



# ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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The public remain hugely interested in archaeology, taking up the offers of a wide range of exhibitions, public engagement activities, learning opportunities and socially inclusive community projects. Reporting in the media remains largely positive. The 2015 survey by Britain Thinks, to describe and measure the range of public benefits from local heritage projects, reported that they are good for our health and wellbeing.

National bodies support the care of, and interest in, the historic environment, while funding bodies welcome archaeology's educational potential, and those health benefits. Archaeology provides positive and special opportunities for the public to be involved, which can bring communities together in unexpected ways, and may help us to live in harmony.

Archaeologists promote the contemporary relevance of archaeology, in forging connections between communities and their environs; they uphold appropriate research objectives while fostering high levels of community inclusion. Museum archaeology collections support academic, commercial and community research, and school programmes and university study. As well as serving public participation, all this in turn contributes to research results, whose publication spreads knowledge to aid our mutual understanding of the historical development of peoples and places. In the last 20 years there has been a shift towards seeing the past primarily in terms of what the public value. This has permeated thinking among academics and institutions, and arguably, Government perceptions of heritage. But more recently, the weight given to the public's view has been reduced in the face of (or the opportunity presented by) perceived economic constraint. The study and practice of archaeology are vulnerable to public policy changes and to the broader impacts of economic austerity: in curricula available in schools and universities, in contract archaeology, community projects, and in museums and archives.

Traditionally, museums actively encouraged access to collections by explaining their intellectual and creative potential. Society for Museum Archaeology Committee Chair Gail Boyle observed:

... the greatest threat to the provision of access ... has rather more to do with the ever-dwindling numbers of specialist curators employed in museums and serious underfunding. The museum sector is being hit especially hard by swingeing financial cuts to public services' and 'There are now whole areas of the country where there are few (if any) curators with any form of archaeological expertise and in some cases none with any curatorial expertise at all.

The Committee would entirely agree with the Prehistoric Society's view that 'Having appropriate and sufficient curatorial staff is clearly vital to service this crucial means of furthering our knowledge of the past.'

The loss of curators is exacerbated by those remaining getting wider remits: for additional collections, additional services, or a broader geographic area (where as well as an overall reduction in staff, county and city teams have been merged). Some newly in post have little or no curatorial experience. How will the sector mentor early career archaeologists and provide sufficient training and development when staff are so stretched?

It is too easy for local government to feel it has done its duty by simply passing the buck to a trust, some of which cynically adopt 'modern' commercial practices like non-disclosure agreements and firewalls to 'protect' information about revised structures and jobs, while still spending public money on public services.

Museums have obligations to the community, and need key specialists. Please urge your councillors to resist financial settlements that threaten loss of expertise.



## CONTINUING CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS

Andrew Williams, Hon. Treasurer

In the 2017 Autumn Mailing was a table listing current Institute activities. Members were invited to rank these in order of importance. Twenty replies were received, and the aggregate scores are reflected in the table below.

INSTITUTE ACTIVITIES	RANK	YOUR RANKING
The <i>Archaeological Journal</i>	1	
Research grants	2	
Attendance at lectures in Burlington House	3	
Post-doc and early career archaeology lectures in Burlington House	4	
<i>Newsletter</i>	5	
'Field trips' in Spring and Autumn	6	
Annual week-long 'field trip'	7=	
Sponsoring of students at meetings and conference	7=	
Conference	9	
Hard copy Summer Meeting Report	10	
Online viewing of Burlington House lectures	11	
OTHERS Meeting interesting and like-minded people Developing and widening membership Increasing charity 'offer' Advocacy for subject interests		

Council, already engaged in reducing the Institute's outgoings, has concluded that the £6,000 spent every year producing a hard-copy Summer Meeting Report could be better used to promote our charitable objectives. In 2018, the Summer Meeting Report will be available online only. The Institute has offered some of the money saved to support the Festival of Archaeology organised annually by the Council for British Archaeology and threatened by reduction in its grant from Historic England.

We are mindful that only twenty members' views have been received. Please use the aggregate table if you would still like to contribute your view to Council. Please send the hard copy to me at Williamsgate, Pembroke Road, Portsmouth PO1 2NS, or scan and email to [andrewwilliams@waitrose.com](mailto:andrewwilliams@waitrose.com).

## GRANTS AND AWARDS

### *Current Archaeology* Awards 2018

Every year, these awards celebrate the projects and publications that have made the pages of *Current Archaeology* over the past twelve months, and the people judged to have made outstanding

contributions to archaeology. The winners are voted for entirely by the public – there are no panels of judges.

The latest awards were announced on 23 February as part of *Current Archaeology* Live! 2018:

**Archaeologist of the Year:** Hella Eckardt

**Book of the Year:** *Lost Landscapes of Palaeolithic Britain*, edited by Mark White

**Research Project of the Year:** Blick Mead: exploring the 'first place' in the Stonehenge landscape (University of Buckingham)

**Rescue Project of the Year:** An Iron Age chariot burial: excavating a square-barrow cemetery at Pocklington (MAP Archaeological Practice)

**Current Archaeology Live!** 2019 will be held in February 2019, with further details available at <https://www.archaeology.co.uk/vote>



Pocklington Chariot burial (P.Halkon)

## ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH GRANTS

The Institute awards the following grants annually:

**Tony Clark Fund** Up to £500 for scientific work including dating

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

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

Please download an application form at <http://www.royalarchinst.org/grants>

Closing date for applications : 10 December 2018. Awards announced in April 2019.

## RAI Cheney Bursaries

The bequest left by Frank Cheney continues to provide the Institute with a small fund of money to enable students to attend conferences or RAI meetings. An allocation is available annually from

which individuals can apply for a maximum sum of £200. Please check with the Administrator that money remains in the yearly fund before you apply. Students who wish to apply for a bursary should email [admin@royalarchinst.org.uk](mailto:admin@royalarchinst.org.uk) or write to the Administrator, RAI, c/o Society of

Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London, W1J 0BE, at least six weeks before the event they wish to attend, stating: the institution in which they study, the event they wish to attend, the sum of money requested, a breakdown of how the money would be spent and a summary (up to 250 words) of why they would like to attend the event and in what way this would be useful to them. Successful applicants may be asked to produce a brief report of the event for the Institute. During 2017, nine students from universities of Manchester and York received bursaries to help them to attend the Institute's Annual conference, 'Arras 200 – Celebrating the Iron Age' (for their report, see p. 21).

## RAI Dissertation Prizes

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

The RAI Masters Dissertation Prize, covering years 2016 and 2017, was awarded to Victoria Ziegler from University College London, Institute of Archaeology for her dissertation *From Wic to Burh: Comparing the archaeological evidence from the last phases of activity at mid Saxon sites within Lundenwic with the earliest phases of activity at late Saxon sites in Lundenburh*.

## RAI Research Grants, 2018

Research grants for 2018 have been awarded to the following projects:

Gavin Simpson *Dendrochronology of furniture at St Peter, Lanehan, Notts* (Tony Clark Memorial Fund)

Ian Parker Heath *Radbourne: The search for the Old Hall*

Marcus Jecock *Hanging Grimston Community Archaeology Project – excavations* (Bunnell Lewis Fund)

Michael Stratigos and Derek Hamilton *At the Water's Edge: Early Iron Age settlement patterns in central Scotland*

Paul Gething *Geophysical survey and field-walking across the later prehistoric landscape of the Bradford Kaims, Northumberland*

Richard Bradley *Excavations at Copt Howe, Cumbria*

Vicki Cummings *Tombs of the North* (including an anonymous donation in memory of Paul Ashbee)

Rachel Pope *Illustrating Eddisbury: a re-evaluation of W. J. Varley's 1936–38 excavations*

## RAI Research Grant Reports

Several projects were unable to complete their research in time to send a report for this edition:

Peter Halkon *Analysis and publication of a site near Elloughton, E. York*

Nick Overton and Irene Garcia-Rovira *Rock Crystal in the British Early Neolithic?*

Robert Wallace *Bridge Farm*

### The Tudor dovecote at Fulham Palace

Eleanor Sier

Fulham Palace Trust undertook a community archaeology dig in October 2017 in an attempt to discover more about the history of the ancient site which was home to the Bishops of London for 1300 years. Funding was acquired to dig two trenches west of the entrance to the Tudor Courtyard, where it was believed both the earlier medieval manor house and the old Tudor dovecote stood. While the excavation did not uncover the dovecote or the earlier manor house, it did reveal some exciting finds which are now being examined by specialists.

In the first week of the excavation, a variety of post-medieval materials including moulded plaster, Reigate stone, peg and pan tiles, tin glazed pottery and Tudor brick were found. One of the more unexpected discoveries was a 'steel picket' (also known as a 'silent screw'), which were used in the First World War in the trenches, as supports for barbed wire defences. Another unexpected

Fulham Palace:  
excavating the  
canine © Fulham  
Palace Trust



discovery was the skeletal remains of a large canine.

A post-medieval pit was carefully examined, and amongst the rubble some Tudor bricks and tile fragments were uncovered – including some possible Delftware from the seventeenth century. The mixed team of archaeological professionals and volunteers also found a fragment of what is thought to be a lice comb made of bone, potentially from the seventeenth or eighteenth century.

Engagement levels were high with 1503 participants involved in the three week project. Five schools, four uniform groups, 30 volunteers and three archaeological groups took part. In addition, we ran a number of scheduled public events, including: ‘Astonishing Archaeology’ which attracted 300 family learners, hands-on archaeology sessions and geophysical survey lectures. We scheduled an ‘Ask the Archaeologist’ session each day including two sessions with Young Archaeologists involved in the project.

### **Tombs of the North: Excavations at Tressness chambered tomb, Sanday, Orkney** Vicki Cummings

The early Neolithic chambered tombs of Orkney are well-known yet there have been no new investigations of these sites for several decades. Moreover, while Mainland Orkney benefits from considerable tourist income generated by interest in the outstanding archaeological remains there,

the outer isles of Orkney are not, as yet, seeing a concomitant growth in tourism. The new project ‘Tombs of the North’ has been created to address both these issues. First, the fresh excavation of sites under threat from coastal erosion will take place to further our knowledge of these sites. This information will then be used to provide detail for a ‘Tombs Trail’ – booklets, information boards and websites to encourage visitors to the outer isles to visit these sites.

The first site chosen for investigation was Tressness on the isle of Sanday. This monument lies on the southern tip of a peninsula and is being actively eroded by the sea. Indeed, a ‘slice’ has been taken off the southern end of the monument by erosion, exposing the internal architecture to the elements. In 2017 we opened a 12m x 3m exploratory trench over the main body of the chambered cairn, running roughly north–south and in line with the chamber. No archaeological deposits were excavated but we did reveal the remains of a well-preserved cairn. The chamber had clearly been investigated in recent times with loose slabs lying close to and in the top of the chamber: this is probably the result of antiquarian activity. The very top courses of drystone walling with a single visible orthostatic stall were visible in this area. There may well also be a later circular cairn built on top of the earlier stalled cairn. We also recorded the eroding section using photogrammetry, and there is a now an online, open access, 3-D model of the site:





- | KEY                                 |
|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Cairn                            |
| 2. Chamber                          |
| 3. <i>In situ</i> dry-stone walling |
| 4. Possible later stone structure   |
| 5. Cairn seen in eroding section    |

Tresness, 3D model (H. Anderson-Whymark)

<https://sketchfab.com/models/c4ba6d719bd241eebf68c40841a0159f>

We are proposing to return in 2018 to conduct larger-scale excavations.

### In place and time: dating and analysing the early agricultural settlement of Shetland – phase II

Claire Christie, Gordon Noble and Kevin Edwards

In July 2017, researchers from the University of Aberdeen, again aided by volunteers from Archaeology Shetland, returned to the site at Troni Shun investigated in 2016. The results of the 2016 field-work indicated a prehistoric house with multiple phases of remodeling. The analysis of the finds from the 2016 field season revealed a Bronze Age date for the earlier phases of the house with significant later reuse in the Iron Age/Pictish and

possibly Norse periods. In 2017 the area surrounding the hearth was re-opened to allow it to be sampled for archaeomagnetic dating, conducted by Samuel Harris (University of Bradford). This is the first time this technique has been applied to prehistoric houses of this type, with the results potentially influencing future approaches. The investigation of the second structure, c. 30m to the north, continued in 2017 with the excavation of a larger trench through the wall and across the area where the field walls abut the structure. The trench revealed walls of similar construction to the neighbouring prehistoric house, with possible buttressing of the external wall face, and yielded an artefact assemblage dominated by coarse stone tools. The field walls appear to abut the structure with a later phase of rebuilding overlying the wall collapse. Further samples were collected for environmental analysis which with that of the artefactual assemblage is ongoing.

In addition to the site at Troni Shun, the nearby site of Brunatwatt (HU 2503 5116) was also studied with the aim of characterising the remains and collecting comparative data. The investigations involved the exploration of two adjoining enclosures, one of which had been noted as a possible prehistoric house, and a nearby field system. However, the excavation of two trenches across portions of the enclosures concluded that neither enclosure was a prehistoric house. The recovery of a small number of stone tools indicates possible



Archaeology Shetland volunteer J. Smith excavating trench across wall of 2nd structure (C. Christie)

prehistoric activity in the area. Further trenches were excavated over sections of the walls that form the field system, revealing a range of construction methods. The ongoing comparative analysis of the excavation, environmental and artefactual data from Troni Shun and Brunatwatt will allow for the sites to be placed in context. The initial results have impacts for our understanding of the later reuse of stone structures and the composition of seemingly coherent sites.

### **Bridging the Past: the integration of two eras of archaeological investigation of Bamburgh Castle's West Ward**

Joanne Kirton

Our project aimed to assess and consolidate a nationally important archaeological archive related to Bamburgh Castle in Northumberland. In 2006 the Bamburgh Research Project (BRP) inherited a large, partial archive generated by Dr Brian Hope-Taylor during excavations in the 1960s and 1970s. Unfortunately, the archive is in poor condition and many major elements are missing. This prompted the BRP to conduct a parallel excavation and re-excavate areas of Hope-Taylor's trenches in an attempt to integrate the two archives and help fill some of the significant gaps in the Hope-Taylor record.

Trench 8 was opened in 2006 based on Hope-Taylor's interim report that noted over 2000 years of stratified deposits in this area of the West Ward. His discoveries included a seventh- to ninth-century industrial metalworking area, whose finds include pattern-welded swords and decorated gold artefacts, likely associated with the Northumbrian royal court. The re-excavation of this area in 2006 located new finds, including undisturbed evidence for Neolithic occupation, and significantly, the remains of Hope-Taylor's section labelling, allowing us to understand where many of the surviving finds from the excavation were found, as well as providing the opportunity to see, in section, what the BRP might expect to encounter in future excavation seasons.

We have amalgamated the artefactual assemblages from the Hope-Taylor and BRP excavations into one contemporary archive. We are evaluating and analysing the metal-work, pottery, and the small lithic and glass assemblages from Trench 8, and now have five radiocarbon dates for key stratigraphic horizons. Together with the worked bone, animal bone and paleoenvironmental assemblages, these will allow the BRP to write up the Hope-Taylor and BRP Trench 8 excavations as one in the Spring of 2018.



Bamburgh: Trench 8 re-evaluation with shoring

*Inset* One of Hope-Taylor's rediscovered section tags © Bamburgh Research Project Ltd



## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Places are limited, so please book promptly.

### 2018

**Spring Meeting** Thursday 10 – Sunday 13 May at Hereford, led by Pete Wilson and Tim Hoverd (details in this mailing)

**Summer Meeting** 7 – 13 July to the Scilly Isles, led by Hedley Swain (Fully booked – contact Caroline to be added to waiting list)

### Forthcoming in 2018

**Please tell Caroline if you are interested in attending**

**Autumn Day Meeting** The Mithraeum, London led by Hedley Swain (details to be confirmed)

**RAI and TDP Joint Conference** 13 – 14 October at London *Ten Years of Thames Discovery* (see preliminary details below)

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

Royal Archaeological Institute and  
Thames Discovery Programme  
Conference: *Ten Years of Thames  
Discovery* 13–14 October 2018

at a London venue to be confirmed

### n.b. This is a non-residential conference.

This year the RAI is joining with the Thames Discovery Programme (TDP), the multiple award-winning community archaeology project empowering and enabling Londoners to monitor and record the fast-eroding archaeology of the Thames foreshore. While communicating their findings to a wide audience, TDP will be celebrating its tenth anniversary at a FREE two-day conference. Papers will be presented by TDP staff and volunteers (the Foreshore Recording and Observation Group or FROG), including new junior members, the TaDPoles, and by professional archaeologists. The presentations will explore the archaeology of the River Thames, London's wider archaeology, and coastal and inter-tidal archaeology from elsewhere in the UK and further afield.

The conference presentations will be filmed by Doug Rocks-Macqueen and made available online after the event (via YouTube, TDP website and RAI website). You can see last year's Foreshore Forum films here: [https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBjeGwwGortT1x95\\_GlxlGpH73OuLrGn](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLBjeGwwGortT1x95_GlxlGpH73OuLrGn).

Cost: FREE, and tea and coffee will be provided at breaks, and a wine reception on Saturday evening.

Booking will be via Eventbrite.

Early bird ticket links will be provided to TDP volunteers (the FROG) and RAI members before tickets go public. Date of ticket releases to be confirmed.



FROGs and  
TaDPoles at  
Greenwich  
©TDP

## MEETINGS NOTES

### 163rd SUMMER MEETING, 8–15 July 2017: Cork and Environs

M. NIEKE, R. AMBLER, M. AMORY,  
L. PARTRIDGE, W. HUSBAND,  
K. STUBBS, S. SHAW, A. HOOSON,  
and G. VICKERY

Sunday saw us in the company of Dr Tomás Ó Carragáin, the first of our expert guides from University College Cork. A stunning day (in all senses) began with Labbacallee wedge tomb, the ‘bed of the wise woman’, said to be the largest of such Irish monuments; a long monumental structure of limestone slabs and still retaining large capstones and buttress stones at one end. 1930s excavations revealed two chambers, with pottery and bone fragments. Unusually for a wedge tomb the main burial was that of a woman; further inspection revealed she had one leg shorter than the other. Wedge Tombs used to be thought to be Bronze Age but recent radio-carbon dating suggests they are some 600 years earlier – c. 3400–3200 BC.

Travelling on we passed Glanworth Castle, a thirteenth-century castle built by Anglo-Norman settlers on a river cliff above a strategic crossing point. It remained in use over several centuries and

evolved in style and structure; in the fifteenth century being a typical Irish tower house owned by the Roche family, leading lords of the Cork area. The borough settlement included a church, Dominican friary and leper colony. The castle was confiscated by the Cromwellians in the mid-seventeenth century; by the early eighteenth century it had fallen into ruin.

At Toureen Peakaun we visited a remarkable site retaining a small church dating to around 1100. This marks the site of a seventh-century monastic site established by St Abban on royal land and named after St Beccan – an Irish ascetic who died in 689. An important collection of decorated Romanesque and earlier carved stones remains, including cross shafts, with fragments of a high cross which has mortice and tenon fittings in a skeuomorph copying timber, possibly the earliest surviving high cross in Britain or Ireland. Also present are rare early shrine-post corners – perhaps indicative of a stone and timber-built reliquary shrine and a sundial – one of only twelve known in Ireland. At least 80 seventh- to eighth-century name stones with a mixture of Irish and Latin names are known; several were found during Tomas’s recent excavations. The names include Cummene and Laidcem, ecclesiastics known to



Toureen Peakaun:  
fragments of the high  
cross with chapel beyond  
(M. Nieke)

have been actively involved along with Beccan in seventh-century discussions about the correct date of Easter. Numerous burials were encountered within the chapel but no trace of an earlier church.

In an adjacent field Tomas explained his discovery of a monastic enclosure including a small enclosed cell – appropriate for the ascetic Beccan. A bullaun stone, with several round depressions, survives as does a well with religious associations. Today the church and well remain a pilgrimage site.

Lastly to the Rock of Cashel, once the seat of the overkings of Munster. Its origins as a centre of power go back to the fourth and fifth centuries AD when the Eóganacht came to power. The site sits dominantly in a landscape full of prehistoric barrows and later high-status ringforts. Recent research indicates that this rock outcrop has been modified to provide access, with the suggestion that an adjacent linear earthwork is part of a ceremonial pathway allowing access but then culminating at an adjacent Royal ringfort. Legend has it that St Patrick baptised the grandsons of an early ruler there; no trace of any church of this period has yet been found. As a royal seat it is thought that inauguration ceremonies took place there – similar to those associated with royal sites including Dunadd in Scotland. The 28m-high round tower is the oldest known feature, dating to around 1100 and functioning as a free-standing bell tower. Its round-headed doorway is, as usual, well above ground level. The top floor, which housed the bells, has four evenly spaced triangular windows. Cormac's Chapel, newly revealed after major restoration, is one of Ireland's earliest and finest Romanesque churches. The building has a nave and chancel with projecting towers. External decoration of string courses and blind arcading give it a very continental feel. Internally the chancel retains wall painting, the dating of which is much discussed. Our wall-painting expert offered the view that these were likely to be original, rather than later overpainted, works. A sarcophagus at the west end of the nave is carved in Hiberno-Urnes style with intertwined beasts and snakes and is roughly contemporary with the chapel.

Outside is a replica of the twelfth-century St Patrick's Cross – the original being on display indoors in the adjacent refurbished Vicar's Choral hall. It is unusual in not having a ring around the



Cormac's Chapel at Cashel (A. Williams)

cross head and in having subsidiary supports each side of the shaft.

The cathedral is a large cruciform Gothic construction without aisles, built between 1230 and 1270, and crudely fitted in between the earlier features. A fifteenth-century tower rises over the crossing; around this time a residential tower was added at the west end of the nave. The cathedral was abandoned by 1749 and by 1848 the roof had collapsed. It was taken into state care in 1875.

Our second day took us into the city of Cork, starting at University College. We again benefitted from the expertise of the College's staff, this time Colin Rynne, whose wide interests include the history of the city. He explained the non-denominational College's origins; it was incorporated in 1845, with two other Queen's Colleges at Belfast and Galway, under the provisions of the Irish Universities Act of 1845. We heard something



of its benefactors – including those whose money was made out of Cork’s international butter trade – and its members: George Boole, whose work on algebra made possible the development of computer programming and was Cork’s first professor of mathematics.

We had gathered in the striking ‘Tudor Gothic’ College quadrangle, by Cork architect Sir Thomas Deane and his partner Benjamin Woodward, which contains in its north wing a collection of stones rescued by antiquarians. These express the Irish language in characters from the Latin alphabet, and include gravestones and others which bear some of the earliest evidence for Christianity in Ireland.

We passed the imposing early nineteenth-century Greek Revival portico at the entrance to Cork County gaol built between 1818 and 1823, now incorporated into the perimeter of the College campus, but looking out towards the city, and approached by a bridge designed by Marc Isambard Brunel, built in 1835. A memorial on the outer wall of the gaol to Seán Ó Caomhánaigh, ‘Fatally shot by the Free State Special Branch whilst engaged in making a tunnel to rescue Republican prisoners from Cork Gaol. 3 August 1940’ is a stark reminder of the harsher realities of Irish history, memories of which are embedded in the history of the gaol.

Moving on to Cork Public Museum through Fitzgerald Park, we admired the recently restored President and Mayor’s Pavilion, specially built for the 1902–03 Cork International Exhibition. The house, built by the brewer Charles Beamish in 1845, was converted into a museum opened in 1910, and after a period as municipal offices, reopened in 1945. A new extension was added in 1996.

But the group’s eagerness to see the Museum’s wide ranging collections, including much on the history and archaeology of the city, was curbed by the discovery that an underpublicized policy of Monday closing had been recently introduced. Fortunately, Colin recognized a member of the Museum staff departing for lunch, and was able to gain us admission. Our thanks are due to Acting Curator, Daniel Breen and his staff for doing us a great favour.

Finn Barre, the patron saint of Cork, is commemorated in the cathedral that bears his name. It occupies the site of the burial ground of the

monastery that he founded in the seventh century, and where he is said to be buried. There have been a succession of buildings on the site, and some fragments of these survive including a doorway from the medieval cathedral which is built into the burial ground wall. This cathedral was demolished and a replacement built, but by 1861 it was felt to be ‘inadequate’, and a new cathedral was planned.

The architect, William Burges, took his inspiration from medieval cathedrals of France and the sumptuousness of his vision was reflected in its cost, projected as £15,000, finally in the region of £100,000. The central spire of the cathedral was topped out in 1879, although the main body had been consecrated in 1870, the year the Church of Ireland was disestablished and disendowed: a concluding statement of diminishing Protestant ascendancy.

Monday afternoon’s walk with Colin Rynne took in Elizabeth Fort, Viking settlements by South Gate Bridge, and a section of medieval town wall.

Near St Finn Barre’s cathedral we climbed to Elizabeth Fort by way of a narrow stepped alley, Keyser’s Hill (Scandinavian: ‘path to the quay-side’). Now a heritage site, the seventeenth-century five-point star-fort had a grim career: doomed Jacobite stronghold, barracks, pre-transportation convict depot, famine food depot, Black and Tan base, fever hospital, air-raid shelter, and recent police station.

Aloft on the battlements we surveyed Cork, dissected south and north by branches of the River Lee; we could locate the three main Viking sites, and the clear midline of the narrow medieval town, Main Street, still leading to river bridges north and south. Continuing along the Fort’s high walkway, we inspected gun emplacements and Cromwellian bastion. Finally, over the intervening trees, Burges’ splendid golden angel appeared, blasting twin trumpets above the cathedral sanctuary.

Descending Barrack Street, core of the first Viking area, to riverside level, we tracked some of our bird’s-eye view. The triple-arched limestone South Gate Bridge (1713), technically significant at a time when wider bridge-spans reduced road gradients, crosses the Lee at the site of the Droichet (‘bridge’), timber entrance-bridge from first to second Viking settlement. Discoveries here include ten houses (c.1100) raised above flood-level on timber-revetted clay platforms. Finds indicate a

busy domestic, industrial and trading environment; intermarriage with the Hibernians made for relatively peaceful coexistence.

Cork continued to evolve, on islands largely man-made by artificial levelling in the marshy, tidal river. We noted Main Street's side lanes, indicating burgage plots, and, in Bishop Lacey Park, excavated fourteenth-century wall-courses which evoke the medieval city, with waterways within and without its towered wall.

One five-star visit remained. Product of the Irish Arts and Crafts movement, consecrated in 1916 and since sympathetically refurbished, the University's Honan Chapel strikingly exemplifies the Hiberno-Romanesque architecture of the tenth to twelfth centuries. The architect was James F. McMullen; building and furnishings were designed and created as a single commission, financed by the Honan merchant family.

It is a simple building with traditional round tower. Inside one is now met by Imogen Stuart's small pillar font (1996), its shallow bowl formed of two stylised hands offering the water. From font to altar, Oppenheimer Ltd's mosaic *River of Life* fills the aisle with magnificent fish threading the lively currents. Ceramic scenes inlaid in the wall arcading, serpent mosaics, plate, textiles and Harry Clarke's brilliant, complex stained-glass windows contribute to the impact of an exceptional place.

On Tuesday we visited Mid Cork; our guide was Billy O'Brien from the University, who was to lead us through the Bronze Age to the Industrial era. We began at Clanashanimud Bronze Age Hillfort.

Irish Hillforts date from mid to late Bronze Age, with some 100 examples remaining. Clanashanimud, meaning the trench or ditch of timbers, possibly recalling popular memory, is about 8 hectares in area. It comprises two ditch and bank systems. The outer rampart has a perimeter of 1.02 km; the inner rampart, c. 50 metres within, is at 0.8 km in length. The banks were topped by palisades, with a rock-cut ditch protecting the inner one. There was one entrance in the perimeter, where a covered passageway led to the interior. Billy and his team excavated for eight months during 2004–6; their radiocarbon date of c. 1200 BCE makes it the oldest known prehistoric hillfort in Ireland.

They found no evidence for occupation. Probable evidence for warfare among emerging

regional powers at this time was revealed by the inner timber palisade having been deliberately burnt shortly after the fort was built. There was no sign of rebuilding after this.

The path to Castlenalact (Castle of the Standing Stones) Bronze Age Stone Row led through the overgrown garden of a derelict house. The row, the biggest in Cork, consists of 4 stones, the tallest (NE end) standing at about 4 m. tall, descending in height to the fourth at about 1.57 m tall. The orientation is NE to SW along the line of sunrise/sunset, perhaps linking it with sun worship and it may be connected to the hillfort. There is a mid-Bronze Age boulder burial nearby.

Garranes Ring fort is an example of the most common historic structure in Ireland, with some 3,000 remaining from the sixth to seventh centuries; they are mainly early medieval enclosed farmsteads. However, Garranes' three rings denote high status and it may have been the seat of a minor kingdom during this period. Partial excavation produced evidence for bronze casting, glass production and enamelling, indicating the presence of metal workers. During the 1990s, the location of a 9 m round house was discovered here, the first built structure found in any ring fort. 150 metres away there is a second fort – the Queen's fort – dating from the same period, which although not ditched has a similar-sized interior. Together they form a minor royal landscape.

Kilcrea was a house of Observant Franciscans of a kind rarely seen in England, where friaries were usually established in towns and disappeared among later buildings after the Reformation. The urban friaries in Dublin have left little trace, but here is a well-preserved example which owes its survival to its remoteness and a continuing devotion among the local population.

The friary was founded in 1465 by Cormac McCarthy, Lord of Muskerry. Suppressed in 1542 and twice sacked by English soldiers, it continued a twilight existence into the nineteenth century. The tower over the crossing remains and the walls of the nave extend almost to their original height. Its preservation in this condition must owe something to its change of use from friary church to local burial place, a custom which continues to this day. A notice at the entrance warns against the dangers of do-it-yourself grave digging.



Kilcrea Friary (W. Husband)



The face on the McCarthy castle (WH)

If the friary is evidence of the McCarthy clan's piety, then the castle was their secular stronghold. The site is private land and heavily overgrown. The castle was built at the same period as the friary and was a tower house with adjoining bawn or walled enclosure. There were a number of defensive features: a moat, corner towers on the bawn and evidence of a yett on the main entrance. This was a hinged iron grill which could be swung over the main door to protect it from battering and impede efforts to set it on fire. A face carved in stone high up on the tower still suggests that strangers are being watched.

Inside, a large chamber on the ground floor has a vaulted roof, which retains traces of wickerwork in the ceiling. This was used during its construction as a cushion between the centring and the stone vault and left in place as a key for the plaster once the wooden framework was removed. A garderobe chute provided rudimentary sanitation. The cattle who roam over the site, inside and out, have no such scruples.

A final surprise lurks beneath the undergrowth in the moat: a section of the long defunct Cork and Macroom Railway line.

The Royal Gunpowder Mills at Ballincollig occupied over 400 acres and had the advantages of

space, isolation and a port nearby. Saltpetre, charcoal and sulphur were all produced and refined on site. Millwrights and coopers as well as gunpowder men found employment. Much of the black powder used by the Royal Navy and the army in the Napoleonic wars was produced here, but the manufacture of other, more powerful explosives rendered the Works unprofitable and they closed in 1903.

The site was bought by Cork County Council in 1974. Some reconstruction was done, and a visitor centre was opened. This closed in 2002, but the area remains open as a Regional Park.

On Wednesday we explored sites along the coast west of Cork. Although without a guide from Cork University, we did not lack information, ably supplied with notes and maps prepared by Caroline. Our journey began on a main route west and following a brief coffee stop at Clonakilty took increasingly winding and narrow roads. This gave us time to appreciate the rural landscape and glimpses of the sea.

The first destination was Castle Townsend, a very attractive small village built on a steep hill overlooking a sheltered harbour. Originally the village was built around a bolting mill and the main street is lined with large Georgian houses.



The present castle, now a hotel, was built in 1800 using stone from the earlier castle on the site. The church of St Barrahanne overlooks the village and is well worth the short steep climb from the village street, rewarded by a tree framed view of the bay. Built in 1826 the church has several interesting features; stained glass windows, including one by Harry Clark (whose work we also saw in the chapel at Cork University) and an oar from a rescue boat from the *Lusitania*, kept in memory of the many drowned passengers and crew who were brought into the harbour when the ship was sunk in 1915. The churchyard was filled with splendid memorials and a pleasing, modest memorial to the cousins Edith Somerville and Violet Martin who lived in the village. Some of us recalled reading the Irish RM stories they co-authored, and the later television series.

After a too brief walk to see the harbour, our next visit to the Drombeg stone circle was very different. Built on a gently sloping site surrounded by lush fuchsia hedges in full bloom and a view of the sea, it is in an impressive setting and landscape. Meaning 'small ridge', Drombeg is apparently one of the most visited megalithic monuments in Ireland. Our group was fortunate to be almost alone there and there was a very intense peaceful and quiet atmosphere. The stone circle has seventeen standing stones of local stone and a central cremation burial. The burial was radiocarbon dated after an early excavation in 1957 but the findings are debated; more recent results suggest a date in the Late Bronze Age. The stones are placed symmetrically with the axial stone opposite a pair of larger stones. Some interpretations link the orientation of the circle with the winter solstice and the surrounding landscape of hills and sea. The associated huts have evidence of cooking, with a visible hearth, well, a stone trough and an arc of burnt stones. The stone trough may have been used for heating water or other uses such as dying or brewing. Doubts were expressed on the wisdom of consuming water heated in a limestone basin. Whatever the function, such sites with burnt stones and a trough are the commonest feature of Bronze Age activity in the Irish landscape.

From Drombeg, we took another circuitous and winding journey to Timoleague Friary and Abbey, seeing wide river estuaries and remote villages.

Next to the River Argideen, the ruined Friary has a romantic character. It was founded by a seventh-century saint, Molaga, reputedly a friend of St David of Wales and credited with bringing bees to Ireland. The legend is that he placed a candle on a sheaf of corn and watched where it came ashore. As it had little land, and was supported by powerful local interests, the Friary avoided suppression during the Reformation. Destroyed when burnt by the Parliamentarians in 1642, it became a burial place for the town.

Our final destination of the day was Kinsale. Blessed by warm sun and calm conditions we boarded a boat for a trip around Kinsale harbour. The master was the perfect guide having studied archaeology in Cork. It was easy to appreciate the strategic location of Kinsale and its position on the Bandol, one of the main rivers of this part of west Cork. Kinsale had been a Viking trading post, was walled by the Normans, an English stronghold and a naval station until 1921. The harbour provides sheltered protection and is dominated by the two seventeenth-century forts – the James Fort and the Charles Fort. Even today the star shaped Charles Fort is imposing and intimidating, with steep ramparts seemingly impregnable from the sea. The James Fort on the opposite lower bluff is less well preserved and obscured by trees and vegetation. Together the forts presented a formidable defence of Kinsale and routes into central Ireland. We were fortunate that the afternoon's timing allowed a rapid visit to Charles Fort. Although some of the buildings inside the fort have been lost, a vivid impression of the enclosed and isolated life of the garrison and its dominating location could be gained.

We left on Thursday for Waterford, Ireland's oldest city and the Viking capital, accompanied by John Sheehan (University College Cork), who gave us an introduction to Viking Waterford during the journey.

On arrival in the oldest part of Waterford, The Viking Triangle, we entered the magnificent Medieval Museum, opened in 2012, and were met by the Director and our guide, Eamonn McEneaney. The Museum is adjacent to the Anglican Cathedral, the Bishop's Palace, and the Theatre Royal and directly linked to the eighteenth-century City Hall, still a working civic building. Below the museum's ground level are the thirteenth-century Choristers'

Hall and the fifteenth-century Mayor's Wine Vault.

Some of the materials used in the new construction reflect the history of the site. Dundry stone, a golden limestone used for the façade, was much used in medieval Waterford and comes from near Bristol, then Waterford's main trading partner. Oak was used internally because the Vikings had used it in their fortification.

Some of the museum's contents reflect Waterford's past loyalty to the English Crown. The Great Parchment Book of Waterford contains manuscript records of the city from 1356 to 1649. It records Mayoral elections, by reference to the calendar year and regnal year of the ruling monarch. After the Cromwellian army took the city in 1650, the last entry was defaced because it recorded Charles II as king.

The Great Charter Roll of 1373 could be described as the world's first Power Point presentation, supporting Waterford's wine monopoly claim, which had embroiled them in a long-standing and sometimes violent dispute with the nearby port of New Ross. The Roll is comprised of pre-existing documents supporting Waterford's claim, bound together with eighteen specially commissioned paintings, including seven images of Kings of England, eight of royal governors of Ireland, and the earliest representations of Irish mayors.

In 1534 there was a rebellion in Dublin. The Mayor secured Waterford's loyal support to Henry VIII, who sent the Cap of Maintenance in 1536 in recognition. Made of red velvet from Lucca embroidered with the Tudor rose and daisies, it is the only item from Henry VIII's wardrobe to survive.

One of the oldest gold ring-brooches in Europe, set with four glass stones, and probably a love token, was made in Waterford in about 1210. It was found in a garderobe during the 1986–92 excavations in the city.

A set of cloth of gold vestments is the only full medieval set to survive in northern Europe. Of the highest quality, they date from the 1460s and are made from silk woven in Florence, with decorative panels embroidered in Bruges. Their survival is remarkable: before Waterford fell to a Cromwellian army in 1650 they were hidden in the medieval cathedral and not found until it was demolished in

1773. We also saw one of the iron chests in which they were hidden. It is Spanish and, incongruously given its contents, features images of naked South American women.

Our afternoon began with a brief visit to Christ Church Cathedral. The architect for the current building, completed in 1779, was John Roberts (1712–96) who designed much of Georgian Waterford. Laid over earlier Viking and Norman foundations, it is important in Irish history; the marriage there in 1170 of Richard de Clare, 2nd Earl of Pembroke (known as Strongbow) with Aoife, daughter of the king of Leinster, established the kingdom. A copy of the imaginative painting of the event by Daniel Maclise (in the National Gallery, Dublin) was displayed.

Next, to the Bishop's Palace. Built in 1743 by Richard Castle, it contains good examples of Irish eighteenth-century furniture, paintings, silverware and glassware including the Penrose decanter, the oldest surviving known example of Waterford glass. On loan to the museum is a Mourning Cross of jet and gold, one of twelve commissioned on his death by the mother of Napoleon Bonaparte.

Waterford's landmark monument is Reginald's Tower, also Ireland's oldest civic building. On the way there, we looked in on 'King of the Vikings' a recently opened virtual reality adventure set in an archaeologically inspired recreation of a twelfth-century Waterford Viking House. It is hoped that after visiting there, people will move on to the more serious museum.

A Viking tower hereabouts formed the apex of the Viking Triangle. The present Reginald's Tower was built in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, with a further fifteenth-century phase, and has certainly been in continuous use for 800 years. Becoming part of the city wall, it has been strategic in the defence of Waterford on many occasions. In 1463 a mint was in operation here, though being a secure building it was probably used for this purpose earlier.

On the tower's upper floor is a well-displayed Viking gallery with finds from Waterford and from Woodstown, the only excavated Longphort in Ireland, partially excavated in 2002. They include a full set of weapons from a Viking warrior's grave and the twelfth-century Waterford Kite Brooch of gold, silver, niello and amethyst coloured cabochon.

Our afternoon finished at the House of Waterford Crystal, where the tour demonstrates the skilled work and precision required to produce such fine glassware. It was intriguing to see the many stages required and have the chance to handle incomplete vessels. As one would expect we left through a large gift shop where the crystal was enticingly displayed and lit but it was disappointing that there was so little reference to the earlier history of glass in Waterford.

Cobh (Cove) is the deep water harbour for Cork. It rapidly developed during the nineteenth century as the final fuelling point for mail boats, passenger transport across the Atlantic, and an embarkation point for the Irish diaspora. Willing or not, many of the departing Irish millions sailed from Cobh to the Americas or in convict transportation to Australia.

On the day of our visit, a large cruise liner was berthed alongside and Cobh was once more a hubbub of market stalls, foreign accents and tin whistles. The Heritage Centre in the old rail terminus made much of the voyages from the port, including the Titanic which moored there before its fatal voyage, oddly a popular attraction for the cruise passengers. The Centre highlighted the fate of documented individuals: I was much taken by the tale of Cork-born Anne (Bonny) Rackham, a flame-haired pirate of the worst order.

We had no time for the full tour of Cobh town, whose shore slopes steeply down to the esplanade

and quay, with an elegant crescent and St Colman's Cathedral above, a French neo-gothic design by Pugin. Cobh was a tactical British naval base during the Napoleonic Wars, and opposite the shore is Spike Island, the site of an eighteenth-century star fort, later housing convicts for penal transportation, and now a tourist attraction.

The Heritage Centre said little of the momentous sinking of the *Lusitania* off the Old Head of Kinsale in 1915. However, our first stop had been at Cobh Old Church cemetery where 169 of the drowned had been buried, most in mass graves. In 2015, centenary commemorative glass plaques were placed here by Cunard and the Port of Cork. There are also 127 individual Commonwealth War graves, including that of Frederic Parslow VC, who unusually was a civilian master of his ship, steadfast under U-Boat attack only a couple of months after the loss of the *Lusitania*, thereby saving his cargo of military horses. There is a good interpretation board at the cemetery entrance providing more information on the *Lusitania* burials and referencing the lives of others who rest here. One such is Jack Doyle, who after a colourful life as boxer, actor and singer, died in poverty and was brought back for burial to his native Cobh.

For lunch, we stopped in Ardmore, a popular seaside village with a mile-long sweep of beach – an opportunity for a paddle. Back in the coach up steep, narrow, winding roads for Ardmore church and Round Tower. Voted one of the favourite



Ardmore, medieval sculpture in the blind arcading (A. Williams)





Ardmore, the tower (M. Nieke)

stops of the week, this ruined church (known as the Cathedral), built in the twelfth century, is sited on an, arguably, semi-circular platform, overlooking Ardmore village with views along the coast. The church, despite its sixth-century ogham stones and Romanesque blind arcading on an external wall, is overshadowed by the twelfth-century Round Tower, unusually rising in tiers, to 30m in height. St Declan is said to have founded a monastery here in the sixth century, introducing Christianity to the area. A humble oratory, said to be his burial place, is tucked into the corner of the

well-stocked churchyard where formal headstones and simple chunks of stone jostle together leaving little room for manoeuvre. Yet again we were intrigued by the family burial plots still in use within the interior of the roofless church.

Up and away from the coast is the town of Lismore, important from the seventh century as a bishopric, monastery and centre of learning. Lismore village has a Heritage Centre, but we had no time to visit, having found a tiny independent coffee shop before eventually finding the church (another cathedral) with its resident family of swallows. Dedicated to St Carthage, the current building has been extensively restored over the last four hundred years. Memorial stones from the ninth century and a sixteenth-century tomb are rather outclassed by the Burne Jones window (the only one of its kind in Ireland) and attractive nineteenth-century chancel vaulting, tastefully coloured to pick out the imaginative carving on the bosses.

The original twelfth-century castle at Lismore was the residence of bishops until, in 1589, it was acquired by Sir Walter Raleigh who subsequently sold it to the Earl of Cork. Through marriage it came to the estate of the Duke of Devonshire. The present castle (rebuilt from 1812) is not open to the public except the West Wing which has been transformed into an art gallery with a small refreshment room. The castle dominates but is not fully visible from the gardens (which are open to the public).

The entrance to the gardens is through the Riding House, a seventeenth-century gatehouse. The garden walls are also seventeenth century, as is the layout of the upper gardens. Here there are formal, kitchen, herbaceous and wild spaces, contained by imposing manicured hedges. When we visited, the gardens were heady with colour, scent and warmth. Conversely, the lower gardens, laid out in the nineteenth century, were informal, green and shady. The Yew Avenue is perhaps of the seventeenth century. These gardens were the perfect place for gently winding down, an excellent choice after a busy and stimulating week.

Members appreciated the care taken by Hedley Swain and Caroline Raison in their organisation and were very grateful to our guides who gave freely of their time, combining to make this meeting such a success.

## AUTUMN DAY MEETING

### 28 October 2017: St Albans

ISOBEL THOMPSON

Twenty-six members met at Verulamium Museum, beside the public park which occupies half the Roman town. The curator David Thorold, and Simon West, the District Archaeologist, were our guides. David first explained that once the new City Museum opens, in the fine Georgian Town Hall overlooking the medieval marketplace at the top of the hill, Verulamium Museum will be able to plan an extension. The museum was built to display the finds from Wheeler's and Frere's excavations, notably spectacular mosaics from rich town houses. It markets itself as the 'museum of Roman daily life', and gets 70,000 visitors a year, including schoolchildren from as far away as France. As Verulamium is a Scheduled monument, little excavation has taken place in recent decades, but geophysical survey of the entire Roman town, by Kris Lockyear of University College London and his Community Archaeology Geophysics Group, has produced a new plan in astonishing detail, including what is plainly the town aqueduct. It is going to take years to absorb and interpret these results.

So, to the mosaics, where David explained the different approaches to lifting them for display. Wheeler cut his into sections, so the joins are visible; Frere lifted his whole, backed and then rolled up, with lumpy results where tesserae came loose. David Neal assigns all of them to a single workshop, which also supplied Colchester; those in Colchester Museum have similar floral motifs and guilloche borders. The 'sea god' is unusual; Martin Henig thinks it the product of a different craftsman. But there are few parallels, and much argument over whether the 'lobster claws' on the sea god's head aren't horns; and is the wonderful semi-circular scallop shell mosaic really a sunburst? Are these double meanings intentional? Between forty and fifty mosaic floors are known at Verulamium, and there are bound to be more.

There is much to see in the side aisle, with recreated Roman rooms and workshops. The restored painted wall plaster here, with its strong colours and *trompe l'oeuil* columns and marbling, is 'better than ours', according to museums in

Rome itself. The plaster comes from the same town houses as the mosaics, its survival due to water getting in following abandonment and whole sheets falling face down.

The displays squeeze in material from major Roman discoveries in the area since Frere's excavations. These include the Sandridge hoard of latest Roman gold solidi, and the Folly Lane grave of a first-century client king. The finds in two second-century burials from Turners Hall Farm villa, near Wheathampstead, are a strange array including heirlooms a century old, bronze items wrapped in possibly Middle Eastern cloth, British and Roman objects, a hunting kit of arrows and butchery knives, and nothing of any real value. They reinforce the impression of local aristocratic continuity from the calm which prevailed in Hertfordshire throughout the Roman 'conquest'.

The museum stands in the centre of the Roman town, with a corner of the forum-basilica plan reproduced in the paving outside. We walked uphill through the park, amidst fine autumn colour, to the site of one of the town houses. From the modern building covering its hypocaust, the view gives a good impression of the Roman town's size and its setting, running down to the river Ver. On the hillside beyond was the client king's burial and the temple which succeeded it, accompanied by a head cult which may have fed into the legend of St Alban himself. Inside the building is another mosaic with floral motifs, which survived because this wing of the house was terraced into the slope, and beneath is a simple X arrangement of heating pipes, so most of the floor is solid. Simon West pointed out that one of the flower motifs *may* incorporate 'lobster claws' – but then told us that the sea god, found very close to this room, was so-called because Wheeler assumed the building was a bath house. As sea gods are usually found with other watery attributes, and this probably wasn't a bath house anyway .... We could toss this argument around for hours, but time being pressing, we walked on to the London Gate, the grand gateway where Watling Street entered Verulamium. Only the bare foundations survive (a long story; it was probably demolished in the mid-twelfth century by the abbey), but this is the best place to see the defences, the huge outer ditch and the wall itself. There is still no consensus on the date of the city wall. Here David and Simon left



By the London Gate, where Watling Street enters Verulamium, the outer ditch at left (C. von Patzelt)

us, with thanks from Tim Champion on our behalf.

Being now outside the Roman town it was time to head up through the Abbey Orchard to the Cathedral. The café is temporarily in a marquee outside, where we found our buffet lunch, and Professor Martin Biddle and Rosalind Niblett. After lunch Martin took us outside and introduced the abbey church, dominating the hilltop. The standing building, with its Norman tower of salvaged Roman brick, is a visible symbol of continuity. We heard about the thread running from the end of the Roman town to the later Saxon abbey, before its replacement by Norman buildings. In 1982 the Biddles' excavations south of the abbey church revealed a late Roman cemetery overlain by levels full of very late Roman material including a fifth-century or later 'hand pin'. Richard Reece also identified a very unusual pattern of coin loss here. More graves were found on the hilltop, close to the nave south wall. This cemetery lies alongside three fifth- to eighth-century field ditches found in 1978 beneath the chapter house; the Norman nave reflects a rectilinear layout going back centuries. So was the basilica of St Alban visited by

St Germanus in AD 429 here too, on the hilltop? Parallels can be found at St Riquier, but not nearly enough is yet known about major Anglo-Saxon monastic sites. Late Saxon floor tiles of a type known from major pre-Norman Benedictine foundations (Winchester Old Minster, Bury St Edmunds, York) were found in the nineteenth century when buttresses were added against the south wall of the nave.

A new 'welcome centre' is being built on the east side of the south transept. This is by the door used by the majority of visitors, on the site of the Little Churchyard. Excavation by the Canterbury Archaeological Trust, with long experience of cathedral work, was still in progress, revealing many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century burials cutting into the foundations of long-demolished south transept apses. Natural ground level is not nearly as deep as expected, but the Saxon boundary ditches may yet be found.

And so into the cathedral, where Martin pointed out the first two 'capitals' of the Norman north nave arcade west of the great screen. These are quite different from those further west, which are much simpler. The dedication in 1116 does not



mean that the abbey church was then complete; did a Roman basilica/late Saxon church survive here until this date? The nave is now strikingly plain, apart from an array of medieval wall paintings on the west faces of the north arcade. Ann Ballantyne spoke about these, which marked the presence of altars. Mass could not be celebrated at any one altar more than once in 24 hours, hence so many. Then east to the shrine of St Alban itself, beneath the fifteenth-century timber Watching Loft where monks kept an eye on pilgrims like a medieval security camera. Martin explained how for 300 years the Lady Chapel, used as the grammar school, had been cut off from the body of the church by a public right of way, and when this was closed in 1878 and the east end opened up, hundreds of Purbeck marble fragments from the shrine were found concealed in the demolished wall. In 1991 the shrine was reconstructed in its late medieval position, using as much of the original material as possible. In a dark corner behind the Watching Loft is the cathedral's other medieval shrine, the much battered shrine of 'St Amphibalus', the priest who converted St Alban. It too will be reconstructed as part of the cathedral's enhancement project. There are drawings, and Richard K. Morris has done much work on what it looked like. (As Martin said, this is not a real saint's name; 'Amphibalus' is a misreading of a word meaning overcoat. But he has his own archaeological interest. His bones were discovered in 1178 on Redbourn Heath, with others, in what came to be called the Mounds of the Banners. These were presumably tumuli, of unknown date, but the bones were immediately associated with the legend of St Alban and carried in procession down Watling Street to meet St Alban's shrine, coming from the abbey. It must have been quite a day.)

Pausing to inspect one of the finest medieval brasses in the country, that of abbot Thomas de la Mare (1349–96), the tour finished in the north transept, where the twelfth-century stone slab base of St Alban's shrine has been set up as an altar table. Martin explained the inscriptions and decoration. The cathedral project has been made possible by a £4-million Heritage Lottery grant, with the welcome centre to include new facilities for study as well as exhibition space. This is happening alongside the transformation of the



St Albans, shrine of 'St Amphibalus' (C. von Patzelt)

Town Hall into the City Museum, housing all the post-Roman material. Our visit, as meticulously organised as ever, was full of variety and great interest, but we haven't heard the last word on St Albans.

ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
INSTITUTE ANNUAL  
CONFERENCE 2017:  
17–18 November Arras 200 –  
*Celebrating the Iron Age*  
VICTORIA GREEN (CHENEY  
BURSIST: UNIVERSITY OF  
MANCHESTER)

Walking in to a room filled with people who have excavated sites and written books that have brought to life and influenced your ideas about the Iron Age, is a very daunting prospect for someone, who just the day before, received the results of their Masters dissertation. However, this was my situation on arriving at this conference. The Yorkshire Museum was the perfect setting, as it houses many of the objects which were discussed

Middle Iron-Age finds from  
Queen's Barrow, Arras  
(©Yorkshire Museum and  
V. Green)



in the conference, such as the collection from the Queen's Barrow from the original Arras excavations. Being able to see such well-known objects on the opening night, then hear about new research in the area certainly brought on a mood of excitement for the future from the delegates.

The conference was held to celebrate the 200th anniversary of Reverend Stillingfleet excavating the Iron Age cemetery at Arras, which he presented to the Annual Meeting of the Archaeological Institute held in York in 1846. The conference was framed by lectures placing East Yorkshire in context with Scotland, the surrounding landscape and Southern Britain.

Though the primary focus of the conference was East Yorkshire, Fraser Hunter's keynote speech took us to Scotland where, he reminds us, they had chariots too. A vehicle which seems to be quintessentially 'Iron Age', it is still a rare find in the archaeological record, though Hunter, Paula Ware, Anne Lewis and Robert Hurford all used chariots, and their fittings, to shed new light on items, which on the surface, may have previously seemed simple to understand. Hunter's lecture set the tone for the conference, encouraging new ideas

and methods to try to understand more about the Iron Age.

Melanie Giles, Yvonne Inall and Helen Chittock's lectures centred on material culture, which they used to reconsider the people who made and used items such as jewellery, spears and pottery, and how their identities may be linked to certain objects. The highly thought-provoking work presented by Janet Montgomery and Mandy Jay on the chemical analysis of the remains of people from East Yorkshire, and Manuel Fernandez-Gotz's work on the more widespread migrations during the Iron Age period reminded the audience of the wider pressures on the population of East Yorkshire.

Personally, I found Paula Ware's lecture on the MAP Archaeological Practice's recent excavations of chariot burials was the highlight of the conference; the chance to excavate something so iconic is something that I imagine many in the room were slightly jealous of! In the short discussion after the lecture, the group were excited to help with and read the reports of the sites. I am looking forward to reading how such burials are interpreted in a thoroughly modern context,

following from the work John Dent and Ian Armit were able to tell us is continuing on the Wetwang burials.

This conference included a range of people from academic and commercial backgrounds, some who were just starting their careers, being invited to speak to an audience including Professor Ian Stead, who kick started many researchers' interest

in the 'Arras Culture'. I am thankful to the Royal Archaeological Institute, the University of Hull and the Yorkshire Museum, as well as the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society and East Riding Archaeological Society for organising such a wonderful conference and providing me with a bursary to be able to attend.

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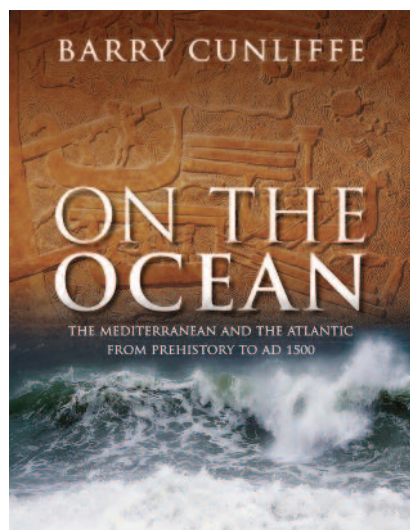
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The current rates are: Ordinary member, £40 and Associate or Student, £20, with discounts when paid by direct debit; Life member, £750 or £525 if aged over 60. Payment for subscriptions may now be made by direct debit or cheque only. For a membership form

or direct debit instructions, please see <http://www.royalarchinst.org/membership> or contact the Administrator.

### **Gift Aid**

Members who pay the standard rate of tax and have filled in the gift aid form have gained for the Institute a substantial sum. Despite previous notices of encouragement, it is still the case that less than a third of members have yet arranged for the Institute to receive gift aid. Under this scheme, if you are a taxpayer, the government will refund to the Institute, 25p in the pound of the value of your subscription. If you would like to help, please ask the Administrator for a form.

### **The RAI office**

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

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## ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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**NEXT ISSUE** Copy for the next issue must reach the editor by the end of May 2018 for publication in August 2018.

**THIS ISSUE'S COVER PICTURE:** At Labbacallee wedge tomb (mid fourth century BC), during our 2017 Summer Meeting to Cork and environs: view from the unroofed antechamber across the dividing slab into the large rectangular chamber, with the small chamber beyond the pier (A. Williams)

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