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# Medieval Archaeology

NEWSLETTER OF THE SOCIETY FOR MEDIEVAL ARCHAEOLOGY

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## The Mick Aston Photographic Competition 2016 has a winner

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The Newsletter leads with super results; the winning photograph of the Mick Aston competition, and reports from four research projects supported by the Society through its Grants scheme. Medieval Archaeology is alive and well, and we're delighted too to include a column from our new President, Prof. Carenza Lewis. It is also very pleasing to welcome once again the observant eye of Mark Hall, as he reports on yet another splendid exhibition of medieval matters. Members please note that the Annual Conference will take place in July this year, in Lincoln.

Niall Brady  
Newsletter Editor  
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Over a career spanning more than 40 years, the late Mick Aston built up a unique collection of images that charted the development of medieval archaeology throughout Britain. In honour of his contribution to the discipline and his role in public engagement, the Society for Medieval Archaeology now runs an annual photographic competition in Mick's honour. Each year entries are requested on a particular theme related to medieval archaeology.

The theme last year was **Religion**, and the winning photograph is from Dr Steve Ashby.

The theme for 2017 is **Fieldwork**. The choice of images is wide and might include excavations, aerial photographs, objects or buildings in Britain and Ireland. Creative images are not excluded either, and all entries but must be sent to the Society at [medieval.archaeology@googlemail.com](mailto:medieval.archaeology@googlemail.com), as an email attachment, to arrive by 31st July each year. The winning entry will receive £200. The SMA reserves the right to use any entry in publications, its website and promotional materials. Further details are presented on the Society's website, at [www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/awards/photographic-competition/](http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/awards/photographic-competition/)

Left:  
The winning photograph for the 2016 competition is from Dr Steve Ashby (Department of Archaeology, University of York), entitled: **Altar, 11th-century crypt at St Mary's, Lastingham.**

# SMA Grants

## An early medieval village in Portugal

A medieval village was found in 2009 near the city of Évora known as *Casa Branca* (White House). The excavation identified structures such as storage pits, an oven, cess-pits, post-holes, graves, and the remains of a Roman road. No stone buildings were identified. Indeed, the amount of stones available for use in the area was quite limited. An exception was observed in four of the six graves, which were framed using rectangular stone blocks and bricks.

The material culture evidence, along with the type of house architecture and the burial rituals observed, identify it as an early medieval site. Radiocarbon samples determine the site to date from the early 8th to the mid-9th century. This is in fact a novelty in Portuguese archaeology, where the findings indicate a Christian community was living here at a time when Muslim populations were already taking over cities just a few kilometres away, imposing a new administration, a new religion and a new way of life.

The purpose of this project now is to study the first known early medieval village in Portugal, made of wooden buildings and with an economy based on agriculture and pastoralism.

The project has six main objectives:

- Understand the type of territorial occupation by the community
- Recognize the relationship between this Christian rural settlement and Évora, when a Muslim political and military elite held sway.
- Acknowledge what type of material culture was being used at this time, its influences and continuities (a grant from the **Society** was used to support this particular objective).
- Understand the type of houses being built through the analysis of the perishable building materials, to assess whether their construction was by necessity and by the paucity of stone and brick.
- Establish more secure chronologies for such settlements.
- Publish all the results.

**Tânia Manuel Casimiro**  
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## The dietary impact of the Norman Conquest

950 years on from the Battle of Hastings, this project seeks to explore the impact of the Norman Conquest on everyday life through the study of dietary change. Funding was acquired to undertake a study focussed on the city of Oxford. The project integrates stable isotope analysis of pre- and post-Conquest individuals (from All Saints Church, Christ Church Cathedral and Oxford Castle) with the palaeopathological analysis of these same individuals and a small programme of organic residue analysis of contemporary cooking pots (samples kindly provided by John Cotter, Oxford Archaeology). The methodology is intended to provide insight to the dietary impact of the Conquest on the scale of the individual. It will build on previous work by Naomi Sykes that was focussed on the zooarchaeological evidence from across England and northern France.

Typically carbon and nitrogen isotope analysis provides a single snapshot of the contribution of meat, marine foods and plant foodstuffs to the diet of an individual. Funding from the **Society for Medieval Archaeology** has allowed

us to use a new technique, incremental isotope analysis. The technique works by sampling dentine from teeth to understand childhood diet. By taking multiple samples from different areas of the tooth, changes in diet (and also dietary stress) can be tracked through the life course.

At the time of writing, the results of the analysis have not been analysed fully. However, it is hoped to be able to move from a simple understanding of how the consumption of foodstuffs changed during the 11th century. It is hoped to develop a more complex insight that looks at the implications of the Conquest on health. The work might, for example, include the identification of periods of famine or food abundance. Over the next few months the project will draw together the data to understand better the impact of the Conquest on everyday life.

**Ben Jervis, Richard Madgwick** (Cardiff University),  
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# Modelling the environmental impact of crusading and waves of colonisation around Kętrzyn, north Poland (Rastenburg, Prussia)

Over the weekend of 4-5 February 2017, Alex Brown (Wessex, Reading), Aleks Pluskowski (Reading), Maciej Karczewski and Małgorzata Karczewska (Białystok) took cores from three frozen lakes within the vicinity of Kętrzyn, in north-eastern Poland. Two of the lakes were located to the east of the town, near the famous ‘Wolf’s Lair’, and one was situated to the west; all three cases were located within the bounds of the territory established by the Teutonic Order in the 14th century – the procuratorship of Rastenburg. Alex Brown is currently preparing samples from the cores for preliminary analysis of any preserved pollen, which will be followed by targeted AMS dating. Seweryn Szczepański (Olsztyn) has been working on the historical sources for the associated settlement pattern, which will be compared with known archaeological and cartographic data. The various strands of data will be integrated and modelled to synchronise the pattern of indigenous occupation and colonisation with changes in the local environment. This region can be characterised broadly as a frontier from the crusading period in the mid-13th through to the mid-14th century, at which point the settlement pattern becomes increasingly stable. The principal aim of this project is to determine whether the pattern corresponds to an intensification of landscape use, and whether it is possible to identify an ecological signature for a militarised frontier.

**Aleks Pluskowski**  
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Coring in northerly climes.

# Landscape and settlement at Harpswell, Lincolnshire: revealing medieval communities

The *Harpswell Landscape and Community Project* is a multi-faceted research framework based at Bishop Grosseteste University (BGU), Lincoln, exploring the historic development of a medieval rural settlement and its wider landscape. In the summer of 2016, *Landscape and Community* undertook a programme of geophysical survey, supported by a generous **Society for Medieval Archaeology Research Grant**, the results of which allowed the BGU International Field School to carry out targeted excavation of medieval settlement remains. This work is beginning to transform our understanding of a complex and possibly high-status medieval landscape, and provides new insights into the evolution of settlement in the region.

Approximately 19km north of Lincoln, Harpswell today is a small village situated at the foot of the dramatic limestone

scarp of Lincoln Cliff. The village is perhaps best known as the site of a post-medieval hall and gardens, the denuded earthworks of which were mapped by the Royal Commission in the 1980s (Everson *et al* 1991, 107-9). Surviving elements of Harpswell Hall’s designed landscape that remain visible include a prospect mound or viewing platform and a large, water-filled moat that appears to have acted as an ornamental garden feature. While few of these earthworks can be dated confidently to the medieval period, documentary sources suggest that before construction of the hall in the 17th century, Harpswell possessed a thriving community. The taxable population of the manor of Harpswell more than doubled between the *Domesday Survey* of 1086 and the early 14th century, making it one of the most populated settlement areas in West Lindsey at the time. It is likely that Harpswell was a

significant centre even earlier in the medieval period, given the frequently recovered finds from animal burrows of Middle Saxon Ipswich Ware and the presence of Late Saxon/Early Norman fabric in the parish church. Located at the very base of the Lincoln Cliff, it may also be significant that the church stands on the site of a spring, and possesses a potentially ancient dedication to St Chad (Everson *et al* 1991, 46). The continued significance of Harpswell in the later medieval period is suggested by its choice as a residence by the Archbishops of York, the location of which has never been determined with certainty (Everson and Stocker 2006).

Immediately west of the church, and within the area emparked during the post-medieval period, evaluation trenching by a commercial unit during the early 2000s identified several medieval buildings, revealing the impressively preserved character of the historic settlement archaeology at Harpswell. With this potential in mind, *Landscape and Community* carried out magnetometer survey in the eastern part of Harpswell Hall park, in the area closest to the road, church and currently occupied village. A series of anomalies were identified, many of which appear to be archaeological in origin, including a structure that bears close resemblance to a medieval longhouse, seemingly fronting onto a routeway projecting in a general north-south alignment. An L-shaped anomaly located in the southernmost part of the survey area (map, feature A) was the most substantial feature detected, however, and this was selected for further investigation by the International Field School.

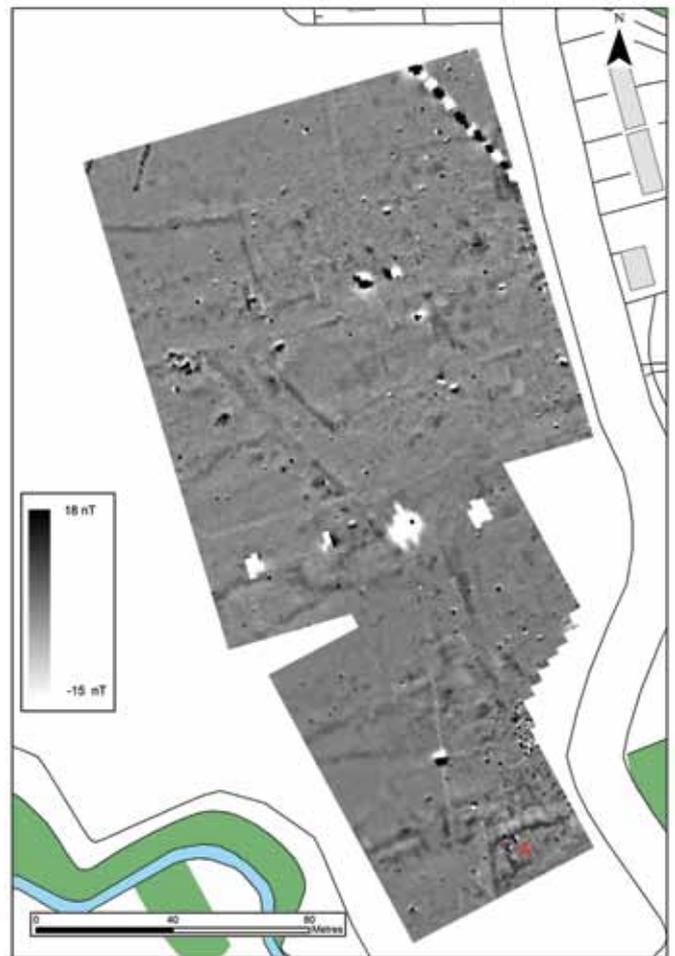
Detailed excavation over a six-week period recovered a complex sequence of activity, commencing with the establishment of a boundary ditch in the Late Saxon/early Norman period. The alignment of this feature was perpetuated by later phases, the most impressive of which relates to an apparent walkway that was probably established at some point in the 13th or 14th centuries. The ceramic sequence from the site suggests it was deserted in the 16th or 17th century, perhaps as a direct result of the landscape being emparked. Whether the medieval remains relate to the Bishop of York's residence is still uncertain as the walkway extended beyond the limits of the excavation; an uncertainty that the 2017 season of investigation hopes to resolve. While at a relatively early stage, the *Landscape and Community* project is therefore starting to unpick the intriguing development of an elite landscape, and is a programme that informs us not only about Harpswell but provides a context in which to understand historic settlement evolution in the east midlands region more broadly.

**Duncan W. Wright and Pete Townend**

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### Acknowledgements

Geophysical survey was funded by an **SMA Research Grant** and excavation was carried out with the support of Zoe Tomlinson and Charles Simpson of Banks Newton Heritage. Mark and Pam Tatam kindly gave permission to dig on their land and they, together with the current community at Harpswell, have made the work possible.



Above: Magnetometer geophysical survey funded by the SMA has enabled a detailed map of the project area.

Below: Aerial image of the excavation cutting, by T Charles Simpson/Banks Newton Heritage.



### References

- Everson, P, Taylor, C and Dunn, C 1991, *Change and Continuity: Rural Settlement in North-West Lincolnshire*, London: HMSO.
- Everson, P and Stocker, D 2006, *Summoning St Michael: Early Romanesque Towers in Lincolnshire*, Oxford: Oxbow.

## Website

[www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk)

The website continues to improve.

Send us your comments:

[medievalarchaeology@googlemail.com](mailto:medievalarchaeology@googlemail.com)

## Apply for a Grant

The Society is in the happy position of being able to offer grants for research and for travel. For information on how to apply for a Society grant/award, see our website,

[www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk](http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk)

## Current Officers

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## SMA Annual Conference, 30th June- 1st July

### Women, Status and Power in medieval society

The 2017 conference takes place in The Museum, Danes Terrace, Lincoln LN2 1LP.

Registration is available online (<http://lincn.eu/SMA17>) and members of the Society for Medieval Archaeology are eligible for the complimentary rate, which applies to all members joining before 19th June 2017.

Need accommodation? See our web page for options, [www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/](http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/)

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# Society News

## a word from our new President

It is a great honour to have been elected President of the Society for Medieval Archaeology, and I am delighted to have this chance to serve in this way the society, its members and medieval archaeology across Britain, Ireland and beyond. I've been lucky enough to work on sites and landscapes of many different dates in my archaeological career, but have always specialised in the medieval period; from my first professional post, with the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments surveying deserted villages in Wessex, through research into settlement origins in the east midlands and medieval childhood, to my most recent excavations exploring inhabited settlements in eastern England, which have helped reconstruct the impact of the Black Death. The latter has only been made possible by involving thousands of members of the public and, as President of the Society for Medieval Archaeology, I am keen to increase opportunities for anyone and everyone, whether or not employed professionally in archaeology, to get involved in medieval archaeology. The activities and resources of the Society for Medieval Archaeology are now more widely available than ever before and include conferences, visits, grants and the newsletter as well as two issues per year of our journal *Medieval Archaeology*, publishing the latest internationally significant research. The Society has more than 2,000 followers on Facebook and around 4,000 on Twitter (@SocMedArch), and I recommend these to anyone who wants to keep up-to-the-minute on news and views in the world of medieval archaeology.

I feel particularly lucky to have started my tenure as President in a celebratory year, as 2017 marks the 60th anniversary of the founding of the Society. For sixty years, the Society has championed and fostered the study of medieval archaeology. To celebrate this, Council has decided to make all society events in 2017 free for Society members. This includes our annual conference (30th June – 1st July), when I look forward to welcoming as many of you as possible to the University of Lincoln to explore new research and ideas about women and power in medieval society.

Carenza Lewis  
[clewis@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:clewis@lincoln.ac.uk)

In **September** the Society will be holding a behind-the-scenes event for members at the **Yorkshire Museum** to coincide with the exhibition **Viking: Rediscover the Legend**. Members should look out for an announcement on the Society's webpage and social media accounts (@SocMedArch and <https://www.facebook.com/groups/214091068666310/>).

In addition to the Annual Conference to be held in Lincoln this Summer, the Society is considering a further event in **December**, to coincide with the **AGM**, which will be held in London. Details will be announced on the website in due course, and in the Autumn Newsletter.

SMA Annual Conference 30th June – 1st July

## Women, Status and Power in Medieval Society

The 2017 conference of the Society for Medieval Archaeology takes place in Lincoln, commemorating the 800th anniversary of the Battle of Lincoln, in which the first ever female county sheriff, Nicholaa de la Haye, successfully defended Lincoln Castle to turn the tide of French involvement in the barons' war.

Few people have heard of Nicholaa today, or indeed of the many other women who played an important role in the medieval period, so this anniversary seems a timely moment for the Society for Medieval Archaeology to take a look at the latest research into the role of women in medieval society.

Papers by scholars from Archaeology, History, Art History and Literature, including former SMA President Professor Helena Hamerow, will throw new light on this subject, from the 7th century to the 15th. The conference schedule is intended to make attendance for a single day possible, but for those able to arrive on Friday evening, the Society's Annual Lecture will be given by

scholar and broadcaster Michael Wood on *Aethelflaed*, the subject of one programme in his recent BBC trilogy on King Alfred and the Anglo-Saxons.

The 1217 anniversary is also being marked in Lincoln by 'Battles and Dynasties', a major exhibition curated by Patrick, Lord Cormack, bringing together a remarkable range of medieval artefacts and documents (including *Domesday Book*), some never on public display ([www.thecollectionmuseum.com/exhibitions-and-events/view/battles-and-dynasties](http://www.thecollectionmuseum.com/exhibitions-and-events/view/battles-and-dynasties)).

The Society for Medieval Archaeology is supporting this exhibition and we are holding the annual conference in the summer this year so that delegates can visit the exhibition, **which will be free to members** of our Society.

For more information, and for the full programme of speakers, see our web page, [www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/](http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/)



# Other Grants

## The Castle Studies Trust awards five grants to advance the understanding of castles



The Castle Studies Trust is delighted to announce the award of five grants, totalling £21,000:

- **Castle Pulverbatch, Shropshire, England**, for geophysical and photogrammetric surveys of this motte and bailey castle. Abandoned by c.1200, the project has the potential to advance our understanding of early castles along the Welsh border.

- **Clifford, Herefordshire, England**, one of the earliest castles in the UK and one of the most important along the Welsh border. Geophysical survey and excavation, along with separately-funded building analysis, will help to understand the morphology of this little understood site. Please note this is a privately-owned site and is not accessible to the general public.

- **Dinas Bran, Denbighshire, Wales**, co-funding with Cadw will provide a geophysical survey of the most complete but little understood native-built castle in Wales, to discover what structures might lie beneath the surface.

- **Fotheringhay, Northants, England**, with almost nothing left above ground, geophysical and earthwork surveys will help to shed light on the form of this castle with strong royal connections, in particular the 15th-century palace associated with the House of York and birthplace of Richard III. Please note this is a privately-owned site and is not accessible to the general public.

- **Lathom, Lancashire, England**, analysis of castle masonry recovered from the completely destroyed late 15th-century castle built by Thomas, Lord Stanley. The masonry comes from excavations and is reused in the current building. The analysis will help to understand what the castle looked like, and will throw light on early Tudor palaces around London, like Richmond. Please note this is a privately-owned site and is not accessible to the general public.

### Donate to attend exclusive site visits

By making a substantial one-off donation or by setting up a standing order, you are helping to fund more exciting projects like the ones above and you will be able to:

a) Visit sites not that are not accessible to the general public. Four out of the five projects this year are on private land.

b) Get exclusive previews and insight to the projects from the project teams before the news is released more widely.

You can donate:

- By credit or debit card, by going to <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/castlestudiestrust>

- By cheque (made payable to the Castle Studies Trust) or by standing order (by completing a form from the website) and sending either (along with the Gift Aid Form if applicable) to the address on the forms at: <http://castlestudiestrust.org/Donate.html>

### 2016 projects finished

Both projects funded by the CST in 2016 have been completed on time and their reports are now accessible on the Castle Studies Trust website. Key findings include:

**Pembroke** – confirmation that the parch marks observed in the outer bailey from aerial photographs are those of a possible Tudor mansion, and the discovery of two or possibly three previously unknown buildings in the inner ward.

**Caus** – the discovery of a possible outer bailey separate from an outer enclosure that has often been assumed to be the outer bailey.

Our 2015 project, on **Pleshey**, should finish in Spring 2017. The wait has been worthwhile, with some exciting new interpretations coming from a close review of the existing archive.

To find out more about all the projects we have funded through recent years, and the Pembroke and Caus reports in 2016, please visit our website [www.castlestudiestrust.org](http://www.castlestudiestrust.org) or contact the chair of trustees, below.

**Jeremy Cunnington**

[admin@castlestudiestrust.org](mailto:admin@castlestudiestrust.org)

Castle Pulverbatch.

Clifford's Castle Motte from the Inner Bailey.

Lathom House in the 1840s.



# New Research



Bundles of coroners' reports in the National Archives.

Inquest into the death of Roger Poydras, a labourer from Coaley in Gloucestershire, who committed suicide on the 6th October 1548 (TNA KB9/573 m. 80, 81).

## The material culture of rural households

A new interdisciplinary project led by Dr Chris Briggs (Cambridge) and Dr Ben Jervis (Cardiff), funded by the Leverhulme Trust, is setting out to explore the material culture of medieval rural households. In addition to the two lead investigators, the project team consists of three post-doctoral researchers (Drs Alice Forward, Matt Tompkins and Thomasz Gromelski) and a GIS specialist (Dr Max Satchell).

Building on a pilot study published in *Medieval Archaeology* 59, the **Living Standards and Material Culture in Rural Households, 1300-1600** project is taking an interdisciplinary approach to understanding the material conditions of rural life in the medieval period. Our research combines the analysis of artefacts recovered from archaeological excavations with the study of lists of goods and chattels found in documentary sources, namely the records of the Royal Escheator and Coroner. As our pilot study demonstrated, neither source provides a complete record of the goods present in rural households but, by combining them, we can gain a more complete picture and explore the ways in which different types of objects and materials were valued in the medieval period.

The project seeks to address two hypotheses. The first is that living standards, as measured by the quantity and variety of household possessions, increased following the demographic and economic transformations caused by the Black Death. The second is that the medieval peasantry had a richer material culture than is often considered. By taking a long-term perspective, we are able to track changes in standards of living from the late 14th to 16th centuries, which are recognised as being critical in the transformation of English society and economy. We intend our work to be a contribution to wider debates surrounding the existence of a late medieval 'consumer revolution' and the concept of a 'great divergence' in living standards between east and west in the early modern period.

Our research will focus on a selection of counties, chosen to represent different levels of urbanisation, agricultural

bases and settlement patterns. Exploring the relationship between agricultural regimes, tenurial freedom and material possessions is a core aim of the project. The historic counties being studied are Yorkshire, Northumberland, Cumberland & Westmorland, Hampshire, Wiltshire, Norfolk, Suffolk, Devon, Cornwall, Worcestershire, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Kent and Middlesex. We would be grateful for any information about recent excavations of medieval rural sites in these regions, which may not yet feature in local Historic Environment Records.

Hampshire and Worcestershire will be the focus of more intensive study, including evidence from a wider range of sites, to allow us to better understand how the material culture of rural households varied from that of the elite and town dwellers. In addition to excavated archaeological evidence, the project will integrate records from the Portable Antiquities Scheme database through targeted analysis intended to understand the depositional patterning that these stray finds may represent, and through comparison with the types of finds typically recovered from excavations.

The project began in November 2016 and will run for three years. Outputs will include a monograph on living standards and material culture in medieval England and an edited collection of inventories collected during the project. More generally, the research will not only enhance our understanding of medieval economy and society, but will also lead to methodological contributions with regard to the integration of historical and archaeological evidence, so critical for developing a deeper understanding of our period.

You can follow the project's progress on our website and blog: [www.medievalobjects.wordpress.com](http://www.medievalobjects.wordpress.com)

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# Excavation

## Long Wittenham: a power centre of early Wessex

Between the late 6th and early 8th centuries, Anglo-Saxon society experienced dramatic changes. The first medieval kingdoms emerged, driving the development of more complex social structures, including a stable hierarchy, economic intensification and the first post-Roman markets. Wessex, which would eventually become the most successful of these kingdoms, first emerges in the Upper Thames Valley, in modern Oxfordshire and Berkshire.

The most dramatic archaeological testament to the West Saxons' rise to power is the 7th-century great hall site at Sutton Courtenay, Oxfordshire. Such great hall sites are defined by large timber buildings, reminiscent of the great feasting hall in *Beowulf*, and their meticulous layout, a web of linear and perpendicular alignments. These sites were instrumental in creating and maintaining power in the early decades of kingdom formation.

In 2015 and 2016, the School of Archaeology and the Department for Continuing Education at the University of Oxford began excavations on a new great hall site at Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire, just 6km east of Sutton Courtenay. Long Wittenham had been previously identified as a possible great hall site from aerial photographs, but this was the first time the site had been investigated on the ground. The current project began with a magnetometer survey in 2015, which confirmed the presence and location of several possible post-in-trench timber buildings. In August 2015, one of these possible buildings was tested by two trial trenches, and then in September 2016, another possible building was fully machine-stripped and excavated. The first feature is now interpreted as a Late Roman ditched enclosure, but the second has been positively identified as a 12 x 6m post-in-trench timber building. The building had opposed entrances positioned centrally in the long walls and a possible third entrance in the eastern gable wall. A possible internal partition

was also visible at the eastern end of the building. The wall foundation trenches were approximately 0.40m wide and sunk 1m below the modern ground surface (0.70m into the underlying gravel). The foundation trenches suffered some bulging in the loose sandy gravel, but the features appeared to have been carefully constructed, with near vertical sides and a near flat base. The external walls were built from a combination of squared planks and rounded posts, and it appears that these structural elements were dismantled and removed after the building was abandoned. Several external posts were identified immediately outside the north and east walls. These external posts are common features at other great hall sites, although their function is not certain.

Very little material culture was recovered from the building: a few sherds of Roman pottery, a sherd of probable Iron Age pottery, and a few fragments of animal bone. The feature cannot therefore be dated with certainty to the Anglo-Saxon period, but the form and construction style is most consistent with Anglo-Saxon buildings. Many elements, especially the plank walls and the external posts, are directly paralleled at 7th-century great hall sites, like Cowdery's Down, Hampshire, and Yeavinger, Northumberland.

The size and construction of the building are suggestive of high status, and Long Wittenham thus joins a growing number of high-status 7th-century sites in the Abingdon to Dorchester-on-Thames area of Oxfordshire. The density of power centres in this landscape indicates an intensively exploited core zone, perhaps forming the basis for the emergence of the kingdom of Wessex.

**Adam McBride**

**Jane Harrison**

**Helena Hamerow**

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*Detail of the Anglo-Saxon timber building excavated at Long Wittenham, Oxfordshire.*

*The foundations are visible as lines of darker soil. Several sections have been cut into the building to investigate the depth and profile of the foundations.*  
(photo: Adam Stanford, Aerial-Cam)



# Juan Zozaya

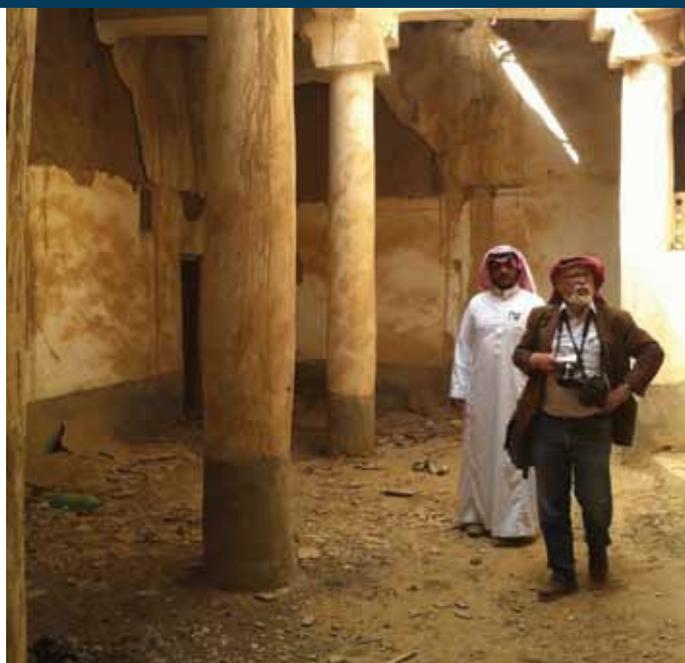
## (1939–2017)

Juan was born in Colombia during his family's exile in Latin America. Whilst at school in Venezuela he spent a year in upstate New York. In 1957 he moved to Spain, eventually to study Geography and History at what is now the Universidad Complutense in Madrid, presenting theses on late antique and Islamic lamps and debuting with papers on glazed pottery. He specialized in Islamic archaeology, learning Arabic in Ceuta. His principal research interest became Islamic fortification (Zozaya 1984; 1996).

In 1969 he started his museum career in the national Bellas Artes y Patrimonio Cultural service, as director of the Museo Numantino y Celtiberico, the Provincial Museum of Soria. In 1972 he moved to the Museo Arqueológico Nacional in Madrid, to become Principal Curator of Medieval Archaeology and Decorative Arts, and later Keeper of Islamic Archaeology, with a break in 1978-79 as Head of Exhibitions in the Ministerio de Cultura. From 1986 to 1999 he was the Archaeological Museum's deputy director. After that he held the same role in the Museo de América (also in Madrid) until he retired in 2004.

In 1972 John Hurst put me in contact with Juan as the only medieval archaeologist he knew in Spain. He had contributed to John's review of 'Red-painted and glazed pottery in Western Europe' in *Medieval Archaeology* (1969) and presented a paper on 'Chinese porcelain in Caliphal Spain' in London (1971). Since 1967 he had advocated medieval archaeology as a field in Spain. His 1972 job title was the first official recognition of the subject. In 1982 he co-founded the Asociación Española de Arqueología Medieval, which he presided over until last year, editing its *Boletín de Arqueología Medieval* and organising the Congresos de Arqueología Medieval Española (Quirós Castillo 2009, 176). He maintained his early interest in ceramics, becoming the Spanish referent for the Association Internationale pour l'Étude des Céramiques Médiévales (now: et Modernes) en Méditerranée, responsible for its conferences held in Toledo (1981) and Ciudad Real (2006).

Fluent in English and French as well as Spanish, he could also get by in Arabic, German, Italian, Portuguese and Swedish. In the course of his work he travelled to many countries in Europe, north Africa, the Middle and Far East, and North America. He was a corresponding member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut (Berlin), the Hispanic Society of America (New York) and the Real Academia de la



Juan Zozaya (in the right foreground) on a mission to preserve the historic neighbourhood of Sanhane in Al Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, being accompanied by a Saudi architect from the Saudi Ministry of Culture, 2012 (photograph courtesy of Fernando Cobos).

Historia de España, as well as being a member of the Instituto Hispano-Árabe de Cultura.

Juan sought inspiration from abroad. In 1969 he worked with André Bazzana on an Islamic and later Christian settlement at Bétera, the first French post-war excavation in Spain (Guichard *et al* 1976). Towards the end of the following decade, Phillip Banks introduced Juan to our excavation recording systems and later they co-directed fieldwork at Gormaz castle, funded by the British Academy and the Spanish Ministry of Culture (Banks and Zozaya 1984). He went out of his way to help, amongst others, John Hurst and myself, organising in 1977 a museum and lecture tour for me in southern Spain sponsored by the British Council. He then had a striking blond beard and complexion, inherited from his mother's Norwegian ancestors. Juan was good company, well informed and had a wide range of passions, encompassing – for example – classical music and aviation. As Gustavo Turienzo put it, 'Don Juan was not only a wise man, in the true sense of the term: he was above all a good man, generous and profoundly human. That's the most that can be said of a person. But he was also a constant example, personally and professionally. In sum, one of those exceptional people that one rarely has the chance to know'.

*Sit tibi terra levis.*

**Hugo Blake**

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## Media & Exhibition

### Threads of Power: displaying *Opus Anglicanum* at the V&A Museum

– the majority of them decorated with religious themes (with a notable focus on the martyrdom of Becket). In addition to succinct labelling and dulled background colouring (allowing the luxurious textiles to shine), the interpretation rhetoric included large digital screens throughout the exhibition offering close-ups of some of the pieces and an excellent digital reconstruction of the Steeple Aston cope and how it was cut up to serve as altar frontals.

Pivotal to the success of the exhibition was that it was not just concerned with the better known ecclesiastical vestments, and so displayed a range of artefacts, including shoes, stockings, seal bags, mitres, burses and horse trappers. The understanding of these embroideries in their liturgical and courtly contexts was aided impressively by a range of related artefacts: coins, reliquaries, jewellery, furniture, stained glass, illuminated manuscripts, ceiling paintings, tiles, ivory diptychs and needlework tools (with the catalogue emphasising the importance of further sources of information – inventories, letters, legal petitions, wills and financial accounts). These added both textural variation and contextual insights. Thus – and allowing for material differences – there is an eye-catchingly strong match between the colouring (golden lions against a crimson red background) of the horse trapper bearing the royal arms of England (cat. no. 51) and a range of heraldic harness pendants (typified by cat. no. 25).

Strongly identified with English identity then and now, the exhibition skillfully brought out the international demand for the material and gave it a strong European dimension. This included acknowledging the contribution of Continental craftsmen moving to London to work in the trade and the

The exhibition 'English Medieval Embroidery – *Opus Anglicanum*' opened at the V&A Museum, London, on 1 October 2016 and ran until 5 February 2017. It proved an engaging tale of sumptuous materiality, of conspicuous consumption in the service of rhetorics of secular and religious power (including engagement with the supernatural), sometimes as discrete elements but often entangled across the lives of makers (men and women but largely under male control), patrons (largely male) and audiences. It was very much an example of the enchantment of technology.

The exhibition opened with an introduction around a huge wooden cope chest and a large map of Europe plotting all the places where *Opus Anglicanum* is known to survive (from Hölar, Iceland to Bologna, Italy) and in a broadly chronological approach took the visitor through the themes 'Bishops and Burials', 'The Making of Medieval Embroidery', 'The Royal Court at Westminster', 'International Renown', 'The Age of Chivalry', 'New directions' and 'Survival and Rediscovery'. Through the lens of these themes, a wide array of rich and fragile embroideries – spanning the 12th to the 16th centuries

shared international links, such as the *or nué* technique, which developed in Flanders and adopted in London.

The relatively modest size of the exhibition – an inheritance of the limited survival of the material – afforded an opulent catalogue, two-thirds of which is taken up with a detailed cataloguing of the exhibits (a rare luxury with the current trend in catalogues) and the other third an opening collection of essays. The essays develop and extend the themes of the exhibition in seven elegant chapters, encompassing the making and trading of embroidery, ecclesiastical usage, patrons, the artistic context and two post-1350 perspectives – on the nature of English ecclesiastical embroidery and the parallel developments in England and Central Europe. The end matters include a very useful technical glossary.

If there was anything missing from the exhibition and its catalogue, from my perspective it was the general absence of any articulation of the effect of this extravagant display of wealth on its various audiences. The other theme I tend to look for in explorations of medieval material culture is any suggestion of cultural biography and reuse. There were clear implications of this in the exhibition – with several of the copes cut up for other purposes (the Steeple Aston cope has already been mentioned). The catalogue adds more detail. We learn that the mid-14th century cope from Vic Cathedral,

Spain, was cut into pieces in the 17th century to create a lectern hanging, two dalmatics, parts of several other vestments and a book binding (cat. no. 61). In a similar vein, the Butler-Bowden cope (cat. no. 52) was (probably before 1721) cut up to make a chasuble, stole, maniple and altar frontal. Then in 1845 the surviving pieces were reassembled as a cope. This was not only a post-medieval rhetoric: the mid-14th century Chichester-Constable chasuble (cat. no. 54) was (before the 16th century) modified to make a matching stole and maniple. That said, an opportunity was lost to treat these episodes as more than individual mis-adventures ('mutilation' is one of the adjectives used) and there was no real engagement with the wider dynamics of such reuse and appropriation.

My abiding memory of the exhibition (to be refreshed from time-to-time by the catalogue), is the rich evocation of the material and its detailing and the close arguments they can engender about male authority, a key example being the fascinating series of foldstools depicted on the Chichester-Constable chasuble and signifying the authority of the bishop and the saintly endorsement of that authority.

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## Conferences & Events

### May:

**11-14 May**

52nd International Congress on Medieval Studies, WMU, Michigan USA.  
[www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress](http://www.wmich.edu/medieval/congress)

### June–July:

**30 June -1 July**

SMA's Annual Conference 2017, 'Women, Status and Power in Medieval Society'. The Museum,

Danes Terrace, Lincoln LN2 1LP.  
[www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/](http://www.medievalarchaeology.co.uk/index.php/events/conferences/)

**30 June -2 July**

31st Irish Conference of Medievalists, NUI Maynooth  
[www.irishmedievalists.com/](http://www.irishmedievalists.com/)

**3-6 July**

23rd IMC Leeds, 'Otherness'.  
[www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2017.html](http://www.leeds.ac.uk/ims/imc/imc2017.html)

### August:

**30 August-02 September**

23rd EAA, 'Building Bridges', Maastricht  
[www.eaa2017maastricht.nl/themes](http://www.eaa2017maastricht.nl/themes)

### September:

**11-17 September**

RURALIA XII conference, 'Transitions and Transformation in the Medieval and Early Modern Countryside',

Kilkenny. [www.ruralia.cz/](http://www.ruralia.cz/)

**15-17 September**

Society for Church Archaeology's Annual Conference. The Old Palace, Worcester Cathedral.  
[www.churcharchaeology.org](http://www.churcharchaeology.org)

## — 2017 Fieldwork Projects —

**If you have free time, are interested in visiting a field project and are in the area, here is a selection of projects involving SMA Committee members that are running this Summer. Be sure to contact the project beforehand (in case they are on excursions).**

### Ireland

**02-29 July**

The third field season of the Castles in Communities Anthropological and Archaeological research project.  
<https://sites.google.com/view/irelandcastlesincommunities>

Location: Ballintober, Co. Roscommon  
Site Type: Medieval Castle and DMV  
Dates for casual visits: Mon-Fri, please give some notice.  
Contact: [niallbrady100@gmail.com](mailto:niallbrady100@gmail.com)

### Spain

**24 June-02 July**

The castle at Molina was the centre of a frontier lordship during both the Islamic and Christian periods of rule. Location: Molina de Aragón castle, Calle Carmen, 1, 19300 Molina de Aragón, Guadalajara, Spain.

2. Site Type: Castle with Islamic- and Christian-period phases.  
3. Dates for casual visits: no formal visit days planned, please give some advance notice.  
4. Contact number/email: 07920281385 / [a.g.pluskowski@reading.ac.uk](mailto:a.g.pluskowski@reading.ac.uk)