

# Southampton Archaeology Society

## April 2019 Newsletter



Dear Members

We've had some fantastic lectures since January, with Ruth Kerr in February talking about Eling Tide Mill (inspiring our visit last week); Phil Andrews in March on the Chapel Riverside excavations; and Frank Green this month whose talk on Environmental Archaeological is reported below (thanks to Mandy Kesby). Reports of all our lectures are available on our website, and please do visit [www.southamptonarchaeology.uk](http://www.southamptonarchaeology.uk) to find contributions on conferences, places to visit, and reports on the findings of our graffiti team.

The April newsletter tends to be lighter in content than usual, as it's sent out with documents for the Annual General Meeting and membership application forms. The new forms this year allow subscriptions/renewals to be made by bank transfer for the first time: subscriptions are due in May and you may renew at any time, or do come along to the AGM in person. Andy Russel's talk will we hope, give us real news of the Bargate/Queensway excavations (instead of 'fake news' from the Daily Echo!) We would be happy to recruit one or two new members to the committee, just speak to any committee member if you'd like to know more.

Many thanks to Matt Garner who led the tour of Eling Tide Mill (reported below) and has been busy with the arrangements for the Study Day on **Life & Death in Medieval Southampton**. The speakers are booked, the hand-out and booking form is enclosed, and bookings are already coming in so it should be another really great day!

We hope to see you soon.

Sarah

## Southampton Archaeology Society Study Day

**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2019 09.30 to 17.00**

**St Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH**

**Life and Death in Medieval Southampton**

Norman Southampton was laid out with a grid of streets, quays and merchants houses. The town was defended by ramparts and ditches on the landward side and by a castle on the west. It was served by five parish churches, a Friary and God's House Hospital. Ships laden with goods such as wine arrived from across the Channel, and wool and woollen cloth were exported. Commodities were stored in the vaults beneath houses or in purpose-built warehouses. Later the town was defended by a Town Wall with many towers and eight gates. Finds from archaeological excavation and evidence from surviving documents and buildings give a vivid picture of the lives, occupations, and health of the people of medieval Southampton.

**Speakers include:** Duncan Brown (pottery); Ian Friel (ships & technology); Phoebe Merrick (cloth trade); Andy Russel (buildings); Mary South (disease & health); & Ian Riddler (artefact analysis).

Cost: members £15, non-members £20, f/t students/under-18s £10 (see attached flyer).

[www.southamptonarchaeology.uk](http://www.southamptonarchaeology.uk)

## SAS Lecture 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019 - Frank Green: Environmental Archaeology

For his thesis at Southampton University a number of years ago Frank Green studied botanical material in archaeology, and since then he has worked in Winchester, with the Mary Rose Trust in Portsmouth, in the Test Valley with the Archaeological Trust and later with the Borough Council. Frank has worked for more than ten years as Senior Archaeologist with the New Forest National Park, and in this lecture he reflects on what he has learned from working in such varied environments, and from many of his colleagues.

The study of environmental evidence from archaeological sites began about two hundred years ago when archaeologists recognised organic remains while excavating lake dwellings on the shore of Lake Constance in Switzerland. The first Hampshire environmental evidence was recognised by geologist Charles Lyell in the 19<sup>th</sup> century: animal, fish and bird bones. Systematic study started in the 1960s and has made important contributions to the interpretation of evidence for instance from sites in Hamwic. Here animal bones showed that cattle and sheep were brought into the settlement, not specifically bred for meat, while pigs and domestic fowl were kept by residents (a tradition continuing into 20<sup>th</sup> century). Over the two hundred years of Hamwic's development there was little evidence of any change in the size of the animals, as shown by bone measurements from individual specialists who worked there.

Preservation of human remains buried in Hamwic was poor due to the acidic soil, so basic characteristics such as height and metric details, age or gender may be missing; but where graves were disturbed and bones placed in rubbish pits they were often better preserved. Modern isotope analysis especially of teeth can now identify the geological region where people buried in Southampton were brought up. A "head of hair" on display in Romsey Abbey has been analysed and found to date from around 975AD. It was found that the person had a mainly marine diet, and the hair was treated with pine resin (not known whether pre- or post-death, or whether this assisted preservation).

Plant remains can provide detailed environmental evidence, for instance pits in Hamwic have yielded remains from the daisy family, plantain and other herbs, but no trees. Also present are thrift, sea lavender, umbellifers and goosefoot, which could have come from thatch or floor covering for humans or animal housing. There was marshland to the west of Southampton, indicated by pollen blown in to Hamwic, and remains of sundew plants have been found.

Macro plant remains have been increasingly recognised, ie charred wood or charcoal, seeds, nuts or fruit stones, sometimes preserved in faecal products or coprolites. A wide range of charred and mineralised plant remains were found at the Lymington salt workings, including saw-leafed sedge. Tanning pits under the Brook Centre, Winchester revealed mineralised plant remains preserved by this toxic process.

In Southampton there is evidence for a range of vegetables for consumption eg carrot, brassicas, beets, broad beans and peas together with sea beet, sea kale (cultivated or wild) and cereals such as oats, barley, rye and wheat (bread wheat and spelt). A site in Romsey now beneath the Aldi store produced charred cereal remains, which suggests it was a midden or dung-heap. Other evidence from Hampshire, such as wild flower seeds among the cereals could indicate when they were sown or harvested and how high they grew, and may indicate the threshing procedure used. The presence of 'exotic' grains for instance lentils in Hamwic, or short-grained rice (connected to the 1338 French Raid) in Southampton suggest evidence of trade with Europe, also records of rice being bought by Winchester College in 14<sup>th</sup> century.

More unusual remains might be found in waterlogged conditions, for instance from the ship Mary Rose, peppercorns possibly used to disguise the taste of salted meat. Finds of nightshade and black henbane remains would probably have been for medical use. More advances are coming in, for instance it is now possible to test ceramics to find out what they were used for, as lipids will be absorbed by the fabric.

*Mandy Kesby/Sarah Hanna*

## Southampton Stories Exhibition

This exhibition (which first opened last December) was officially launched on Wednesday 27th March 2019 in the Pavilion at SeaCity Museum. A small turnout of invited guests were treated to tea and biscuits on arrival, and we were then able to examine the exhibition at leisure.

The exhibition itself is quite small, representing the beginning of an ongoing project by Southampton City Council Museums, funded by Arts Council England, to set up the project '**Southampton Treasures**'. The aim is to work with local communities to tell stories from Southampton, and the current display mainly concentrates on shipping memorabilia, but includes some other interesting snippets. There is a small archaeological display of typical Southampton pottery finds, some of which I am sure come from the St Michael's House excavations in the Old Town.

Now passing from living memory are views of the reclamation of the Western (new) Docks, but more recent are pictures of well known Southampton shops, such as Downey's, Misselbrook and Weston, and Lancaster and Crook. There is also a small piece on Charles Dibdin the songwriter, a Southampton man whose best known song is perhaps 'Tom Bowling', used by Sir Henry Wood in his arrangement of sea songs, heard at the last night of the Proms. It is planned that the exhibition will change over time with more stories based on the City's collections, as well as newly acquired material.

*Martyn Dowell*

## SAS Outing to Eling Tide Mill Experience

On Saturday afternoon 13<sup>th</sup> April twenty-five members and friends had a lovely time exploring the 17<sup>th</sup> century Eling Tide Mill guided by Matt Garner, who is one of our members and a volunteer at the Mill. Two mills are mentioned at Eling in the Domesday Book (1186) and although the locations are not known, milling here dates back at least 900 years. The mill was closed for many years after WWII before being restored by volunteers in 1980s, and with Heritage Lottery help further restoration took place before it reopened in April 2018.



*Mill machinery in action. J Langran*

*The restored water wheel. S Hanna*



One group toured the Mill while another found out about its history with the objects and displays in the Discovery Room. They then changed places, after which we all enjoyed a chance to socialise over tea and biscuits. Some of the group continued exploring the Mill, examining methods of dressing the millstones (made from French burr, a composite material) and some machinery used in

20<sup>th</sup> century to make animal feed. Others accompanied Matt to Eling Church which was opened for us, with its graffiti and 'vampire associations'! We didn't have time to experience the boardwalk



around peaceful Bartley Water, where tidal water is held by sluices to operate the mill. The path takes you through Eling's lovely cemetery and to Goatee Beach, good for bird-watching at low tide – and a view of the container port. We all recommend a visit to Eling Tide Mill Experience!

*Sarah Hanna*

*Animal feed grinding machine. S Hanna*



*Mill stones with dressing tools. J Langran*

## Some forthcoming events

**Novium Museum, Chichester.** A new touring exhibition on **Hollywood Rome: Reel life in the Ancient World** will appeal to fans of film and history of all ages. It features film costumes, props and posters from many famous films, with opportunities for handling and interactive exhibits, including dressing up. Novium Museum, Tower Street, Chichester PO19 1QH, open 10.00 – 17.00 Mon to Sat, 10.00 - 16.00 Sun, admission free, accessible. Exhibition continues to September. For details of associated events please visit [thenovium.org](http://thenovium.org).

**Saturday 27th April** 09.20 to 15.45. Hampshire Field Club (HFC) History Section hold their Spring Symposium on **Childhood & Adolescence**, in the Cinema at Hampshire Record Office, Sussex Street, Winchester SO23 8TH. Subjects covered: The Civil War period in Hampshire; Dissenting families in Hampshire; Ceremony and performance in English medieval schools; Inoculation of children in C18 Southampton; Children in Basingstoke Workhouse. Cost: £10 members of HFC, £15 non-members (tea, coffee and biscuits included). If you are interested in attending please contact Richard Aldous, by email on [aldousdrj@gmail.com](mailto:aldousdrj@gmail.com) or tel 01962 860571 as soon as possible. Details of all HFC events may be found on [hantsfieldclub.org.uk](http://hantsfieldclub.org.uk).

**Sunday 28th April** 11.00am to 4.00pm. **Spring Steam Up at the Brickworks Museum**, Swanwick Lane, Bursledon SO31 7HB. Tickets: £7 adult; £6 concession; £4 child; £18 family. Transport: train stations Swanwick & Bursledon; First Bus X4 and X5 to Swanwick Lane, stop 'The Navigator'. See [bursledonbrickworks.org.uk](http://bursledonbrickworks.org.uk).

**Saturday 4th May** 9.30am to 5.00pm. Sussex School of Archaeology presents the **Sussex Symposium 2019**, exploring thousands of years of the human past in south-east England. Speakers include: George Analey, Jon Baczkovski, Jaime Kaminski, Paola Ponce, Mark Roberts, David Rudling & Jo Seaman. Venue: King's Church, Brooks Road, Lewes BN7 2BY; cost £35 inc buffet lunch. See [sussexarchaeology.org](http://sussexarchaeology.org) for details and to book.

**Tuesday 14th May** 7.30pm Southampton Archaeology Society 2019 **Annual General Meeting** at St Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH. Please join us for the meeting followed by a glass of wine and nibbles. Dr Andy Russel will give a presentation on recent archaeological work carried out by Southampton Archaeology Unit.

**Saturday 18th May 2019**, 9:45am – 5:30pm. Docklands History Group presents **The Medieval Port of London Conference** at Weston Theatre, Museum of London, 150 London Wall, London, EC2Y 5HN. Tickets: £10 – 35. Speakers include John Clark, Nathalie Cohen, Damian Goodburn, Alison Gowman, Vanessa Harding, Gustav Milne, John Schofield & Laura Wright. Please see [docklandshistorygroup.org.uk](http://docklandshistorygroup.org.uk) for booking details.

Lectures are free to members and £3 per visitor. Please bring your friends! All lectures will take place in St. Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street, Southampton SO14 2AH, unless otherwise stated, from 7.30pm to 9.00pm. Tea and coffee is served from 7.00pm. Please join us at the Duke of Wellington pub after the meeting.

### 2018-2019 SAS Committee

**Chair** – Sarah Hanna  
**Vice-Chair** – Martyn Dowell  
**Hon Treasurer** – John Langran  
**Hon Secretary** – Mandy Kesby  
**General Committee Members** – Rowan Bright, Chris Evans, Karen Wardley and Matt Garner. Archaeological Advisor: Dr Andy Russel.

### Subscription Rates 2019

Individuals	£10.00
Senior Citizens	£8.00
Juniors/Students	£8.00
Family	£14.00

If you or a friend would like to join (or if you haven't yet renewed your subscription) please send your details to John Langran, with a cheque for the appropriate amount, payable to Southampton Archaeology Society – or you can pay at the next lecture.

### Contact us

[www.southamptonarchaeology.uk](http://www.southamptonarchaeology.uk)

**Mandy Kesby,**  
**Hon Secretary.**  
29 Abercrombie Gardens  
Lordshill  
Southampton SO16 8FQ  
[amandybutt@aol.com](mailto:amandybutt@aol.com)  
Phone: 023 8073 5360

**John Langran,**  
**Hon Treasurer.**  
8 Cavendish Grove  
Southampton SO17 1XE  
[john.langran@hotmail.com](mailto:john.langran@hotmail.com)  
Phone: 023 8022 4472

We would be happy to receive contributions to the Newsletter – by e-mail to [sarahvhanna@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahvhanna@hotmail.com) or post to Sarah Hanna, 346 Hill Lane SO15 7PH. We reserve the right to edit as necessary.