

VINDOLANDA

CHARITABLE TRUST

Excavation News 2006

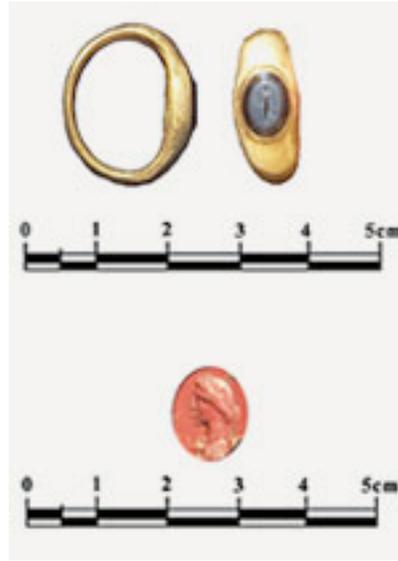
Early 2006

The first two months of the 2006 season have been bedevilled by cold and wet weather, but summer has at last arrived, and real progress is being made. In the far western area, Justin's team continues to search for more of the massive posts of the early building that lies within a quite separate defensive system - and it is beginning to look like a legionary base, perhaps connected with the construction of the Wall in the AD 120s. Nearby finds have included the spectacular brooch, once owned by Quintus Sollonius from the century of Capitus, who very kindly had his name inscribed on the clasp. Capitus was probably the Second Legion Augusta centurion, who left behind an inscription at Caerleon.

Andrew's team is still dealing with the western wall of the Stone Forts, where what should have been an uncomplicated rampart mound is proving to have been packed with three successive stone buildings - some including orthodox ovens, but others perhaps workshops. Finds have included the graphic stone statuette, probably featuring the god Priapus, much favoured by farmers and gardeners, together with a fine gold ring and a number of intaglios from other rings. Once all the stone buildings have been examined, it will be possible to search for the pre-Hadrianic remains beneath them.



Priapus



The legionary brooch and a gold finger ring and Maenad intaglio

Summer 2006

A fascinating new inscription

Excavation of the SW corner of the fort wall revealed the original presence of another toilet block each corner now has one and outside the wall (still standing over ten feet high) the excavators revealed the presence of its sewer leading, as usual, into the filthy fort ditch. When Andrew turned one of the sewer side stones over, he was astonished to find that it had been a statue pedestal, with the inscription illustrated below. The inscription reads: CIVES GALLI / DE GALLIA / CONCORDES / QVE BRITANNI - a free translation of which would be "The troops from Gaul dedicate this statue to the goddess Gallia, with the full support of the British-born troops".

The statue was probably set up early in the third century by soldiers of the Fourth Cohort of Gauls, Vindolanda's garrison until the end of the fourth century, and it reveals that native Gauls were still to be found in the regiment which had been in Britain since AD 43, and that they liked to distinguish themselves from the British born recruits. But they clearly now got on very well with the British soldiers, who had been persuaded to join with them in an expensive dedication to the patron deity of Gaul. Quite a turn around since AD 103, when a writing tablet referred to the British soldiers as Brittunculi, or "wretched little Brits"! It should also be noted that this is the first record of the goddess Gallia, and the dedication to her was perhaps a sign of homesickness by the Gaulish born troops.



Andrew washes the stone on site



The Text