

# Southampton Archaeology Society

## January 2019 Newsletter



Dear Members

Welcome to new members and our first newsletter in 2019. Our lecture this month attracted a large audience to hear a talk on *Prehistoric Cannibalism*, and a report on this is included below (thanks to Martyn Dowell). Thank you also to Karen Wardley for her article on the British Library exhibition on *Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms* which looks absolutely amazing, with so many beautifully decorated manuscripts and precious artefacts on display. There's a round-up of the graffiti group's recent activities; and as a follow-up to last year's Christmas meeting I recommend Cheryl Butler's book as a good read in the cold and dark winter days.

Plans for this year's Study Day on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June are well advanced – provisionally titled *Medieval Southampton* and a varied group of speakers includes Duncan Brown (pottery), Phoebe Merrick (cloth and cloth trade), Ian Friel (ships), Mary South (health and sickness) and Andy Russel (buildings). More details to follow. Meanwhile we're planning an early spring outing to the Eling Tide Mill Experience led by Matt Garner, and we'll let you know the date as soon as it's fixed.

This will fit in well with our next lecture on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> February, when Ruth Kerr, Public Engagement Officer for Eling Tide Mill Experience will talk on *The Jewel In Our Crown – Eling Tide Mill*. The mill is one of only two working tide mills remaining in England, and a flour mill has stood on this site for 900 years. The present mill dates back to ~1785 and through a partnership between New Forest District Council and Totton & Eling Town Council it has been restored with help from the Heritage Lottery Fund, and reopened last year. The meeting will be held at St Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH, 7.30pm (refreshments from 7.00pm).

We hope to see you there!

Sarah

### SAS Lecture: Palaeolithic Cannibalism: calories or culture 15<sup>th</sup> January 2019

The first talk of 2019 was given by Dr James Cole, now a lecturer at Brighton University. Members may recall him speaking to us a couple of years ago about his work in Isimila, Tanzania, East Africa, where he collected some huge Palaeolithic hand axes, evidently made as showpieces or for rituals. This is his area of expertise, so this time he spoke on Palaeolithic cannibalism in the period from about 1.5 million years ago. This period includes a number of ancestor 'species' of ours, which, it is now thought, may not be separate species at all, since considerable interbreeding is being discovered in DNA studies.

He considered a number of possibilities for this (to us) rather revolting behaviour: survival (famine), psychosis (mental aberration), warfare (complete conquest), ritual, memorial (acquiring the wisdom of the deceased), and dietary advantage. He also addressed how we knew actual cannibalism was taking place, and suggested that at least two diagnostic signs in the bones were needed to be sure. These were: cuts for de-fleshing bones; base of skull and/or vertebrae missing (to access edible parts); broken long bones (marrow); and tooth marks.

Does the human body have a high food value, such that there is evolutionary advantage to those groups who practise cannibalism? James' team have compared other contemporary animals which our ancestors were eating, but found nothing special about humans in general. Indeed, one individual would hardly provide a feast for an average family or tribe (believed to be about 25 in number). Much better to catch a larger animal to feed everyone efficiently in one go. Furthermore, the evidence so far recovered suggests that "cannibalism" events were few and far between. There is also the question of disease transfer. If a tribe were to regularly eat those dying of natural causes including disease, they would likely all become infected, and die out quite quickly.

The conclusion at present is that the practice is connected with warfare, ritual or memorial. James mentioned such cannibalism among chimpanzees, and spoke of the Neanderthals' complex social culture, evidenced in several ways

including by the recent work of Alistair Pike on cave painting. Such complexity probably dates back at least 300,000 years, and has the potential to give rise to some extreme behaviour.

This fascinating talk is of course work in progress, given the present level of our knowledge about these distant times, and no doubt we shall learn more in years to come.

**Martyn Dowell**

## Anglo-Saxon Kingdoms, an exhibition at the British Library

This must-see exhibition is a remarkable opportunity to engage with a spectacular range of books, manuscripts and artefacts from the Anglo-Saxon period, brought together in a wide ranging, carefully researched and beautifully presented show. It was a treat to see so many famous and iconic items, most of them previously familiar only through text books and photographs.



I was not expecting though to be greeted by an old friend at the start of the show: Spong Man, from the Anglo-Saxon cemetery site of Spong Hill in Norfolk, the finds from which I worked on as an archaeological conservator in Norwich. This enigmatic seated figure, his head supported by his hands, made a striking and very personal introduction.

*Figure 1 Spong man. Ceramic pot lid from Saxon cremation urn, Spong Hill, Norfolk*

Although mainly concentrating on books and manuscripts, many from the British Library's own collection, some stunning artefacts are included. Glittering gold fittings from the Sutton Hoo burial evoked gasps of awe from visitors, and the iconic Alfred Jewel, along with finds from the recently conserved Staffordshire hoard.

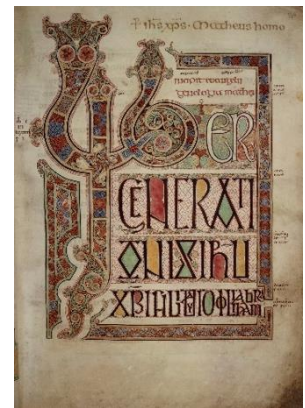
There are more unusual objects, such as the 8<sup>th</sup> century River Erne horn, dredged up in Ireland in 1956, shown next to the Vespasian Psalter which holds an illustration of similar instruments.



*Figure 2 River Erne horn*

The books and manuscripts are the main stars of the show though, and include famous objects like the Lindisfarne Gospels, Bede's Ecclesiastical History and Domesday Book.

*Figure 3 Lindisfarne Gospels, St Matthew's Gospel*



*Figure 4 Codex Amiatinus*



They are all stunning, but among my favourites was the Codex Amiatinus, an enormous Northumbrian Bible taken to Italy in 716 and now returned to England after 1300 years.

I also loved seeing the 10<sup>th</sup> century Exeter Book, which contains many enigmatic riddles, apparently a popular form of entertainment among monastic communities; and the Utrecht Psalter, whose vibrant and expressive line drawings had a huge impact on later Anglo-Saxon art.

The exhibition is very big, and looks in detail at the connections between the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms and their British, Irish and continental neighbours, forged through migration, religion, trade, travel and conquest. There are seven themed galleries, and I spent about two hours there but I could easily have stayed longer. The exhibition is on until 19<sup>th</sup> February, so there is still time to go if you haven't seen it already. There is a very good website if you can't get there [www.bl.uk/AngloSaxon/Exhibiton](http://www.bl.uk/AngloSaxon/Exhibiton), and a comprehensive exhibition book.

**Karen Wardley**

## Report from SAS Graffiti Group

We had a busy time during the autumn 2018: visits to St John's Church, North Baddesley near Southampton in September, exploring the Wool House, Bugle Street, Southampton in October, and visits to Southampton's medieval vaults within the city walls in November and December.

Church of St John the Baptist, North Baddesley: for our outing in September we had almost a full team, although relatively little graffiti was found. This church is linked to the Knights Hospitallers and is probably an earlier foundation than the 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> century nave and chancel. Later additions date to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and it was restored in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Records were made of the graffiti, including the scratched outline of a hand beside the south doorway, see right; and a group of 23 overlapping circles on a reused king-post in the gallery. The monuments in the church were recorded by The Arts Society (formerly NADFAS) Church Recording Projects (see: <https://theartsociety.org/church-recording> for more information).



*Outline of hand beside doorway. Photo K Wardley*



The Wool House/Dancing Man Brewery, Bugle Street, Southampton: two visits were made in October. The two-storey stone warehouse dates to the early 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Southampton was a major wool exporting port. It has had many other uses, most recently as Southampton's Maritime Museum to 2012, then briefly as an art gallery and now it's a brewery, pub and restaurant. Dr Ian Friel recorded graffiti and other features in 2013 and gave permission for us to use his report and photographs. The most clearly dated graffiti is from 1711 and 1748 and should relate to the Wars of Spanish Succession (1701–14) and Austrian Succession (1740–8). Most examples of graffiti were found on one roof beam at the south end of the first floor; comprising individual names, initials, ship names and dates. Unfortunately a number of similar beams were removed when the building was converted into a museum. Other marks were found scratched in stone on the ground and first floors.

*Members of graffiti team recording Wool House graffiti. Photo K Wardley*

### Vaults visits

Southampton's medieval vaults are well known and popular for guided tours although not all of them are visited much, due to limited accessibility (most have steps) or dark/damp conditions. They generally date from between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> centuries and with some exceptions were built as storage areas below substantial merchants' homes and trading premises. The vaults were subsequently used for storage purposes; as troop billets during wartime (High Street vaults); as prisons (St Michael's); also many of them served as WWII air raid shelters, and they are scheduled monuments. It was known that graffiti had been found in several of the vaults but this had not been documented in detail, so the graffiti group has begun a campaign to record them.

Visits were made in November to Nos 93 and 94 High Street, where in 93 one set of scratched initials was found. No 94 had a number of marks interpreted as apotropaic or protective, such as a cross, compass-made circles and 'daisy-wheel', an arrow and a grid-pattern, all near to widows or doors. Other graffiti found on the ribbed roof supports dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, comprising initials and dates, possibly left by soldiers.

### Vaults in the Lower High Street

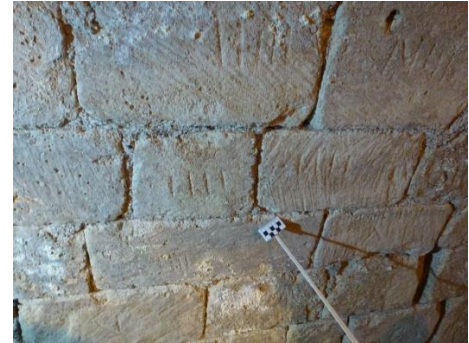
Quilters Vault (named after the former landlords of the Royal George Hotel, which used to stand above the vault

before it was destroyed in 1940). The date 1988 was engraved below a barred window, on the concrete windowsill, and other marks found were an X and the letters 'I R' with small 's' scratched on string courses.

79½ High Street on the corner of Gloucester Square (formerly below 79 High Street). The only marks found here were a pencilled calculation on the roof of the vault. 88 High Street is located on the West side of the lower end of the High Street, between Porter's Lane and Quilters Vault. It was possibly used as a WWII air raid shelter and an escape hatch is fitted in the roof. No graffiti was found and any marks that may have been made here could have been damaged by the flaky and mouldy condition of the interior.

Lankester's Vault The graffiti consists mainly of initials, interpreted as masons' marks on ribbed roof supports, on ashlar blocks and on the floor, possibly reused flagstones. The scheduled monument includes a vault to the south, once connected but now inaccessible from Lankester's Vault. A report on archaeological work carried out in 1990 when a new entrance was constructed has been consulted (SOU 342/403, by Ingrid Peckham).

*Examples of ashlar blocks with masons' marks. Photo R James*



St Michael's Vault/Prison Vault contains blast walls and traces of benches fitted for its use as an air raid shelter during WWII, and a badly rusted ventilation pump (moved there from the Post Office vault: MG, pers. comm.) The vault was damp and dark, and little graffiti was found: a few incised initials on door posts, and letters on the walls made with spray paint (of recent date).

In December we visited the Undercroft and Castle Vaults: the Undercroft, although well-preserved, revealed few examples of graffiti, which included scratched initials and dates by the fireplace and two window bays, and modern pencil marks. Castle Vault was built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century as a store for the King's wine (one tenth of all wine imported through Southampton). It was used as an air raid shelter during the Second World War and later as a City Council mason's store. Only two incised and scratched initials with 20<sup>th</sup> century dates were found, near the south entrance.

Photographs and notes of the graffiti are held on the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project archive, and summaries of most of the above sites can be seen on the SAS website [www.southamptonarchaeology.uk](http://www.southamptonarchaeology.uk).



Further work We are a group of ten members and between four and ten of us take part in our visits, usually on Tuesdays from about 10.30am. Starting this month we'll be visiting more vaults and churches in 2019, and we would welcome SAS members to join us – contact me, Sarah Hanna ([sarahvhanna@hotmail.com](mailto:sarahvhanna@hotmail.com)), or Karen Wardley ([karenwardley@hotmail.com](mailto:karenwardley@hotmail.com)).

*Part of the team at the Undercroft, Simnel Street. Photo: M Garner*

Sarah Hanna

### **Review of *The Theatre of the World* by Cheryl Butler**

I was inspired to read this book because it's a novel about Southampton in the time of Queen Elizabeth I written by a local historian, which I expected would take me three months to finish – but I read it in three weeks! The size is daunting (770 pages including list of characters, map, glossary and Author's Note), and I found it a real page-turner, full of fascinating people and amazing incidents, some more believable than others but all contributing to the atmosphere and bustle of the times. The protagonist, Richard Mudford, a man on the make from poverty-stricken beginnings was a real person as are several of his family and associates, and many local characters are based on the

names of people who appeared in Southampton's *Mayor's Book of Fines*, the subject of Cheryl Butler's PhD. Some well-known personalities from late Tudor England also make appearances, such as the Queen herself, Robert Cecil, the Earl of Essex, and others: sea captains (Drake), military leaders (Norreys). There are scenes of explicit violence and sex, while the spelling is often idiosyncratic (perhaps following the practice of the time). Some readers may find this problematic, but it is impressive to see how the author has woven a vivid and imaginative tale around the places, events and people of the period.

The book deals with preparations for the Armada and its aftermath up to the death of Elizabeth I, as a background for the fictional ventures of Richard and his brother Jack in privateering, and the details of Richard's involvement in the Earl of Essex's Cadiz expedition, his imprisonment, his marriages and many children, and his business dealings are clearly fiction. But Richard had another side, he loved poetry, music and theatre and he wanted to have his children well-educated. Some of the buildings associated with the family were or are real, such as Bull House, the Angel Inn (now the Duke of Wellington in Bugle Street), St Julien's church and the first home of King Edward VI School, and many streets in the old town still exist. This of course adds to the interest of the book for those familiar with the town and its history. As the title suggests this was a time when people from a port like Southampton could play their part in 'the theatre of the world', although others preferred the older ways and could not cope with change; and as it happened the town's prosperity was not to last for long after Queen Elizabeth's death.

Published by Matador Books, 2017. ISBN 978-1-78803-658-0, £9.99 (also available through Southampton Central library).

Sarah Hanna

## Kent Archaeological Field School

SAS member Dave Glew has asked us to publicise the new fieldwork programme of KAFS ([www.kafs.co.uk](http://www.kafs.co.uk)). This is a well-established training organisation whose work often features in the British archaeological press, and they have a range of activities planned for 2019. The programme includes a course on field walking and test pitting at a Roman Villa site at Teston, Maidstone (April 13/14<sup>th</sup>); an archaeological training course at Wye Roman Villa and Water Mill (April 19<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup>); and investigation of a Roman Aisled Building at Faversham, Kent (4<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> May, with training week for students 6<sup>th</sup> – 10<sup>th</sup> May). They are digging 'Villa B' at Oplontis, near Pompeii in Italy too but this year's dig is fully booked!

Activities are open to all with reduced fees for KAFS members: cost for 1 year is £20 - students, £25 - single or £30 - family; or £5 per year less for recurring annual membership. Costs for courses vary from £10/£25 for the field walking weekend to £100 per week for the excavation courses plus certificate of attendance, if membership is paid at time of booking. To join the excavations without training you would pay £10/£15 per day or £50/£75 per week. Further details can be obtained from the KAFS website as above.

## Events for next month

**Friday 1<sup>st</sup> February to Monday 6<sup>th</sup> May.** Southampton City Art Gallery Exhibition *Leonardo da Vinci: A Life in Drawing*. Marking five hundred years since Leonardo da Vinci's death, the Royal Collection Trust has selected twelve museums and galleries in the UK to hold simultaneous exhibitions of the artist's drawings, enabling them to be seen by the widest possible audience. Each of the galleries will display twelve drawings reflecting Leonardo's interests, in the natural world, maps and engineering; and in Southampton the exhibition will be supported by a series of talks, tours and art workshops. Please visit [southamptoncityartgallery.com](http://southamptoncityartgallery.com) for the full programme and opening times.

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February** 10.30am. Friends of Southampton's Museums & Galleries (FoSMAG) talk *The Writing on the Wall* to be given by Karen Wardley, former Collections Manager with SCC Arts & Heritage. Karen will look at the work and discoveries of the Hampshire Medieval Graffiti Project and describe how historical graffiti can reveal tantalising glimpses into the past. Venue the Jane Austen Room, Dolphin Hotel, 34-35 High Street SO14 2HN. Cost £4 to members, £6 to guests.

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February** 6.30 – 8.30pm. Lecture at Salisbury Museum *Finding Nero (and other Roman Emperors): establishing identity in Romano-British Sculpture* by Dr Miles Russell. Britain was part of the Roman Empire for nearly four centuries, but the apparent absence of portrait sculpture here stands in marked contrast to other Roman provinces. Recent work by Bournemouth University, examining and 3D laser scanning damaged Romano-British

sculpture - much of it misidentified or simply buried deep in museum stores - has shown that there was in fact a large amount of marble and bronze statuary in Britannia, much of which appears to have depicted emperors or members of the imperial family. By re-evaluating this archive, it is possible to generate a whole new 'portrait' of Roman Britain. Venue Salisbury Museum, The King's House, 65 The Close, Salisbury SP1 2EN. Cost £8 members, £10 non-members; book online at [salisburymuseum.org.uk](http://salisburymuseum.org.uk) or call 01722 332151.

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> February** 7.00pm. Dr Andy Russel will talk on *Medieval Trade in Southampton*, a 'virtual tour' of the medieval south coast port. With no industries, Southampton's trade depended on exporting wool and importing wine; and ships of many nations brought goods from all of the known world to Southampton's quays. From here they were sent across England or into Europe, recorded in the Port Books and local tax records, which help us to reconstruct trade networks and the lives of people living here; while archaeology allows us to handle some of the goods. Venue Eling Tide Mill Experience, 24 Lexby Road, Totton SO40 9HD, tickets £5 may be booked on 023 8086 9575 or online through [elingtidemillexperience.co.uk](http://elingtidemillexperience.co.uk).

**Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> February** 2.00 to 4.30pm. Southampton Ancient Egypt Society lecture *Seth, Lord of Chaos, Defender of Re: The Chequered career of a Deity* by John J Johnson. Although one of Egypt's most enduring deities Seth has been both worshipped and reviled across the millennia. This lecture will draw on textual and archaeological sources to explore Seth's fluctuating fortunes and examine his importance in the culture of the Nile valley during the Pharaonic period. Venue: Oasis Academy Lordshill, Romsey Road SO16 8FA. Cost: members £3; non-members £6. Doors open 1.30pm, free refreshments. Please see [www.SouthamptonAncientEgyptSociety.co.uk](http://www.SouthamptonAncientEgyptSociety.co.uk), or contact 07729 627901.

**Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> February** 7.30pm. WARG (Winchester archaeology & local history) presents the June Lloyd Lecture 2019, by Dr Jim Leary: *Round mounds & mega-monuments*. This will give an account of the project 'Extending Histories: From Medieval Mottes to Prehistoric Round Mounds', funded by the Leverhulme Trust, exploring the history of monumental mounds in England. Evidence from detailed earthwork survey, geoarchaeological techniques and a comprehensive dating programme was used to determine date of construction, subsequent development and environmental context of 20 English castle mottes. Venue Winchester Guildhall, The Broadway, Winchester SO23 9GH. Tickets £17.50 (£15 to WARG members, students, unwaged) by post from Miss Maureen O'Connor, 58 Harewood Close, Boyatt Wood, Eastleigh SO50 4NZ. Please make cheques payable to WARG and send stamped sae.

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 2018**

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)

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We would love 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.