



Southampton Archaeology Society

January 2023 Newsletter

Dear members

Welcome to our first newsletter of 2023, and I hope the New Year has started well for most of you. At Southampton Archaeology Society we had a last minute change to our online lecture (10th January), as the advertised speaker was unable to talk at very short notice; but half an hour later SAS committee member James Brown, National Trust (NT) Regional Officer for Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex offered us a replacement talk on recent work at their site **Runnymede and Alderswycke**, on the River Thames. The talk was excellent and an account appears in this newsletter (thanks to Sue Davies, with further notes from Mandy Kesby); please see the SAS website www.southamptonarchaeology.uk for an extended version of the lecture, and possible fieldwork opportunity later in the year.

I'm grateful to Sam Edwards for his review of the impressive **Kings & Scribes Exhibition** in Winchester Cathedral, which covers 1000 years of English history and the role that Winchester played in that story. Many thanks to Mandy Kesby for two contributions: her enthusiastic review of the new book from historian Janina Ramirez - **Femina: a new History of the Middle Ages through the Women written out of it**; and for the account of Hampshire Cultural Trust's new interactive installation **878AD** about life in Anglo-Saxon Winchester, which I'm sure will be a hit with both the young and young at heart.

Our next talk takes place on Tuesday 14th February, 7.30pm with Stephen Fisher speaking on **Embarking the D-Day Armada**. This will be held at St Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH (a poster for the event is attached with the newsletter). There have been some unforeseen changes to our lectures in March and April this year, and please see the last page for an updated list. Matt Garner, programme organiser, found a new speaker for March 14th, and the new speaker for April 11th has now been identified (see back page).

The date for our **Study Day 2023** is confirmed as Saturday 10th June, and preliminary details of venue and some of the topics and speakers are given below on the page before last. We hope you'll be able to join us for most of these talks, and we look forward to seeing you soon.

Best wishes

Sarah

Potential Excavation Opportunity

Here is advance notice of a proposal from Frank Green concerning a potential opportunity for society members to engage in some practical archaeology. He is proposing to excavate a soakaway in St Denys churchyard later in the year. The trench would be about 1.5 metres square. The site is couple of hundred yards from the site of St Denys Priory, and Roman material was located in ditches when the church centre was built 25 years ago. Locally the topsoil produces material from all periods.

The dig duration is likely to be 2/3 days with a mid-week slot in the spring or summer.

This could be an opportunity for some society members to develop or refresh their skills. We will call for volunteers in due course but in the meantime let us know informally if you are interested so we can start to assess demand. Please contact John Langran via southamptonarchaeology@gmail.com. If you have a friend or relative who wants to get their hands dirty doing some real archaeology we would also be happy to speak to them.

Ankerwycke Revealed, Part of the “Runnymede Explored” Project

Speaker: James Brown, Regional Archaeologist for the National Trust for Hampshire, Surrey & Sussex.

We were grateful to James for stepping in on 10th January in place of the advertised speaker, to talk about this project at the National Trust site covering Runnymede and Ankerwycke, situated on either side of the River Thames.

Runnymede provided a convenient, neutral site for the signing of the Magna Carta although the spot on which Magna Carta was signed has never been established. Reviews of maps and aerial evidence showed an ancient field boundary, with extensive wet areas to north and south. A series of bore holes were dug across the site. Two produced results of interest, identifying channels going around the ‘island/ field’ and containing mollusc shells. A metal detecting survey uncovered a late Bronze Age sword blade in one channel and two Roman copper alloy coins from the Constantine period, 307-317 AD. 2023 will see more sampling work and radio carbon dates taken. A recent talk, “Sites of Power and Assembly in the Thames Valley” by Prof Alex Sanmark can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onS1XPspbHk&t=93s>.

Ankerwycke is the site of the Benedictine St Mary’s Priory, founded in 1160; as well as the Ankerwycke Yew, the National Trust’s oldest tree, circa 2000-2500 years old. The only standing remains are thought possibly to be the two storey refectory of the Priory adapted into one of the wings of a later Tudor Mansion built by Sir Thomas Smith after 1550. A later owner demolished the house and Priory to construct a Georgian mansion further from the river, adapting the Medieval and Tudor areas into pleasure gardens.

Picture 1- Ankerwycke Ruins.

Credit: James Brown, NT



Picture 2- Trench 1. Credit: James Brown, NT

Lidar 3D modelling and geophysics identified part of the front façade of the Tudor house and other features. A 3D model of the surviving L- shaped building is available here: <https://sketchfab.com/nta.lse/collections/surrey-landscapes-7bd0cf76ce6447b38eade9fe9f99be21>

Two trenches were dug: Trench 1, north of the L- shaped remains found a long corner chalk wall to the right of which was believed to be the cloister walkway (upper part of picture, left). An extension trench (in the box section at top right of image) possibly found the Church wall, suggesting the cloisters were north of the church.

Trench 2 (not shown) was dug across the garden platform near the standing remains. A Tudor retaining wall was found, together with orange (river) gravel and an area of chalk blocks.

In 2023, conservation work on the standing remains and, possibly, work to identify the layout of the Church will take place. Volunteers’ help may be needed and James offered to keep SAS members updated.

Sue Davies Jan 2023

Please see the SAS website southamptonarchaeology.uk for an expanded version of the report on this talk (Ed.)

Kings and Scribes: Birth of a Nation

This exhibition opened at Winchester Cathedral in 2019 following seven years' work funded by the NHLF and other bodies, to explore the story of the present Norman cathedral and two earlier Anglo Saxon Minsters, and their place in British history. Based on three levels in the South Transept of the cathedral, the exhibition is presented in four sections.



A Scribe's Tale: (ground floor) is based around the illuminated 12th century Winchester Bible which has been relocated here, together with digital recreations of selected sections to allow closer viewing, and a cabinet showing dyes used in the illuminations (according to recent analyses). This provides an introduction to the main concepts of the exhibition as well as displaying the Bible itself more prominently in public. The Royal patronage of Bishop Henry of Blois (1096 - 1171), King Stephen's brother, is explored through 12th century alterations to the cathedral building, with a display of stone capital heads possibly removed in the process.

A page from the 12th century Winchester Bible, an example of its rich illuminations.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

One of the six mortuary chests in its original place above the 15th century altar screen.

Credit: Winchester Cathedral

Birth of a Nation: (South Transept balcony) The role of Winchester and its Anglo-Saxon Old Minster in shaping early English history is revealed in a time-line and in the analysis of the contents of six mortuary chests held here, which were reputed to hold the remains of twelve English kings. A detailed cut-away model of the Old Minster is displayed, and a 3-D replica of an almost complete skeleton which has been identified as that of Queen Emma of Normandy (984 – 1052), wife of Aethelred the Unready and later of King Cnut. You can view a film of the investigation of the mortuary chests, and an interactive presentation about osteoarchaeology which includes diagrams of each mortuary chest and their contents.



Decoding the Stones: (South Transept balcony) This section focuses on the Norman cathedral, opening with wooden block models illustrating the differing principles of Gothic and Romanesque architecture, which are combined within the building. A reproduction of St Swithun's shrine is featured, destroyed on the orders of Henry VIII, with fragments of figures from niches in the massive 15th century altar screen, some still showing signs of paint; and fragments of 12th century roof bosses and other decorative elements removed during remodelling of the building at times of struggle and reconstruction. The texts emphasise the links between medieval and modern craftsmen and their methods.

The Benedictine Priory: (mezzanine) Aspects of life in the medieval Cathedral Priory are illustrated through a display of contemporary manuscripts and books, such as a manorial account roll from 1314 and a refectorian's roll from 1492. The locations and goods supplied to the priory from numerous sources are tied to a novel combined digital map and extracts of the sources in question, the focus of which can be moved across Hampshire with a wheel. This section features a changing programme of displays sourced from the cathedral archives.



The exhibition can of course be enjoyed in any order, and it is carefully balanced to be an introduction to those unfamiliar with the cathedral, such as tourists; and as a series of focused, thematic, separate displays that will reward repeated future visits – made easier by the fact that the £10 entry ticket is valid for an entire year. I found the wardens/ docents exceptionally well-informed, especially about the Winchester Bible, and the exhibition is most rewarding, with spectacular views of the cathedral interior from the balcony.

Sam Leos Edwards (edited by S Hanna)

Winchester Cathedral South Transept balcony and steps, taken from the Kings & Scribes gallery.

Credit: Wikimedia Commons

878AD: Step into Anglo-Saxon Winchester



For those of you not aware, **878AD** is an interactive history installation about Anglo-Saxon Winchester, which opened in The Brook Centre, Winchester on 12th November 2022. You can immerse yourself in the townscape and streets of the town through graphics produced in conjunction with the makers of Assassins Creed (a computer game). The attraction is presented by Hampshire Cultural Trust, supported by Arts Council England, Art Fund, HCC and several local bodies.

After a short explanatory journey to the town using some stunning graphics and narrative, you will walk through the city gates onto the streets of Winchester where you will find various characters such as



as merchants, town officers, a monk, a healer and a housekeeper, who will tell you a little about their lives, how they work and what is happening in and around the town. You will be encouraged to ask questions and take part in interactive elements. These characters will vary on certain days. There are also exhibits and information boards about different elements of Anglo-Saxon life such as housing, food, slavery and health, enhanced by archaeological finds, as well as details on the lives of individual characters who supposedly lived in the town.

John Langran and his two grandchildren (7 and 9 years old) visited the installation, and afterwards the children said that they had learned that what life was like in 878AD and how the Saxons lived, how they worked and how they healed people. They understood that Winchester was a stronghold of the Saxons. They

enjoyed the first video presentation outlining the Anglo-Saxon burh and how it could safeguard not only the town itself, but also people living outside the walls.

Other favourites included the actors who encouraged visitors to participate. They liked the “healer” who showed how plants were used as medicines and told them about “Elfshots”: the Saxons thought Elves fired invisible arrows which were the cause of pain and diseases. They also liked the board game where the pieces used had to “capture” the king in the middle. In particular the children remembered the 11th century handcuffs which might have been used on slaves, and they were surprised that the Saxons kept slaves. They learned that the battle of Edington (878AD) was important as the Saxons defeated the Vikings and there set the foundation for a unified England. They formed a Shield Wall and also did very scary battle screams to scare the enemies away. The children were surprised that the Saxons spoke a different language and found it difficult to follow. However, they have a book at home about Beowulf in modern English. Overall they gave the experience 9 out of 10. In January they returned to tour *Saxon Winchester* using the interactive App (available when buying your tickets) on a self-guided walk around Winchester’s Saxon Heritage.

I also enjoyed the experience, always finding human explanations much easier to take in, and having opportunities to ask questions. All in all, a very worthwhile and enjoyable visit.

878AD is open Monday-Saturday 10am-5pm and Sunday 11am-5pm. Pre-booked tickets via <https://878ad.co.uk>. Adult ticket: £15, child: £9.50, family: £46.50 and concessions: £12. Tickets can be used on return visits for a year.

SAS Christmas Social 2022



For our Christmas Social on December 13th we were entertained by The Concert Party, a group of ten musicians and singers led by Simon and Jo Harmer with Cath Watkins and Nic Bradford (who both play with Jigfoot among other bands). They gave us a fantastic programme called **The Goose is Getting Fat – a very Hampshire Christmas** - with songs, poetry and music in the tradition of early 20th century ‘concert parties’. We learnt that many of the group were related to each other, and their families had long taken part in this tradition, which they continue to practise today.

*Left: Members of The Concert Party singing (note glass of red wine!)
Photo: S Hanna*

The programme included both traditional and modern numbers where the audience enjoyed singing the chorus, such as *The Holly and The Ivy*; Thomas Hardy’s poem *The Oxen*; Tom Lehrer’s satirical song *Christmas Time is here by Golly*, or forgotten gems like *I know where flies go in winter* (ie into the Christmas pudding!) among others. They read newspaper reports from parts of Hampshire, danced (Simon’s barefoot Hornpipe), with instrumental numbers on trombone, keyboard, accordion and percussion.



*Simon Harmer dances the Hornpipe, accompanied by Cath on the fiddle.
Photo: S Hanna*



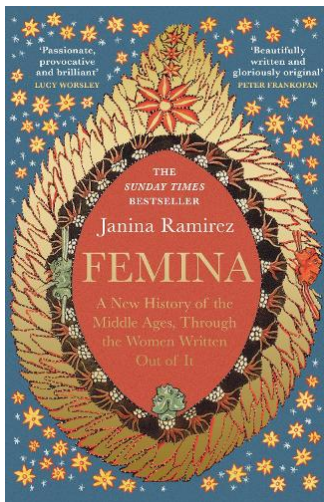
The trombone player with his colourful Christmas jumper.
Photo: S Hanna

The entertainment was followed by a substantial buffet provided by members of the SAS committee, which was much enjoyed by members and guests, and Concert Party members. We even ran out of red wine – only white is now available for the AGM in May!

Sarah Hanna

Femina – A New History of the Middle Ages through the Women Written Out of it by Janina Ramirez. [Publisher: Ebury 2022, available from Waterstones] Review by Mandy Kesby

“For too long medieval women have been written out of history. It’s high time we put them back in.” So says Janina Ramirez of her new book **Femina**.



Janina uses already available research, but with a modern eye and concentrating on the women, as this gives a different slant on the past. She introduces the book by citing the suffragette Emily Wilding Davison who, at the Epsom Derby in 1914, ran in front of the King’s horse and was killed. Emily achieved a first-class honours in English Literature at Oxford, studying medieval literature. Joan of Arc was also mentioned – a well-known female holy warrior who died for her cause. Janina also states that it seems strange that King Alfred was hailed as an excellent king, while his daughter Athelflaed, who was also a great leader is largely overlooked.

In the not-too-distant past, Janina feels, women were seen as “virgin, victim, mother, whore or hag” and were often written out of history. This is partly due to the destruction of past literature seen as subversive or inconsequential due to religious changes; but also because during the later British Empire, privileged western men were looked up to, and women and lesser men tended to be ignored. Then when women were able to read and write, their writings were often buried or plagiarised by men, and their voices overlooked. Within the following chapters, Janina takes us through examples from Scandinavia, cases in England, across Europe and to the Eastern Mediterranean, using records of archaeology, art history, theology, historical evidence and literature. Assumptions were made in the past about archaeological finds, with excavations taking place before the introduction of modern technology, which has subsequently been able to shed more light on the findings. One such was that of a burial containing weaponry surmised to be of a warrior, but the skeleton was recently revisited, and has been identified as that of a woman!

During religious upheavals, originally between pagan and Christian beliefs and later as England fluctuated between Roman Catholic and Protestant regimes, many texts were destroyed. However, tenacious searches have unearthed writings by influential women, such as Julian of Norwich, which luckily survive and give us a crucial insight into the lives and accomplishments of women throughout the ages. This book shows us that there is always more information to be gleaned by determined researchers and up-dated technology, and hopefully we can look forward to more very interesting feminine history.

Southampton Archaeology Society Study Day 2023

We're delighted to announce the date for our annual Study Day 2023, to be held on Saturday 10th June in the Southampton City Art Gallery lecture theatre, Commercial Road Southampton SO14 2LF, times approx 10.00am to 4.30pm. A suggested title is 'Slavery, Colonialism & Empire: a Southampton perspective'.

Speakers confirmed so far:

Prof Christer Petley - *University of Southampton* on 'History of Atlantic Slavery, including Bryan Edwards, a slaveholder, Jamaican plantation-owner and politician who lived in Southampton.'

Dr Maria Newbery - *Curator Maritime & Local Collections, Southampton City Council* on 'Southampton's 18th century maritime trade focussing on slavery connections.'

Dr Andy Russel - *Archaeology Unit Manager, Southampton City Council* on 'Southampton's 18th century Sugar House.'

Emeritus Professor John Oldfield - *University of Hull* on 'Abolition of the slave trade and slavery in Britain, including the anti-slavery movement in Southampton.'

Dr Chris Prior - *University of Southampton* on 'After abolition: Britain and slavery in Africa in the 19th century.'

Further details will be coming soon, which will include the price of tickets and how to book, the full title and programme, and the names of chairs for morning and afternoon sessions.

www.southamptonarchaeology.uk

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@SotonArchaeoSoc

Email: southamptonarchaeology@gmail.com

Our lectures normally take place in St. Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street SO14 2AH, 7.30pm on the 2nd Tuesday of each month, subject to restrictions as current. Refreshments are available from 7.00pm. Talks are free to paid-up SAS members, £3 to guests.

2022-2023 SAS Committee

Chair – John Langran

Vice-Chair – Martyn Dowell

Hon Treasurer – Sue Davies

Hon Secretary – Mandy Kesby

Committee Members – Rowan Bright, Karen Wardley, Sarah Hanna, Matt Garner, Sam Edwards, James Brown. Archaeology Advisor: Dr Andy Russel.

Subscription Rates 2021/22

Individuals £10.00

Senior Citizens £8.00

Juniors/Students £8.00

Family £14.00

If you or a friend wish to join SAS (or to renew your subscription) please contact the Hon Treasurer for an application form, or visit our website to print off a copy.

Contact us

www.southamptonarchaeology.uk

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We would love to receive contributions to the Newsletter – by email to sarahvhanna@hotmail.com, or by post to Sarah Hanna, 346 Hill Lane SO15 7PH. We reserve the right to edit as necessary.



Southampton Archaeology Society

Lectures February and March 2023

Lectures are usually held on the second Tuesday of each month between September and April, at St Joseph's Hall, Bugle Street, Southampton SO14 2AH, from 7.30 to 9pm unless stated otherwise (refreshments provided from 7pm). Covid19 guidelines will be followed. Lectures are free to members and £3 to visitors; online talks via Zoom are free to attend and joining instructions will be sent out the day before to all SAS members; non-members should book in advance through southamptonarchaeology@gmail.com.

February 14 – Stephen Fisher, historical researcher

Embarking the D-Day Armada

D-Day required a massive amount of infrastructure along the south coast of England. Some sites and facilities are relatively well known – such as the PLUTO pipeline facilities on the Isle of Wight and at Dungeness – whilst others are almost unrecognised, although constructed exclusively for Operation Overlord. Across the south are roads that owe their unusual width to parking areas for tanks; slipways for pleasure boats that once embarked men and vehicles onto landing craft; and breakwaters or ferry facilities made from components of Mulberry Harbour. These sites and the archaeological evidence will be explored, and the need to recognise and protect them for future generations.

Stephen Fisher is a freelance archaeologist and historian. He has extensively studied World War 2 infrastructure in the New Forest and preparations for D-Day along England's south coast, and he investigated the stories of landing craft (LC) involved in Operation Neptune. He was heritage advisor for the restoration of LCT 7074 in Portsmouth Dockyard, researching her history and archaeologically recording changes made to the vessel, as advisor on the restoration. He provides heritage mitigation advice for Forestry England and New Forest National Park Authority, leads battlefield tours and often speaks on small expedition cruise ships.

March 14 – Richard Henry, formerly Finds Liaison Officer for Wiltshire and newly appointed Curator of Archaeology, Southampton City Council.

Fractured Britannia – material culture and the end of Roman Britain

The end of Roman Britain has fascinated us for hundreds of years. Yet, what we know about the end of Roman Britain is built on snippets from the surviving historical sources. In contrast, late Roman objects within the archaeological record are found in large numbers, including brooches, buckles, spurs and coinage. As part of a doctoral research project this material has been considered systematically for the first time. What can material culture inform us about this complex yet crucial point in history or how the population of Britain dealt with complex social and political changes?

Richard Henry is a finds specialist who has worked for the Portable Antiquities Scheme as the Finds Liaison Officer for Wiltshire, for Historic England and as a curator for Southampton County Council. He has published books and articles on Roman archaeology, material culture, coinage and hoards. His most recent publication 'Roman Buckles & Brooches' looking at the end of Roman Britain and material culture was published in November 2022.

April 11 – Speaker: Stuart Needham. Further details to follow.

Website: www.southamptonarchaeology.uk

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