



# ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is revising the definition of Treasure and its related codes of practice. Since 2007 the associated procedures, known as the treasure process, have been administered by the Treasure Secretariat at the British Museum, where the Portable Antiquities Scheme is housed alongside BM core staff, though Finds Liaison Officers based at local institutions across England and Wales undertake most of the fieldwork.

There is a public consultation under way, which closes on 30 April 2019. We are invited to comment on existing proposals including: the speeding up and rationalisation of the treasure process; revision of the definition of treasure to focus on, and ensure that museums can acquire, finds of historical, archaeological or cultural importance; and extending to the acquirer the duty of reporting a possible treasure object or coin to the coroner. This might include the creation of a new offence targetting purchasers of undeclared artifacts, even the unwitting.

They are also seeking views in relation to the long-term future of the treasure process and its sustainability; the stated aims include establishing a sound financial underpinning for the process. To this end, there are not uncontroversial proposals such as having all archaeological objects become the property of the Crown, or the introduction of a regulation as in Northern Ireland, where archaeological digging of any sort (both by professional archaeologists and others) is only allowed by permit. Further aims would encourage positive behaviour and strengthen educational outreach, and not a moment too soon.

In March, Cadbury made its biggest launch of 2019, Freddo Treasures ('Retailers can drive sales with a unit designed like a pirate ship') contains a toy and some chocolate buttons in a complex, half empty, folding plastic box (another controversy!). On the foil liner, there is a QR code linked to a Cadbury's website with ideas for family outings, part of which, entitled 'Undiscovered Treasure' suggested children go metal-detecting to look for finds that had been overlooked, but on Scheduled monuments and other protected or privately-pwned sites, and without describing any archaeological or environmental context, disregarding safety let alone the law, and partly inaccurate to boot. This bizarre marketing exploit appears somehow to have escaped the proper scrutiny of their legal department; the company itself may have been in breach of the Advertising Standards Agency's requirement not to condone or encourage unsafe or illegal acts, and the website was fostering the flouting of the law by others. Following a massive outcry from archaeologists, the webpage was suspended on 19 March (it is still suspended as I write), and Michael Ellis MP, then Minister for Arts, Heritage and Tourism, has (by Tweet) reminded the CEO of Cadbury of the need to respect the law, and 'invited' him to attend a meeting at DCMS.

We will probably never know why Cadbury failed to take advice from appropriate specialists in order to devise a suitable promotional campaign. They are now, of course, well aware of innumerable organisations willing to guide them in the sensible promotion of archaeology. The Freddo campaign included a £6m budget for TV and outdoor advertising from May. This is an immense amount of money by archaeological standards, and the platforms will already be booked. Surely Cadbury will grasp the opportunity to remedy their gaff with a new programme with long term impact including education aimed at protecting our heritage.

Please search online for [revising-the-definition-of-treasure](#) to access the DCMS consultation and at the very least, argue for better funding for Portable Antiquities Scheme outreach.

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

### British Archaeological Awards 2018 ED ARDILL

The awards were made in Central Hall Westminster on 15 October compered by Professor Carenza Lewis.

**Best Archaeological Book:** *Lost Lives, New Voices: Unlocking the Story of the Scottish Soldiers in 1650* by R. Annis, A. Caffell, C. Gerrard, P. Graves and A. Millard

**Best Community Engagement Archaeology Project:** jointly to CITiZAN and the SCAPE Trust, using 'citizen science' and a TV programme 'Britain at Low Tide' to make their discoveries accessible

**Best Archaeological Project:** the National Trust for 'Archaeology at Knole Sevenoaks, Kent'

**Best Public Presentation of Archaeology:** Bloomberg for the reconstruction of the Roman Temple of Mithras (for the report of our Autumn Meeting's visit, see below, p. 20).

### ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH GRANTS

The Institute awards the following grants annually:

**Tony Clark Fund** Up to £500 for archaeological work and dating

**Bunnell Lewis Fund** Up to £750 towards archaeology of the Roman period in the UK

**RAI Award** Up to £5000 towards archaeological work in the UK

Please download an application form at <http://www.royalarchinst.org/grants> or write to the Administrator.

Closing date for applications: 9 December 2019. Awards announced in April 2020.

### RAI Cheney Bursaries

*In 2018, the Institute received no applications – please encourage your young colleagues to apply.*

The investment of a bequest left by Frank Cheney produces a small fund of money to enable students to attend conferences or RAI meetings. An allocation is available annually from which individuals can apply for a maximum sum of £200. Please check with the Administrator that money remains in the yearly fund before you apply. Students who wish to apply for a bursary should email [admin@royalarchinst.org.uk](mailto:admin@royalarchinst.org.uk) or write to the Administrator, RAI, c/o Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BE, at least six weeks before the event they wish to attend, stating: the institution in which they study, the event they wish to attend, the sum of money requested, a breakdown of how the money would be spent and a summary (up to 250 words) of why

they would like to attend the event and in what way this would be useful to them. Successful applicants may be asked to produce a brief report of the event for the Institute.

### RAI Dissertation Prizes

The RAI holds two competitions for dissertations on a subject concerned with the archaeology or architectural history of Britain, Ireland and adjacent areas of Europe. In even-numbered years, the competition is for the best dissertation submitted by an undergraduate in full-time education, the Tony Baggs Memorial Award. In odd-numbered years, the prize is awarded to the best dissertation submitted by a Master's student. Nominations are made by University and College Departments. The winner receives a prize of £500 and the opportunity for a paper based on the dissertation to be published in the *Archaeological*

*Journal*. The chief criteria considered are (a) quality of work and (b) appropriateness to the interests of the RAI as reflected in the *Journal*.

The RAI Tony Baggs undergraduate dissertation prize, covering years 2017 and 2018, was awarded to Louise Moffett from Queen's University Belfast for her dissertation, *The Late Medieval Parish Churches of Counties Antrim and Londonderry*. Louise received her prize at the Institute's meeting on 12 December 2018.

## RAI Research Grants, 2019

Research grants for 2019 have been awarded to the following projects:

Mary Peteranna *The Rosemarkie Caves Project*  
Michael Stratigos and Derek Hamilton *At the Water's Edge: Early Iron Age settlement patterns in central Scotland*

## RAI Research Grant Reports

**Culver Archaeological Project**  
**environmental samples analysis** (Bunnell  
Lewis and Tony Clark Memorial Funds)  
Robert Wallace

In 2014, the Culver Archaeological Project carried out a 600 sq m open area excavation in a meadow

to the west of the Romano-British settlement discovered in 2011 adjacent to the River Ouse, near Lewes, East Sussex. This followed on from four trenches excavated in 2013.

The excavation targeted thirteen circular geophysical anomalies forming a rectangular grouping 16 m by 6.4 m, which when excavated proved to be 1 m-diameter postholes, each containing the base of a waterlogged post averaging 0.45 m in diameter at 0.8–1 m deep. These were interpreted as the principal posts of a building, possibly aisled, dated by pottery to the late third century A.D.

As well as the waterlogged timbers listed above, adjacent, but at an oblique alignment to it, we discovered a large fourth-century ovoid pit, being over 2 m wide and 1.3 m deep. The lower contexts of this pit (a possible sump well) and the waterlogged postholes provided us with organic remains, and had environmental bulk samples taken, together with the fills from two hearths discovered.

These samples were initially processed on site using a SIRAF flotation unit with the >4 mm residues investigated for organics. These were subsequently sent together with the floating material (flots) collected by 300 µm mesh for specialist analysis. The results provided valuable information



Culver: drone image of the completed excavation, 2014  
(R. Wallace)

for the interpretation of the site and its wider environment during the occupation period.

The data extracted included no evidence of cess disposal or crop processing, suggesting that grain was in storage awaiting consumption. The well contained waterlogged roundwood suitable for a wattle structure. The plant debris was mainly from the surrounding environment rather than food waste, with no exotic species observed. Some iron-hammerscale was detected in the primary fills of both the possible forging hearth and the well, providing evidence of metal working in the vicinity.

The specialist's report highlighted the rarity of waterlogged material in the archaeological record for south-east England and offered valuable advice on how we can improve our procedures to obtain even more data in the future. It also recommended items that should be considered for radiocarbon dating.

#### **Fieldwork at Copt Howe, Cumbria** Richard Bradley, Aaron Watson and Peter Style

Until 1999 the Neolithic site at Copt Howe was best known to rock climbers. It was after excavations on the Langdale Pikes above the site had been published, that pecked designs were identified on

two of the prominent stones known as the Langdale Boulders. Although they had been transported by ice, the decorated rocks provide a monumental portal into the valley itself. They command a direct view of the stone sources on Harrison Stickle and Loft Crag.

There have been important developments since the fieldwork carried out on the high ground in the 1980s. One is the redating of the axe production sites employing samples collected in the original fieldwork. It is clear that their main period of use was between 3800 and 3300 B.C. That means that their products cannot have been exchanged through the henge monuments of north-west England, as was long believed. The second was the recording of the rock art which showed that it was different from most decorated outcrops in the north and more like the imagery associated with Irish tombs. That raised another problem as those monuments are dated between about 3300 and 2900 BC, meaning that the pecked designs were later than the quarries.

In 2018 small scale excavation was conducted at Copt Howe to shed further light on this problem. It showed that a platform had been built at the foot of the principal decorated surface and that its construction sealed two additional motifs with



Copt Howe: the remains of the platform built against the principal decorated surface (A. Watson)

obvious Irish parallels. Stone tools for pecking the designs had been deposited in the material of the platform, but there were no pieces of the distinctive tuff employed to make axes. The only struck flakes were of poor quality raw material obtained on the site itself.

Langdale axes were widely distributed in Britain and many were taken across the Pennines to the North Sea coast. As their production diminished or ceased it seems that connections with Ireland assumed a greater significance. That is why the rocks at Copt Howe were embellished in the same style as the passage graves of the Boyne valley.

### **Tombs of the North: exploring the Neolithic chambered tombs of the Northern Isles** Vicki Cummings

In 2018 a 12 m by 10 m trench was opened over the chambered tomb of Tresness, Sanday, Orkney. The remains of an exceptionally well-preserved cairn surviving to a considerable height was revealed. A significant quantity of later prehistoric stone tools were recovered from across the cairn – notably ard points, flaked stone bars, hammerstones and other coarse stone tools typical of Bronze or Iron Age date in Orkney. Indeed, the most distinctive

characteristic of these stone tools was the absence of diagnostically Neolithic objects.

Investigations also explored the northern and central component of the chamber. First, what appeared to be collapsed or displaced roof slabs were removed to reveal the uppermost components of a chamber. This was comprised of areas of dry-stone walling built around upright stones – orthostatic stalls typical for stalled cairns. The northern end of the chamber was defined by a backslab. Five courses of dry-stone walling were revealed; measurements from photogrammetry indicate that if the tomb was constructed on flat ground the orthostats of the stall may survive up to 2.1 m high and the masonry could be 2.3 m from ground surface. Within the chamber and underneath the collapsed roof slabs were some massive slabs which required two people to lift, along with medium- and gravel-sized stones. The large stones sat at acute angles showing they had been tipped in.

Towards the southern end of the chamber as visible in the trench, a wall running east–west was found. While the dry-stone walling is found to the north of this wall, immediately around it and to the south, the dry-stone walling is missing. This



suggests that the east–west wall is a later addition into the chamber. In fact, it would appear that the walls of the chamber have been removed here to enable a later feature to be inserted. This in turn suggests that the change is Iron Age – souterrains are documented as being inserted into chambered tombs elsewhere on Orkney, and there is an Iron Age broch just 500 m to the north. There is a well-preserved chambered tomb at Tresness. However, there is also evidence that some of the monument has been reused at a later date.

## Hoppen Bank: field walking and test pitting of a prehistoric landscape Paul Gething

Hoppen Hall Farm (Northumberland) is the site of a prehistoric landscape that has been investigated over the last decade by the Bamburgh Research Project (BRP) as part of the Bradford Kaims Project. This is investigating an expanse of farmland and fenland around 3 miles inland from Bamburgh Castle. Initial test pits of a promising landscape located in situ Bronze Age, Neolithic and Mesolithic remains in various low-lying areas of the landscape. Information from excavations was added to, using drone photography, geophysics and coring. The work to date has identified a large group of burnt mounds.

Aerial and satellite images give clear indication of further prehistoric activity on the hillside at Hoppen Bank, to the north-west of the previous excavations. This is probably of Iron Age date, by analogy with excavated sites. Geophysical surveys added further data. We decided to field walk to confirm its identification as an Iron Age enclosure and to locate dating evidence. A small trial trench was also dug to ascertain the dimensions and date.

Community volunteers and student volunteers (21 in total) set out a grid over the site. Each ten-metre square was given a number and five minutes of intensive field-walking. All finds were retained, but an initial on-site sift was made to remove non-archaeological material. The artefacts were cleaned, catalogued and recorded before being plotted by square. The whole process was used for teaching: many of the volunteers participate in other projects and field-walking and artefact identification are valuable skills.

A 5 m by 1 m trench was excavated over a main geophysical anomaly using volunteers alongside BRP staff. Plough soil was removed and the top of archaeology identified. A small sample was excavated and recorded.

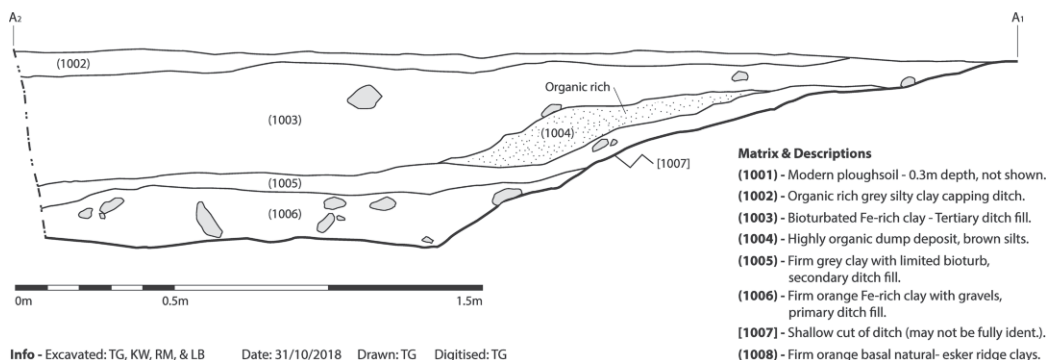
In total, 100 ten-metre squares were field-walked. The data collected allowed us to highlight areas of specific interest including concentrations of flint and some possible prehistoric pottery.

The trial trench demonstrated that there is archaeology remaining that has not been eradicated by ploughing.

## At the Water's Edge Michael Stratigos and Derek Hamilton

This project sought to elucidate the Early Iron Age settlement pattern around Loch Tay (Perth and Kinross), which contains an exceptional group of crannogs with known phases of use in the Early Iron Age (800–400 BC). However, outside of the crannogs, there are virtually no traces of settlement dating to this period, and few known recorded sites even potentially from the period.

To test this apparent lack of settlement, in September 2018, magnetic gradiometer survey was



Hoppen Bank: west-facing section of the ditch [1007] (T. Gardner)



D. Hamilton surveying at Loch Tay (M. Stratigos)

carried out on 3.2 ha over three sites along the loch shore. Test trenches over anomalies confirmed them as post-medieval features, and uncovered no evidence for later prehistoric archaeology, apparently a true representation of the surviving archaeology. Additionally, geophysics was undertaken over two purported ring-ditched houses at Easter Croftintygan (situated on the terraces above the north shore). The geophysical survey showed clear positive results. Test trenches in the better preserved of the two houses revealed relatively shallow stratigraphy in its interior with the remnants of a hearth and small pit feature, but also the potential for a considerable depth of remains in the ring ditch surviving beneath the collapsed wall debris.

The results have important implications for our understanding of settlement patterns in this part of Scotland. Primarily, there does not appear to be extensive or intensive later prehistoric activity on shore near the crannogs. However, this is not to say that the crannogs existed in isolation and it seems more likely that contemporary settlement in the area could be found higher upslope from the loch shore, such as at Easter Croftintygan.

The project was only possible with volunteer support. Those involved included: local volunteers (with support from the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust), staff from the Scottish Crannog Centre, and students from the Universities of Aberdeen and Glasgow. We also welcomed a member of the Scottish Crannog Centre Young Archaeologists Club, William, who is visually impaired. He was able to gather magnetic gradiometer data owing especially to the machine's audio cadence. So with only minimal aid, William successfully gathered data over two full grids (800 m<sup>2</sup>).

### **Excavations and pottery assessment at Hanging Grimston, Yorkshire Wolds** Marcus Jecock

Our joint venture for the High Wolds Heritage Group and Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society, was a fourth season of community excavation at the eponymous deserted medieval village, the earthworks of which are located on the slopes of the western scarp edge of the Yorkshire Wolds, north of Kirby Underdale. The site is scheduled as a village with attached



Hanging Grimston: the ladder settlement looking south: ditch 1 far right (west), ditch 2 by vertical scale, and ditch 3 (re-cut) by the stone in section, with 'berm' in the natural clay beneath corresponding to the base of the re-cut (C. Hall)

manorial enclosure, but our project has already established that the village and its open fields overlie features of late Iron Age to Romano-British date. This year, we commissioned Peter Didsbury to report on the pottery from the first three years of excavation.

Trench 1, sited over the entrance to one of the ditched enclosures on the west side of the central trackway of the ladder settlement, was re-opened and extended, revealing three phases of ditch. Two have previously produced handmade pottery, which Peter has now confirmed conforms with known late Iron Age traditions on the Wolds (both Calcareous- and Erratic-Tempered Wares), use of which probably continued in to the second century AD. Ditch 3 – essentially a re-cut of ditch 2 – was only recognised for the first time this year. The pottery it contained has yet to be reported on, but seems to include mostly Roman-period wares of the second to earlier third century. Large amounts of stone in the top of the re-cut hint that ditch 3 may have been accompanied by a low wall or faced bank. The trackway beyond the enclosure had

shallow flanking ditches sealed beneath a final-phase metallised surface.

The pottery assessment has indicated that activity in the other four trenches, all sited to investigate particular aspects of the medieval and later settlement at Hanging Grimston, spans from the twelfth to the fifteenth century. The dearth of pottery later than fifteenth century suggests that the village is likely to have been in serious decline by that date. This is in agreement with documentary and earthwork evidence that suggest the village was depopulated by 1575 when Ralph Bouchier of nearby Beningbrough bought the estate and constructed a mansion (demolished but identifiable in the earthworks) for his second son.

### **Dendrochronology of Furniture at St Peter's Church, Laneham, Notts** Gavin Simpson

St Peter's is essentially Norman, and one of the most important churches in the county, being in the manor of the archbishop of York which he has held since before the Conquest. There are



The Laneham door is affixed to the west wall of the nave (R. Sheppard)

numerous Romanesque features and apart from the west tower which has been renovated in the Perpendicular style, the only other major structural addition is the Early English arcade opening onto the north aisle. Two items of oak furniture were tree-ring dated by Oxford Dendrochronology Laboratory: the former south door, now displayed on the west wall of the nave, and a clamped chest

with wide stiles, three chip-carved roundels and three vertical iron straps with split curl terminals at the front and a pin-hinged lid.

The door retained some evidence of sapwood and dated in the range (*OxCal Modelled*) 1157–78. It was made up of four square-edged sawn boards held tightly rigid by stopped loose tenons between them. The inside is reinforced by two pairs of saltire braces with a batten across above and below and the exterior has an iron band around the curved top of the door ending in split curls and the two hinge straps end in thin tendrils and two Cs ending in split curls. The dating is a generation earlier than thought previously and gives a close indication of when the church was completed, while Archbishop Roger de Pont-L'Eveque held the manor (1154–81), and also a close date for the Romanesque sculptured surround of the doorway. The dendrochronology of the oak matches well with local chronologies and suggests that the carpentry and the ironwork are the products of local craftsmen.

The chest had no sapwood evidence and can only be assigned a *terminus post quem* of 1237 and therefore associated with the Early English phase of the church. The base of the westernmost colonette of the arcade had been cut back so that the chest could be fitted tightly into the north-west corner of the nave. The tree-ring analysis also demonstrated that the oak was from a different location from the door, in the Hampshire/Wiltshire/Somerset region, conforming with the mainly southern distribution of chests of this type.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

### 2019

**Spring Meeting** 10–12 May at Peterborough, led by Stephen Ashby

**Summer Meeting** 6–13 July to Dumfries and Galloway, led by Hedley Swain

**Autumn Day Meeting** 19 October, at Reading, led by Hedley Swain (details to be confirmed)

**RAI 10th Annual Conference** 29 November – 1 December at University College, London, *The Romans in the North-East* (see below)

**Please check our website** for news and early details, at [www.royalarchinst.org/events](http://www.royalarchinst.org/events). As soon

as they are confirmed, full details and booking forms for Meetings will be made available on the Meetings Programme page <http://www.royalarchinst.org/meetings>. Places are limited, so please book promptly. If you would like further details of any of these meetings sent to you, please send your e-mail or postal details to the Administrator, RAI, c/o Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, London, W1J 0BE or [admin@royalarchinst.org](mailto:admin@royalarchinst.org) or to Caroline Raison, RAI Assistant Meetings Secretary, 48 Park Avenue, Princes Avenue, Kingston upon Hull, HU5 3ES, or [csraison@gmail.com](mailto:csraison@gmail.com).

# ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2019

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## Romans in North-East England

**29 November – 1 December at Senate House, Malet Street, London, WC1E 7HU.  
(N.B. This is a non-residential conference.)**

Organised by the Royal Archaeological Institute in association with the Roman Society, our tenth annual conference will concentrate on recent work on Roman north-east England, from Yorkshire to Hadrian's Wall. The programme includes lectures by leading academics and unit-based professionals and will cover major sites from Aldborough, Corbridge, Scotch Corner, and Catterick to Brough-on-Humber, as well as recent work on rural sites.

**Conference fees** will include teas and coffees. The area around the venue is well-provided with places for lunch.

**Booking deadline:** 18 November 2019.

For further details please send your e-mail or postal details to the Administrator, RAI, c/o Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, London, W1J 0BE or at [admin@royalarchinst.org.uk](mailto:admin@royalarchinst.org.uk)

## MEETINGS NOTES

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### 164th SUMMER MEETING 7–13 July 2018: Isles of Scilly

M. AMORY, D. AND L. CHAMBERS, J. AND V. COAD, W. HUSBAND, J. KNIGHT, A. SCOTT, S. SHAW, K. STUBBS, T. TATTON-BROWN

After an early start, we met at Swindon and joined the Barnes coach, with knowledgeable driver Phil, familiar to some from previous trips. Fortunately, we didn't drive round the Magic Roundabout, but nevertheless, would we arrive at our overnight stop before the England/Sweden football World Cup kick off at 3 p.m.? We were soon on to the Somerset Levels, where the sea used to extend towards Glastonbury, and saw buildings on small raised areas, hedgerows interspersed by reeds, bulrushes and huge willow trees, sure signs of water nearby. There were distant views of mud flats as we passed the slip road to Weston-super-Mare. There are far more solar roofs here than those of us from around London are used to; no wonder solar had just made a record weekly contribution to UK electricity generation. We drove past Serena de la Hey's 'Willow Man' sculpture (sometimes known as 'the Angel of the South'), heading west past Exeter, across wild Bodmin Moor, the setting of du Maurier's *Jamaica Inn*, and towards St Austell, where china clay has been mined since the eighteenth century. Redruth, the next key town, is famous for its tin mines and we were regaled with

its many firsts: an early horse traction railway, the first place to have gas lamps, where Boulton & Watt's representative William Murdoch made many innovations and where Isambard Kingdom Brunel made the chains for the Clifton Suspension Bridge and laid them out on the road near Hall before transporting them to Bristol.

Eventually we arrived in Camborne, famous for its nineteenth-century School of Mines, still today running specialist courses. Many pitheads are visible throughout the landscape. The town's other outstanding edifices include both chapels and pubs. This day, the pubs were full of exuberant red-and-white-flag draped supporters shouting 'It's coming home!' out of the windows. On a wander through the town, we saw examples of Camborne's industrial past celebrated in the form of pumping engine and pithead shaped pasties in a baker's window, an interesting cultural fusion. We settled into the comfortable John Francis Bassett Hotel, Wetherspoons with adjoining pub that had more than a little in common with Fawlty Towers. This Grade II listed building (1866–7), with four-stage corner tower, replaced a smaller Market House

and has housed variously the Town Hall and Magistrate's Court, the Camborne Savings Bank, and Assembly Rooms. It was paid for by the eponymous Basset, aka 'Squire of Tehidy', a leading local landowner, whose family coat of arms is set in the North facade, an Italian palazzo-style extension added in 1911. The conversion to hotel and pub includes nods to the local story in the copious artwork and shovel-shaped door handles.

Next day after a short coach hop to Penzance we embarked the ferry, the latest, only just over 40-year-old, version of the *Scillonian*, numbered *III*. We enjoyed fine views of the open-air Minack Theatre, the cliffs of southern Cornwall and the remains of the Porthcurno Intercontinental Telegraph Station, still the landing for some fibre-optic cables. Then we crossed open sea, passing the 130-feet high Wolf Rock lighthouse (1869). There are more than 500 registered wrecks around the Isles of Scilly, the *Torrey Canyon* being one of the best known. She went aground on the Seven Stones reef between Land's End and St Martin's in 1967, causing one of the worst man-made disasters ever. Despite our vessel's reputation for a shallow but not particularly stable hull, our voyage was calm, and as we drew into Hugh Town Harbour, St Mary's, we could see the Scottish-style fortress housing our hotel on the top of the cliff. Unlike the rest of the Isles Hugh Town is not owned by the Duchy of Cornwall, but by its inhabitants, though the Duchy does control the port.

Sir Francis Godolphin, governor of the islands from 1568–1608, claimed that 'no other place can so aptly permit or restrain the traffic of Ireland and the north of Scotland with France or Spain'. It was with this in mind that various attempts at fortification were made.

The Star Castle, begun in 1593, was our base for six days. It is formidable in appearance, with projecting bastions to give interlocking fields of fire. There is a substantial magazine and some surviving barrack buildings. It makes an excellent hotel, but a poor fortress; in its present role, it is wonderfully picturesque. In the sunshine and clear air of a flawless week in July, the islands took on a Mediterranean or even a Caribbean appearance, but however commanding the castle may look on its promontory above the harbour, its construction must have been too flimsy to withstand a serious



Detail of the bell-cote and parapet of the Garrison Gate as remodelled (1742) by Abraham Tovey, resident master gunner (the initials are of King George II, Francis Godolphin, and Tovey).  
(M. O'Brien)

attack. The Scillies' defences were often ambitious and well designed, but time and again, because building works advance more slowly than political developments elsewhere, they were abandoned when only half finished. Perhaps it was fortunate, if ironic, that the only serious and successful attack on the islands came from England, led by Admiral Blake.

**Our Sunday afternoon walk**, around The Garrison, guided by Jonathan Coad, took in the Walls. These were built in the 1740s, during the War of the Austrian Succession, no doubt with the possibility of invasion in mind. With their redans and gun emplacements they are formidable, and the Woolpack and Bartholomew Batteries in particular are skilfully and solidly constructed. A planned extension to the west to take in the whole peninsula was abandoned. At the north end, the King Charles Battery was re-armed in 1793 on



Garrison Walls: view N-E across King Charles' Battery, with reconstructed turf bank and replica gun carriages (M. O'Brien)

the outbreak of war with France. Some cannon have been mounted to give an impression of its appearance, and a reconstructed traversing platform shows how the guns could be laid to cover the approaches to the island. Throughout the nineteenth century and during the two World Wars, the defences were constantly updated to include rifled breechloaders and electric searchlights, but they saw little, if any, action. The murderous rocks and shoals around the islands must have destroyed far more ships than were ever damaged by the shore-based artillery, without distinction of friend or enemy.

The afternoon's walk had introduced us to the island of St Mary's dominant vegetation – bracken. Quite why this invasive and noxious weed has been allowed to establish itself in such density and profusion is not obvious. There are no sheep being farmed in the parts of the island which the RAI visited, so perhaps there is no incentive to tackle it. Soay sheep, said to be resistant, eat the base of the plant and are used on Dartmoor to control bracken. A modest suggestion ...

**Monday** was a very full day. Scillonian resident and guide Chas Wood, of Scilly Walks, took us on a tour of St Mary's, visiting sites from the Bronze Age, Tudor and Civil War defences, and war time Pill boxes. The party took a local bus to Halangy Down, the highest point of St Mary's. It is marked by a BBC mast and Telegraph Tower, now a residence but built for semaphore in 1841. On the side of the hill, the Down is criss-crossed by footpaths, with trees, hedges and low vegetation. En route Chas told us much about the history and archaeology of the islands, their flora, geology, weather, the bulb industry and occupants. Botanists and garden lovers marvelled at the variety of plants common to the Canaries and New Zealand, pausing to admire the tall flowering spike of the *Agave Aeonium*, and amazing 'giant' nasturtiums with leaves the size of dinner plates! Walking down towards the sea, we reached Bant's Carn, a large and impressive Bronze Age burial chamber with a curved stone lined passage to the interior and capped by four large stones. Another much smaller burial chamber, Halangy Porth, is close by, below



Halangy Porth Bronze Age burial chamber  
(M. O'Brien)

Halangy Down settlement, although difficult to spot, as it was subsumed in bracken.

Down the hill slope on a series of banks and terraces, the settlement dates to the later Iron Age/Roman period. Excavated in the 1950s, it has well preserved low walls of eleven interconnecting stone-built structures and a field system. The settlement was apparently long lived with evidence of the houses being altered and repaired and it was a productive, sheltered area for farming and animal raising. As sea levels have risen by about 300 m, it is now close to the coast line, but from our vantage point it was easy to imagine a lower sea level and extensive larger islands.

At this point we took a leisurely route to Old Town, walking along a narrow coastal path with frequent stops to admire the view, the boats, flowers, butterflies, and monuments. In places we saw remains of kelp pits, stone lined shallow pits used to burn dried kelp, producing soda ash. There are over one hundred such pits on the islands and the soda was exported to Bristol and Gloucester for the manufacture of blue glass, soap and bleach. It was a very important, if pungent, part of the islands' economy from the seventeenth century

until 1835. The route took us past the golf course and there was much consternation and waving when the tail end of our party found themselves close to the tee of the challenging and scenic Fourth Hole above the cliffs – at a critical point of the game!

The next stop was the defences of Harry's Walls, built in the 1550s and described by Chas and Jonathan Coad. Overlooking Porthcressa and Town Beaches, and facing The Garrison, it is intriguing and incomplete, with V-shaped defences, designed by the Italian, Portonari. The remains show that it was an innovative design and a considerable investment in the defence of the country. Was it abandoned because The Garrison was thought to be a more strategic position (some of the granite was taken for building Star Castle), because the site was too small for the defences needed or because the threat of French invasion was removed? Whatever the explanation, the remains are a further demonstration of the strategic significance of the islands. Intriguingly, there is another monument here – a Bronze Age standing stone, probably moved from its original location and standing sentinel with a modern navigation marker, guidance for boats in the harbour.

We then took a meandering walk through Lower Moor nature reserves managed by the Isles of Scilly Wildlife Trust. A network of paths led to secluded pools and nature hides and we glimpsed views, of planes arriving and landing at St Mary's Airport, and of the remaining part of the Norman Ennor Castle, built against a granite outcrop. Emerging into Old Town, we had a welcome and generous lunch at a very busy café overlooking Old Town Bay, catching up on the mornings' activities, paddling and for the well-prepared, swimming.

We walked towards the west coast of the island in the afternoon through an area of dunes and bulb fields. At Porthellick Cove we paid due respects to the original grave (now marked by a simple and stark quartz memorial) of Admiral Sir Cloudesley Shovell who died in 1707 and is now buried in Westminster Abbey. One of the greatest naval disasters in the area, his was one of four ships wrecked on the Western Rocks, with many lives lost. The state of navigational aids at that time meant that ships could go off course and become disorientated if it was difficult to fix their exact location. This disaster was a further spur to the Board of the

Admiralty which instituted a competition for a more precise method to determine longitude.

Climbing uphill, we reached the impressive Bronze age entrance grave chamber known as the Great Tomb. It is almost circular with a turf and gorse capping and has a narrow unroofed passage leading to the central tomb and surrounded by a low outer platform. The tomb was found to be empty when excavated. The chamber is the largest in a scattered cemetery including six others, and two cairns. It is well maintained by English Heritage and surrounded by mown grass. Nearby, a pill box overlooks the sea.

We then took a bus back to Buzza Hill in Hugh Town, waiting for it amongst the characteristic small fields of *Agapanthus* and *Narcissi*, surrounded by high protective hedges. Buzza Tower at the top of the hill was originally a windmill built in 1821. It was restored in 1912 as a memorial to King Edward VII and is now a *camera obscura*. Nearby is a later Neolithic/ early Bronze Age burial chamber, very small, deep and again, overgrown.

After an early evening dinner, we strolled back into Hugh Town to the Methodist Church to meet Chas again and see the fantastic slide show by Katharine Sawyer, also of Scilly Walks. Katharine took us through the long history and archaeology of the islands with wonderful images. It was excellent background for some of the sites we had seen and a tantalising introduction to the following days' visits; many thanks to both Chas and Katharine.

**On Tuesday morning** we caught a boat to Tresco, guided by Heather Sebire, Senior Property Curator, English Heritage. Owing to the tide we landed at the southern end of the island, and a short walk from the entrance to the Abbey Gardens. Close to the landing stage is evidence of submerged landscape: to the west, a prehistoric field system and post-medieval enclosure and to the east another field system and two possible round houses. Just inland is Oliver's Battery, constructed in 1651 after the Parliamentary forces captured Tresco on 18 April. Gunfire from this Battery pounded the Garrison on St Mary's, leading to the Royalists' surrender on 23 May.

St Nicholas's Priory, an early twelfth-century Benedictine foundation, was probably abandoned before the Reformation though the cemetery con-

tinued in use until 1811. The visible remains include the nave and chancel of the small priory church with two surviving arches in the south wall, formerly the entrances to the south transept and the cloister. A sill slab at the base of the smaller arch is a reused Christian inscribed memorial stone thought to date from the later sixth century, the earliest evidence for Christian activity at or near the site. Just to the west of the church is a stone perforated by two round holes, possibly Bronze Age, brought to its present position from elsewhere on Tresco or from Bryher.

Augustus Smith (1804–72) acquired the Scilly Isles' lease from the Duchy of Cornwall; the Crown stipulated that as Lord Proprietor he build St Mary's a new pier and complete the parish church, among other improvements, to the tune of £5000, within six years from 1834. He brought much needed social and economic benefits to these small islands, though his actions were not always popular. He lived on St Mary's while he built the family home adjacent to the priory on Tresco, which is the almost central island, and began to create the garden; over time he extended both the house and the garden. The ruins are attractively integrated into the now world-famous Tresco Abbey Garden, which has thrived under five generations of Augustus Smith's family. The garden, six to seven hectares, and its woodland now occupy about thirty of Tresco's 297 hectares (1.15 sq. miles). This island remains leased to the family.

Augustus took advantage of natural shelter afforded by Tresco's high ridge and south-facing slope, carving out three terraces, adding windbreak walls and an extensive belt of sheltering trees. Realising the asset of a warm, virtually winter-free climate, he acquired plants from English nurseries and private gardens, and from Scillonian seafarers sailing abroad. He had long-term productive contact with Kew. His heir, nephew Thomas Dorrien-Smith, helped the island economy by growing supplies for the London flower market. Thomas's son Arthur in his turn added to the garden range, having collected plants while serving in the army in South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. Arthur's son and grandson maintained the garden's progress. The Abbey Garden is not Paradise, however; massive storms brought severe damage in 1929, 1987, and 1990.

Every year now, the result of the family's collecting and gardening efforts draws many visitors to see a subtropical display in which species from 80 countries flourish, hundreds blooming even in midwinter. Admittedly visitors do not find innovative garden design: a grid of lengthy paths, some with steps, covers the slope, Long Walk stretching the full width east to west, and Neptune's Steps with Lighthouse Walk from north to south, down the three terraces. The draw is the presence of so many striking and exotic species in the open air, many of which could not survive on the Cornish mainland only 30 miles away. They are located where they are best suited, Australian and South African plants mainly on the drier top levels, those from New Zealand and South America in the more humid lower reaches. Many plants are strongly sculptural in effect, with distinctive spires, spikes, whorls, fans, fronds, pyramids or mounds, the flowers often brilliant, complex and ostentatious.

Within the grid of beds you come upon the Mediterranean Garden, Pebble Garden (in Union Jack design), Palm Circle, Succulent Cliff, and, at the edge, the Eucalyptus Field and Bamboos. Monterey Pines and Cypresses abound in the shelterbelt; there are palms and tree-ferns aplenty, *Yucca*, *Echium* and *Agave*, *Banksia* and bottle-brush: the diversity is amazing.

Eye-catching objects mark junctions or ends of paths: a statue of earth-mother Gaia, another of three leaping Tresco Children, the gothic arches of the old priory, a figurehead of Neptune, the Agave Fountain, a Shell House. Of particular interest to the RAI was a Roman altar with carved side-panels depicting a cleaver and a long-handled axe, found at The Garrison on St Mary's, unfinished and so probably unused. More eye-catchers are found in the garden's 'Valhalla', a group, not of Norse heroes, but certainly of those lost in battle – with the sea: the tireless Augustus Smith started this collection of 28 figureheads and other relics from local shipwrecks of the late nineteenth century. The most dashing is Palinurus, helmsman to Virgil's Aeneas, here as a Victorian swashbuckler, fully and formally dressed down to the brass buttons on his blue jacket, waving his cutlass over his head. The vessel, inward bound from Demerara in 1848, went aground on the Lion Rock, north of St. Martin's, its 17 crewmen all lost; of its cargo,

locals salvaged 14 hogsheads and 71 puncheons of spirits, and nine quarter-casks of rum.

From the top terrace and from Abbey Hill there are views outwards to several islands, Bryher, St Mary's, St Agnes, and Samson, their nearness a reminder that the 55 isles and some 80 islets of the Scillies were once one. (In certain calm, low-sea conditions it is still possible to wade between some of them; Caroline was relieved that we missed the opportunity by a day!) It also reminded me of the experience of a friend who, early in her career in horticulture and its history, spent a memorable year working at the Abbey Garden, very happily, although at that time transport was so limited you were virtually marooned – apart from the weekly boat to St Mary's, where there was A Shop.

Having made our separate ways around the gardens and ruins, following our various interests, we joined forces to set off for Tresco's sixteenth- and seventeenth-century defences, getting an external view of the garden boundary and luxurious shelter-belt of trees as we left.

After the delights of lush gardens we turned again to the serious business of warfare. We began our walk round the east side of the island, passing the end of the great pool before making our way northwards to the Old Blockhouse. Heather Sebire reminded us of the vulnerability of the islands to attack by foreign warships and privateers. The Old Blockhouse clearly occupied a strategic position commanding Tresco's main port, Old Grimsby, with views over to St Martin's, Tean and St Helen's. Built in 1554, it was originally armed with at least three heavy guns. Little is known, however, about the use of the blockhouse from its completion until the Civil War when it was used by Royalists in their unsuccessful defence of Tresco.

From Old Grimsby, a challenging uphill climb over a boulder strewn path brought us to Castle Down where attempts to locate prehistoric cairns, enclosures and entrance graves were frustrated by the heather and natural outcrops of granite, though we did identify part of a field system. King Charles' Castle, guarding the inner channel and New Grimsby harbour, was clearly a more sophisticated fortification than the Old Blockhouse. It was built probably between 1550 and 1554 and was originally two storied to accommodate at least two tiers of guns. The somewhat Spartan and cramped living quarters consisted of a hall with kitchen at



View S-W over Cromwell's Castle and across the channel between Tresco and Bryher (A. Williams)

its north end containing a fireplace with bread oven. Two smaller chambers, north and south of the main room were probably sleeping quarters and to the east lay the guard room.

We then scrambled downhill to Cromwell's Castle which effectively replaced King Charles' Castle in the defence of New Grimsby harbour. This is a somewhat enigmatic fortification of more than one period. A sixteenth-century blockhouse thought to have been here was superseded by the unusual tall cylindrical tower. Documentary evidence gives a construction date of 1651–2 when the islands, threatened by a Dutch fleet intent on eradicating privateers here, were captured by forces under the command of Robert Blake, General-at-Sea. Those members of the RAI who mounted the internal stair of the tower were rewarded with impressive if puzzling internal features that suggest an earlier date, including a

fine ribbed stone vault, fireplace and decorative capitals. On the open platform above there were six gunports.

The original date of the substantial gun platform on the seaward side is unknown as the platform was apparently remodelled in the 1740s to its present appearance. These alterations seemingly included the blocking of the original doorway to the tower and its replacement with a new entrance via the platform.

The final leg of our walk to New Grimsby and the boat back to St Mary's took us along a somewhat tortuous coastal path. On the way we passed a simple memorial to a secret naval flotilla based in Grimsby Sound in 1942 and 1943 that had transported agents to and from Occupied France and played a role in bringing back details of German defences on the Normandy coast.

**On Wednesday** we visited St Martin's and the eastern and northern isles.

We landed at Lowertown Quay, St Martin's at around low tide, after our short crossing from St Mary's. This was the perfect time to see the many fragments of the 290-million-year-old granite pluton that project from the flats (and destroy ships) between Tresco, St Mary's and St Martin's. Before 7000 BC, Scilly was one large granite island that stretched continuously as far south-west as the Bishopstone rock, until a rapid post-glacial sea-level rise flooded the island, and by the end of the Bronze Age almost all of the present 'Isles of Scilly' had been separated from one another, as recent work (paid for by Historic England) has shown. Over thirty years ago, a splendid book by the late Charles Thomas was published (*Exploration of a drowned Landscape: Archaeology and History of the Isles of Scilly*: 1985), which proposed, from the then scientific evidence, and from place-names evidence, that the flooding of the flats did not take place until much later. As the new sea-level curve shows, there was a more rapid sea-level rise in the Stone Age, which tailed off in the last few thousand years. Marshall and Johns (2018, *HE Research* Issue 8, 58–65) outline the latest ideas on this. Charles' book still has much else of value.

From Lowertown we walked to the north-west side of the island, and trekked over Tinker's Hill to see another of the many kelp pits that were made in the islands from the late seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Beyond this, to the east on Top Rock Hill, we tried to find (in dense heather) the remains of a large prehistoric field system, with cairns, a hut circle, and a bank and ditch. This area is now perhaps more famous for the detailed work carried out in recent years by Quaternary geologists. The northern side of St Martin's (as well as Trescoe and Bryher) has many deposits and erratics relating to the southern limit of the last vast glacier of the Ice Ages. About 21,000 years ago, this great glacier flowed southwards down the Irish Sea Basin to the north side of the great granite pluton of Scilly. On Scilly there were cold tundra conditions, and orange-brown deposits of 'ram' can be found in the cliffs. These contain organic matter which have been radio-carbon dated to between 21,000 and 30,000 years ago, as well as some worked flints that were used

in the Palaeolithic. We saw some of these in the Museum on St Mary's on our last day.

After lunch we had a magnificent boat trip, first to observe Nornour and the Eastern Isles, and then west of St Martin's to Teän, St Helen's and Round Island. Nornour, which in the Prehistoric and Roman periods was part of Great Ganilly, was the site of a well-known excavation undertaken by the late Sarnia Butcher. The remains of a Bronze Age to Roman settlement was discovered in the early 1960s, when it was being washed away by the sea. A remarkable collection of early first-century AD objects were also found (all now splendidly displayed in the Museum on St Mary's), which were perhaps votive offerings for a nearby Roman shrine, and Charles Thomas has suggested that the area of deeper water, north of Nornour, was then a Roman harbour, which looked east to the mainland of Cornwall.

After Nornour, we turned west, rounded Cruther's Point on the south side of St Martin's, and passing through many rocky 'ledges' west of Lowertown, we went into the sheltered bay on the south side of Teän. Like a number of other sites on Scilly, Teän has produced sherds of seventh-century pottery (Thomas's E ware) imported from western France. In all, some thirty vessels are known, along with a few scraps of earlier East Mediterranean amphorae.

From the boat we observed the site of Charles Thomas's 1956–60 excavations around St Theona's Chapel. This was another remarkable site with early Medieval stone-lined cist graves and an eighth-century stone chapel, all now surrounded by seventeenth- to nineteenth-century walls, and a cottage built for the Nance family, who lived here and started the kelp industry in Scilly. We continued west around Teän to St Helen's, which was used as a quarantine island (with a Pest House) in the eighteenth century. Here was another early Christian site and chapel.

St Elidius's Chapel – St Helen's was the mistake of a sixteenth-century map maker – was excavated (appropriately) by Helen O'Neil. It is one of a series of island hermitage sites along the Atlantic seaways in western Britain and Ireland. In its initial phase it comprised a small rectangular oratory, a round dry-stone hut and a group of graves, all within an enclosure. Church Island, Valencia, County Kerry is very similar. In later phases, the

hut was retained, perhaps as the original cell of the 'saint'; three rectangular dwelling huts and a new church were added, the latter with a north chapel. This may have housed the remains of the saint and fragments of a twelfth-century Purbeck marble shrine or reliquary were found.

We finished our boat trip by going around the north side of St Helen's to Round Island, where we observed closely the landings leading up to the Scillies' great northern lighthouse. Built in 1887, it stands on the northern edge of Scilly's vast granite batholith, and is often lashed by huge waves, like the Bishop's Rock lighthouse. The top of the lantern is sixty metres above the sea. We then turned west to see some seals and the last of this year's puffins on, and around, the three great pie slices of Men-a-vaur, with its huge vertical cliffs. Our direct return to St Mary's was down the channel between Bryher and Tresco, where we passed very close to Cromwell's Castle, that we had visited the previous day, which is perhaps the second oldest surviving 'castle' (after Ennor Castle on St Mary's) in the Scillies.

#### Thursday

If any member – distracted by guillemot or molten ice-cream – had not been paying attention at every moment of our stay, Thursday morning was the chance for revision. The Isles of Scilly Museum on Church Street, St Mary's, has two purpose-built storeys packed to the gunwales with a well-curated display of these islands' prehistory and history, including nauticalia and wrecks (notably *Colossus*, and the *Association* on which Sir Cloudesley Shovell came to grief), agricultural, social and war history. Members were impressed with Bronze Age urns from the chambered tombs seen earlier in the week; the mirror and scabbarded sword from the Bryher cist of c. 200 B.C.; a greenstone axe from Halangy Porth; and fine Roman brooches found on Nornour. An entire pilot gig took centre stage in the museum's open basement. There was even a wall of natural history displays, including a stuffed Black Kite so rare it was just asking to be shot (in 1942). The museum – founded in 1967 and run largely by volunteers – is exemplary in the way that such a wide variety of objects is given space to convey the interest and importance of each item. Staff should be proud of the clarity of presentation of so many disparate items. Behind the scenes, this

independent museum also supports the community through its family history resources and archives.

Another item on display was the Gannex mac affected by Harold Wilson, Lord Wilson of Rievaulx, who had retired here to his holiday home. As we left the museum, flags were at half mast across Hugh Town; a sign, not of sadness at the Institute's last day here, but of respect for his widow, the poet Mary Wilson, whose memorial service would be held that morning. She now lies beside him, in the beautiful coastal graveyard by St Mary's. On this day of blue sky and waves that could not refrain from sparkling, there was time for members to pause in the truncated but homely old town church, before walking on round the headland, past rocks that Henry Moore would have died for, back to Hugh Town's fudgiferous shops, the cool shade of taverns, and the queue to re-board *Scillonian III*.

Members were as ever grateful for Caroline's organisation and care, and for Hedley's knowledge and leadership.

Further notes can be seen via the RAI's Events webpage.



Memorials to Scillonians and the shipwrecked  
(W. Husband)

# AUTUMN DAY MEETING 27 October 2018: The London Mithraeum, Roman Amphitheatre and Museum of London

LINDSAY ALLASON-JONES

It was a cold Saturday morning when we managed to find our way out of Bank Underground Station and gathered at the new Mithraeum Museum at 12 Walbrook in the City of London. This new display, which includes an 'immersive experience', is the latest chapter in the history of an extraordinary site, which was first found in the early 1950s during the excavation of a Second World War bomb site.

The temple lies by the course of one of London's 'lost' rivers, the Walbrook. When Londinium was founded by the Romans, the Walbrook marked the limits of their first settlement, but it wasn't until the third century A.D. that a temple to the god Mithras was built on reclaimed ground by the river.

The worship of Mithras first appeared in the east of the Roman Empire in the first century B.C. Different forms of the men-only cult then spread across the Empire, following the travels of the merchants, soldiers and imperial administrators who were drawn to this exotic god of light who could act as an intermediary between men and eternity. The worshippers met in rectangular temples, which were often constructed below ground, dark and windowless spaces that imitated the original cave in which Mithras killed a bull as an act of creation or fertility. This scene, the 'tauroctony', is the focal point of each mithraeum and its full meaning is the subject of much speculation.

Sophie Jackson and Mike Tetro of MOLA (Museum of London Archaeology) told us the story of how William Grimes had excavated the site, attracting more than 30,000 visitors a day. There was much debate at the time as to what to do with the site and it was finally decided to dismantle it and reconstruct it about 100 metres from its original location. Many of us visited this rebuild after it was opened in 1962, but it is recalled as being rather sad and lonely amongst the high-rise buildings that increasingly surrounded it. In 2010 Bloomberg acquired the site for its European headquarters and worked with the City of London and conservation specialists to dismantle the temple again and reconstruct it as close to its original position as possible. An interesting decision was made to resist the temptation to reconstruct the temple as the Romans would have seen it around 250 A.D. or rebuild the ruin that thousands of enthusiastic Londoners saw in the early fifties.

No expense has been spared to display the site and the finds from the 1950s and 2010–14 excavations in an elegant and informative way. As we wended our way down the stairs, we were literally going back in time, as was explained by graphics on the walls of the staircase. In the ruins themselves an 'immersive' sound and light display introduces visitors to the cult of Mithras and to the Walbrook Mithraeum. This is a very modern



The tauroctony from the Mithraeum on display in the Museum of London (C. von Patzelt)

presentation which will appeal to many people and is proving popular.

Before striding out to Guildhall we also inspected the London Stone in its new aedicula. This is another antiquity which has had a wandering habit, both before and after Jack Cade, the leader of the rebellion against Henry VI's government in 1450, struck it with his sword and claimed to be Lord of London. The original age and purpose of the stone is open to debate but it was generally felt by our group that its present setting was more elegant than the stone's own appearance warranted.

At Guildhall another basement was explored, this time containing the Roman amphitheatre. It had long been presumed that Londinium must have had a major sporting venue but it was not until the 1980s, during the building of the Guildhall Art Gallery, that it was discovered. The amphitheatre's remains are now on permanent display and, like the Mithraeum, good use has been made of lighting to display it to its advantage. The footprint of the old amphitheatre is marked out in grey paving in Guildhall Yard but one wonders how many visitors to the area know what this curved line in the ground indicates or are aware that the real amphitheatre is visitable below their feet, complete with its drains and sump pits.

On our way to the Museum of London to see the sculpture from Grimes's excavations at the Walbrook Mithraeum, we stopped to view the visible stretches of the Roman walls of Londinium and the Roman fort. An especial treat was to be

taken underground again, through a hidden and somewhat unprepossessing door, to see the west gate of the fort and city. Even those of us who know Roman London well had never seen these remains, which included the gate's north guardroom, gravelled roadway and central piers.

After admiring the displays of marble sculpture from the Mithraeum and neighbouring temples, we ended an excellent morning with lunch at Benugo's at the Museum of London. This may be the last time that the RAI visit the Museum of London before it is bodily lifted to its new site at Smithfield. Somehow, given that we had spent the morning visiting archaeological sites that have been moved around, it seemed only reasonable that the Museum should also continue on its journey around our capital. Many thanks are due to Caroline Raison for organizing and Hedley Swain for leading us on a fascinating and thought-provoking tour.



Londinium: model of the west gate of the fort and city

## ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE and THAMES DISCOVERY PROGRAMME CONFERENCE 13–14 October 2018: Ten Years of Thames Discovery ELIOTT WRAGG

The Royal Archaeological Institute teamed up with the Thames Discovery Programme (TDP) who were celebrating their tenth anniversary in October with their annual Foreshore Forum. This was a special two-day event held at UCL and generously supported by Team 2100. The first session comprised a round up of the TDP's work in 2018 by Elliott Wragg (TDP) followed by papers from Foreshore Recording and Observation Group (FROG) members Martin Hatton and Melvyn Dresner looking at the Greenwich foreshore and

'art and the City' foreshore respectively, before Nathalie Cohen (FROG and former TDP) gave her perspective on the ten years of TDP.

Next was an update on the City Bridge Trust 'older Londoners' project by Helen Johnston (TDP), followed by Josh Frost (TDP) discussing the Tideway TaDPoles project for young people. Theresa O'Mahony, a FROG member, then described her work with the Enabled Archaeology Foundation and possible future links with TDP.

The last session of Day 1 saw Stella Bickelman of Museum of London Archaeology (MOLA) giving an overview of the Tideway river-front excavations while Sadie Watson (MOLA) answered the question 'Who were Roman Londoners?'. Stuart Wyatt of the Portable Antiquities Scheme discussed their work in relation to Thames foreshore finds. Lastly Jane Sidell of Historic England presented the Annual FROG Awards before everyone enjoyed our birthday party – the high point of which being the astonishing foreshore cakes baked by Matt Hoskins, formerly a MOLA apprentice.

Sunday morning kicked off with three FROG papers; Suzanne Taylor discussing the Rose theatre, Samantha Brummage talking about her

PhD work in the Colne valley and Claire Millington discussing her PhD work on Roman officers' households. Then Damian Goodburn (MOLA) presented the evidence for tidal levels on the Thames and Jon Cotton, formerly of the Museum of London, discussed the golden age of Thames antiquarians.

The second session looked at intertidal work around the British Isles; Stephanie Ostrich (MOLA) outlining the work of the Coastal and Intertidal Zone Archaeological Network (CITiZAN), Professor Martin Bell of the University of Reading discussing his work on pre-historic route-ways in the Severn Estuary and closing with Tom Dawson of the SCAPE Trust looking on video at intertidal archaeology around the country.

The final session took the conference into uncharted waters; Jose Manuel Mates Luque of Arqueocean discussed his work on the foreshores of Biscay, Sarah Miller of the Florida Public Archaeology Network presented volunteer archaeology in the Sunshine State, and Mark Beattie-Edwards of the Nautical Archaeology Society took us into the murky depths of the underwater world before Gustav Milne (CITiZAN) and Nathalie Cohen brought proceedings to a close.

We couldn't have made the conference such a success without a lot of help so would like to thank all the TDP volunteers; our MOLA colleagues, in particular Suzie Haworth, Amy Reid and Emma Bakel; Chris Haworth for taking the pictures; and Team 2100 and the RAI for supporting the event.



TDP staff past and present cutting the cake

## MISCELLANY

### Institute scarves and ties

The old stock of RAI ties and scarves is almost exhausted, and we would like to offer new designs for sale to members. Once the samples are prepared, images will be posted on our website. Depending on the level of interest, and so the number ordered, prices should probably be about £20. Please email feedback to me at [newsletter@royalarchinst.org](mailto:newsletter@royalarchinst.org)

### Online access to RAI journals and lectures

The video recording of the Institute's lectures is no longer available from the Society of Antiquaries'

technological services. The President is exploring other possible services.

If you would like online access to lectures or to the journals, please contact the administrator with your e-mail address. You will be sent a username and password, which you can use to login to our website using the boxes at the top of its first page. Once logged in, you will be able to change your password to something more memorable, and to access the journals.

### Subscriptions

The current rates are: Ordinary member, £40 and Associate or Student, £20, with discounts when paid

by direct debit; Life member, £750 or £525 if aged over 60. Payment for subscriptions may now be made by direct debit or cheque only. For a membership form or direct debit instructions, please see <http://www.royalarchinst.org/membership> or contact the Administrator.

### Gift Aid

Members who pay the standard rate of tax and have filled in the gift aid form have gained for the Institute a substantial sum. Despite previous notices of encouragement, it is still the case that less than a third of members have yet arranged for the Institute to receive gift aid. Under this scheme,

if you are a taxpayer, the government will refund to the Institute, 25p in the pound of the value of your subscription. If you would like to help, please ask the Administrator for a form.

### The RAI office

The Institute's Administrator will usually be at the Society of Antiquaries on the second Wednesday of each month from October to May, between 11 am and 3 pm. The direct telephone number is 07847 600756, the email is [admin@royalarchinst.org](mailto:admin@royalarchinst.org) and the postal address is RAI, c/o Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, London, W1J 0BE.

## MY FAVOURITE DIG

### Coppergate memories: Erik Bloodaxe Rules OK MARGARET NIEKE

Nearing retirement I have been looking back over the many and varied areas of archaeological endeavour I have been associated with over the years and it is clear that chief and pivotal amongst many experiences was the time I spent in 1977 and 1980 digging on the now internationally famous and significant urban site at Coppergate, York.

Being a strange, bookish (well I still am!), child I had caught 'history and archaeology' fever at a very early age; a passion ignited and nurtured by the amateur local historian I had the great fortune to live next door to. Here was a man who happened by chance one day to find the owners of a neighbouring farm about to begin burning the local medieval manorial court rolls which languished in a dusty wooden chest they wanted to reuse. Having quickly learnt medieval Latin he spent the next decade patiently transcribing them for publication. Also a skilled draftsman he worked recording many 1950s and 60s York excavations; all in his spare time alongside work in the local Co-op Offices; a remarkable act to try and follow. By the age of 11, I was proudly announcing to my new Grammar School Head that I was determined to be an archaeologist! Living in York I had the luck to see and help with several early excavations run by the newly founded York Archaeological Trust (YAT). You can probably imagine my determination to get involved with the major site appearing

at Coppergate in the mid 1970s and I was indeed fortunate to spend the summer of 1977 onsite trying to get my head around the scale and complexity of it all. Having previously worked on dry and dusty shallow urban sites the depth of stratigraphy (several metres of it) and the quality of surviving remains, especially the extensive water-logged remains, were mind-blowing. This window into the Viking period got me hooked on the Early Historic period and, little did I know it then, was to provide a major guide and influence on my developing career. Once 'hooked' I had to return to the site following my undergraduate degree to spend most of a gap year (1980) there, before further studies took me on to other Early Historic adventures and, eventually, a long Civil Service career; firstly with English Heritage and latterly Natural England. Looking back, Coppergate fed my academic appetite for a more balanced understanding of Viking-age life, firmly engraving on our hearts that we were dealing with more than wild and wilful warriors. It also taught me endless archaeological skills from excavation, recording, sampling and careful finds recovery. Based on these I sailed into later projects immediately able to take on supervisory and directorial roles. Continued contact with YAT, including with the great and much missed Richard Hall, helped me understand how the 'raw' site data could be further studied to transform international understanding

of the Vikings. What luck it was to engage with such a prestige project!

Notable also was the introduction the site provided to 'Public' Archaeology. Whilst working on-site with a constant flow of visitors overhead felt like being in a goldfish bowl, the careful and subtle ways YAT worked to fund-raise and maintain support for the site have remained firmly with me throughout my career. In the days before PPG16 and the advent of developer funded archaeology this was one of the last, and perhaps best, major publicly supported excavations. This level of support was crucial rolling forward to underpin creation of the Jorvik visitor attraction. Who would have imagined that this would still be going strong in 2019 and remains a crucial part of the York cultural experience? Which local school child has not been to visit and been enthralled by transport into this ancient world? How many families have joined the holiday queues outside the centre? How strange to be able to tell folk 'I was there when it all happened'.

To record and celebrate the experience that was the excavation YAT is now running a **Coppergate Memories** project and I am delighted to have been able to record my thoughts on the site for posterity. It's odd to think that my experiences – which sometimes feel as if they were only yesterday – now form part of an oral history project ! The search for new contributions continues; (search for *coppergate-memories* for further details). Coppergate had a deep impact on both my professional



View north over the Coppergate site in full swing.  
(© YAT)

and personal life; without it my life experience and career path would have been quite different. If any readers have their own recollections YAT would be extremely pleased to hear from them.

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## ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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NEXT ISSUE Copy for the next issue must reach the editor by the end of May 2019 for publication in August 2019.

THIS ISSUE'S COVER PICTURE: The entrance to the Star Castle Hotel, St Mary's (I. of Scillies) is through the original Garrison Gate as remodelled (1742) by Abraham Tovey, with the guardhouse partly visible within. (Taken during the 2018 Summer Meeting by K. Stubbs)

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