

Lankester's Vault, Southampton



Graffiti Survey Summary

A team from Southampton Archaeology Society visited this vault on 27th November, 2018. The team consisted of K. Wardley, S. Hanna, M. Dowell, J. Porter and G & R James.

The vault was built in the early 14th Century for storage and was used as an air raid shelter during World War Two. It is situated at the south corner of High Street and West Street and now lies below a paved area. The vault forms the northern part of what used to be called the Queen's Hotel undercroft. Lankester's Vault get its name from a 19th Century lessee.

Very little graffiti was found. Of interest are the quantity of masons' marks on the ashlar blocks of the vaulted ceiling. These have been described, drawn and discussed in the archaeological report for the site, recorded as SOU 342 and SOU 403, by I Peckham, 1993, and held by the city's HER.



Fig. 1 A flight of stairs built in 1989 give access to the vault via the eastern doorway. Two blocked windows are shown.

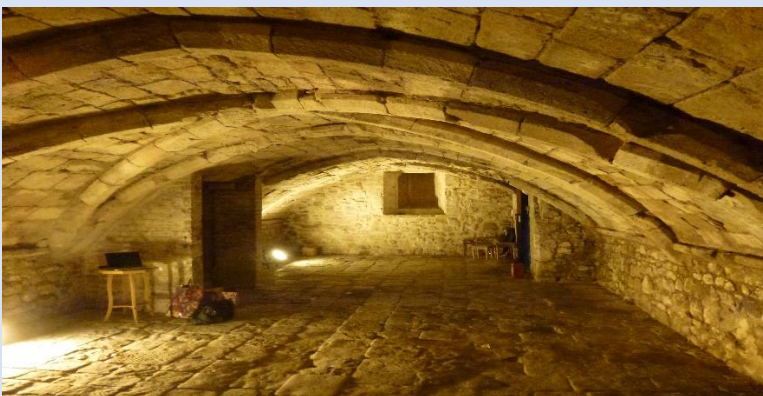


Fig. 2 The north facing vaulted ceiling in the form of a ribbed barrel vault. A large number of the ashlar blocks have masons' marks carved on them.

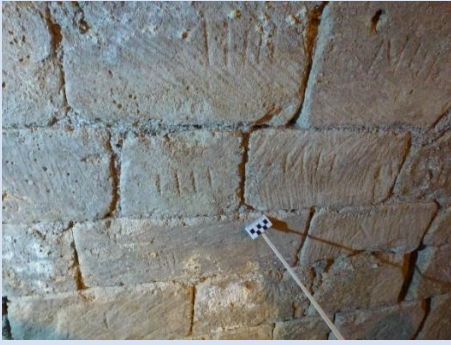


Fig. 3 Representative examples of masons' marks



Fig.4 A possibly re-used flagstone by the east door threshold



Fig 5 Three sooty marks on a south roof rib possibly fingerprints

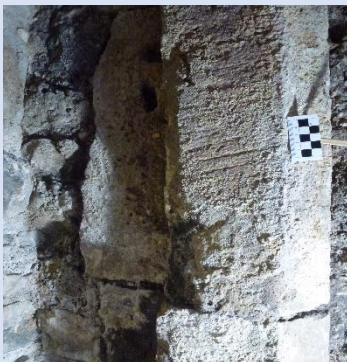


Fig 6 Incised horizontal lines on the south reveal of the bricked-up door

Gill & Roger James – 30th November 2018