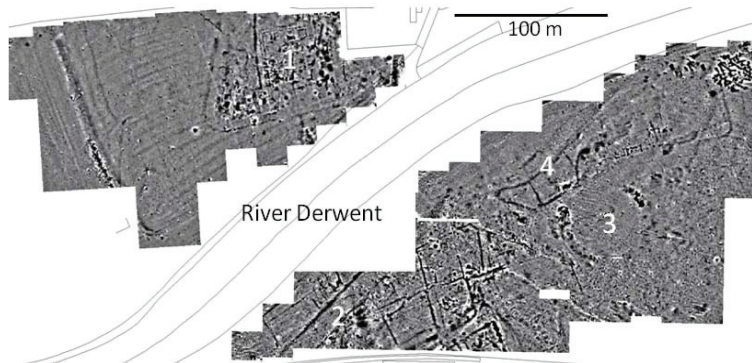


Community Archaeology at Papcastle and Cockermouth A Roman Bath House, Amphitheatre and Watermill?

This summer, local volunteers carried out a geophysical survey of the flood plain by the River Derwent near Papcastle and Cockermouth, led by **Grampus Heritage and Training Ltd** within the lottery funded **Unlocking Hidden Heritage** project (one of 30 projects funded by the **Bassenthwaite Reflections Landscape Partnership Scheme**). This area was damaged by the floods of November 2009 and pottery fragments and possible building foundations had been found there (CWAAS Newsletter 63, p3).



Map of magnetometry survey on the banks of the Derwent
The numbers refer to features in the text.



Volunteer Ian Thompson on the magnetometry survey.

Amazingly, magnetometry revealed an extensive Roman settlement from the vicus at Papcastle (*Derventio*) south of the river into Broomlands (see the map). Inspired by this, the survey team (photo) moved north of the river, where the geophysics showed a large building, 35m x 30m, (1 on the map) of characteristically Roman layout at the foot of Sibby Brow. This appears to have a water channel by the west wall bringing water from Sibby Brow into an annex on the SW corner. There are two symmetrical square annexes on the north side of the building. This may be a **Roman Bath House** for Papcastle; excavation is now needed.



David Jackson from North Pennines Archaeology examines a Samian ware bowl.

Trenches proved the existence of a road (2 on the map) from the south west parallel to the current river channel. Ditched enclosures along the east of this road contained evidence of occupation with large amounts of Roman pottery (photo) and 3 fragments of carved inscriptions. A trench through the large elliptical anomaly (3 on the map), which may be a **Roman amphitheatre**, showed that the structure is indeed of Roman date with a heavy clay and cobble foundation, though the Roman surface has been lost.

The proposed Roman river bank was investigated in the north of the field. Two parallel lines, initially interpreted as a lane (4 on the map),



Timbers lining the mill-race.



The watermill under excavation.
Photographs by the author.

were actually a constructed water channel lined with timber. Substantial foundations of a **Roman watermill** (photo) were revealed with a timber lined mill-race (photo). Samples of the timber have been taken for analysis and dating.

This community archaeology has been a rare opportunity for volunteers to carry out archaeological research from survey to excavation. The local response was incredible and the credit for these remarkable discoveries goes to each and every volunteer.

Mark Graham, Grampus Heritage and Training Ltd

We gratefully thank the landowners Mr Robert Jackson, Mr David Robinson and Mr Eldred Curwen for permission to do this fieldwork.