

Institute of Physics

LONDON AND SOUTH EASTERN BRANCH REMS SECTION

Visit to Fishbourne Roman Palace and Bosham Walk Thursday 8 September 2005

This visit has been organised by Shirley Bateman

Fishbourne Roman Palace was discovered by accident during the digging of a water main trench in 1960. The discovery led to nine seasons of excavations that showed the site had developed from a military base at the time of the Roman invasion in AD43 to a sumptuous Palace by the end of the first century. Over the last five years, new excavations by the Sussex Archaeological Society have revealed exciting new insights into this development.

This story is told in an entertaining audio-visual programme and also in the site museum, with the addition of fascinating artefacts from the excavations along with plans, reconstruction drawings and models. The remains of the North Wing of the Palace are enclosed within a cover building for their protection and for the comfort of the visitors. Here can be seen the largest collection of in-situ mosaics in Britain including the famous Cupid on a Dolphin mosaic.

Outside, the northern half of the formal garden has been replanted to its original plan as recovered by excavation. An attractive plant display area contains a range of plants known to have been cultivated by the Romans. Adjacent to it is a Roman Garden Museum which includes a reconstructed Roman potting shed with a selection of horticultural tools. Entrance fee at Fishbourne is £4.60 pay on the day.
<http://www.bosham-walk.co.uk/>

Bosham is a small attractive village on one of the small inlets of Chichester harbour, Bosham (pronounced 'Bozzum') has played an important part in the history of this country over the centuries. Inhabited by the Romans, Bosham was the sixth most important town in Sussex in the 8th Century, recorded as one of the wealthiest manors in England in the Domesday Book Bosham was only one of five places that appear on the map attached to the 12th century "Saxon Chronicle" The Romans left a great deal of evidence of their occupation of the area of Bosham, particularly around the Quay and church and, as there is no natural water course to this area, it can be assumed that it was the Romans who constructed the brook (the Mill Stream), which was to give the villagers a fresh water supply for nearly 2000 years. It was here that the Romans built a basilica, on the foundations of which was built, in 850 AD, the original church – just a rectangular building with an apse at the eastern end.

Bosham is a wonderful place to visit, especially for those with a sense of history. Many recognisable signs of the seafaring days are still to be seen in the village. The Quay and the tiny High Street are lined with cottages that were once the homes of fishermen – in the early 1900s at a rent of two and six pence per week (the equivalent of 25p pw). An old building known as the Raptackle, now leased by Bosham Sailing Club, was used to house the gear for rope making, while the old mill, which probably dates back long before the Conquest, is now the Bosham Sailing Club Clubhouse <http://www.bosham-walk.co.uk/>

Suggested Timings

- 11.00 Meet in the car park at Fishbourne Roman Palace
- 12.45 Leave and travel to Bosham Walk
- 13.00 Lunch Anchor Bleu high Street, Old Bosham <http://www.bosham.info/anchor/index.htm>
- 13.45 Wander around Bosham Walk

Chichester is the nearest railway station and arrangements can be made to collect and return members to the Chichester Railway Station. In the current timetable the 9.02 from London Victoria arrives at Chichester at 10.47 and there is a return service at 17.11



Drive down Delling Lane to the T junction at the Berkeley Arms Public House and turn right into Bosham Lane and the historic village. Pass Bosham Service Station on your left, the Millstream Hotel on your right before a sharp left hand turn. Shortly you will follow the road's left hand bend opposite Bosham Walk into the car park