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# Editorial

This edition of *Britannia* continues to showcase the extraordinary variety of research relating to Britain's rich Roman legacy. From the novels of Rosemary Sutcliff to the gut parasites of Roman London, research on the Roman past has rarely been more diverse and vibrant. Some papers, for example those on the Colchester vase, show the value of revisiting ostensibly well-known objects while others, such as that on *Fanum Martis* in Gaul, demonstrate that the results of developer-funded excavation can shed light on major questions of resource management in the Roman period.

*Britannia* is different from many journals in that its authors come from professional backgrounds that span multiple sectors including developer-funded archaeology, museums and local government, alongside those from universities. The study of Roman Britain also attracts a range of independent scholars, sometimes retired from academia or the professional archaeology sector but also from other professional backgrounds. An approximate breakdown of contributors to the 2024 volume shows that of the 36 authors involved in the papers and shorter contributions, 19 (53 per cent) come from universities and 17 (47 per cent) come from other sectors.

This diversity is a cause for celebration. It does, however, represent a challenge in the face of the rapidly changing face of academic journals, which are being transformed by the inexorable push towards open access publication. Open access allows the easy online dissemination of new academic research to a huge range of audiences who would otherwise be unable to access material hidden behind publishers' paywalls. The value of open access can be clearly seen in the figures for the most downloaded articles in *Britannia* and, as the use and readership of print journals declines, the direction of travel is clearly towards online content.

For authors from universities the route towards open access publication is straightforward. So-called 'transformative agreements' in which institutions secure the right for members both to read the journals and publish on an open access basis without charge are now in place for the majority of institutional authors. Cambridge University Press (who publish *Britannia*) also have a system in place that ensures open access publication routes are available to those from low- and middle-income countries. As noted above, a very significant number of *Britannia*'s authors currently do not fall into either category. Although eventually we are likely to have a system in which full open access is available for all authors, we must be careful to avoid a period in which we have a 'two-tier' system of publication in which authors from academic institutions are able to have greater reach and impact for their work than those who sit outside those institutions.

Notwithstanding this issue, it is clear that the move towards greater open access publication is a cause for optimism. In a world where an increasing range of conflicting voices lays claim to narratives about the past, it is more important than ever that peer-reviewed scholarship is available to the widest-possible range of audiences.

The production of *Britannia* relies on the unpaid and often uncredited contributions of a huge range of people. I continue to be enormously grateful to those who give their time as peer-reviewers, as book

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reviewers, as members of the editorial board and who contribute updates on recent discoveries in Roman Britain. I would particularly like to thank Pete Wilson, the editor of the 'Sites Explored' section, who steps down after this issue. I am also, as always, indebted to our copy editor, Anne Chippindale, who deals with both authors and editor with patience and good humour.

## OBITUARIES

Jon Coulson (1957–2024) was a specialist in study of the Roman army, particularly relating to military equipment and the sculptural depiction of the army, with his 1988 thesis on Trajan's column the start of a life of study of the monument. In Britain he co-authored the *Corpus Signorum Imperii Romani* volume on the western section of Hadrian's Wall. He was Senior Lecturer in the School of Classics at St Andrews and his popularity as a teacher was recognised with a University Teaching Award in 2016.

Brenda Dickinson (1938–2024) made a remarkable contribution to samian studies in Britain and beyond and was instrumental in the recording and publication of the *c.* 300,000 potters' stamps recorded in the Leeds index, ultimately published in the nine volumes of *Names on Terra Sigillata* and hosted in database form at Mainz. She also recorded and published samian assemblages from sites across Roman Britain. Alongside her scholarship, she was a tireless mentor of younger scholars and did much to pass on the knowledge of samian to a new generation.

John Hayes (1938–2024) redefined the study of late Roman finewares in the Mediterranean. The publication of *Late Roman Pottery* in 1972 put the study of Late Antiquity on a firm chronological footing. His work had a significant impact on the study of sites in western Britain that were in receipt of fifth- and sixth-century Mediterranean finewares.

Malcolm Lyne (1943–2023) was an expert on Iron Age and Roman pottery, commencing with work on the Alice Holt industry and subsequently working on a wide range of ceramics including Dorset Black Burnished Ware, particularly in Sussex and South-east England. Alongside his work on pottery and other finds, he was instrumental in bringing the 1936–64 excavations of Pevensey to publication, alongside those of Lewes Friary.

Phil Mills (1967–2024) was a Roman pottery and ceramic building materials expert who worked widely across the developer-funded and research sectors, with research interests spanning Britain and the Mediterranean. He was a staunch advocate of the importance of statistically robust recording of ceramic building materials and did much to advance their profile as an important topic for study.

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