiddly if done separately, so were made in groups. Areas such as the Aisled Hall which no longer existed were shown as demolished rather than not present at all, so that it would be easier to follow the story.

He made several tests in order to see what would best represent the flint and yellow gritty mortar foundations of the buildings. The best result came from painted sand: at this tiny scale the different sized grains look like different sized rocks and the sand can be painted any colour to match yellow gritty mortar and flint cobbles which the real foundations were made from.

The rubble was made by crushing up clay, cement and plaster and applying it to the model in sprinkles. To increase the dustiness of the rubble and paths and to dirty up the abandoned sections of the Palace he applied pigment powders. The Roman fences built in the Palace gardens would most likely have been made of woven branches or wattle and daub. As representing this at 1:400 scale was not possible, he made the fences on the model out of sliced matches stained with wood dye.



The final step of the project was applying the grass and the trees to the model. He also added some grass to the abandoned sections of roofing to make it look as though nature was slowly reclaiming them.

Jules was extremely happy with how this model turned out, and I think when we see it we will agree. It will be a valuable addition to the resources available to tell the story of this exceptional site.

This article was written by new Newsletter/Website editor Anne de Potier, based on Jules Rinterknecht's blog <https://julesrinterknechtmodelmaker.wordpress.com/blog/>. Why not read the whole account, and look at more images of how it was made, and the finished work?

Goodbye from Melanie



It has been a wonderful three years working with you all at the Palace. The pandemic has made my tenure as Property

Manager of Fishbourne Roman Palace an unusual one, with the Palace being closed for long periods of time, however there has been so much progress towards developing the Palace's full potential over that three years.

When I started at Fishbourne Roman Palace, the February half term activities were in my first few weeks, so it seems apt that this is now my last event here.

Half Term 21-25 February: Roman activities – a different craft each day

I have enjoyed working with the staff, volunteers and Friends alike to develop the site and would like to reflect on some of the achievements over this time. The second hand bookshop shows the combined effort of the Friends, staff and volunteers to create an atmospheric bookshop that has raised significant income for the organisation. Likewise, we have revitalised areas of the site such as the outdoor spaces, café and museum into being more refreshed, with particular thanks to Stewart for the work on this. We are upscaling our Summer event and this is set to be better than ever this year with the return of the Roman Cavalry alongside the Ermine Street Guard. There are other successes, like our onsite WiFi and new Society website with

online sales, which set a foundation for us to grow further.

Finally, one of the biggest achievements at the Palace has been our resilience. The past two years have been difficult, with constant changes to the pandemic regulations resulting in us constantly reviewing our offer to visitors for their safety. Our team of Friends, staff and volunteers have met this challenge face-on and always created an exceptional visitor experience despite the obstacles. This is no small feat and I recognise the work of all in ensuring that the Palace could deliver this. I am very proud of everyone and all we have achieved together and I look forward to hearing and seeing the future successes of the Palace. I have no doubt that Fishbourne Roman Palace will continue to evolve onwards and upwards.

Hello from Leanne



My name is Leanne O'Boyle and I have recently joined the Sussex Archaeological Society as Head of Historic Properties.

I come from the City of London Corporation where I was employed as Head of Cultural & Visitor Strategy, but I was raised in Sussex and am delighted to return to the county in this role. I studied at the Institute of Archaeology, UCL (both at BA and MA level), and used to oversee Billingsgate Roman House & Baths in London and so I am thrilled to have the opportunity to work with such an exceptional site as Fishbourne. It is both a personal and professional joy.

I have visited the Palace many times and been incredibly impressed with the team – both the knowledge and the clear passion for the site. As Friends, you are vital to the running of the Palace and I am very much looking forward to working with you to both preserve and develop this extraordinary site. I hope to have the chance to meet with you as soon as is possible, but, till then, thank you for all that you do.

Leanne O'Boyle

From the Chair



Since the deferred AGM in November last year, the new committee has been somewhat delayed in getting to grips with their new

roles due not only to Covid restrictions but also various health problems and surgical operations. Unfortunately, this is something that affects so many of us in the more mature age group. The committee is now fully functioning, but we do need volunteers for the non-officer roles to keep the committee quorate and help with succession planning. We currently have five committee members with one due to stand down at the next AGM and the role of Secretary (currently filled on a temporary basis) becoming vacant. Please can you help? The future of the Friends depends on your support.

Items currently being discussed by the committee include a reassessment of the benefits that membership provides in addition to supporting the Palace. Do you, as a Friend of Fishbourne Roman Palace, have any ideas that you would like the committee to consider? This

may include additional talks or events, perhaps shared with other groups, or other ways in which to assist the Palace. The caveat is that they need to attract enough members to be viable. The committee is also reviewing the date of the next Friends' AGM; whether to return to earlier in the year or stay with a November date, which would perhaps give us more time to increase the number of committee members.

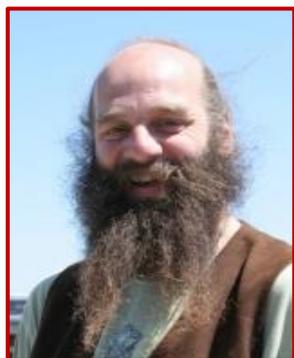
I was pleased to hear that the Palace staff are welcoming schools back from Monday 31 January, with a 7-day week opening resuming from Saturday 12 February. However, we also have news that Melanie Marsh, Property Manager for Fishbourne, is moving on to new projects in early March. We wish Mel the best in her new role and look forward to meeting and working with the new Property Manager in due course at a time when, hopefully, we are beginning to see a real return to more normal non-Covid times.

David Bone

Membership renewal

On 1 February the renewal of your membership of the Friends fell due. Joan Rundle the Membership Secretary has sent out the form, which can also be downloaded from the website if you can't find it. Your Committee has been able to keep subscription rate unchanged for a further year and we hope very much that you will all renew and enable us to continue our valuable work helping the Palace and its staff. And do encourage others to join too!

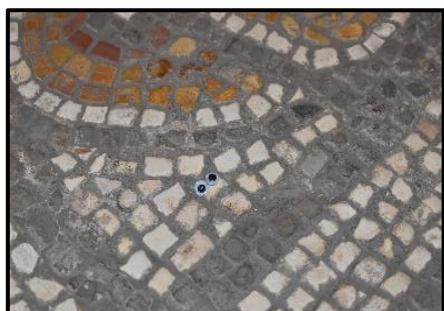
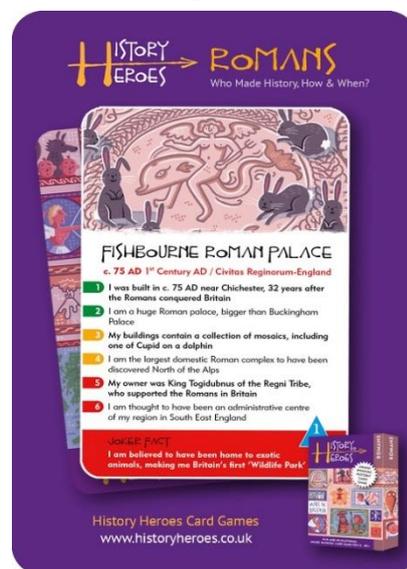
New products: update from Rob Symmons



Since we reopened to the public last July (was it really that long ago?!) we have been working hard to get the museum shop up to scratch and selling products that will entice our visitors to part with a couple of extra pounds as they end their visit. "Secondary spend" is a crucial part of our income!

That's why, back in August we were thrilled to launch a brand-new card game, based on notable Roman characters, gods and sites. I had spent a lot of lockdown working with the manufacturer, "History Heroes"

and classicist, Dr Hannah Platts, to pick 40 characters for inclusion in the game and seven interesting facts for each. Then artwork had to be completed and approved, and seemingly endless proof-reading before the game could go into production – just in time for our "Gladiator" event. There are only three sites represented in the game, Pompeii, The Forum in Roman and (of course) Fishbourne Roman Palace! We're so happy to be in such esteemed archaeological company and grateful to History Heroes for including us. We're even more pleased that the artwork for our card includes, not only cupid on the dolphin, but also our famous rabbits!



Just before Christmas we launched another "product" that we hoped would bring in a little extra income during the lean weeks while we were closed, as well as cheer people up during the cold winter months. We offered the public the "once in a lifetime" opportunity to "adopt a pet tessera" from our Cupid mosaic! For a fee of £20, adoptees received a unique picture of their new pet, with plastic googly eyes

attached to identify the tessera as well as vastly increase its cuteness. Surely this is the gift for the person who has everything.

This has been a fun enterprise, and while it did raise a few much-appreciated pounds, it was just daft enough to put a smile on a lot of people's faces as well as generate a fair bit of publicity – and neither of those can be bad! The game is still available and the pet tessera scheme is still open. If you are interested in either you can visit the SAS website, pop into the shop (for the game) or give Penny a call on 01243 789829 (for the tessera).

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