

Society for Medieval Archaeology Newsletter

Issue 37 March 2007

ISSN 1740-7036

EDITORIAL

Welcome to the Spring edition which introduces two new items which we very much hope will become regular, if not permanent, features of the Newsletter. The first, a slot dedicated to overseas news, opens with a report on recent developer-funded archaeology in the vicinity of Malmö, Sweden. Involving some of the first large-scale excavations of medieval village sites in the country, this work is bringing major new evidence to bear on the evolution of rural landscapes and promises fascinating comparative material for researchers in the UK. The second, profiling current research on medieval archaeology across the university sector, kicks off with a résumé from the Department of Archaeology, University of Sheffield.

All comments, reports and news to **Gabor Thomas, Classical & Archaeological Studies, School of European Culture & Languages, Cornwallis Building, University of Kent, Canterbury, CT2 7NF, Email G.Thomas@kent.ac.uk**

COMMENT with *Duncan Brown*

The good news is that God's House Tower, Southampton's museum of archaeology, is to remain open. City Councillors decided not to take the option of closing it as a cost-cutting measure.

The bad news is that we live in a country in which our museums and galleries are threatened with closure, or consider selling off pieces from their collections to maintain adequate levels of funding. Local government in Britain is grossly under-resourced, and cultural services are a soft target when it comes to imposing cuts. Few politicians and senior managers have any idea what is required to run a museum service. They see the displays, but rarely take the trouble to find out about the enquiries, visits, tours, events, grant applications, documentation programmes,

and even research, that curators are involved with. Not only do the ridiculous panjandrums not understand what museums do, they also seem unaware of what they are for (more than vote-catching), and there seems to be a direct line between ignorance and under-funding.

Ministers for Culture rarely miss an opportunity to trumpet the huge increase in visitor figures that has followed the cancellation of admission charges at our nationals. They conveniently forget, of course, that they were free before, and not that long ago. This 'good news' is offset, meanwhile, by the introduction of charges at many provincial venues. God's House Tower survived cuts only because the Council has imposed an entry fee at our maritime museum. The last time we charged at our museums, visitor figures plummeted. Most of those who stayed away would have been Southampton citizens, who probably could not see why they should pay again for a service funded from their Council Tax.

So, government ministers make political capital out of the re-introduction of free admission to museums, while the crippling under-funding of local government forces many smaller cultural venues to charge. This typifies the way in which culture is 'promoted' in this country. Museums are an important way for societies to establish a context for the present and an understanding of how our future might develop. They are about learning and participation. They advance an appreciation of what 'progress' can mean, and how, actually, there is such a thing as society. Our museums are tragically under-resourced, and with the cost of the Olympics rising daily, things are going to get worse. Will we, in 2012, be able to show the world a country we can be proud of?

www.medievalarchaeology.org

50th ANNIVERSARY EVENTS

Scottish repeats of 2006 AGM lecture

14.05.07-15.05.07

Members not able to attend the AGM in London (see leaflet enclosed), will be delighted to hear that, in association with the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, Professor Roberta Gilchrist will be taking her Presidential Lecture, 'Magic for the Dead: the archaeology of magic in later medieval burials' on a mini Scottish tour, with dates in Edinburgh and Aberdeen on Monday 14th and Tuesday 15th May respectively.

The Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium

School of History & Archaeology,
University of Cardiff

17.05.07-18.05.07

Call for papers

This symposium will create a constructive and multi-disciplinary forum for researchers to express, discuss and explore *new* research and ideas in a positive and interactive environment. The symposium will explicitly aim to cross traditional period/institutional/theoretical divides to allow discussion between researchers of diverse expertise and perspectives. This symposium will aim to provide a forum for researchers to present ideas and thoughts informally without the pressure of producing complete research ready for publication.

Sessions will consist of 20-minute papers followed by open discussion and debate chaired by leading specialists in each field. As wide as possible a range of topics will be selected, and papers may cover all areas of Early Medieval research and discourse. Academics, professionals and undergraduates are invited to attend and give support and comments. Poster presentations are welcome from those unable to attend or speak on the day.

Our intention is to theme the sessions according to the proposals that delegates submit; papers relating to theory, method and practice in Early Medieval Archaeology are particularly welcome.

For all enquiries and to submit paper titles and abstracts contact Andrew Seaman:
seamanap@cardiff.ac.uk

Perth Lecture

22.06.07

Perth Museum and Art Gallery

A lecture by **Professor Tom Beaumont James** (former Deputy Director Perth Excavation Committee 1976) '*Hunting for Heritage: the Perth Excavations of 1976*', designed to coincide with Perth Archaeology Month 2007.

Tickets offered on first come, first-served, basis. Contact: Mark A Hall, History Officer, Perth Museum & Art Gallery, 78 George Street, Perth, PH1 5LB, Tel: 01738 632488, email: mahall@pkc.gov.uk, Fax: 01738 443505

Cardiff Lecture

06.09.07 & 08.09.07

University of Cardiff

Professor John Hines will be delivering the following lecture (in both Welsh and English)

'Treftadaeth archeolegol a'r Canol Oesoedd Caerdydd a'r cylech' (Thursday 6th)

'Archaeological heritage and the Middle Ages in the Cardiff region' (Saturday 8th)

SMA sponsored sessions and major reception at Medieval Europe Conference, Paris.

03.09.07-08.09.07

The sessions (programmed for Wednesday 8th) will cover medieval landscapes, buildings and material culture; medieval health and diet; and medieval people. To be followed by an evening reception, including the award of the first John Hurst dissertation prize, and a plenary lecture by Sir David Wilson entitled 'Fifty Years of *Medieval Archaeology* in Britain'. Preliminary details on *Medieval Europe, Paris*, including registration forms, can be found at the following link: http://medieval-europe-paris-2007.univ-paris1.fr/MEP%202007_fichiers/frame.htm

Please note: the Society is offering a number of *Medieval Europe, Paris* bursaries to either students or speakers resident in the UK. Please contact the Hon. Secretary, Dr Andrew Reynolds, for further details: a.reynolds@ucl.ac.uk

OTHER EVENTS

A Decade of Discovery - a conference to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Portable Antiquities Scheme.

17.04.07-18.04.07

British Museum, London

Over the last ten years, the Portable Antiquities Scheme (www.finds.org.uk) has systematically recorded 235,000 archaeological objects found by members of the public. They range from hand-axes made by early hominids half a million years ago to lead seals from the hitherto little-known nineteenth-century Russian flax trade.

Patterns emerging from this vast resource are beginning to change our ideas about the past. Until now, conventional archaeological methods such as survey and excavation have shown what was lost around 'sites' where people in the past lived, worked and died. But papers to be presented at this conference by major British archaeologists show that metal-detecting and field-walking can locate different kinds of objects. Prehistoric hoards, cart and horse-harness fittings, workshop tools and lost brooches can conjure up a subtly different view of the world. Has traditional archaeology got it right? Or will the thousands of finds made by ordinary people change the way we think? Speakers will include Mark Blackburn, Richard Bradley, Duncan Garrow, Fraser Hunter, Jude Plouviez, Tim Schadla-Hall, Gabor Thomas, Martin Welch and staff from the Scheme.

The conference will take place in the Stevenson Lecture Theatre, The British Museum, London, 10am-5pm, and will cost £10 per day or £15 for both days. It is planned that the proceedings will be published in 2008. If you would like to book a place please contact Claire Costin on 0207 323 8618 or email ccostin@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk.

Finds Research Group AD700-1700 Conference

18.05.07-20.05.07

Department of Archaeology, University College Cork and Cork Public Museum
The Department of Archaeology and the Cork Public Museum (with thanks to Professor Billy O'Brien and Ms Stella Cherry, Curator, respectively) look forward to welcoming The Finds Research Group. We are planning an interesting programme concentrating on the material from the extensive urban excavations in Cork and Waterford in the last 20 years and including finds from the recent excavations in Cork (South Main Street area).

Details of the programme will be available shortly, but will include talks on bone and wooden artefacts by Maurice F. Hurley FSA, textiles by Elizabeth Wincott Heckett, reliquaries by Dr Griffin Murray, Clare McCutcheon on amber paternosters, possibly John Sheehan on Viking silver and English medieval small finds by Geoff Egan; material will be available for handling, study, comment and examination. It is also hoped that there will be speakers from some of the units that are excavating in the Cork. Details of further speakers will be supplied once they have confirmed.

Friday

- 2.00pm Meet at Cork Public Museum, Fitzgerald's Park, Cork.
<http://www.corkcorp.ie/ourservices/rac/museum/index.shtml>)
- 2.30pm Tour of museum gallery with Curator Stella Cherry, we will look at material from excavations on display and it is also hoped that there will be an opportunity to view some of the reserve material.
- Evening Meet at Reidys Wine Vault, a local hostelry on the Western Road (opposite Jurys Hotel), to meet up with those arriving in the late afternoon.

Saturday

- 10.30am Registration and tea/coffee at the Department of Archaeology, UCC. (<http://www.ucc.ie/en/DepartmentsCentresandUnits/Archaeology/Welcome/>)
- 11.00-1.00 Talks.
- 1.00-2.30 There are several cafés, sandwich shops and pubs near the Department – further details will be supplied.
- 2.30-4.00 Talks.
- 4.00-5.00 Handling session; there will be the opportunity to view material from the recent excavations in Cork city, including waterlogged organic materials.
- Evening To be arranged: possible reception at the Department or drinks in a nearby pub!

Sunday

Depending on numbers interested it may be possible to arrange a visit to the Waterford Treasures Museum, Waterford (<http://www.waterfordtreasures.com/location.html>), which displays some of the material recovered from the extensive excavations that have been held at Waterford. The museum was Museum of the Year 1999 and received a Special Commendation in the European Museum of the Year Awards 2002.

For bookings please contact Quita Mould, Eastmoor Manor, Eastmoor, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE33 9PZ, email: quita@onetel.com or visit the FRG website: www.frg700-1700.org.uk/index.html

Disease, Disability and Medicine in Medieval Europe AD 400-1200: Concepts of Health and the Healthy Body

06.07.07-07.07.07

School of English Studies, University of Nottingham

Call for papers

The second conference on *Disease, Disability and Medicine in Early Medieval Europe, AD 400-1200* will focus on questions of what constitutes a healthy body in the medieval world, health care, cure and the language of care. The meeting aims to be a forum for scholars working on

the topic in a variety of disciplines and regions of Northern Europe, including all aspects of disease, disability and medicine. The conference aims foster interdisciplinary approaches and we invite contributions from archaeology, palaeopathology, history of medicine, as well as history of religion, philosophy, linguistic and historical sciences. Please send abstracts (no more than 300 words) to Dr Christina Lee [Christina.lee@nottingham.ac.uk] by 28 February 2007.

The Impact of the Edwardian Castles in Wales

07.09.07-09.09.07

2007 is the 700th anniversary of the death of Edward I. In partnership with the Castles Study Group and the School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology, University of Wales, Bangor, Cadw is arranging a conference to review recent research into his great castles and towns around the coast of north Wales. Speakers will consider not only the political context for building the castles, and their design and use, but also the impact they had on the people and landscape of Wales. We will explore their visual and poetic legacy and their significance as symbols of power and places of ceremony. The programme includes excursions to the castles at Dolbadarn, Beaumaris, Conwy and Caernarfon. Confirmed speakers include Michael Prestwich, Huw Pryce, Nicola Coldstream, Rick Turner, Peter Brears, Pamela Marshall, Marc Morris, Jeremy Ashbee, Abigail Wheatley, Keith Lilley, John Goodall, and Dylan Foster-Evans. Accommodation will be in University of Wales, Bangor.

For a full programme and booking form visit the conference website at www.cadw.wales.gov.uk/events or contact Dr Nancy Edwards, School of History, Welsh History and Archaeology, University of Wales, Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2DG his010@bangor.ac.uk.

St Ninian and the earliest Christianity in Scotland: the Friends of the Whithorn Trust Weekend Event

15.09.07-16.09.07

In 2007 The Friends of the Whithorn Trust plan to celebrate the 21st Anniversary of the

founding of the Trust by holding a weekend event in place of the annual Whithorn lecture. The event will consist of a day of lectures on Saturday 15th September, and an excursion on Sunday 16th September to sites of the Late Iron Age and Early Christian periods in Wigtownshire, including a tour of the exhibition opened by Historic Scotland in 2005 which presents and interprets the Early Christian stones in the Museum originally founded in 1908. The Seminar will explore the evidence for Christianity in Galloway in the fifth century AD, and the background to its introduction, traditionally attributed to the missionary role of St Ninian.

Programme:-

Lecture Day to be held in Whithorn Primary School on Saturday September 15 2007 10.45am – 17.30pm

Chairs:

Professor Ted Cowan, Director of the Crichton Campus, University of Glasgow, Dumfries

Peter Hill, Director of the Whithorn excavations, 1984-1991

Speakers:

Jonathan Wooding, Centre for the Study of Religion in Celtic Societies, 'Lampeter Archaeology and the *dossier* of a saint: Whithorn investigations 1984-2001'

Katherine Forsyth, Department of Celtic, University of Glasgow

'Whithorn's earliest Christian stones in their Irish Sea Context'

Dave Cowley, RCAHMS

'Aerial photographic evidence for long cist cemeteries in south west Scotland'

Mike McCarthy, Department of Archaeological Sciences, University of Bradford

'Christianity in Northern Britain in the Late Roman period'

Ian Wood, School of History, University of Leeds

'Relations between Britain and the Continent in the Fifth Century'

Catherine Swift, Mary Immaculate College, Limerick, National University of Ireland

'The establishment of Christianity in Ireland'

Evening buffet supper (optional) in the Whithorn Community Centre

Excursion on Sunday 16th September

Excursion by minibus, with guide, visiting the Historic Scotland Museum of Early Christian stones in Whithorn, the Isle of Whithorn chapel and promontory fort, St Ninian's Cave, and the Late Iron Age settlement at Rispain Camp.

Enquiries about this event, and applications for tickets and accommodation addresses, should be sent to the Friends of the Whithorn Trust, c/o Headland Archaeology, 13 Jane Street, Edinburgh, EH6 5HE, office@headlandarchaeology.com.
Tel: 0131 467 7705, fax: 0131 467 7706.

Perceptions of Medieval Landscapes and Settlements

23.02.07-1.12.07

Organised by the Medieval Settlement Research Group (MSRG) as a series of seminar workshops around Britain, concluding with a plenary conference held in Leicester which will provide an overview of the seminars.

-Planning and meaning - Belfast, 23 February 2007. Organisers: Mark Gardiner and Keith Lilley.

-Working and sharing - Edinburgh, 20 April 2007. Organiser: Piers Dixon

-New people, new farms - Exeter, 6 July 2007. Organisers: Oliver Creighton and Stephen Rippon.

-Belonging, communication and interaction - York, 21 September 2007. Organisers: Kate Giles and Julian Richards.

-Plenary conference, which will bring together all of these themes, will be held on 1 December 2007 at Leicester. The workshops will be small-scale seminars, and anyone with a particular commitment to a theme should approach the local organisers. The plenary conference will be a larger event, and will provide an overview of all of the seminars. It will be widely publicised. For more information contact Prof Christopher Dyer at Centre for English Local History, University of Leicester, 5 Salisbury Road, Leicester LE1 7QR, email cd50@le.ac.uk.

SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH

Kirkdale – Comments on C14 Results

Nine samples were submitted from two areas of excavation, Area TP to the immediate north of the north wall of the present churchyard, and Area TP, adjacent to the west walls of the present church. They were designed to provide a wide range of dated stratigraphic contexts, and to provide more than one assessment for each phase where possible.

Three samples failed to provide a date, two from Area TP, where bone was in a poor condition; and one from Area II. For Area TP, Grave AE, should be covered by the results of Graves AT and AO; Grave XX was late in the sequence. For Area II, Grave AB was also late in the grave sequence.

The two dates obtained for Area II were broadly similar in date (fig. 1). They were similar but slightly later than the dating suggested by the general archaeological considerations. Four dates were obtained from Area TP (fig. 1). These were broadly similar to the sequence from other archaeological considerations. Other comments that can be made before this data is fully integrated into the excavation data are:

- from the burials covered by these assessments, there are no C14 dates for Roman burials (as so far excavated and assessed; earlier burials may, for instance, underlie the west walls of the church)
- nor does there appear to be any direct association between burials and the two Roman finds close to inhumations in Area TP

- instead it would seem that burial in Kirkdale, based on these assessments, starts in the 8th/9th century

- there is no clear chronological separation of the two variant orientations in C14 terms. The orientation which appears to follow the natural topography of the site occurs in the area to the north of the church from the 8th-10th century; and again, to the west of the church, in the 11th to 12th century. ‘Canonical ‘ orientation was used to the west of the church in the 9th to 11th century

- regarding charnel from HH from Area TP, under the sarcophagus, assigned in C14 terms to 9th to the 11th century: from parallels elsewhere (including Lichfield, which was connected with this area via Lastingham), this charnel and the three skulls immediately below appear to have been deliberately buried in a ‘special’ way (having been much handled, according to Don Brothwell), may thus be part of a late-Anglo-Saxon-early Norman ritual behaviour.

Philip Rahtz and Lorna Watts

Context	Expected Dating	Ox-A no.	C14 95% confidence (AD)	C14 95% confidence (AD)
Trench II:				
Grave AG	?C7-C9	15340	781-981	881-969
Grave AE	“ “	15355	778-971	783-963
Grave AB	“ “	P1744 9- failed		
Trench TP:				
Grave AS	C10-C11	15341	886-1012	896-983
Grave AT	“ “	15356	898-1028	983-1019
Grave AO	“ “	15357	1015-1155	1020-1148
Grave AE	“ “	P1745 0- failed		
HH	C10-C11	15358	897-1028	980-1020
XX	C11+	P1745 3 - failed		

Fig.1. C14 assessments from Kirkdale (in both areas, the earliest grave in the stratigraphic sequence is placed first.

Symbol Stones in their Landscape: REAP 2006

The Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project (REAP), co directed by Dr Meggen Gondek (University of Chester) and Dr Gordon Noble (University of Glasgow) was initiated in 2005 as a three-year programme of research and fieldwork based in and around the village of Rhynie, Aberdeenshire. The main aim of the project is to study the landscape context of an important group of early medieval Pictish symbol stones (Class I) that came from the village. Rhynie is the focus of a distinct and unusual concentration of Pictish symbol

stones, which likely date to c. AD 5th–7th century. Eight symbol stones are known from the village, including the ‘Craw Stane,’ which is likely to be in its original position.

Fieldwork and excavation conducted in 2005 began to uncover the landscape context of this group of monuments and has shown that they inhabited a place that was already of great significance in the centuries and millennia prior to the erection of the Pictish symbol stones, themselves. Excavations to the north of the Craw Stane in 2005 revealed a Mid-Bronze Age burnt timber structure associated with a collection of large flat-rimmed ware pottery. Gradiometry survey in 2005 was hampered by a strong natural magnetic anomaly that obscured the area to the south of the Craw Stane, but the 2005 results did show very clearly a series of concentric enclosures visible on aerial photographs (taken by Aberdeenshire Archaeology Service) related to the location of the Craw Stane. In 2006, funded in part by a research grant from the Society for Medieval Archaeology, REAP targeted this area again with a resistivity survey and revealed further features. Another enclosure with an entrance feature was identified, bringing the total of concentric enclosures related to the Craw Stane to five. Several of the enclosures showed evidence for potential banks on the outside of the ditch, possibly indicating their ritual nature. In addition, a strong circular feature suggestive of a Bronze or Iron Age roundhouse or possibly a Pictish-period burial mound was also identified to the southwest of the enclosures.

As the results of the past two seasons are being brought together, we can see that the Craw Stane and the other symbol stones from Rhynie existed in a long-lived ceremonial landscape. Their direct connection to this ancestral heritage remains to be explored and it is hoped future investigations will help us further our understanding of this unique and fascinating collection of early medieval monuments and the landscape of which they were part.

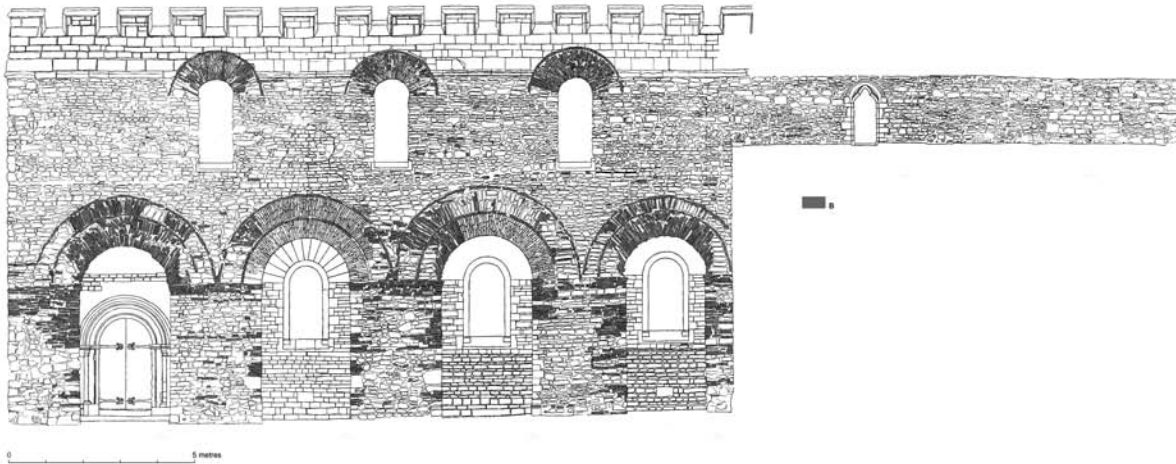
Meggen Gondek
University of Chester
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Brixworth Church Survey: Data Digitisation and Analysis

Beginning in 1976 the Brixworth Archaeological Research Committee carried out a stone-by-stone survey of this predominantly Anglo-Saxon church. This included the coding of each individual stone according to its geological type. The large number of stone types and the heterogeneous nature of the rubble fabric make the handling and interpretation of the data difficult.

Advances in computer technology since the survey was begun have made it possible to manipulate the data electronically. The Society’s research grant has enabled the Committee to have the major elevation drawings scanned and to transfer the original alpha-numeric petrological identifications to the individual stones in the form of colour codes. These are more easily assimilated by eye and additionally provide a more consistent basis for the eventual full-colour publication of the survey results. By allocating a separate layer to each colour code, i.e. to each stone type, it is possible by using the layering facility of programmes such as Photoshop Elements 3 to isolate any particular petrological type in any given elevation and to combine two or more types to give an objective rather than an impressionistic definition of the stone assemblages. The accompanying working diagrams show, for example, how the most characteristic building material (brick, rather than natural stone) can be superimposed on the outline diagram, clearly showing its distribution in the main south elevation, and the further imposition of varieties of Northamptonshire limestone, which were used both in an early, probably primary, phase and in a later reconstruction or repair (see figure on next page). We are thus able to begin the detailed analysis and interpretation of the church structure, which will lead to final publication.

David Parsons
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OVERSEAS NEWS

Medieval Rural Settlement in *Skåne*

Compared with England, Sweden has a relatively short tradition of medieval rural settlement archaeology (in Scandinavia traditionally defined as AD 1050-1520/30's). A handful of small-scale investigations were carried out before the 1970s, but with a move to infrastructure projects in the countryside the number of excavations has thankfully begun to expand.

The most important of these projects, within the densely-inhabited southern Swedish county of Scania (*Skåne*), is undoubtedly the bridge constructed across the Öresund strait between Sweden and Denmark, completed in the year 2000. Öresundsförbindelsen (*Eng.* The Öresund Link Project), as the project is known, involved the construction of a 25 km ring-road around the city of Malmö and the partly underground expansion of the railway network (known as the Citytunnel project), both of which have been preceded by extensive programmed rescue excavations carried out by Malmö Kulturmiljö (*Eng.* Malmö Heritage). During the most intensive phase of the work in the late 1990's, more than 100 archaeologists were involved in investigating vast areas of cultivated land in the south-western part of Scania recording remains from the Mesolithic to modern times.

The following presents a summary overview of two of the most important

medieval village sites excavated as part of this work. Approximately half of the 28 historically attested village sites situated within the area of the city of Malmö have been excavated since the middle of the 1990's. As in many cases post-ex work on these sites is still ongoing, this note can only offer readers a provisional view of the results obtained.

One of the first sites investigated was the village of Fosie where, between 1996-8, an area measuring some c. 15,000 square metres was stripped and excavated (Jönsson & Kockum 2004). This revealed a total of 11 timber buildings, the oldest dating from the Late Viking Age and the most recent to the post-medieval period, which were found in association with a large number of boundary and drainage ditches. The former type of ditch appears to have been laid out in two main phases.

The earlier, involving the initial laying out of toft boundaries, is most likely connected with the establishment of a regulated village plan during the 11th century. A historical link is provided by an 11th-century rune-stone mentioning a local landowner by the name of 'Esbern'. The stimulus for settlement growth in this case was most likely Esbern's award of land from the king. As in England, the dating and the origins of the regulated medieval village has been a major research question in Sweden. Excavations in the Malmö region have confirmed that the pattern revealed at Fosie was fairly widespread. However, there are also divergent examples, such as the settlement at

Lockarp, where the appearance of a regulated village has been traced to the first half of the 12th century-late 13th century. It is clear that the process of village formation was complex and contingent on sometimes very localised factors.

Returning to Fosie, the construction of the post-medieval boundary ditches have been associated with the mapping of villages during the 17th century. During this century maps were drawn up which provided the grounds for reform in land holding and enclosure: the *storskifte* – or Great Shift, which took place over the course of the 17th and 18th centuries. It has been assumed that there was a need to emphasize the visible boundaries in a time when land was being partitioned and allocated.

Aside from shedding new light on the chronology and evolution of the structure and layout of medieval villages, recent excavations have also yielded a broad spectrum of artefactual remains. Several of the rural settlements excavated in the vicinity of Malmö consisted of well-preserved and – considering the extent of deep-ploughing – relatively thick occupation layers. These results have triggered a renewed discussion of the material differences between town and countryside during the Middle Ages, and of social stratification within village communities. Excavations carried out in the village of Bunkeflo during 2000-2, as part of the Citytunnel project, will serve as an illustration (Ingwald & Lövgren 2005).

As revealed from interventions covering more than 60,000 square metres, the origins of Bunkeflo also lie in the 11th century. The thick occupation layers associated with the historically-known Farm No. 1 produced some particularly striking finds including a notable array of high and late medieval ecclesiastical objects. Such finds include a rosary, a knife-mounting engraved with the likeness of a saint, and an ivory figurine, picturing the Virgin Mary and the Holy child. The latter came from the wall-trench of an early 15th century building and has been interpreted as a possible ‘foundation deposit’. Also likely to be connected with this sphere is an *alsengem* – a gem stone taking its name

from the Danish island of Als in the southern Baltic where the first example was found in the 19th century. The *alsengem* is a glass intaglio mounting for the cover of a book, although it appears to have been mounted on at least one further occasion. The discovery of two bell-casting pits adds to the impression given by the finds that this farm was a holding of the Church.

With the many excavations carried out in Scania since the 1990’s - around Malmö as well as in other parts of the region - our understanding of the medieval countryside is beginning to alter. Open-area excavations on the scale of Fosie and Bunkeflo have yielded complex material which will occupy archaeologists for the coming years. Until now, no publications or find reports are available in English, but English summaries can be found in the relevant site reports.



Fig. 1. Map of southern Scandinavia, showing Scania (Sweden) and Zealand (Denmark), since 2000 connected by a bridge across the Öresund strait.

References

Jönsson, L & Kockum, J. 2004. *Öresundsförbindelsen Fosie by 10. Rapport över arkeologisk slutundersökning 21*. Malmö. (With an English summary).

Ingwald, J & Löfgren, K. 2004. Fynd med kyrklig anknytning från en medeltida gård i Bunkeflo. *Medeltidsarkeologisk tidskrift META* 2004:2, pp. 39-51.

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2222920).

Staff in the Department of Archaeology at the University of Sheffield have research interests that span the entire Middle Ages, with a particular focus on such themes as the relationship between archaeology and text; the funerary archaeology of medieval societies; and the role of material culture in the construction of social identities, including gender and ethnicity. Fieldwork on medieval sites is currently being conducted in Britain, Ireland, the Low Countries, Croatia, the eastern Mediterranean and Italy. The staff whose main research interests lie in the medieval period are Dr John Moreland, Dr Dawn Hadley and Dr Hugh Willmott, but other staff whose research has a significant focus on the Middle Ages include Dr Umberto Albarella, Prof Mike Parker Pearson, Dr Caroline Jackson, Dr Peter Day, Dr Joanita Vroom and Prof Richard Hodges. The department runs a Masters course in European Historical Archaeology, which permits students to specialise in the medieval period, and there is also a Masters programme in Material Culture Studies, which has a significant medieval element.

*Staff specialising in medieval
archaeology and their research interests:*

Dr Dawn Hadley (Senior Lecturer): research interests in Anglo-Saxon society, gender, the Vikings, medieval funerary archaeology; author of *The Vikings in England: settlement, society and culture* (2006) and *The Northern Danelaw: its social structure c.800-1100* (2000)

Dr John Moreland (Reader): research interests in the use of writing and the role of images in medieval societies, and the transition from late Antique to early medieval society: author of *Archaeology and Text* (2001)

Dr Hugh Willmott (Lecturer): research interests in the material culture of later medieval society, and the archaeology of

glass: author of *A History of English Glassmaking* (2005) and editor of *Consuming Passions: Dining from Antiquity to the 18th Century*.

*Other staff with research interests in
medieval archaeology:*

Dr Umberto Albarella (Research Officer): research interests in the zooarchaeology of medieval England

Dr Peter Day: research interests in Mediterranean ceramics

Prof. Richard Hodges (Visiting Professor): research interests in the archaeology of the early medieval monastery of San Vincenzo al Volturno in Italy, and the archaeology of Albania

Dr Caroline Jackson (Senior Lecturer): research interests in medieval glass production

Prof. Mike Parker Pearson (Professor): research interests include Viking settlements in the Outer Hebrides

Dr Joanita Vroom (Post-Doctoral research Fellow): research interests in medieval ceramics in the eastern Mediterranean

*Current and recent doctoral research
projects on aspects of medieval
archaeology:*

Joanna Bending: Environmental Change in Norse Settlements of the North Atlantic Islands

Joanne Buckberry: A social and anthropological analysis of conversion period and later Anglo-Saxon cemeteries in Lincolnshire and Yorkshire (awarded 2004)

Annia Cherryson: Early Medieval burial practices between 600-1100 AD in Wessex (awarded 2006)

Cheryl Clay: Germanic presence in late and sub-Roman Britain

Lizzy Craig: A bio-cultural study of middle Saxon cemeteries in northern England

Kirsten Jarrett: Ethnic identities in south west Britain in late Antiquity

Neantzis Nerantzis: Byzantine and Ottoman mineral extraction and smelting in Eastern Macedonia

Pam Macpherson: Social implications of Anglo-Saxon childhood diet (awarded 2006)

Sally Smith: A social archaeology of the medieval peasantry (awarded 2006)

Diana Swales: The Anglo-Saxon

cemetery at Black Gate, Newcastle-upon-Tyne

Letty Ten Harkel: Cultural interaction in Lincoln and Lindsey during the Viking Age: a town in its context

Harriet White: Production technology of Byzantine lead-glazed ware from Corinth

NEWS & VIEWS

Medieval Domestic Space in Northern Italy: a *Casa* Study

This review deals with the V&A's most recent and exciting foray into the late medieval world: the exhibition *At Home in Renaissance Italy*, which ran from 5 October 2006 – 7 January 2007. A major international exhibition - drawing on material in the V&A's rich collections and from collections in both Europe and the USA – it was a notable achievement in several respects, not least its uncommon approach to medieval art and archaeology and to Renaissance studies in particular, through the context of domestic space below the level of church, castle and court.

The exhibition successfully explored the role of the possession-filled town houses in its contribution to the artistic and wider cultural agenda of the Renaissance, primarily through an exploration of that evidence as it survives from the contrasting states of Tuscany and Venetto. The central focus was the Italian concept of *Casa*, meaning both house and household. The approach adopted, with a welcome emphasis on the everyday experience, was to bring together a rich array of artefacts and texts in an evocative environment which aimed at recreating the key rooms of the *Casa*: the *Sala* (a flexible, public room at the front of the house), the *Cucina* (kitchen), the *Camera* (bedroom) and the *Scrittoio* (study). The minimal, suggestive superstructure of these spaces is all in black and at times works very well, to both give prominence to the colourful furnishings and possessions and to create a sense of architectural, lived-in space. The latter is particularly well achieved through the combination of a variety of actual-size window openings combined with large-scale photography of Italian buildings, giving the effect of looking out of those

windows to buildings across the street or into courtyards. Unfortunately I found no information as to where precisely the views were taken. More unfortunate was the choice of flooring for the exhibition: a composite, ill-fitting affair, which creaked and groaned with every footfall, seriously marring both the opportunity for quiet contemplation and an appreciation of the background Renaissance music. This was performed (by Trictilla) and recorded especially for the exhibition in a 16th century Florentine palazzo as a demonstration of what would have been heard in a typical *Sala*.

The popular imagination will always associate the Renaissance with paintings and, aware of this, the exhibition included several but contextualised them in the domestic spaces we so rarely hear about. In so doing their role as one element of the furnishing of the *Casa* alongside several other types of material culture is ably demonstrated. Further, what this focus on spatial context did was to bring out the inter-relationship between the use of objects (an inter-relationship established and governed by their owners, their users and the belief-systems of both) and to bring out the dual functions of taste-defining (and so linked to status) decoration and popular Christianity. Paintings were either religious (e.g. various Virgin studies) or genealogical (e.g. family portraits) but always imbued with the contemporary Renaissance context and redolent of the widespread use of apotropaic amulets and devices. Such amulets – e.g. fragments of coral – could be religiously neutral (but Christian approved through their depicted association with the Virgin and Child) or overtly Christian (e.g. saints relics). Often the boundaries between the two are difficult to perceive. To take one example, so clearly expressed in the exhibition catalogue: 'Extra encouragement' (to conception and child-birth) 'can be seen in the animal on the back of a tray of c. 1427 attributed to Masaccio; it is almost certainly a typical weasel or marten, which, according to Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, was thought to either conceive or give birth by the ear. This associated weasels with the Immaculate Conception, and made them a childbirth talisman, eminently appropriate

for a tray back or any other domestic object that came into contact with a potential mother. Women wore weasel furs for similar reasons; Lorenzo Lotto's portrait of Lucina Brembati (c. 1518) plays on the woman's name and Lucina, the goddess of childbirth, through the rebus of her name in the top left and the fur – the weasel head visible – over her shoulder. Perhaps Brembati was having difficulty conceiving and the weasel and this portrait were meant to assist her. Some of these weasel furs were ornamented with metalwork heads, making them even more precious and elaborate' (Musacchio 2006, 131-2) and imbued with amuletic power, as the example on display made clear.

More seemingly mundane objects are also included (notably in the kitchen, where the majority of the exhibition's scattering of excavated finds 'of the everyday' are displayed) but these too have a rich psychological endowment. Examples include a small group of copper alloy pins and several ceramic spindle whorls. Pins and needles were a common element of a bride's trousseau and so helped to signify authority and status in the *Casa*. It struck me that such pins, retained through life could go two ways at the death of their owner: as heirlooms to a daughter or deployed in a final task of pinning the deceased's burial shroud. We certainly need to think more about how material culture - as embodiment of ritual – linked life and death and their attendant beliefs rather than overly categorised them. Superficially mundane material culture also demonstrated an ability to balance some of the inherent biases of written accounts. The perceived Renaissance split between needlework - a virtuous pursuit for elite women – and weaving – a pursuit for women of low social standing – is supported by written accounts that describe spinning and weaving as for lowly women. However this appears not to have been an absolute rule, as a set of spindle whorls demonstrated. Such earthenware whorls were 'probably given to women as part of marriage rituals. The women's names inscribed on them range from the popular like 'Antonia'... and to the sophisticated like 'Chasandra'...and 'Beatrice', thus suggesting recipients at different social

levels' (Ajmar-Wollheim 2006, 157). I must say (or perhaps speculate) that I was struck by the apparent lightness of these whorls and pondered whether this gave them a totemic rather than a practical value; a reminder (reinforced through their marking with names and use in marriage rituals) of the historic role and on-going status the leading females of the household? Another of my particular interests – gaming – was also catered for by the exhibition. Principally this was through the key contribution of gaming to *Casa*-based entertainment. A variety of objects on show included dice (excavated in Florence); a 16th-century Spanish gaming board for chess and backgammon (reminding us of the diverse trade links that helped to objectify the *Casa* interior); illegal gambling games such as *Pluck the Owl* and *Biribisi* and Anguissola's magnificent 1555 painting of her three *Sisters Playing Chess*. There was much to derive from these pieces on personal, social and gender implications of leisure time pursuits. There was also a hint of the interaction between religion and gaming. Whilst the dice used to cast lots for Christ's clothing are a common element of paintings and 'Arma Christi' depictions it is very rare to find them deployed in the cult of relics. That they were, was evidenced in this exhibition by a personal, pendant reliquary cross bearing the instruments of the Passion (including the three dice) in black enamel on gold. The cross opens to reveal small apartments for tiny relics. It holds out the possibility it may have contained relics of the Crucifixion-dice as well as the much better known Crucifixion relics (including the True Cross).

It is only fair to state that the households dealt with were not those of Italy's highest lords and prelates; nevertheless they still belonged to social elites. The exhibition recognised this by ending with a short section called 'People, Spaces and Objects', which sought to redress the absence of poorer households. It came over as a rather perfunctory nod to our own politics of inclusion, though the exhibition tried to explain its brevity by the lack of surviving evidence. It gets no fuller treatment in the otherwise excellent catalogue. That said it does usefully draw the contrast between the *Casa* of the wealthy – both generationally

permanent and an expression of that permanence and dynasty – and the Casa of the poor – being impermanent (with many families moving on an annual basis, frequently on 11 November, St Martin's Day) and focussed much less on the house than on the family and its meagre possessions.

The exhibition was well supported by the now expected range of activity days, merchandise and an International Conference. Despite the disappointingly summary catalogue entries, the exhibition catalogue (Ajmar-Wollheim & Dennis 2006) is a rich reward of insightful, engaging scholarship.

Mark A Hall

Perth Museum & Art Gallery.

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Marginalised Identity and Technological Change in Medieval and Modern Japan: *Princess Mononoke* Reviewed

I recently had the good fortune of catching up (on DVD) with a brilliant Japanese anime film from 1997 *Mononoke Hime* (Princess Mononoke), written and directed by Hayao Miyazaki. It offers some stimulating insights into medieval Japanese history and culture and its contemporary perception in Japan. It fuses its portrayal with a contemporary concern for Green politics. Thus environmental concern for the destruction of forests (and their spirit guardians) is framed through its setting in the 15th century at a time of growing exploitation of resources such as iron (and consequent technological change including the development of firearms). This is linked to a sense of loss for a golden age when Man was in harmony with the environment. Within the Muramachi period (c. 1336-1573) setting of the film this is posited as the 7th and 8th century AD (and by

implication as far back as the prehistoric Jomon culture). The film's hero is Ashitaka, last prince of the Emishi, an ethnic group absorbed by the expanding Japanese culture in the 8th/9th century. The film posits a last, reclusive village of the Emishi living in forest harmony until disturbed by distant events, which send shock waves across Japan. Ashitaka is forced to travel west to resolve matters and his different looks and material culture mark him out for attention and abuse. It is surely no accident that the modern-day descendants of the Emishi are the Ainu, a people who have only comparatively recently emerged from long years of persecution by the mainstream Japanese culture. Through its medieval framing then the film manages to both historically situate issues of identity and ethnic politics and precisely through that historical dimension remind its contemporary audience of those issues that Japan has been reluctant to confront.

As an animated film it is about as far as one can get from the Disney ethos and the film eschews any recourse to mawkish sentimentality and simple characters. Instead we have ambiguous, complex characters and a dark, relentless narrative ark. It also demonstrates that the animation medium is a suitable one for popular archaeological reconstruction. Its visual archaeology encompasses the early medieval Emishi village, their distinctive architecture, clothing and use of lithics, Samurai weaponry and armour and the heavily fortified lake-village of 'Irontown' and its over-exploitation of local iron resources to make firearms. Samurai, of course, are a staple of Japanese period dramas (or *jidaigeki*) and are usually fulcrums of plot and character. In this film they get much shorter shrift, part of its strategy to promote ethnicities, social strata and genders usually marginalised. Thus the Samurai are marginalised narratively as politically exploitative war-mongers, whilst the spotlight is given to strong women and ethnic and social minorities, pretty much those that the Samurai elites marginalised in the past.

Whilst medieval Japan has always had a strong interest for me I do not consider

myself an expert and though the reconstructions seemed highly believable and authentic it would be interesting to hear from anyone with a deeper knowledge of medieval Japan and the film's reliability and whether this should take priority over its skilful, sensitive airing of some complex issues.

Mark A Hall

Perth Museum & Art Gallery

NEW BOOKS

Excavations at Launceston Castle, Cornwall

Edited by Andrew Saunders. Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph No. 24, General Editor, Christopher Gerrard. xviii + 490 pages, 2 colour plates, 2 fold-out. ISBN 978 1 904350 75 0. Price: £45.00 pb.

The duration of the excavations at Launceston Castle, Cornwall, runs close to that at Wharrah Percy. It all started in 1961 with a watching brief and trial trenching during the stabilization measures to prevent the shell keep from collapsing down the slope of the motte. Further exploratory work in advance of conservation led eventually to area excavation all of which extended to some 20 years of three or four week annual seasons with a few gaps. Bringing the post excavation process to publication took a little longer!

We were always conscious of the topography of the site. The bailey was located on the slope of a ridge subsequently levelled up with accumulations of post-medieval urban rubbish and hard core to such an extent that one side of the bailey rampart and base of the curtain wall was hidden from view. August is an unpredictable month for digging in Cornwall with extremes of weather. In one memorable year the site shelter was blown over the buried rampart into the road far below one Saturday afternoon. How it missed traffic is a mystery but there were some bemused pedestrians.

Being a 'Ministry' site we had the services of the direct labour force (now an extinct species). Despite being masons and

building labourers they undertook much of the heavy digging until finally it was possible to use mechanical means. They took a keen interest in the proceedings. Much of the digging was later done by volunteers arriving from far and wide as well as by members of the Cornwall Archaeological Society. It intrigued the volunteers that an unusually high number of the local labour force, including the custodian, was called Reginald. Could this have been a tradition stimulated by the 12th century Earl Reginald, one of the foremost of the castle's builders?

Such a long drawn-out sequence of excavations had advantages as well as obvious disadvantages. We benefited from developments in excavation technique and recording methods, which influenced the 1960s and 70s. Progress in archaeological practice had its counterpart in architectural history. The move from narrowly military interpretations in castle studies towards appreciating the social implications of lordship and statements of prestige embodied in castle building assisted interpretation of Richard, Earl of Cornwall's remodelling of Launceston Castle in the 13th century.

The gradual shift away from the problems of the motte and its ditches towards the bailey and its defences led to the identification of the Great Hall and its associated kitchen, and from there to the complex sequence of earlier stone and timber structures which lay beneath. Here it was possible to recognise structures that belonged to the earliest years of the Norman Conquest. At the opposite end of the temporal sequence we were able to record the decline of the importance of the castle as part of the possessions of the Duchy of Cornwall while maintaining its role in the judicial administration of Cornwall. The county gaol remained as a feature of the bailey until the 1840s when the castle was turned into an urban park. Its looming presence in the town still dominates the wider landscape.

While the excavations continued to stimulate discovery and illuminate the historical landmarks there were frustrations. The front of the earliest bailey rampart had

been cut away by a road bypassing the town centre in the 1840s. Much of the interior of the bailey had been bulldozed for the construction of an American hospital during World War II, removing the later medieval layers. A park keeper's cottage seems to have been built over a high status site, probably to be identified with the 'Prince's Lodgings'. There are still many unanswered questions for subsequent researchers.

While we were working on site for so many years it was impossible to grasp the cumulative significance of the small finds though there were highlights - the whale bones, the Venetian glass beaker and the quantity of 'bar-lug' potsherds. The true significance was later achieved through the work of many specialists during the post-excavation process. As a result, in the fields of metalwork, faunal remains and the study of clay pipes in particular, conclusions of national importance have emerged. The many specialists have produced a fascinating analysis, which complements the integrated historical background with the archaeological record.

Andrew Saunders

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SOCIETY NEWS

Society Helps Schoolchildren in the Hunt for Medieval Village Origins

The Society for Medieval Archaeology in its anniversary year is supporting a new scheme run by Carenza Lewis from the University of Cambridge which aims to raise the aspirations and enthusiasm of 14-17 year-olds for higher education via actively engaging them in current research into the medieval origins and development of currently occupied rural settlements (CORS). The Higher Education Field Academy (HEFA) programme gives attendees the chance to spend two days excavating test pits within inhabited medieval villages. They work in small teams, each of which completes their own independent excavation of an archaeological test pit, supported by on-site specialists. Attendees then use their excavation records to write up their test pit, before attending a third day spent within the university, which gives them a taste of university life, after which their written reports are then assessed and returned with comments and advice. Feedback has shown that, post-HEFA, 70% of attendees feel more positive than before about staying on in school post-16, and 75% feel more positive than before about going to university. The numbers of those intending to attend university were raised by c. 60% in 2006, and those interested in applying to the University of Cambridge by 113%. The Society for Medieval Archaeology is sponsoring prizes for the best written test pit report produced by a year 10 student from each of 12 Field Academies being held in eastern England in 2007.

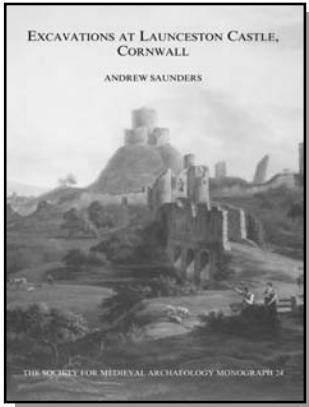
The HEFA programme is a partnership between the University of Cambridge, Aimhigher, the Higher Education Academy Subject centre for Archaeology, and the Society for Medieval Archaeology. Contact Carenza Lewis, Project Director on cr129@cam.ac.uk or visit the website www.arch.cam.ac.uk/access/

Excavations at Launceston Castle, Cornwall

Edited by Andrew Saunders

The Society for Medieval Archaeology Monograph Series (Volume 24)

Series Editor: C M Gerrard



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December 2006

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