



ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

No. 65 SPRING 2023



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When I was looking this week at the news for a topic to share with you, I found so many genetic studies reported, and so presumably able to attract funding. Though I studied genetics at university, I struggle to comprehend some of its recent applications in experimental archaeology, especially the assertive expressions of results.

One study has been investigating whether modern humans shared a sense of smell with their Denisovan and Neanderthal ancestral cousins, in case it might provide clues to evolutionary adaptive trends.¹

DNA data from the '1000 Genomes' project was used to represent modern humans, with publicly available genome sequences from multiple Neanderthals, one Denisovan and one ancient human (the authors acknowledge the obvious limits of sample sizes on interpretation). Comparing olfactory receptor genes from each group, they found that eleven receptors had some novel mutations present only in extinct lineages.

In the largest study of its kind yet, the team created *in vitro* laboratory versions of those eleven olfactory receptors (ORs). While the ORs could detect the same range of odours as modern humans, in many cases they differed in sensitivity. From among hundreds of odours at different concentrations to which they were exposed, some striking differences in response were observed when compared with *Homo* ORs: Neanderthal ORs had reduced responses to green, floral or spicy odours; Denisovan ORs had a strong response to honey-like and vanilla odours.

Said co-author Matthew Cobb, 'It shows how we can use genetics to peer back into the sensory world of our long-lost relatives, giving us insight into how they will have perceived their environment and, perhaps, how they were able to survive.'

Maybe, maybe not.

A year ago, in Newsletter 63, I mentioned a paper by Tim Darvill, proposing a calendric interpretation for the design of Stonehenge, that it represented a calendar year of 365.25 days.² In a response from two archaeoastronomers, Juan Antonio Belmonte and Giulio Magli, it is now argued that because of a combination of numerology, astronomical error and unsupported analogy, this cannot be substantiated.³

1 de March, C. A., Matsunami, H., Abe, M., Cobb, M., Hoover, K. C., 2022, Genetic and functional odorant receptor variation in the *Homo* lineage, *iScience*, 26(1): 105908.

2 Darvill, T. 2022, Keeping time at Stonehenge, *Antiquity*, 96(386): 319–335.

3 Magli, G. and Belmonte, J. A. 2023, Archaeoastronomy and the alleged 'Stonehenge calendar', Online at *Antiquity, First View*, pp. 1–7.

Audit and Investment Committee New Member

The Institute is looking for a member of the Institute who would be willing to join the Audit and Investment Committee which meets twice a year. A member with experience in fundraising, development, marketing, business or not-for-profit organisations would be especially welcome. If you would consider this role, please send an expression of interest to the Administrator at admin@royalarchinst.org.

OUR NEW TREASURER Dr Jennifer Nye

Jennifer has had a life-long interest in archaeology and history, receiving her BA in History and Political Science from Boston College and, more recently, her MA in Archaeology from University College London's Institute of Archaeology. Although her interests are wide-ranging, Jennifer's academic study of archaeology has focused on the late Roman and early medieval periods in the United Kingdom and Europe. She has a particular interest in the relationship between law and society, as expressed through historical documents and the archaeological record.

Jennifer also received her Juris Doctorate from Boston College Law School and practised law for many years at various law firms and asset management firms in New York and London. She currently leads the EMEA compliance team for a large institutional asset-management firm based in Boston, Massachusetts.

Jennifer (who also answers to Jenny and Jen), has lived in London for thirteen of the last seventeen years and is a dual citizen of the United States and the United Kingdom.

OUR INSTITUTE'S AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

All well-conducted organisations revisit their Aims and Objectives on occasion to ensure they are still fit for purpose. As the Institute had not done this for several years, and it was one of the recommendations of the recent review, the Governance Committee have recently spent some time on preparing a succinct document which accurately reflects what the Institute currently does and wishes to do.

The following is the result of several reiterations by the Governance Committee and a discussion at Council in March, and will be on the agenda of the Institute's AGM in May, to be voted on by the membership. It is stressed that this is intended to be a living document and will be reconsidered regularly in order to ensure that it represents the needs of the Institute as it develops through the twenty-first century.

Aims:

- 1) to deliver public benefit by advancing learning about archaeology at all levels;
- 2) to study, protect, share, and engage audiences with new understandings about

aspects of the human past relevant to the United Kingdom including archaeology, buildings, and landscapes, from prehistory to the twentieth century;

- 3) to offer a membership that is open to everyone with an interest in the archaeology and heritage of the United Kingdom;
- 4) to create an environment in which young and early career archaeologists can develop their research and career progression and strengthen the future of the discipline;
- 5) to facilitate access to expertise in archaeology and related disciplines.

In order to further these aims we:

- 1) champion archaeology and related disciplines at every stage of the research process;
- 2) support our members in sharing skills and resources with all those inspired by the archaeology and heritage of the United Kingdom;

- 3) support the United Kingdom's archaeology and heritage societies and museums in achieving their research and public engagement goals;
- 4) contribute to new understandings of archaeology through the latest research and scientific techniques;
- 5) work with partners to share information and opportunities to inspire others to engage with and protect the archaeology and heritage of the United Kingdom ;
- 6) work with partners and members to contribute to public policy on issues of direct concern to our core aims;
- 7) produce the *Archaeological Journal*, an active website, a regular Newsletter and other publications;
- 8) offer grants to facilitate active engagement with archaeological research in the United Kingdom, from excavation to dissemination;
- 9) offer a lecture programme where the latest research is shared and discussed;
- 10) organise site visits and conferences;
- 11) practice good governance and financial management, following current Charity Commission guidelines.

GRANTS AND AWARDS

Archaeological Achievement Awards 2022

The Archaeological Achievement Awards, which now include Ireland and the UK, seek to advance the study, practice and dissemination of archaeological activity in all its aspects and to celebrate its impact and legacies; and to promote high standards of archaeological practice in the service of the public. The judging criteria consider how archaeology provides value for society and our environment, and how we create a positive impact from the work of archaeologists. The awards encourage work founded on ethical practice, expertise and restraint, based upon shared standards. They consider the achievements of the archaeological community in relation to key areas which are very much shared across the islands of Britain and Ireland: society, identity, place, health and wellbeing. Award categories are based on these cross-cutting themes, to celebrate innovation, public dissemination and presentation, engagement and participation, learning, training and



Victoria Sands, Winner of the Early Career Archaeologist Award (at right) and Megan Schlanker (Highly Commended)

skills, and early career archaeologists. The judging panel has representatives from across the archaeological community, chaired by Jeannette Plummer Sires of

ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE RESEARCH GRANTS

The Institute awards the following grants annually:

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

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

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

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

Closing date for applications: 11 December 2023. Awards announced in April 2024.

the European Society of Black and Allied Archaeologists (ESBAA).

The winners for 2022 were announced on 29 November at Dublin Castle, hosted by Ireland's National Monuments Service in partnership with the Office of Public Works and in the presence of the Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform, Malcolm Noonan T.D. The ceremony was led by the National Monuments Service's Chief Archaeologist, Michael MacDonagh. The award for Early Career Archaeologist is sponsored by our Institute, and on our behalf this year Jeannette Sires presented two – to Highly Commended Megan Schlanker and to the winner, **Early Career Archaeologist**, Victoria Sands.

Other awards were:

Archaeological Innovation: The Uist Virtual Archaeology Project

Engagement and Participation: Bristol's Brilliant Archaeology Programme 2021–2 (BBAP)

Learning Training and Skills: UCD Centre for Experimental Archaeology and Material Culture (CEAMC)

Public Dissemination or Presentation: The Uist Virtual Archaeology Project

Outstanding Achievement: The Uist

Virtual Archaeology Project

www.archaeologyuk.org/what-we-do/celebrating-archaeology/archaeological-achievement-awards.html

CURRENT ARCHAEOLOGY AWARDS

Chosen by a public vote, these awards go to some of the projects and publications that were featured in *Current Archaeology* magazine over the past twelve months, and to people judged to have made outstanding contributions to archaeology. On 25 February during *Current Archaeology Live!* 2023, held at the British Museum, Julian Richards announced the winners:

Archaeologist of the Year: David Jacques, for work at Blick Mead (near Stonehenge)

Research Project of the Year: Prehistoric pioneers: how female migrants changed the face of Bronze Age Orkney (University of Huddersfield/EASE Archaeology)

Rescue Project of the Year: The Lego Lost at Sea Project (Tracey Williams)

Book of the Year: *Landscapes Revealed: Geophysical Survey in the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Area, 2002–2011* by Amanda Brend, Nick Card, Jane Downes, Mark Edmonds and James Moore

RAI Cheney Bursaries

The bequest of the late Frank S. Cheney was established to enable students to participate in Institute events or other conferences or meetings. An allocation is available annually to which individuals can apply for a maximum sum of £200. Before applying, please check with the Administrator that monies remain in the year's fund. Students who wish to apply for a bursary should email 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. In 2022 bursary funds were used to enable the Master's Dissertation Prize winner to attend the award ceremony.

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 Tony Baggs undergraduate prize, covering years 2021 and 2022, was awarded to Maria Cunningham from University College London, Institute of Archaeology, for her dissertation, *More Than Concrete: Investigating the Preservation of WWII Coastal Defences on the South-East Coast of England*. At the Institute's meeting on 9 March 2023, Maria received her prize from Tony's son Barnabus.



Barnabus presents the Tony Baggs memorial award to Maria Cunningham

RAI RESEARCH GRANTS

In 2023 grants have been awarded to four projects:

David Brooks *Hagg Farm, Swaledale, (N. Yorks): Post-ex Analysis* (including Bunnell Lewis Fund)

Steven Mithen *Rubha Port a t-Seilich: Excavating an Upper Palaeolithic Site in Western Scotland*

Gordon Noble and James O'Driscoll *Boom Towns or Seasonal Assemblies: The Great Hillforts of Northern Britain*

RAI RESEARCH GRANT REPORTS

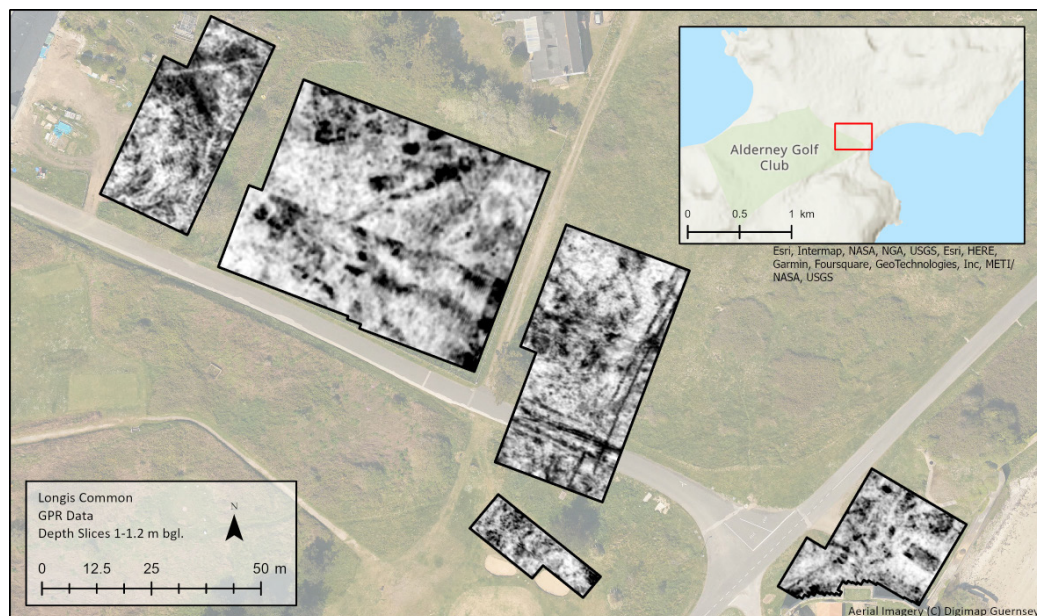
What Lies Beneath Longis? (including Tony Clark Memorial Fund)

Robert Fry

Longis Common on the Channel Island of Alderney is home to the island's only natural harbour. The wider area contains sites from the early prehistoric period through to the Second World War, including two ruined megalithic tombs and the substantial remains of a late Roman shore fort known as 'the Nunnery'. In 2017, work to a service trench on the common revealed multiple Iron Age burials, with later excavation exposing substantial Roman buildings, suggesting that a significant Roman settlement underlies the deposits here (Monaghan and de Jersey 2017; de Jersey 2019). The archaeological deposits at Longis

are characterised by deep burial in aeolian sands and contain extensive horizons of silty palaeosoils. The landscape was also extensively altered by the occupation by German forces during the Second World War, making any underlying Roman and Iron Age archaeological deposits on the common difficult to detect with magnetic or resistance methods (Creighton 1998; de Jersey 2019).

During the summer of 2022, a Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR) survey was conducted over five areas to the north-west of the Nunnery, to pilot-test the GPR response to the archaeology, and if possible, to establish further evidence and map any potential underlying Roman or Iron Age settlements. Over the course of a week, an area of 0.5ha in total was covered, at a



Preliminary processed data showing the areas surveyed at Longis Common. Black (high amplitude) to white (low amplitude). Data depth c. 1–1.2m bgl (© R. Fry, University of Reading)

resolution of 0.05m (along-line) × 0.25m (between line) traverse intervals using a 400MHz antenna.

The project has been successful in revealing a crowded dataset of potential structures and possible floor surfaces at depths of up to 2m below ground level (bgl). The structures identified appear to be largely rectangular in nature and many are visible in data depth slices from around 0.8m–1.5m bgl. As expected, the data suggest that the settlement here extends significantly further through Longis common than the scope of this survey, with the full settlement extent still to be established.

The data from this survey will be used to help target future archaeological excavations in the of 2023 and beyond, which should help us to understand these geophysical anomalies and help us to provide context to the archaeological settlement.

Creighton, J., 1998, Longis Common: Geophysical Survey Report, (unpublished) Reading.

De Jersey, P., 2019, Excavation in the Paddock Field, Longis, *Ald. Soc. Bull.* 54, 87–104.

Monaghan, J. and de Jersey, P., 2017, Discoveries from the Longis Cable Trench, *Ald. Soc. Bull.* 52, 78–81.

Excavation at Rubha Port an t-Seilich 2022

Steven Mithen

The second (of three) field seasons at Rubha Port an t-Seilich, Isle of Islay, was undertaken from 11 June to 12 July 2022. The aim was to continue excavating the Mesolithic deposits surrounding a fireplace, with a view to locating underlying contexts associated with a possibly Late Glacial Ahrensburgian point (lithic), recovered from a test-pit at the site in 2010.

During the excavation, two complete layers were removed from the whole trench and at its western end, two further layers from a 1m-wide strip that reached the underlying natural, a glacial head deposit. Finds continued to be abundant, although the quantity of coarse stone artefacts and animal bone was markedly reduced in the lower levels of the site now being reached. Several post-holes, stake-holes and a stone-lined pit were excavated; the fireplace proved to be part of a large stone-lined feature that now appears to be a large roasting pit. That will be fully excavated in 2023.

In initial post-excavation study, the chipped-stone assemblage from the lower horizons was shown to have the distinctive



Excavating at Rubha Port an t-Seilich (© S. Mithen)

core technology and retouched artefacts of the Early Mesolithic (Maglemose) period. Radiocarbon dating provided dates of 8424–8283 BC for this Early Mesolithic assemblage and of 7056–6702 BC for an overlying horizon that contains material transitional from the Early to Later Mesolithic. We now have a site with a continuous stratigraphy throughout the whole of the known Mesolithic period in Scotland, from c. 8500 to 3900 BC.

At the base of the sequence we had hoped to find a Late Glacial cultural horizon that would provide a source for the tanged point found in 2010. No such evidence was found. This might indicate that the point is Early Mesolithic in date; alternatively, any associated Late Glacial deposits may have been entirely eroded away. Either of these conclusions would, however, be premature. The glacial head deposit underlying the Mesolithic was only reached in the 1m-wide strip at the western edge of the trench, and was not fully excavated. Further investigation is required in 2023.

The project is grateful to the Dunlossit Estate for permission to excavate at Rubha Port an t-Seilich.

The following project was awarded a grant in 2021 and was completed in 2022:

No Name Hill 2022

Nick Overton, Barry Taylor and Amy Gray Jones

In August 2022, students and volunteers from the Scarborough Historical and Archaeological Society led by Nick Overton (University of Manchester), and Drs Taylor and Gray Jones (University of Chester) excavated at No Name Hill (N. Yorks.). During the Early Mesolithic, the site would have been on an island in the middle of

Palaeolake Flixton, just over a mile east of the well-known site of Star Carr. Previous test-pitting by the team had identified a concentration of stone tools and animal bones on the north-western shore of the island, and in 2022 this was investigated in more detail, revealing a dense scatter of material preserved in the peat at the base of the lake, and along the island shoreline.

Excavation recovered a substantial assemblage of stone tools, including microliths, scrapers and an axe; a large assemblage of remarkably well-preserved animal bone, including remains from red deer, roe deer, elk, aurochs, wild boar and beaver; and humanly worked wood, including split pieces and woodchips. We also excavated a number of uniserial barbed antler points, in a range of states from unfinished blanks to whole points, to broken



No Name Hill: antler-working evidence
(© N. Overton)

sections of points, and remains of antler relating to the manufacture of points. The site has now produced over twenty uniserial barbed antler points, the second largest assemblage in Mesolithic Britain, behind Star Carr.

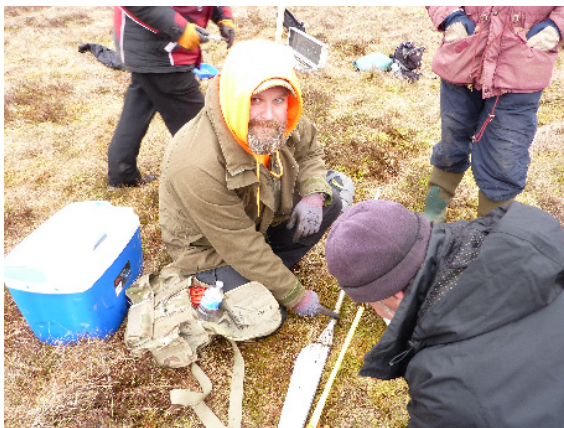
No Name Hill offers a very rare opportunity to examine Early Mesolithic depositional practices. Along the shoreline, discrete groups of material, including a group of barbed antler points, a pile of woodchips alongside a flint axe and a mostly complete red deer skull with other pieces of animal bone, suggest intentional acts of deposition structured this material. Furthermore, at a small island in the middle of a lake, it is very likely that most, if not all, of the material at the site was intentionally transported there. Ongoing research includes examining these selective depositional practices in more detail, in the hope that they will inform us about Mesolithic hunter-gatherers' relationship with their landscapes, and the plants and animals within it.

Exploring the Environmental Impact of the Iron Age–Roman Transition at the Northern Frontier (including Tony Clark Memorial Fund)

Damian Rudge, Eline van Asperen and Lisa-Marie Shillito

This project seeks to understand how the landscape has changed from the Iron Age to the Roman period and whether this is linked to mining and metal-working activities. Peat retains a pollution record and acts as a proxy for past metallurgical processes. Pollen likewise enables us to reconstruct how vegetation cover across the landscape has changed as a result of human activity. These two analyses can be linked to assess the extent to which mining and landscape change are linked. High silver-bearing lead ores exist in a limited number of locations and extraction would have required specialist local knowledge and skills. One such area is near to *Epiacum*, a Roman fort on the edge of Alston Moor in the South Tyne valley on the Roman route to Hadrian's Wall. To investigate whether the Romans were engaged in large-scale mineral extraction and processing in this region, in 2021, a single core was collected from the moor and analysed using inductively coupled plasma spectrometry (ICP).

Volunteers from *Epiacum* Heritage learned about the collection and analysis of pollen data and were trained in how to use a Russian corer. In fieldwork in spring



Mike Dickin training volunteers in the use of a Russian corer (© D. Rudge)

2022, we recovered two peat cores from locations around Alston Moor (AM3 and AM4). All cores have been processed in the labs at the Department of Archaeology, University of Newcastle for pollen (AM3, AM4), and sub-samples sent to the British Geological Survey for ICP analysis (AM3), and to Scottish Universities Environmental Research Council for radiocarbon dating (AM3, AM4).

Analysis of the data is still in progress. Preliminary results for sample AM2 indicate

that peaks of lead and silver (identified using ICP) correspond with substantial landscape changes (identified by pollen analysis) around 551 to 397 BCE. This suggests that metalworking was occurring prior to Roman occupation around 70 CE. A similar pattern is seen in AM3 and AM4, but dates are not yet available for these. The metal peaks coincide with a reduction in tree pollen, suggestive of land clearance, which may relate to the amount of wood needed for initial smelting procedures.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Please note that **non-members are not covered by the Royal Archaeological Institute's Public Liability Insurance** and they must arrange their own insurance to enable them to attend Institute Meetings.

In 2023 there will be **no Annual Conference**.

2023

Spring Meeting 14–17 April, West Riding, Part I led by Peter Ginn (fully booked)

Late Summer Meeting 11–17 September, Lune Valley, led by Peter Ginn

Forthcoming in 2024

Spring Meeting at Newark, led by Mark Gardner (details to be confirmed)

Please check our website for news and early details, at www.royalarchinst.org/events. As soon as they are confirmed, full details and booking forms for Meetings will be made available on the Meetings Programme page, <http://www.royalarchinst.org/meetings>. Places are limited, so please book promptly. If you would like further details of any of these meetings sent to you, please send your email or postal details to the Administrator, RAI, c/o Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, London, W1J 0BE or 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.

LECTURES

If you wish to watch our 5 pm lectures online, please subscribe to our YouTube channel where you can also see the list: https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=royal+archaeological+institute

Historic England's Open Data Hub

Historic England launched its Open Data Hub at the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists Innovation Festival in October 2022. This provides the ability for users to download spatial data from some Geographical Information Systems (GIS) under an Open Government Licence. The data now available are from the National Heritage List for England, the Heritage at Risk Register for 2021, and Conservation Areas.

The data can be available (and readable) on a variety of devices, including mobile ones. This facility will be developed further as part of the forthcoming Historic England Digital Strategy, with more datasets from other GIS managed by Historic England being added. <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/open-data-hub/>

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 and the postal address is RAI, c/o Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, London W1J 0BE.

Contact information for Members

In case the monthly meeting is cancelled, please ensure that our Administrator (admin@royalarchinst.org) has your email address so you can be contacted.

Subscriptions

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

ROMAN AND MEDIEVAL ART, ARCHITECTURE AND ARCHAEOLOGY IN PEMBROKESHIRE

Call for Papers

British Archaeological Association Annual Conference, 15–19 July 2024

For the first time in its 180-year history, the BAA will gather in Pembrokeshire to explore and debate the artistic, architectural and archaeological wealth of a significant county. They welcome proposals from both early career and established scholars for papers to be presented at the conference. They are also interested in hearing from colleagues with an expert knowledge of any of the sites to be visited, with a view to leading tours and giving on-site presentations. The conference will be based at Pembrokeshire College in Haverfordwest, and site visits are planned to St Davids Cathedral and Bishop's Palace, together with various sites of archaeological and architectural interest throughout the historic county, including Tenby, Pembroke, Haverfordwest, Manorbier, Lamphey, Llawhaden, Carew and Upton.

Proposals for papers of up to 30 minutes on any topic relating to the art, architecture and archaeology of Roman, medieval or early modern Pembrokeshire are invited. Topics may include, but are not limited to:

- Great church architecture: friaries, chapels, halls, parish churches
- Castles, civic architecture, and town planning
- Sculpture, glass, and material culture more widely
- The archaeology of the county, and of its monasteries
- The Roman heritage of Pembrokeshire

Please send abstracts of not more than 300 words by 30 September 2023, to the convener, Dr Christopher Catling: christopher.catling@rcahmw.gov.uk

All other enquiries about the conference should be sent to the Conference Secretary, Kate Milburn, at conference@thebaa.org

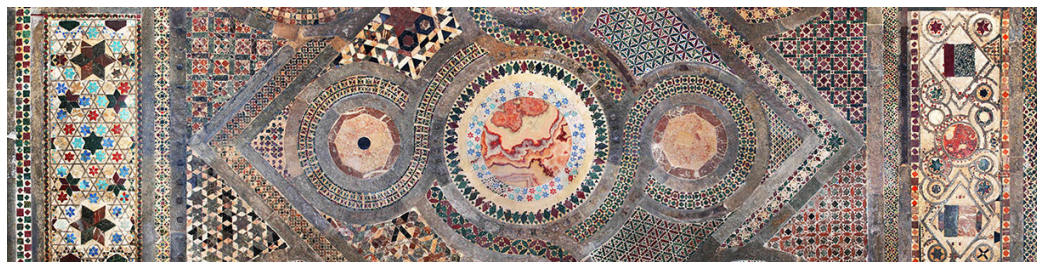
The report of our Institute's visit to the area for its 2010 Summer Meeting is available as the *Archaeological Journal*, vol. 167:sup1.

Every London Building Opened by The Queen

From Lloyds Lime Street (opened 1952) to the Elizabeth Line (2022), Queen Elizabeth II opened more than 100 buildings in London, and some, such as the *Cutty Sark*, and the Lion enclosure at London Zoo, were opened more than once, after development work. Volunteers helped Open City compile the list: <https://open-city.org.uk/blog/queen-elizabeth-ii-1926-2022>. A report from a visit to one of them follows.

THE QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE GALLERIES AT WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Isobel Thompson



The Cosmati pavement seen from the triforium (© Westminster Abbey)

A week before The Queen's death last September I visited Westminster Abbey to take the lift up the Weston Tower to the Diamond Jubilee Galleries, opened in 2018. It now seems an appropriate season to give a plug for this new museum space. It costs extra to visit, but offers an unusual experience, away from the crowds downstairs.

The Galleries occupy the eastern triforium, built c. 1250 for Henry III. It is a large area, occupying the whole upper level from the east side of the transepts and sweeping around the sanctuary below. At the end of the seventeenth century, Sir Christopher Wren reroofed it and installed a timber floor, turning the triforium into a usable storage space. It also functioned as a viewing gallery for coronations and royal funerals, although access was still via two medieval spiral staircases. The Galleries project involved construction of a new (beautifully built) tower tucked in north of the Chapter House, providing a lift and stairs, and conversion of the triforium into a museum. The site of the tower revealed medieval foundations and graves, some of which are Anglo-Saxon. Less conventional archaeology took place high above, where the 'pockets' on the upper side of the sanctuary vaulting were emptied before installation of a new floor in 2016. These pockets were over 1.5m deep, and full of rubbish accumulated since the mid-thirteenth century. Much of it was simple stuff in stone, metal and pottery, but some of the 30,000 fragments of medieval stained glass have been reused in new windows in the lobby at the top of the lift. Shoes, playing cards and tobacco packets came from people using Wren's space; perhaps the most riveting item is a handwritten paper giving admission to watch Queen Anne's coronation in 1702, torn up and dropped by someone who had trudged up the spiral stairs with it: *'Bring this Tickett to the North Door of the Abby by five of the Clock on the Coronation Day in the Morning at furthest'*.

The sense of space up here is limited only by substantial oak crossbeams put in by Wren in 1699. (Whether the signs warning against banging your head on these are intended primarily to prevent injury to visitors or to Wren's beams is not made clear.) And perhaps anyone prone to vertigo should avoid the central point with its view down to the Cosmati Pavement 16m below, and westwards along the full length of the Abbey nave.

The collections are organised in four thematic areas, with exhibits ranging chronologically from ancient times to recent works. Only some are sealed in conventional cases, so it is possible to walk round many items and look closely at them.

Building the Abbey has archaeological finds and remnants, including sculpted fragments from the monastery, and medieval stained-glass narrative panels displayed at head height for easy viewing. There is even a massive fourth-century limestone sarcophagus inscribed with the name of its original occupant, but reused in late Saxon times when the lid was recarved with a cross. Other items relate to more recent work at the Abbey, such as scale models, and weathered early nineteenth-century 'buttress beasts' removed from the exterior of Henry VII's Lady Chapel.

Worship and daily life has treasures such as the late thirteenth-century

Westminster Retable, the Lytlington Missal, gold and silver plate (ancient and modern), and interesting mundane things such as a crozier, a monk's leather shoe, and bells, including a strangely shaped one which called the monks to meals.

The Abbey and the monarchy: every coronation since William the Conqueror's has taken place in the Abbey, and most monarchs, from Edward the Confessor to George II, are also buried here. Coronations and royal funerals do not happen very often, so here is the *Liber Regalis*, which dates to c. 1382 and is the manual still used for staging these events. As well as the ticket to view Queen Anne's coronation, here are also Mary II's 1689 coronation chair (adorned with graffiti by Westminster School pupils), and two 'peepshows', ingenious coloured card souvenirs of the coronations of William IV and Victoria.

Elaborate tombs we are used to, and perhaps also funeral achievements (such as the helm, shield and saddle of Henry V, pre-dating 1422), but not effigies. From the fourteenth to the sixteenth centuries it was customary for the funeral procession to carry on top of the coffin a life-size wooden effigy of the dead monarch or consort, which would be left in the Abbey. Five of these recumbent effigies lie here, one of them articulated; that of Catherine de Valois wears a painted timber gown. There are also four busts, notably the painted head of Henry VII. This vividly lifelike effigy, probably modelled by Pietro Torrigiano, lost most of its body in the Second World War. Later monarchs (Elizabeth I to Anne) are represented by standing figures with wax heads and hands, and these wear royal robes (not necessarily original, although Elizabeth I's funeral corset is also here). At least one was commissioned by the Abbey, conscious that the figures attracted visitors.

The Abbey and national memory: here are non-royal funeral figures, ranging from General Monck (1670, but now only empty armour), to Lord Nelson, wearing his own clothes



The Holy Spirit descends as a Dove, copy of a thirteenth-century glass panel (© Westminster Abbey)



Probably the oldest stuffed parrot, an African grey, for 40 years pet of the Duchess of Richmond, maid of honour to Catherine, queen of Charles II. It died soon after her
(© Westminster Abbey)

and the only effigy of someone not buried in the Abbey. Alongside is Frances Stuart, Duchess of Richmond (d.1702), with her stuffed African grey parrot; and William Pitt (1778), by Patience Wright, the wax modeller suspected of spying for revolutionary America. More mainstream are wall monuments, especially a fine one to the dramatist John Gay (d.1736), by Rysbrack. This and another Rysbrack monument were booted up here out of sight in 1938, and are only now on view once more, but it was not because the writer of *The Beggar's Opera* was 'cancelled'; his original position, in the south transept, was found to be concealing thirteenth-century wall paintings.

Of course, this is not a comprehensive description of what is here. But these are extraordinary yet decidedly human displays in a unique context – and I wonder who will get to see this May's Coronation from up here? This time, they can go up in the lift.

ROYAL ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE NEWSLETTER

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NEXT ISSUE Copy for the next issue must reach the editor by the end of June 2023 for publication in September 2023.

THIS ISSUE'S COVER PICTURE: Lid of an anthropoid lead coffin (c.1400–75) excavated in 2015 at Poets' Corner Yard, Westminster Abbey, before the construction of the Weston Tower (see above, p. 14) (© Westminster Abbey/Museum of London)