



SEARCH: Part of a mosaic found on site in Litlington. 599103
Below, excavation work on site. 599092



ON THE HUNT: Tony Robinson, Guy de la Bedoyere, Helen Geake, Ben Robinson and Stewart Ainsworth from Time Team. Picture: David Johnson 599102.

Time Team finds Roman treasure

■ CHRIS HAVERGAL

ARCHAEOLOGISTS from *Time Team* have uncovered the remains of a dazzling Roman villa in the Cambridge-shire countryside.

Stars of the Channel 4 show, hosted by Tony Robinson, spent their third and final day digging in fields and gardens around Litlington yesterday.

The army of diggers were searching for a 30-room palace recorded by antiquarians in the 19th century, and a cemetery, close to the Roman track known as Ashwell Street.

But although the experts believe they have located the villa and its mosaics, excavated a bathhouse and uncovered the cemetery, they have come to very different conclusions from those of their predecessors.

Fascinated villagers being shown around the site last night were told the villa, thought to date from the late Roman period, was smaller than thought and in a different location from that



LITTLE THINGS: Finds give an insight into the past. 599088

plotted on Victorian maps. Crews spent much of their time digging in gardens in the Anvil Avenue area.

Intricate tessellated floors discovered under back gardens and colourful painted plaster work revealed it was a very wealthy settlement.

A big haul of Roman coins was also uncovered.

In the Roman cemetery, now under a field, osteoarchaeologists worked to make sense of Victorian excavations, and unearthed disarticulated human bones and pottery which dated from the late Iron Age and early Roman period.

It is believed to be related to the villa site.

Mr Robinson told the *News* it had been a "fantastically useful" three days.

He said: "I think it will be one of the shows which will demonstrate why the archaeological process is so important.

"Around 200 years ago, somebody said there was something under the ground and everybody believed them.

"But in fact there is something completely different here."

The *Time Team* was first invited to Litlington 10 years ago by the May family, who own Manor Farm, and finally came along after a tip-off from experts.

Mr Robinson said villagers had been thrilled to find mosaics under their gardens.

He said: "It's been brilliant for them. I don't think we've had anyone who has said 'not on my land'."

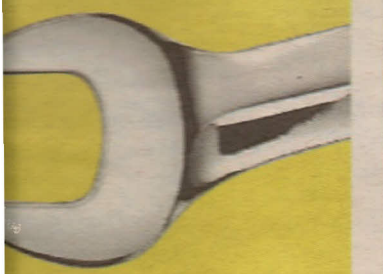
The Litlington show will be broadcast during the first three months of 2010.

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