

SCANDAL

Another day spent at Tolson Museum with Gerrie Brown clearing up after the Romans at Slack (such untidy people!) and another day again where the historical interest came not so much from yet more bits of Samian ware, but from the sheets of newspaper used to line the display cases. On this occasion a page from the *Daily Express* which had first appeared almost 55 years ago to the day, - September 5th 1963. (Perhaps it is time to create a new sub-branch of our hobby, - the Archaeology of Newspapers). Most striking was this cartoon by Cummings:



I was in my early twenties when this appeared for the first time and seeing it again the intervening five decades melted away as though the passage of time had not existed, its references remembered with a clarity which took me by surprise. The busty blonde in the bikini is either Mandy Rice-Davies or more likely her friend, Christine Keeler, whose fragile beauty was at the heart of one of the biggest scandals in English post-war politics. Across her bosom is a reference to the Denning Report, i.e., the enquiry by Lord Justice Denning into what became known as the Profumo Scandal. His conclusion was, - shock! horror! - that people in high places who live in posh houses do not always lead an exemplary life. The hapless Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, struggles to come to terms with the fact that it is 1963 and not 1863. For poor Christine Keeler her brief shenanigans with the English upper classes would result in a period in prison and a poisonous blight on the rest of her life. She died in 2017, aged 75. RIP.

