

# Society for Medieval Archaeology Newsletter

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## EDITORIAL

All comments, reports and news to **Gabor Thomas, Department of Archaeology, University of Reading, Reading RG6 6AB, Email: [g.thomas@reading.ac.uk](mailto:g.thomas@reading.ac.uk)**

### 'Fifty Years of Medieval Archaeology'

Culminating a year-long series of events to mark the 50th anniversary of the Society for Medieval Archaeology, a one-day symposium is to be held at The Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, on **Saturday 8th December**.

Attendance at the conference, lunch and the evening reception are free to members of the Society, and to graduate students; otherwise there is a conference registration fee of £20.00 (to include lunch and attendance at the evening reception) for non-members.

A booking form is included as an insert in this edition of the Newsletter; it can also be downloaded direct from the website.

**Places at the conference are limited to the first 100 applicants so book early to avoid disappointment!**

### Preliminary timetable

#### 1. Fifty years of Medieval Archaeology (10.00-11.30)

This session will address key developments over fifty years of medieval archaeology, taking a comparative regional perspective.

10.00: Chris Gerrard (University of Durham): Understanding traditions and contemporary approaches: the development of medieval archaeology in Britain

10.30: Andrea Augenti (University of Bologna): Medieval archaeology in Italy

11.00: Florin Curta (University of Florida): Medieval archaeology in south-eastern Europe

11.30-12.00: Coffee/tea

#### 2. Medieval landscapes, buildings and material culture (12.00-13.00; 14.00-15.15)

This session outlines developments in approaches to medieval landscape, buildings and material culture, addressing themes of daily life, the household and landscape reconstruction.

12.00: Steve Rippon (University of Exeter): Understanding the Medieval Landscape

12.30: Else Roesdahl (University of Aarhus): Housing culture in Scandinavian perspective

13.00-14.00 Lunch

14.00: Geoff Egan (Museum of London): Material culture: household and daily life

14.30 David Hinton (University of Southampton): Medieval people and their identities

15.00 Discussion

15.15-15.45: Coffee/tea

#### 3. Medieval health and diet (15.45-17.15)

This series of papers reviews recent scientific developments in the study of human and animal remains, DNA and isotopes to address new evidence for medieval health, diet and migration.

15.45: Charlotte Roberts (University of Durham): Health and welfare in Medieval England: the human skeletal remains contextualised

16.15: Gundula Müldner (University of Reading): Reconstructing medieval diet by stable isotope analysis of human remains

16.45: Naomi Sykes (University of Nottingham): Animals, the bones of medieval society

#### 4. Plenary lecture: (17.15-18.00)

David Wilson: Fifty years of the Society for Medieval Archaeology

**18.00 Wine reception:** award of first John Hurst dissertation prize

*[www.medievalarchaeology.org](http://www.medievalarchaeology.org)*

**COMMENT** *with Duncan Brown*

A while ago I submitted a costing for a small pottery job, only to be told that my day rate was higher than that quoted for a report on the iron objects. My natural response was that the iron specialist was under-valuing himself, and I still hold this to be true – he is eminent in his field and should be asking for a lot more. The episode set me thinking along different lines, however, because there seemed to be an implication that working on iron objects was more important than working on the pottery. This may, of course, be related to the relative scarcity of those who specialise in iron, while we ceramicists are obviously far more common. There may be league tables of specialists, at least subliminally, but I really don't want to speculate on this, if only because I'd rather not discover how dangerously I might be flirting with relegation.

More interesting, I think, is the possibility of a league table of specialisms, where iron seems to be higher than pottery, and coins perhaps higher still. If such a table were to be constructed, one could then work out how much each specialist deserved to be remunerated! What a fabulously simple system for the exploitation of freelance archaeologists!

Each separate archaeological project would probably generate a separate table, because if there are only a few bits of animal bone, then the faunal remains might be knocked down a few places, below even the pottery. A global table might be possible, however, as a composite of all the site-specific ones. It could even be published every year in *Medieval Archaeology*, if every project appearing in the annual gazetteer submits an individual table to feed into the final one.

There could also be some sort of related knockout competition between disciplines. Finds would have their own league table, survey techniques another and we could go on in similar vein for other specialist activities such as illustration and photography, conservation and so on.

The winners of each separate league might then come together to slug it out for the annual title of champion archaeological specialism!

There will be a myriad of details to work out of course, in order to remove potential bias and so forth. I envisage some sort of manual with which project managers would have to become familiar, akin to the Duckworth-Lewis method of calculating the runs required in rain-affected one-day cricket matches, and an independent panel of adjudicators may also be needed from time to time. The technicalities would mean little to avid supporters of this new pastime however, and the actual benefits in terms of driving down project costs, albeit at the expense of some people's livelihoods, make this a sure-fire hit. Now then, what do I need to know about gold and silver?

**CONFERENCES & EVENTS**

***"The Very Best Sort of Earthenware":  
Cistercian and Midlands Purple Ware  
from Ticknall, South Derbyshire***

27.10.07

Sharpe's Pottery Museum, West Street,  
Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE11 9DG

This conference and study day aims to highlight the Cistercian and Midlands Purple wares manufactured at Ticknall as well as exploring our current state of knowledge of these wares. A display of Ticknall pottery will be available for viewing and attendees are invited to bring along examples of Cistercian and Midlands Purple ware for display and discussion. Speakers include: Janet Spavold and Sue Brown, Anne Boyle, Julie Edwards, David Barker, Ian Rowlandson, John Hudson and Alan Vince. Tickets: £13.50, buffet lunch £6

Contact: Dr Anne Boyle, Archaeological Project Services, The Old School, Cameron Street, Heckington, Sleaford, Lincolnshire, NG34 9RW Details on the conference and venue are available at:

[www.medievalpottery.org](http://www.medievalpottery.org) and  
[www.sharpes.org.uk/](http://www.sharpes.org.uk/)

**Sculpture and Archaeology: New Perspectives on Carved Stone**

02.11.07-04.11.07

Sherwell Centre, University of Plymouth

This conference aims to open up a truly interdisciplinary approach to sculpture, drawing upon the perspectives of archaeologists, art historians, conservators and those with practical experience of working stone. Addressing the close relationship between sculpture and archaeology the conference seeks to explore the diverse ways in which carved stone has been interpreted and posit new ideas based upon recent research.

Papers focus on the archaeology of stonecarving techniques; perceptions of sculpture within archaeology and art history; the role of sculpture in the establishment of museum collections; sculpture in the landscape; the influence of ancient sculpture on the art and artists of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries; the conservation of sculpture; markets for sculpture and forgeries; and new theories on medieval sculpture and dressed stone.

Full programme details and further information: University of Plymouth, School of Humanities, Department of Art History website:

[www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=7863](http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/pages/view.asp?page=7863)

For further information contact Dr Theresa Oakley: [theresa.oakley@plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:theresa.oakley@plymouth.ac.uk) or Dr Alex Woodcock:

[alexwoodcock@sirenpress.co.uk](mailto:alexwoodcock@sirenpress.co.uk)

**Landscapes of Defence in the Viking Age: Anglo-Saxon England and comparative perspectives**

09.11.07-10.11.07

UCL, Institute of Archaeology

Warfare and power, as we know from contemporary events, play an important role in the formation of state institutions and their manifestation in material culture and landscape. The conference will bring together international experts from various disciplines to discuss key issues in the defence of territories during the period of the Viking incursions of the late eighth to eleventh centuries. Themes to be covered

will include the cultural landscape of warfare, the geographical context of civil defence structures, military communications and logistics, warfare and state formation, the social and administrative infrastructure of defence. Confirmed speakers include: Richard Abels; John Baker; Stuart Brookes; Juan Antonio Quiros Castillo; Julio Escalona; Peter Ettel; David Hill; Lena Holmquist-Olausson; Michael Olausson; David Parsons; Andrew Reynolds; Dorn van Dommelen; Gareth Williams; Barbara Yorke; and chairs: Stefan Brink and Nicholas Brooks.

For further details of the conference and an application form, please visit: [www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/project/beyond-burghal/conference/index.htm](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/archaeology/project/beyond-burghal/conference/index.htm) or contact Landscapes of Defence Project, Institute of Name Studies, School of English Studies, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD, United Kingdom, or email: [John.Baker@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:John.Baker@nottingham.ac.uk)

**Call for papers: The BT@ the BM: New Research on the Bayeux Tapestry**  
**An international conference at the British Museum**

15.07.08-16.07.08

The Bayeux Tapestry has attained near iconic status. Although extremely well known, because it depicts one of the most famous events in English history and the subject of numerous studies, many aspects of the Tapestry remain contentious - even enigmatic.

In recent years there has been increased interest in the Tapestry and further advances in our understanding of it, with scholars examining how, where and why it was made, questioning its reliability and value as a historical source, and excavating its hidden meanings.

The purpose of this conference is to highlight recent and new research on the Tapestry, and to disseminate those findings to a wider audience, in the hope of furthering discussion, debate and the sharing of ideas about this unique textile.

### **Submissions**

Submissions are invited on any aspect of the Bayeux Tapestry that advances current knowledge. Papers should be no longer than 20 minutes. It is hoped the conference proceedings will be published.

Submissions, outlining the nature of the proposed paper and no longer than 200 words, and a short biography, should be sent to Dr Michael Lewis, Deputy Head, Department of Portable Antiquities & Treasure, British Museum, London, WC1B 3DG. Email: [mlewis@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk](mailto:mlewis@thebritishmuseum.ac.uk) by **31 October 2007**.

*Please note the British Museum cannot cover speaker's expenses*

### **Call for Papers: Diaspora and the Natural World - Leeds International Medieval Conference 2008**

session sponsored by the Society of Medieval Archaeology

Medieval Europe witnessed far-ranging movements of both peoples and ideas; from Barbarian invasions to the Crusades and from Paganism to the expansion of Christianity and Islam. The impact of these movements on the 'Natural World', both physical and perceived, was many and varied. Understanding their significance has the potential to reveal much about the groups responsible for them. This session seeks to showcase new archaeological research – whether scientific or theoretically-based – into the ecological and/or ideological changes that accompanied the diasporas of the medieval period.

The session has been conceived as a forum for both established and early-career academics; we would like to encourage post-graduate and post-doctoral researchers to present their work, either orally or as a poster. We are particularly keen to attract speakers who have adopted inter-disciplinary approaches.

To register an interest in this session or to submit a presentation/poster abstract please contact Naomi Sykes:

[naomi.sykes@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:naomi.sykes@nottingham.ac.uk)

Deadline for abstracts **14<sup>th</sup> September**

A day symposium '**The Future of Medieval Archaeology**' is to be held at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London on Saturday 3rd May 2008.

The event is intended as an opportunity to reflect on the position of the discipline in view of the ongoing 50th anniversary celebrations and to consider how and in what directions medieval archaeology may develop in future.

Further details will be available shortly on the Society's web site.

### **SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH**

#### **Revealing the Lost Medieval Abbey of Scone: MASS Project 2007**

A team of archaeologists from Glasgow University have located the remains of the lost abbey of Scone where Scottish Kings were inaugurated and medieval parliaments held. The breakthrough was made through the use of geophysical survey in the grounds of Scone Palace this July. The Moothill and Abbey of Scone Survey (MASS) Project, co-directed by Oliver O'Grady (University of Glasgow) and Peter Yeoman (working in a private capacity), was commenced this year to complete a focused season of survey at the core of Scone Palace Estate using remote sensing techniques.

Scone, with its Moothill and monastery, was at the centre of kingship and ecclesiastical power in medieval Scotland, possessing a powerful cultural significance as the place of inauguration of the Kings of Scots. The site may have originated as a Pictish power centre within the territory of Gowrie, even before the time of the Scots and the Kingdom of Alba when royal assemblies were held on the Moot Hill from at least the 10th century. By 1120 a royal abbey was established as befitting this great ceremonial centre, which housed the Stone of Destiny. The Palace and lands were granted to the Murrays by James

VI/I in 1606. Destruction at the Reformation, combined with quarrying of the abbey for stone for the Palace and the nearby town, culminated with the creation of the designed landscape in the 18th and 19th centuries. This resulted in the wholesale altering of the historic site, so that at present nothing of the abbey is visible standing above ground and the Moothill survives incorporated within the gardens of Scone Palace. It is extraordinary that such an important place has left so little trace on the surface.

Much of the project's efforts have been put into reconstructing the form of the lost medieval landscape of Scone. The 2007 fieldwork followed on from an initial smaller-scale season of geophysical survey undertaken in 2005 which examined the environs of the famous Moothill mound as part of Mr O'Grady's PhD research into the archaeology of medieval places of assembly in Scotland. The MASS project aims to expand upon the findings of this pilot survey; to assess the survival of buried archaeology of the lost medieval abbey of Scone, examine the archaeology of the Moothill, and to seek an understanding of the spatial relationship between the abbey and assembly mound. The Glasgow team was supported by a group of five experienced volunteers from the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, who were trained in archaeological remote sensing, with Erica Utsi of Utsi Electronics Ltd assisting with the tuition in ground penetrating radar.

This year's fieldwork, funded in part by a research grant from the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, investigated key areas east of the Palace, the Moothill, and the neighbouring graveyard. Gradiometry, resistivity and radar survey were employed with detailed sampling strategies to provide clear resolution of results at different depths beneath the surface. The research strategy proved successful during the first week of the two week season, with the emergence of a series of pronounced anomalies suggestive of the partial floor-plan of what is likely to be the latest phase of the abbey church. The resolution of the

results was such that individual buttress features were clearly identifiable along the northern wall of the nave and around the footprint of what appears to be the northern transept. The results were confirmed by both the magnetic and resistivity survey, and most clearly by a radar time slice. More subtle anomalies were also identified which appear to derive from elements of the cloister and eastern range of the abbey. Compelling findings were also made from survey on and around the Moothill mound. An anomaly around the base of the mound is thought to be indicative of a massive in-filled ditch. This is the most forceful evidence yet that the Moothill mound visible today respects the site of the historic royal assembly mound, although excavation would be required to confirm this assertion. Details of these findings also suggest that the form of the mound has been considerably augmented throughout the extended history of the site.

The project proved popular with the Palace visitors, all of whom were given a free leaflet explaining the project and the strange contraptions being used to 'scan' the ground. The team were also happy to provide 'live' interpretation. This leaflet was kindly funded and produced by the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust. The project also attracted considerable media interest.



Taken together the results from the 2007 survey have considerably enhanced our understanding of the medieval ecclesiastical and royal landscape of Scone. The results have given the first clear window into the extent to which significant in-situ archaeological remains survive and have laid a solid foundation for future investigations. Further fieldwork is planned for 2008, yet to be confirmed in discussions with the Mansfield Estate. The project is supported by the Hunter Archaeological Trust, the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland, the Russell Trust, Glasgow University Department of Archaeology, the Perth and Kinross Heritage Trust, and by the Mansfield Estate.

*Oliver O'Grady*  
University of Glasgow

## NEWS & VIEWS

### **EMASS: Cardiff University May 2007**

The Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium (EMASS), held at the Cardiff School of History and Archaeology May 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> 2007, was organised to provide a forum in which post-graduate students could present, discuss, and debate their research with other researchers and academics. The symposium generated a tremendous response; a total of seventeen papers were presented and the symposium was attended by nearly fifty delegates.

Speakers were invited to present on topics of their choice. This relaxed attitude brought about an eclectic mix of papers by speakers from many different specialities based in universities both in Britain and Ireland. The papers spanned the entire early medieval period, as well as overlapping with the late-Roman and medieval periods. The papers addressed a diverse series of themes which included: the archaeology of 'Late Antiquity' (Rob Collins, James Gerrard, and Nick Wells), interpretation in the field (Herdis Hølleland and Joseph Reeves), death and burial (Lizzy Craig, Adrian Maldonado, David Klinge, and Bradley Hull),

material culture and identity (Letty Ten Harkel and Ben Jervis), settlement and spatial studies (Rebecca Boyd), landscape and identity (Kirsten Jarrett and Gill Boazman), boundaries (Andrew Ferrero), the use and interpretation of textual evidence (Timothy Jones and Oliver Reuss), and broader themes of theory and interpretation in early medieval archaeology (Andy Seaman and Sue Content). The papers were of a very high standard, and often stimulated lengthy debates (particularly the Late Antique papers). A small 'symposium review' containing all the papers abstracts, and a general discussion is currently being prepared, and will be published through the Cardiff University School of History and Archaeology later this autumn.

The first day of the symposium ended with a field trip and guided tour of Cosmeston Medieval Village, this was followed by a 'cawl and welsh cakes' drinks reception which was very kindly sponsored by the Society for Medieval Archaeology, and held in a reconstructed medieval barn (special thanks to my brother who had the task of preparing forty portions of cawl from scratch). The field trip, reception, and subsequent trip to the pub proved to be almost as lively forums for debate as the symposium itself, and a good time was had by all.

At a small meeting held amongst the speakers and delegates on the morning of the second day, it was agreed that EMASS should not be a one-off, and a follow-up event called PREMASS is being organised for 2008 at Exeter University by Imogen Wood and Simon Foote:

[www.sogaer.ex.ac.uk/archaeology/conferences/present/premass2008.shtml](http://www.sogaer.ex.ac.uk/archaeology/conferences/present/premass2008.shtml)

A website which will host information on up-coming PREMASS events, as well as the review publication and an email discussion list has also been constructed by Letty Ten Harkel at Sheffield University

[www.premass.group.shef.ac.uk/](http://www.premass.group.shef.ac.uk/)

*Andy Seaman*  
Cardiff University

## **Two Women and a Boat or a novel approach to engendering the Sutton Hoo excavations**

*The Dig* is the recently published novel by John Preston. It centres on the discovery and excavation of the Sutton Hoo ship burial in 1939 and is a pithily eloquent and elegant series of interwoven character portraits of some of the protagonists and their roles in the dig. Arranged chronologically, it splits the months April to September 1939 into five chapters and a prologue. Each chapter is also assigned to a particular character and so told in their voice: Basil Brown (two chapters and the prologue; 62 pages), Edith Pretty (two chapters; 66 pages) and Peggy Piggott (one chapter, 83 pages). The book concludes with an epilogue set in 1965, with excavations about to recommence, and told in the voice of Robert Pretty, Edith's grown son. The novel successfully conveys (particularly through Basil's characterisation) the context and excitement of the excavation, as well as its dangers. These are both physical – a collapse of mound 3 buries and almost kills Basil – and material – at one point an excavated mass of leather is placed in a bucket of water, unfurling to reveal a shoe or sandal, only to utterly disintegrate on removal from the water. The story also has a nice feel for the seeming-chaos of some museum storage. When Basil starts to find the boat rivets, unsure what they are he races on his bicycle to Aldeburgh Museum to look at similar examples from Snape. The contents of the museum are stacked up from floor to ceiling against all walls and one drawer haphazardly contains 'Bronze Age arrowheads, half-hunter watches, anti-corrosion percussion powder and several packets of mustard seed apparently from the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem.' Such once natural and sometimes exciting juxtapositions would today (where museum storage remains a woefully under-resourced area) be termed works of (conceptual) art. The tension between local/regional museums (in this case Ipswich) and the British Museum over excavation and finds ownership is also powerfully conveyed.

The above and other perceptions permitting on the shattering importance of the discovery (which continues to unfold in our own time) it struck me that the novel's main concern is not primarily a detailed account of the archaeological process. As the author states in his endnote: 'Certain changes have been made for dramatic effect'. The dramatic effects sought include the telescoping of time and events to heighten the tension and the narrative clarification of character and motivation. Perhaps most noticeable of these is the conflation of the preliminary 1938 season into the 1939 season and a playing down of the results garnered from the first two mounds, along with an exaggeration of the class issue as played out around Basil and C W Phillips who took over as site director. In reality, Basil's own diary<sup>1</sup> makes it clear that he was happy to work with Phillips and that he continued to excavate under Phillip's direction (though not in the burial chamber itself). Perhaps more crucially the drama-heightening changes underlie the novel's class and gender politics. It took me some mulling over to realise that the book was not seeking to expand our understanding of Sutton Hoo as archaeology but of archaeology as social practice. It is a perceptive discourse on English class behaviour and an attempt to retrospectively give a voice to those deemed to be socially inferior through their class or gender. It particularly allows its women to tell their stories. The book's four voices are balanced – two men and two women – but the weight does go with the female voices of Edith Pretty, the landowner, and Peggy Piggott, a junior member of the excavation team. Initially Peggy is chosen because she is married to Phillips' protégé Stuart Piggott and partly because her much slighter, feminine body mass (likened to a juvenile boy) is deemed less threatening to and a biddable tool on the delicate stratigraphy. Peggy is only on site for a month and so gets one chapter, but hers is the longest chapter of the book. The Piggott's marriage ended in the mid 1950s and Peggy, of course, went on to be a renowned archaeologist as Margaret Guido, doyen of bead studies.

Although there are other novels that deal with pivotal excavations (e.g. Peter Ackroyd's *The Fall of Troy*, about Schliemann's excavations) *The Dig's* class and gender issues within the context of early medieval studies suggest that it is better compared with Angus Wilson's 1956 novel, *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes*<sup>2</sup>. Wilson, of course, worked at the British Museum for a while and helped with the concealing of some of its treasures in a disused tube station during World War II (including finds from Sutton Hoo). Similarly we should take note of another exploration of Sutton Hoo, one that could have readily inspired *The Dig*, namely U A Fanthorpe's poem *Unfinished Chronicle*<sup>3</sup>. In 63 lines, laid out in two chronological parts, it succinctly and movingly interweaves Basil's campaign with the looming shadow of war in Europe and the pithy observations of Mrs Pretty's gardener.

'... The winds of that year blew Redwald's flaked bones  
Over the fields of his kingdom. Gold leaf also  
Floated away in that weather...  
In this year also the men of Germany  
Marched into Poland, and they held it. ...'

*Mark A Hall*  
Perth Museum & Art Gallery

## Notes

1. See for example R Bruce Mitford, 'Basil Brown's Diary of the excavations at Sutton Hoo in 1938 and 1939', in Bruce-Mitford 1974 *Aspects of Anglo-Saxon Archaeology, Sutton Hoo and Other Discoveries*, London, p. 141-69 and see also Bruce-Mitford et al 1975 *The Sutton Hoo Ship-Burial Volume I*, London, esp. Ch. II and II (the 1938 and 1939 excavations) and Ch XII (C W Philips excavation diary).
2. *Anglo-Saxon Attitudes* is readily available as a Penguin paperback. Its collecting politics are discussed by M A Hall in S Pearce et al 2002 *The Collectors Voice: Cultural Readings in the Practice of Collecting Vol 3 Imperial Voices*, Aldershot, p. 269-82.

3. The poem appears in at least two collections: U A Fanthorpe *Collected Poems 1976-2003* (Peterloo Books) and in A Thwaite (ed.) 2006 *The Ruins of Time Antiquarian and Archaeological Poems* (Eland Books).

## Indexing Medieval Archaeology

Few readers of this *Newsletter* will have read the last 25 volumes of *Medieval Archaeology* from cover to cover, but having just completed my fifth 5-year index, to volumes 46-50, I can make this boast.

I began indexing the journal in 1985, taking over from Ann Morley, and have worked with three Hon. Editors, David Hinton, Harold Mytum and John Hines. The first index was compiled on handwritten cards, but since then I have used the Macrex indexing program,<sup>(1)</sup> which copes with the drudgery (for instance, sorting into alphabetical order and ensuring consistent punctuation and spacing) and leaves the indexer free to concentrate on the more intellectual aspects of the job.

Any index is something of a ragbag of miscellaneous information, especially a journal such as *Medieval Archaeology* which ranges widely in time and place and covers many aspects of archaeology. The same places and topics may be discussed from different angles, and the indexer has to bring this material together and arrange it in a helpful way. Indexers need an element of imagination in order to anticipate the needs of a variety of readers from whom they receive little or no feedback. As David Crystal has written: 'From a communicative point of view, there is probably no more isolated intellectual task than indexing.'<sup>(2)</sup> Before making an index entry I ask myself: would anyone look this up, and if they did would they find anything useful?

Synonymous and related terms must be connected by cross-references. This demands good subject knowledge, as different authors may use different terminology. For example, you have to know that an SFB is a sunken-featured



building, that *Grubenhau* is an alternative term, but that a *souterrain*, although it sounds similar, is actually something quite different.

Several well-known sites are potential traps: Buittle Castle or Botel Castle? Should Wenlock Priory go under W or under Much Wenlock? Every British place-name is given its local authority area in the index, requiring careful checking in areas where there have been extensive changes, such as the old county of Glamorgan. Personal names sometimes need checking too: in the latest index Tuukka Talvio looked unlikely but was correct, while one author appeared variously as Gilles and Giles; both problems were easily solved from the internet, which has largely replaced the local reference library for checking information. Online resources like the Archaeology Data Service catalogue(3) are invaluable.

It is a challenge to maintain consistent coverage in one 5-volume index, let alone five. I have my own thesaurus of subject headings compiled specifically for *Medieval Archaeology* and constantly checked against the thesauri of archaeological objects and monument types now available on the English Heritage website.(4) New headings are frequently added, reflecting the development of the discipline and new research interests: for example, 'landscape history and archaeology' first appeared in the index to volumes 31–35, 'linear earthworks' in 36–40, 'spatial analysis' and 'productive sites' in 41–45, and in the latest index 'special deposits', 'characterization' – and even 'eBay'!

*Ann Hudson M.A.*

Fellow of the Society of Indexers  
[annhudsonindexer@aol.com](mailto:annhudsonindexer@aol.com)

#### Notes

1. [www.macrex.com](http://www.macrex.com)
2. *The Indexer*, Vol. 19 No. 3, April 1995, p. 153.
3. <http://ads.ahds.ac.uk/catalogue/>
4. <http://thesaurus.english-heritage.org.uk/>

#### **MedArch: A Dedicated Medieval Archaeology Email List**

MedArch is a new discussion forum for Medieval Archaeology. It aims to encourage a holistic (diachronic, interdisciplinary and cross-cultural) approach to the subject - and to link researchers and students in the academic and professional archaeological communities. The list is open to all and can be joined by visiting <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/archives/medarch.html> or by contacting James Barrett ([jhb41@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jhb41@cam.ac.uk)) or Neil Price ([neil.price@abdn.ac.uk](mailto:neil.price@abdn.ac.uk)).

#### **NEW BOOKS**

##### ***Hereford City Excavations Volume 4: Further Sites and Evolving Interpretations***

Edited by Alan Thomas and Andy Boucher. 205pp, b/w figs, pls, tbs, published by the Logaston Press (2002). ISBN-13: 978-1-873827-18-5. Publishers price GB £24.95, Oxbow Price GB £12.95.

Ron Shoesmith's landmark publications appraising the results of excavations undertaken in Hereford city in the 1960s and 70s will be familiar to many members. They provide what still represents one of the most striking archaeological visualisations of the long-term evolution of medieval town defences stretching back to the mid 9th century associated with some of the earliest evidence of planned urban initialisation in Late Anglo-Saxon England. The current volume pulls together the results of a subsequent generation of archaeological work undertaken between 1976 and 1990, encompassing sites largely confined to the north-east and north-west sectors of the town, a small number of which lie inside the circuit of the Late Saxon burgh. Based upon the small-scale, piecemeal evaluations which have come to define urban archaeology of the PPG16 era, this report is, as the authors themselves acknowledge in their introduction, very much a product of its time. Nevertheless, marshalled collectively, the results of these interventions have helped to fill gaps in

understanding and to refine the remarkably resilient model of urban growth first laid down by Shoemith nearly thirty years ago.

Within the period covered by this report, opportunities for investigating the Late Saxon burgh have been few and far between, and consequently relatively little new can be said about the nature and development of the early (Period 1 and 2) defences, save for topographic discussion (pp 184-6) on the extent to which the southern circuit relied upon the River Wye. Perhaps most revealing is the negative evidence afforded by recent interventions at Deen's Court, located in the south-western corner of the late Saxon defences, and other intra-mural sites. This work confirms the impression that, in common with other Late Saxon burghs such as Cricklade, sizeable areas within the defensive circuit remained unoccupied, emphasising the strongly defensive character of their initial phases.

Inevitably, the majority of recent excavation has followed in the wake of housing and amenity development located on the periphery of the medieval core. With it has come the first glimpses of extra-mural expansion, with excavations in the north-west sector on the site of Tesco providing confirmation of Late Saxon (10th-11th-century) occupation and interventions to the south of the river Wye (Sack Warehouse), recovering evidence for industrial activity - ironworking and pottery manufacture - sited within the medieval suburb of St Martin's. Beside analytical reports on finds and environmental evidence, Ron Shoemith (with Richard Morriss) maintains a presence with an important essay on the construction and afterlife of the late medieval defences as divulged from a comparative analysis of archaeological and historical/pictorial sources. The volume concludes with a chapter which moves beyond pure synthesis by presenting a dynamic view of urban morphology drawing upon analysis of 1st edition Ordnance Survey mapping.

Viewed individually, the sites upon which this volume is based appear mundane when compared to the large-scale interventions which first placed Hereford on the map of

medieval urban origins. It is to the authors' considerable credit that the results of such work can, through their sustained effort at integration and synthesis, make a meaningful contribution to our understanding of the city's past.

## NEW WEB RESOURCES

Of interest to members is a new website of medieval images recently launched by the University of Cambridge (Department of English) entitled *Medieval Imaginations: literature and visual culture in the Middle Ages*: [www.english.cam.ac.uk/medieval/](http://www.english.cam.ac.uk/medieval/)

Partly funded by the British Academy, the site organises images around episodes from the mystery play cycles from 'Abraham and Isaac' to 'The Visitation'. A dimension which will particularly appeal to archaeologists is the broad range of media covered, to quote from the website:

'Images have been selected to represent the rich diversity of artistic forms and media, including painting, stained glass, alabaster, textiles, and sculpture. Images were the books of all those who could not read in the Middle Ages, and through 'Medieval Imaginations' you can reconstruct something of the visual culture that once surrounded medieval people and gave meaning to their world'.

## SOCIETY NEWS

### Society Trip to Estonia!

The Society for Medieval Archaeology in association with the Finnish Antiquarian Society is proud to announce an excursion to Estonia, to take place between 25<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> April 2008.

The trip will start off with a guided tour of Tallinn by Dr Ivar Leimus of the Estonian History Museum. We will then travel by coach to Läänemaa and the island of Saaremaa (Ösel-Wiek), where Kaire Tooming of the Estonian National Heritage Board will be our guide to the region's wealth of medieval architecture.

Time allowing, it may be possible to also visit the Järvamaa area in central Estonia, before returning to Tallinn.

Further details of the programme and cost will be announced as soon as possible.

If you are interested in taking part in this excursion please contact Katinka Stentoft at: [katinka.stentoft@csglasgow.org](mailto:katinka.stentoft@csglasgow.org)

#### **Moving forward: Society Initiatives in 2007**

Several changes have been initiated in this, our anniversary year. In case you missed notice of them, here they are again:

- electronic access to *Medieval Archaeology* (see Hon. Editor's report below)
- new look Medieval Britain & Ireland (see Hon. Editor's report below)
- launch of new website: [www.medievalarchaeology.org](http://www.medievalarchaeology.org)
- launch of the Martin Jope Award for article judged to display the best novel interpretation, application of analytical method or presentation of findings
- launch of the John Hurst Award for the best undergraduate dissertation in medieval archaeology

#### **Changes to the Journal**

With Volume 51 of the journal (published late November 2007) you will hopefully notice a few changes. A one-off editorial will explain these, but the things to look out for include:

- announcement of new Associate Editors
- more colour illustrations (to celebrate our 50th anniversary)
- announcement of the first Martyn Jope Award
- the introduction of article abstracts in French, German and Italian
- we no longer carry news, for which see this newsletter and our website


- the evolution of our Medieval Britain and Ireland section to well-illustrated 'highlights' only, and the development with the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology of a period-base searchable online database for other entries, accessible as a 'Special Collections' feature of Archaeology Data Service's ArchSearch.

From around December, to celebrate the Society's 50th anniversary, as a one-off gesture we are making volumes 1-50 accessible through the ADS. Volumes 44 onwards will also be available on secure access through IngentaConnect, a provider of access to publications online that are fully searchable and include linked references via the Cross Ref system. We will be able to include more colour illustrations in the online version of the journal than we are able to publish in the journal. Current members of the Society for Medieval Archaeology will be able to view these issues free of charge as part of their membership. In the autumn of each year Maney will contact all current members direct with a unique access code and details on how to get access. This privilege will be removed if you lapse or cancel your membership!

Volume 52 (2009) will herald further changes to the journal's house-style, most notably the introduction of Harvard references within footnotes.

As ever, please do get in touch, not least if you want to discuss a potential contribution to *Medieval Archaeology*. We welcome original submissions of international significance, or national significance and of international interest, which match the objectives of the Society. We seek a balance of material by date and region, and are particularly keen to see more European material, synthetic articles and debates submitted. We'd be interested to hear from people who might be prepared to produce a review of coverage of medieval archaeology in foreign language periodicals, for instance.

*Sally M. Foster, Hon. Editor*  
[www.maney.co.uk/journals/ma](http://www.maney.co.uk/journals/ma)



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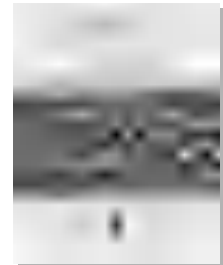
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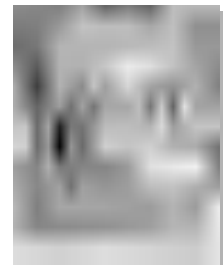


## **Excavations at Hulton Abbey, Staffordshire 1987–1994**

*W D Klemperer and N Boothroyd Monograph 21*

Hulton Abbey was a minor Cistercian monastery in north Staffordshire (England), founded in 1219 and finally dissolved in 1538. This is the final report on the archaeological excavations undertaken there between 1987 and 1994.

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