



Newsletter

Summer 2020

News 🧑🏫 Meetings 🧑🏫 Reports 🧑🏫 Diary
Dates 🧑🏫 Travellers' Tales

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This newsletter provides reports on the activities of WARG, the Society for Winchester archaeology and local history. It also carries information of interest to the WARG membership.

For more information on WARG or to join, please contact by email membership@warg.org.uk or visit www.warg.org.uk

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history

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Editorial

I said to my parrot, 'Are you in isolation?' He said, 'Look at the bars on this cage. Are you (expletive deleted) serious?'

Barry Cryer 04/2020

Hello Everyone,

Well these are still strange times; thank heaven for the Barry Cryers of this world who can still see the funny side of life. And life is not all gloom and doom in lockdown. A family re-enacted the Farnborough Air Show in their garden. People swam, walked, bounced and generally did alternative marathons. Postmen have dressed up and goats and deer have reclaimed city streets. There is a Hannahsaurus Rex loose in Portsmouth targeting the local children, and another dinosaur was seen shopping in a North Harbour shop. Teddy Bears also appear to be rampant, conducting their daily activities in front gardens in various locations over the country. Ted and Ed Bear were apparently removed from the marmalade aisle in a Stockport shop, for causing an affray.

We clapped, banged our saucepans and sang to a trumpet version of 'Somewhere over the Rainbow', and generally had a good chat with the neighbours. As a retired nurse I remember the many patients and relatives who told me I was an Angel, which was never reflected in my salary, but now there is a beautiful Banksy painting displayed in Southampton Hospital, honouring all of the current staff of all grades, as it should. I hope some of the money raised from its auction will reward today's angels in some way.

We are so fortunate that the lockdown came with sunshine, and allowed us to enjoy what time we could have outside in the fresh air. Although, as I write this, thunder is rumbling

away over my parched garden, hopefully signalling a little welcome rain.

Well – to business. We have lost a little copy for the newsletter, but Steve Old has provided a comprehensive personal profile, Chris Sellen has given us an extended version of the Brickworks talk, and Steve Taylor, a thought provoking write up on the Origins of Us, so we are actually only one talk short. Julia has provided more of her fascinating jottings and Techer, book reviews. These books can be bought online, and interestingly, hard copies seem to be resurgent, which may be explained by recent research that we process things more thoroughly from hard copy than from on screen. This may explain why, if I really need to assimilate information, I do print it out, as I like to write in the margins and know that online I will only skim read.

What talks and visits we have lost, Maureen is doing sterling work to reschedule, so hopefully we shall not lose out in the long run. Don't forget, if you have anything you would like to write about, please do send it to the newsletter, including photos of any 'personal museums' you might like to share.

I should also like to know if you like the Lollipops. These will continue to be online, but please let me know if this is a problem or you do not have access to IT.

Stay safe, stay healthy, and most importantly be happy

Janet.



Chairman's notes - *Steve Old*

These are indeed strange times; the plans we all had to visit places, learn, participate and enjoy have all been put on hold,

hopefully for not too long. As the chairman of a normally active society it has left me with very little to do other than gardening and baking bread! I don't think my small garden could stand another test pit! And there are only so many bread recipes out there to try, if you can get the flour and yeast!

The news from the local history and archaeology scene has all but dried up as we all stay home and stay safe. There are initiatives from Hampshire Cultural Trust and others that can help to fill in the quest for knowledge gaps we are all feeling, but being online they have a limited appeal for those that hanker for being outdoors climbing over mounds, investigating ruins and delving into local customs etc.

When we can return to normality, we do not know, but the committee are determined to make the return of our talks and visits as successful as ever so we are hoping to see you all at an event in the near future. We will be keeping you updated with timely emails on the current situation whenever we have something to advise.

During this period, we are trialling new methods of keeping people informed and making WARG more efficient and transparent. We will let everyone know the outcomes and what the new systems are when we are ready to launch.

In the meantime, please stay safe.



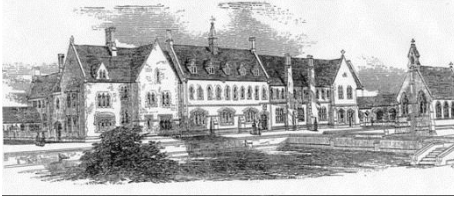
Meet the Chair – *Steve Old*



Culham College
Badge

Born and bred in Hampshire I went to Bay House School and sixth form in Gosport. I played Rugby, Football, Cricket, Basketball and Athletics at school and sometimes county representative level. I also played Rugby for Gosport Colts and Football for

Gomer United. I studied at Culham College Oxford. Geography, Education (theory and practice), Physical Education and Youth and Community Studies. This college was closed in 1979 and is greatly missed by its alumni, though the buildings still stand on the Dorchester-on-Thames road out



of Abingdon. There is a thriving Society for former students and staff.

Culham College

I played Rugby, Football, Cricket, Basketball, Athletics, Hockey and Badminton at college representative level. Also playing Hockey for Didcot in national league 3.

My parents and Grandparents (and Great-grandparents) were grocers and vintners and had many shops in the Gosport, Fareham and Portsmouth area so I grew up filling shelves and serving customers (from the age of 8!). My first properly paid job was as a cleaner at Haslar Naval Hospital in Gosport, in the summer of 1976, before I went off to college. I was given four wards to clean, the Zymotics wards, these were the isolation wards for infectious diseases! Luckily, whilst I was there, no patients were admitted.

After working at the Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Titchfield, as a census planner and cartographer, I then moved to Post Office Telephones (BT) where I spent 35 years in various roles including Trainer, Software Engineer, Network Planner (Ethernet) and Customer Relations.

I am married with 3 children, 2 daughters and one son.

I was always interested in history, from the projects and reading I did in junior school but in secondary school you had to choose between History and Geography, you could not study both. Geography had the most interesting and most

frequent field trips and visits so I chose this path whilst still taking an out of school interest in History.

I continue to be interested in both Geography and History and can see the connections between the two areas. Archaeology also adds to the mix with many studies having geographical as well as historical factors.

My interest in History became polarized for a while when my wife and I got bitten by the Genealogy bug and this led to studying Local History and the links it had with our families. This then led to the discovery of family links to events and family members of national importance.

My interest in Archaeology was rekindled in earnest when my youngest daughter decided to study Archaeology at College and joined WARG, with myself joining to accompany her. She went on to study Archaeology at Bristol University (getting a 1st) and then Osteoarchaeology at Bournemouth University (getting a distinction).

My first dig was in 1974 when I was at Bay House School, a group of students were asked to dig at the site of Gosport Railway Station under the direction of the county archaeologist. The aim was to stabilize the site and record the in-situ buildings, as well as the evidence of previous buildings before the county made a decision on the site's future. It was a self-learning exercise as we were very much left alone to discover what we could and record it in a very rudimentary fashion. This was followed many years later by digging at St Cross for WARG, along with my daughter.

I am interested in nearly all post-Roman time periods, from Saxon to Modern Industrial and Social History and Archaeology. However, I am also interested in many ancient civilizations, like first nation American, Pre-Columbian Central and South American and pre-colonization Australasia.

I am also interested in the history of the common man though all ages and how this can be revealed by archaeology, as well as by the study of maps and records.

I currently give talks to any society or association that will have me, for some reason most of them seem to be in Salisbury! I have written several brochures which I have self- published and books which I have yet to finish or have published for family only, copyright checked versions are being prepared but this takes time.

I am also currently a lecturer in Archaeology at Eastleigh College on a leisure course, Wednesday nights, where all aspects of Archaeology are discussed and taught.

As well as Archaeology I am very interested in nature and do what I can to encourage wildlife to my small garden. I try to make it bee friendly, bug friendly, attract birds and encourage visits from hedgehogs, last summer we had between 6 and 10 regular hedgehog visitors to our feeding bowl every night. I also lecture on Garden Design at Eastleigh College. Being brought up in Gosport, I have an interest in the history of the Royal Navy, this ties in with many of my ancestors as well.

For reading I like anything that is factual and interesting with a history or archaeology base. There are few fiction books I like, but I do like those written by Stan Barstow, Alan Sillitoe and Charles Dickens, especially "A Christmas Carol".

For music I have a very wide and eclectic playlist. I like Folk and Roots Music, Steeleye Span, Fisherman's Friends, Show of Hands, Mawkin, Fairport Convention and 3 Daft Monkeys. I also like 1950's and 1960's rock and pop with artists like Manfred Mann, The Searchers, The Beatles and The Hollies along with more modern classics like Led Zeppelin, Queen and Pink Floyd to name just a small selection. I try to go to as many shows and concerts as I can. I also like Classical music,

Prokofiev, Rachmaninov, Vaughan-Williams, Elgar, Saint-Sans and Tchaikovsky.



A Little Bit of Bling – *Janet Backhouse*

In the Spring newsletter, Julia told us about the beautiful brooch found in Hursley. It seems local ancestors were not the only ones careless of their jewellery. In 2017, a metal detectorist in Northampton found a 15th century cluster brooch in the form of a blooming flower. It is made of gold, enamel, diamonds and a large 'Pigeon's blood' red Spinel. When made, it would have been so expensive, only a very rich person could have afforded it. Never before found in Britain, this type of brooch is thought to be one of only seven in the world. Its rarity in Britain suggests it is of foreign origin.



**15th century cluster brooch
showing enamelling**

It was found in a 15th century hunting ground. As this was an area where both Ladies and Gentlemen could meet, it cannot be assigned as male or female jewellery, and one can only speculate as to how it might have been lost, but the exquisite

hinged but twisted pin (**below**) suggests it may have been wrenched off.



Of a complex construction, the structure of the brooch was encrusted with soil. This was gradually removed using a bamboo stick, a sharpened feather and the conservator's spit. Saliva contains a digestive enzyme which is highly

effective in removing fats and oils when applied with a 'feather bud'. (A cotton bud like implement of a feather with cotton wool twisted on the end.) No high tech. apparatus there then. The flexibility of a feather allows the conservator better to gauge the pressure needed to remove debris. This gives a real meaning to the term 'spit and polish'. Once cleaned, it was possible to see the original tool marks.



Cleaning with a sharpened feather using a 'feather bud'

This exquisite piece of history has been acquired by the Victoria and Albert museum where it is described as 'priceless'. It will be displayed alongside Queen Victoria's coronet.

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>

all photographs © Janet Backhouse



WARG Talks

February 2020 – Bursledon Brickworks – A talk

by Bob Marshall - *Chris Sellen*

(Our 2020 summer outing to the Brickworks had to be postponed, so this article incorporates a report from a visit WARG made in 2008)

Bob Marshall, a volunteer at the brickworks, gave a comprehensive exposition of not only the history of the site and the companies that worked there, but the science and practicalities both ancient and modern, of producing brick, this most versatile of building materials. The site is run by the Hampshire Buildings Preservation Trust and volunteers work through the Friends of Bursledon Brickworks.



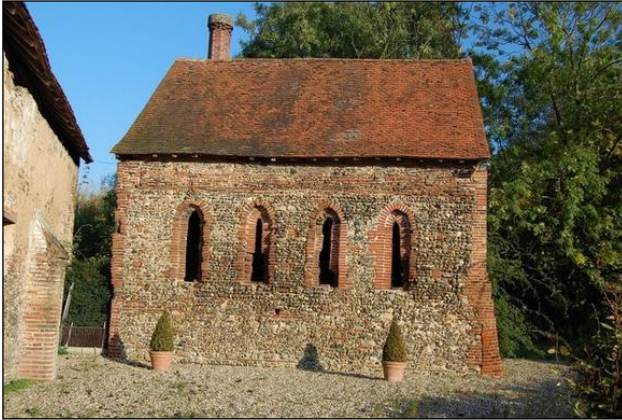
**Bursledon
Brickworks
general
view**

© Chris
Sellen

The Brick

Brick making and tile-making arrived in Britain with the Romans, who used them particularly in hypocaust *pilae* and roof pantiles, but also within walls for both structural and aesthetic reasons. Then until the 14th and 15th centuries its use was restricted to scavenging from Roman ruins! From then

important building such as churches and abbeys (like Coggeshall Abbey in Essex) used the material for either internal and/or external use, often decoratively, within the normal local stone.



Coggeshall Abbey

© Chris Sellen
Wikipedia

By, such as
Hampton
Court and
Tattershall
Castle were

a sign of affluence and power. Practically it was possible to create high chimneys - far safer than the previous norm of thatched roofs and smoke filtration.

In the mid-17th century the Great Fire of London proved a massive incentive for rebuilding in brick (also not much good local stone in London, but plenty of clay). By Georgian times bricks were used countrywide for grand palaces to agricultural buildings and by the Victorian era railway stations, factories, bridges and tunnels were all brick. In the most modern period buildings such as Battersea power station and the Byker Wall in Newcastle are testimony to the flexibility and ubiquity of the use of bricks.

Prior to the industrial revolution bricks would have been made on a small, local scale. Estates will have made their own in a very manual and labour-intensive process utilising animal power. Brick makers will have 'paddled' their clay, thrown it into individual moulds and dried in the open air (therefore a summer activity) prior to firing in 'clamps' which were

essentially piles filled with straw. The first mechanisation included 'stupids', machines which compressed and extruded clay. Further technical progress happened in the Victorian era which meant a move away from local production to specialist companies like that at Bursledon.

The Site

Started in 1897 by the Hooper/Ashby family, who previously worked the clay fields and kilns at Chandler's Ford in 1879 (hence Brickfield Lane), the buildings are the production end of the clay extraction which has now created the Swanwick Nature Reserves to the north. At its height the brickworks produced 20 million bricks a year and employed 300 people over the two sites, having been briefly bisected by the M27 before closure in 1974 when it was owned by Redland Brick (later London Brick Company).

The site had access to plentiful London Clay and sand, was midway between Portsmouth and Southampton and had good communications via the railway and the River Hamble. Although in production for over 75 years, the need to bring clay from further and further away, plus the planned route of the M27 would mean the site's final demise, despite the kilns, machine shops, cottages and so on (many of which were not well-made, but are now listed and require expensive maintenance).

The Process

Bursledon Brickworks celebrates the process as it was done in the early days. The clay was 'won' from a clay pit face some 30 feet deep, and was dangerous work. Only after WW2 were mechanised shovels used (Ruston Bucyrus 19RB & 22RBs) and these are still to be found at the brickworks.



Extruding and rolling

© Chris Sellen Bursledon Brickworks

Using 'grafts' to dig the clay, place into barrows and then hoppers via an inclined ramp to raise the clay into the extruding shop, the early (1888) machines

would compress the clay into a 'pug' and a system of rollers would remove stones and pulp the resultant raw material in a process called 'running out'.

After pulping, the bricks were formed in moulds for bricks or tiles using wooden moulds often stamped with 'BBC' (Bursledon Brick Company), sanded by a 'sandboy' (who was 'happy' as he was the only worker not on piecework) to stop adhesion, and 'frogged'.



(Bursledon Brick Company), sanded by a 'sandboy' (who was 'happy' as he was the only worker not on piecework) to stop adhesion, and 'frogged'.

The John Wood steam engine

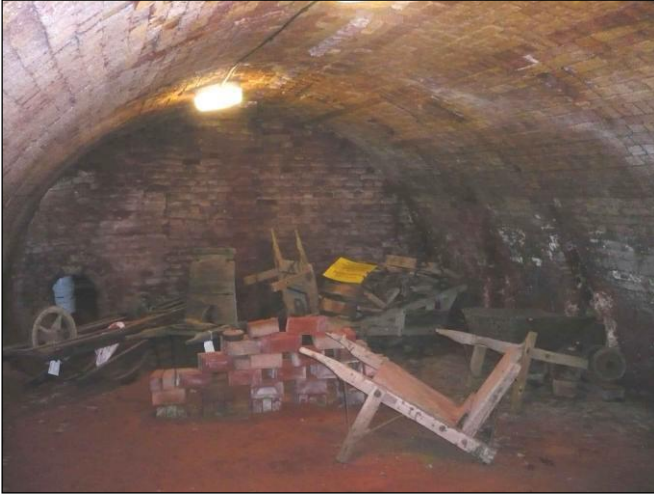
© Chris Sellen

Power was provided by a John Wood steam engine which is still kept in running order, though it now runs on gas, not the original coal or later oil.

Bricks now move to the drying shed which is fed with steam in a process patented by Hooper & Ashby. Bricks would dry for 15

days on the ground then another 10 on the top of the brick pile before being stacked in one of 12 brick-built

Hoffmann kilns. There they spend 3 days heating up, 3 'cooking' at 1,160°C and 6 days cooling down. Each kiln holds 26,000 bricks. Fuel is continuously fed into the chamber through holes in the roof until the bricks have totally vitrified. The operation was only interrupted once which was during the Second World War.



**Inside a
Kiln**

© Chris
Sellen

The end products were transported by rail via the nearby station or barge on the River Hamble, to which they were carried down the slope by aerial trackways. But in the latter years, road, the M27 route ironically hastening the brickworks' demise, despite the building of two special bridges connecting the works with the clay fields. The nail in the coffin was the poor state of the machinery and the 1974 Health & Safety Act. Rescued by volunteers, the brickworks is run as a trust and is open to the public to witness the manufacturing process.

More information about the events and opening times can be found at:

www.bursledonbrickworks.org.uk



Brick and tile products at Bursledon

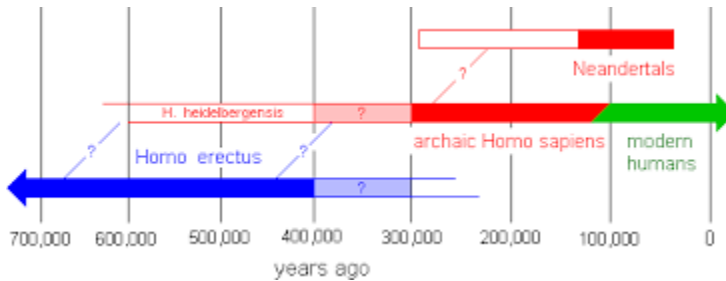
© Chris Sellen



March 2020 The Origins of Us: Latest developments in Human Evolution Talk to WARG by Dr James Cole University of Brighton - Steve Taylor

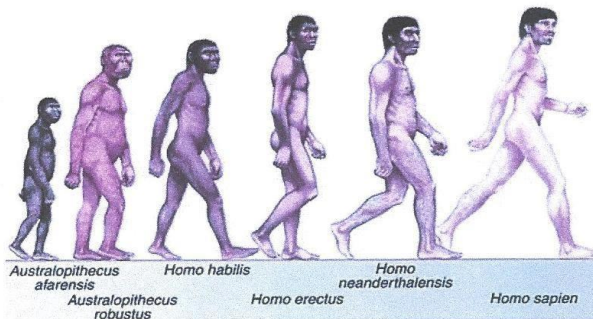
The scientific enquiry into the origins of man has seen many shifts in the understanding and modelling of human evolution. Before reviewing more recent developments Dr Cole briefly summarised the earlier views.

At the beginning of this century there was a widespread acceptance that our species *Homo sapiens* had a recent African origin. 500,000 years ago (500ka) it was dominated by *Homo heidelbergensis* which split into two lineages around 400ka. In western Eurasia *Homo neanderthalensis* appeared while in Africa *Homo Sapiens* came into view.



Ole Eichhorn 2003

Descendants of this latter branch dispersed from Africa around 55ka and by 30ka had replaced the Neanderthals across Eurasia with little or no interbreeding. While this model seemed fairly straightforward as far as physical evolution was concerned there was much debate on the topic of human behavioural complexity.



Quora.com – Heidelbergensis is a species of Homo erectus

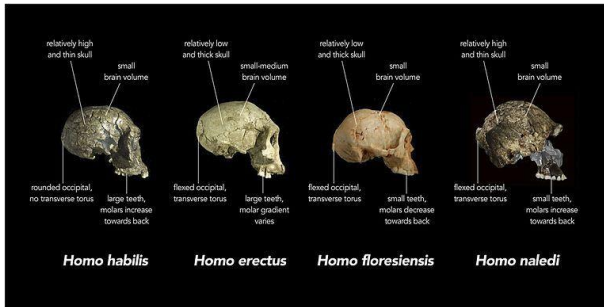
This relatively tidy perspective has been much disrupted over the last two decades by further paleoanthropological research and the discovery of new hominin taxa. In short, it isn't so simple.

New fossil sites have been discovered in unexpected locations and time periods and along with them new reflections on what defines modern behaviour in our ancestors. Behaviours such as blade and microliths technology, bone tools,

specialized hunting, use of aquatic resources, long-distance trade and use of pigment, art and decoration were all giving a picture more complicated and surprising than had been recognized earlier.

One of these surprises was the discovery on the Indonesian Island of Flores of a diminutive skeleton now categorised as *Homo floresiensis*. This skeleton is now dated to around 60ka with associated archaeology and more fragmentary fossils suggesting a date range between 50 and 190ka. There is still much debate about *H. floresiensis*. Generally, it is not seen as a pathological form of *H. sapiens*. Some argue that it is an island-dwarfed descendent of *H. erectus*, whereas others see its origins being much further back such as the form found in Dmanisi (Georgia) dated back to 1.8Ma. Wherever its origin lies, its appearance in the fossil record has forced a reappraisal of the earlier, simpler evolutionary model.

Another challenging discovery was made in 2013 in a region supposedly well explored for hominin fossils, South Africa. This assemblage of fossils, representing at least 18 individuals, was sufficiently far removed from other hominins to be categorised as a new species *H. naledi*. It was remarkable for at least two phenomena. Firstly, a range of techniques (including luminescence and electron spin resonance) gave a surprisingly recent date around 285ka, surprising because the morphologies (i.e. form and structure) of the fossils would have suggested a date at least a million years earlier. Secondly, it seemed that the fossils had been deliberately deposited in remote dark corners of the cave, controversially implying that *H.naledi* had been involved in ritual disposal of its dead. The further difficulty is that the evolutionary history of naledi is completely unknown. Are there other finds of this species waiting to be discovered?



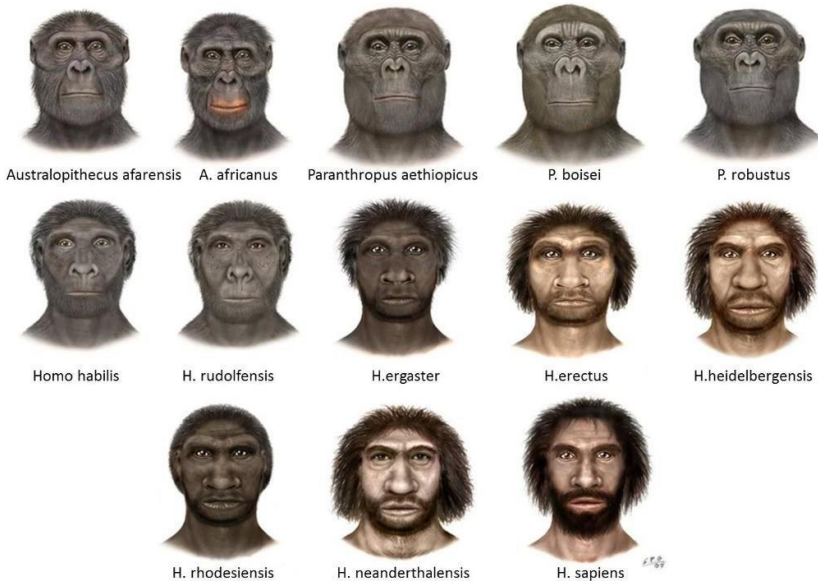
Wikipedia

Overall the perspective on African evolution of *H.sapiens* has changed from a view that it

originated in one region to the current view that the evolution of modern humans was multi-located. At least three human species are believed to exist around 300ka across the continent alongside species such as *H. naledi* and *H. heidelbergensis* (sometimes called *H. rhodesiensis* from the site in Zambia). Once again, a simple model is fragmenting under closer inspection.

Examination of ancient DNA has been central to the refining of understanding of Human evolution. It is this technique which has been key to the discovery of a new lineage – the **Denisovans**. In the late 1990's the work on the mitochondrial DNA genome confirmed that Neanderthals were a distinct evolutionary lineage from all extant humans, diverging over 300ka. By 2010 techniques had evolved such that examination of Neanderthal DNA outside Africa showed evidence of ancient interbreeding. Unexpected results had appeared once more.

It is now evident that all modern humans that trace their origin outside Africa have about 2% Neanderthal DNA in their genome. The current view is that this interbreeding occurred between 50 and 60ka, most likely in western Asia.



Another recent discovery was the 2010 analysis of a fossilised finger bone from Denisova cave in Siberia. It turned out to represent a lineage distinct both from Neanderthals and modern humans. Reconstructing the genome suggested a divergence from the Neanderthal lineage about 400ka. Further samples have shown that Denisovans occupied the region for over 100,000 years with a population intermediate between smaller Neanderthals and larger regional groups of humans. Added complexity is indicated by the discovery of Denisovan-like DNA in native Australasians. To twist the story further, it turns out that this latter DNA is different from the Siberian genome. It may be that there were three Denisovan sources extant at one time.

This uncertainty is found elsewhere. The basic timeline is generally accepted. Our species exited from Africa about 60ka, colonizing Australia ~50ka, Europe ~40ka and the Americas ~15ka. However, there are growing indications from fossil and archaeological discoveries in eastern Asia and Australasia

that there must have been dispersals of *H.sapiens* into those regions before 60ka. They either died out or were overprinted by the later dispersal ~60ka.

Answers must await further discoveries and/or further developments in the science.

This summary of Dr Cole's talk has had to omit much of the fascinating detail he gave in an information-packed lecture. Those interested can get on-line access to his paper in the Journal of Quaternary Science, Vol 34, issue 6. It is entitled

"Aspects of human physical and behavioural evolution during the last 1 million years"

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/jqs.3137>



Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress – The Tower of London

Hopefully many of you will have seen the excellent series of programmes entitled 'Inside the Tower of London' (Channel 5 – available on Catch-up). If you missed then I would highly recommend this as a superb insight into history.

From the building and its history, to meeting the Governor, his Deputy, the Yeomen Warders and the Wardens, these programmes introduce you to the palace and people who both live and work there.

If you have ever admired the splendidly uniformed 'Beefeaters' you will not be surprised to hear that these men – and women, there are two Moira and Amanda Jane, have had to complete twenty-two years' service in one of the armed services, have held the rank of Warrant or senior Non

Commissioned Officer and been awarded both the Good Conduct and the Long Service medals, before qualifying to apply for the post of Yeoman Warder. All services are represented and they both dress and work with military precision. They are among the most photographed people in the world.

The yeomen are required to live within the Tower precinct, most with their families, and, whilst the residents' accommodation is mainly within the Casemates, (Chambers in the wall) the Old Hospital and various towers, such as the Byward and Devereux which was constructed in 1238-72. The internal arrangements are adapted, within strict heritage rules, to modern life. However it must, at times feel uncomfortable sharing space with the violent history and resident spirits, as well as being locked in by The Ceremony of the Keys and an armed guard, at 10pm - precisely.



**The Byward Tower by
dynamosquito from France -
Tower of London, CC BY-SA**

2.0

<https://commons.wikimedia.org>

The Tower is a living community, containing its own Doctor's surgery, public house and Chapel – St. Peter ad Vincula (St. Peter in chains), where lie the bones of fifteen members of our Royal families, including three queens, many disgraced nobles and – what many people may not know – thousands of ordinary people.

It is thought that the presence of a religious building on this site pre-dates William the conqueror, and the medieval church had a larger footprint than the current chapel, with most burials taking place outside.

Approximately one hundred and fifty years ago, in Victorian times, the West door was installed and an excavation under the chapel floor took place. This revealed over seventeen hundred bodies.

In the 21st century with the necessity of constructing an accessible access to the chapel, it still took over six months and a representation to Her Majesty The Queen, to gain permission to disturb the area outside of the door.

When the dig commenced, it was at a fairly shallow depth where fragments of human bone were discovered. A further metre uncovered the remains of the lower halves of two undisturbed bodies immediately outside of the west door, and under a Victorian retaining wall. This necessitated screening the dig from the public and the opening of a second trench on the opposite side of the wall. Eventually the entire remains of both skeletons were exhumed. One appeared to have been buried in a coffin as nails were also found, the other was squashed into a small space wrapped only in a shroud.

The position of the graves suggests they were buried under the floor of the larger, medieval church, which dates them pre-1520. This was helpful as carbon dating of these bones was not permitted.

In July 2019, examination of the skeletons had revealed they were a female of approx. 35 – 45 years, and a male child approx. 7 years old. The female showed sign of a hard life with loss of intervertebral cartilage, but the child may have died of natural causes, not unusual in those times. The bones were then consigned to archival boxes and placed under the chapel altar.

In September 2019, a small committal service was held in St. Peter ad Vincula and the bodies were respectfully laid to rest in the Chapel Crypt.

As Yeoman Warder Moira Cameron so succinctly put it *“This place is not just about stories it is about real people.”*



Julia's Jottings

A New Palace

Any of you who've visited the Yucatan, as I have, will know that the wonderful Mayan sites are constantly under threat from the incredibly fast growing jungle that surrounds them. It's been known for several decades that many palaces and towns litter Mexico and the bulgy- part (that's a technical term) of Middle America but that excavating them has been considered far too costly and difficult. So it's excellent to hear that a large Mayan palace, thought to date back 1000 years, has been uncovered at Kuluba. The remains of a building 6m high, 55m long and 15m wide appear to cover 2 periods of Mayan history, possibly 600-900 and 850-1050. Other structures are being uncovered, including a round one thought to be an oven. In order to save the area from the damaging effects of wind and sun the conservationists are considering reforesting the surrounding area. The Mayans ruled large territories covering southern Mexico, Guatemala, Belize and Honduras.

More than just Raiders!

Probably most of us think of the Vikings as raiders *par excellence* but are also aware that they produced some glorious jewellery. However there was a much more “ordinary” side to these pillagers and very pretty it is too. An excavation on Lindisfarne has uncovered a really

beautiful “lump” of worked glass. After cleaning it turned out to be swirling blue and white with a small “crown” of white droplets. Beautiful just as a small object, its importance is that it’s a gaming piece from the Viking game known as Hnefatafl, or at least a local variant of this game. It offers a rare link between Lindisfarne’s Anglo-Saxon monastery and the culture that overwhelmed it.

Lindisfarne in 793 suffered the first major Viking raid on Britain and Ireland, and launched about 3 centuries of the destruction and occupation that so radically re-shaped English history. But it’s good to know that there was another side to the Vikings where games and beauty took place.



Viking gaming piece

Smithsonian museum

Plus Ca Change!

I don’t know about you but I have a tendency to think that Rickets is a modern problem, created by extreme poverty and lack of the essential nutrients needed by the human body. I was told that all British people over 60 should be taking a Vitamin D supplement daily to counteract the effects of living in a sometimes less than sunny climate. Yes, by all means eat citrus fruits and try

not to get sunburned in our now very hot summers, but make alternative arrangements!

And just why do I think this is of the slightest interest to you history and archaeology buffs? Because research by Historic England and Canada's McMaster University from over 2700 Roman Empire skeletons has revealed that Rickets was a "widespread" problem 2000 years ago.

Still no change!

It's obvious that graffiti is not a 20th century problem since a Roman quarry near Hadrian's Wall has a large boulder with a caricature poking fun at a commanding officer!. Around AD 207 some poor quarry workers must have decided that a bit of lunch-break fun was in order and created many inscriptions along the lines of "I did this bit" etc. They were quarrying stone for repairs to the wall on the orders of the Emperor Septimius Severus. He was touring Britain in that year and ordered major improvements to the wall which was by then a century old. Archaeologists are working to protect these carvings which have been known about for many centuries but have until now been uncared for.



Septimius Severus

Museo Capotolini Rome



Book Reviews

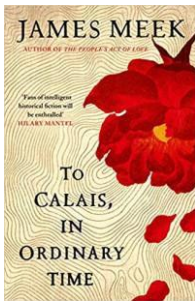
Books for our time – *Techer Jones*

I usually review worthy archaeology books of great technical depth. But this time I would draw your attention to two novels which were Christmas presents. Both are very apposite for times we live in, and both are a jolly good read.

“To Calais in Ordinary Time” by James Meek

Canongate Books Ltd ISBN: 9781786896742

This story is set in 1348 at the time of the outbreak of the Black Death. Three main characters: the first is a ploughman and a good archer. He decides to seek adventure joining a group travelling to France to fight for the honour of England. A lady is trying to escape an arranged marriage. A priest is escaping the Black Death in France.

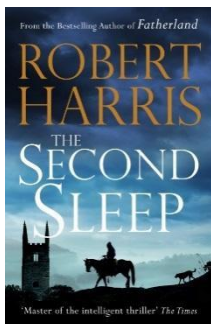


The book has interesting language: the working classes speak in Saxon English and the aristocracy in 'French' English, and the priest thinks in Latin which undoubtedly

reflects the times and makes for wonderful cultural clashes. There is a good storyline with unexpected twists, but underlying this is a serious analysis of what happened to the structure of society when labour and food suddenly was in short supply. For me, one of the overriding themes was the strength of Christian belief and its impact at that time. Published by Canongate and available in hardback or as e-book.

“The Second Sleep” Robert Harris

Penguin Books ISBN: 9781786331373.



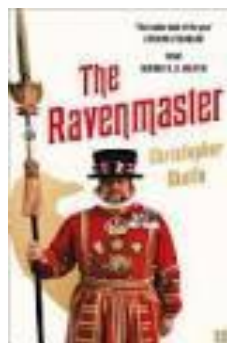
Robert Harris is perhaps a better-known author (Pompeii, Enigma, Conclave, Munich etc.). His latest novel “The Second Sleep” is set in a medieval England of 1468 when a young priest is sent to Exmoor to bury an old priest who has died. (Spoiler alert – but it’s in the first chapter). The old priest has been what we might call an archaeologist.

Among his finds are small slim black oblong boxes that fit into a hand and have the sign of a bitten apple marked on them. What did the ancients use these boxes for? What does the apple mean? What 1468 are we in? Apart from a blooming good story, this book reflects well how the public might perceive those who try and understand the past by digging it up. Published by Penguin available as hardback, e-book or audio book.

An Enjoyable and informative read – but not for Ornithophobics

The Ravenmaster – My Life with the Ravens at the Tower of London - Christopher Scaife 4th Estate 2018 ISBN 978-0-00-830793-6

Ravens may initially not sound very attractive, but what characters they are when, like The Ravenmaster, you really get to know them. This is a great read.



Born in Kent, Chris Scaife was a 'bit of a naughty boy', but took the perfect path for him when aged 16 he signed up as a boy soldier. After a long career which fed his zest for life, as well as his courage, he was discharge with the rank of Staff Sergeant and Drum Major, which he describes as a 'Drum and Fife playing Specialist Machine Gunner'. Serving, bravely, all over the world he also took time to take a degree in archaeology along the way. With discharge imminent in 2005, he decided that the life of a 'Yeoman Warder of Her Majesty's Royal Palace and Fortress of the Tower of London and a member of the Queen's Body Guard Extraordinary', would tick all of the boxes for his future He has a great sense of showmanship and humour which make him perfect for the job. Ask what the E11R on his uniform means and you may be told 'Exit second Right'!



Military drummers, says Chris, are a different breed and think differently, which may be why the then Ravenmaster identified him as a potential Raven Warder. He repeatedly denies his knowledge of the science and psychology of the birds, but this is clearly false modesty and Chris has begun to breed Ravens specifically to match the ambiance of the Tower's avian community.

The seven ravens of this book are real characters with their idiosyncrasies, demands for attention, or not, their strict routines – vary at your peril – and their attitude to people, individual or general. There are rules followed by the Raven team, to minimise distress and disruption for the birds and to ensure their health and safety. Chris has a notable love of these somewhat scary but highly intelligent creatures, and it is evident that the loss of any of them affects him deeply. However, as he makes clear, these are not pets and need to be treated with caution. His care and concern is not restricted to

the Ravens, but extends to the Tower Foxes, whom he feeds in a secluded site to prevent them having to scavenge and risk attacking the birds.

For some photographs of the birds go to the following

<https://urbannature.blog/2019/07/14/raven-watching-at-the-tower-of-london/>

or if you are a twitterer go to

<https://twitter.com/ravenmaster1>



And Finally WARG Talks and Events 2020

As the IBM offices are closed and the site and facilities are unavailable this dig is postponed until 2021

2020 Meeting Talks Programme – Subject to any changes and safety directives.

All talks and events up to September 2020 have been cancelled

14th September Dr John Crook, FSA - Archaeological Consultant to Winchester Cathedral – Recent investigations at Winchester Cathedral.

12th October AGM followed by a talk on the Barton Stacey Big Dig of 2019

9th November Don Bryan, BA (Arch) - Director HADS – 60 years in Archaeology

14th December Marjoleine Butler, Trustee - CBA and Roland Smith, Chair - CBA Wessex - CBA at 75 and CBA Wessex at 60 – Celebrating Archaeology for All, past, present and future



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