

# Archaeology Lifelines

## SMA Annual Conference Conference Pack

**Amgueddfa Cymru-Museum Wales, National Museums Cardiff**  
**7th-8th of November 2024**  
and livestreamed

The SMA would like to acknowledge MSDS Heritage for generously sponsoring the afternoon refreshments of the 7<sup>th</sup> of November. MSDS Heritage offer a range of conservation services for the heritage and archaeological sector.



## Abstracts

### **Archaeology at Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales**

*Steve Burrow, Deputy Head of Public History & Archaeology, Amgueddfa Cymru*

This presentation will describe the scope and strengths of the archaeological resources at Amgueddfa Cymru – our staff, collections and visitor offer. It will then explore the range of work that we undertake, focusing specifically on:

- The changing role of Amgueddfa Cymru’s archaeology curators with respect to the collections, fieldwork and research.
- The ever-increasing volume of PAS and Treasure work in Wales and the challenges and opportunities that this presents.

Throughout the presentation, Steve will contextualise the work of Amgueddfa Cymru’s archaeologists within the wider policy framework of the museum and Welsh Government.

### **Heneb – the Trust for Welsh Archaeology**

*Richard Nicholls, CEO, Heneb*

*Claudine Gerrard, National Specialist Lead for Heritage Management, Heneb*

*Calli Rouse, National Specialist Lead for the Historic Environment Record, Heneb*

*Judith Doyle, Head of Region for Glamorgan Gwent, Heneb*

Heneb is the new national trust for archaeology in Wales having been established through the merger of the four former regional archaeological trusts that had been operating successfully in Wales for nearly 50 years.

As a new national organisation, Heneb comprises 76 staff making it one of the larger archaeological trusts in the UK. Heneb’s income is derived both commercially and from Welsh Government via Cadw. Nearly 60% of our income is self-earned through commercial archaeology, predominantly in Wales, whilst our Advisory Services include management of the Historic Environment Record, Planning advice services and Heritage Management services which are funded through a longstanding partnership with Cadw. Heneb is also engaged in a range of community focussed project work including community excavations and public engagement activities across the whole of Wales.

In this session, Richard Nicholls, Chief Executive, along with colleagues from the Glamorgan Gwent region of the trust, will outline Heneb’s ambitions for the next five years, and recent successes in both archaeological field work and advisory services.

### **Buckholt Wood Community Dig**

*Katie Churchill, Archaeologist, Churchill Archaeology*

In June 2024, Churchill Archaeology organised a community archaeological evaluation on the Iron Age hilltop enclosure in Buckholt Woods near Monmouth on behalf of

Buckholt Bryngaer CIC. Prior to the dig, very little was known about the site, despite its designation as a scheduled monument. With assistance from Amgueddfa Cymru, Churchill Archaeology welcomed seventy-four participants over five days.

It soon became apparent that the enclosure was much more substantial than previously thought, but it may not have been completed. The ramparts consisted of a c.5m high coursed stone wall, but not a single artefact was identified. In contrast, on a neighbouring summit, a local volunteer, who had been researching the area for 30 years, revealed the location of a large Early Neolithic flint scatter. Based on the assemblage and the earthworks present on the site, it appeared to be a 'new' Early Neolithic enclosure.

Additional funding to investigate both enclosures was acquired from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the evaluation was scheduled for early October. This paper will present the results of the excavation and discuss where we go from here.

### **Exploring Past Lives through Metalwork Wear Analysis**

*Andrea Dolfini, Professor of Archaeology, Newcastle University*

Over the past two decades, Metalwork Wear Analysis (MWA) has emerged as a cutting-edge scientific method for investigating the life histories of prehistoric metal objects, encompassing their manufacture, use, repair, deposition, recovery, conservation, and museum display. Originating from the synergy of microwear studies, experimental archaeology, and archaeometallurgy, this research field has yielded a wealth of new data and insights into the social lives of Chalcolithic and Bronze Age tools and weapons. Yet, much of this knowledge remains confined within specialist circles. This paper seeks to address this problem by demonstrating the untapped potential of MWA to enrich narratives about the prehistoric past presented by museums and heritage institutions.

Following a brief introduction to the method, the paper explores two case studies based on the author's research. The first examines the use of swords in Bronze Age combat, while the second investigates the reasons behind the evolution of axe blade shapes from the early to late Bronze Age. In both instances, the paper illustrates how MWA can assist museum curators in moving beyond traditional typology-focused displays, enabling them to craft dynamic narratives that highlight the vibrant and diverse life histories of the creators, owners, and users of prehistoric metal tools and weapons.

### **Re-creating a Roman Cavalry Helmet: Using 21st century techniques to reveal the secrets of a 2000-year-old object**

*Helen Sharp, Curator (Archaeology), Leicestershire County Council Museums*

A fine silver-gilt and iron Roman cavalry helmet has been displayed at Harborough Museum, Market Harborough since 2012 as part of the Hallaton Treasure – a Late Iron Age find also comprising of thousands of gold and silver coins, the remains of hundreds of pigs and other precious artefacts buried at the time of the Roman invasion. This

magnificent helmet was expertly restored by British Museum conservators, to reveal intricate Roman iconography, likely chosen by the cavalryman who commissioned it. However, its surfaces no longer shine after being underground for 2000 years and the details of the design are difficult for audiences to fully engage with.

Leicestershire Museums commissioned two artisans to work alongside their team to investigate and recreate the Hallaton Helmet as it may have appeared when new. One approach used CAD modelling, 3D printing and electroforming, pushing the boundaries of contemporary silversmithing, the other used more traditional techniques. These contrasting approaches produced stunning replicas and enabled differences in the interpretation of the evidence to be embodied in physical objects. These replicas and a re-display of the real helmet and associated objects, as well as updated interpretation have widened the appeal of the finds and re-invigorated the gallery. They also help us to think about wider themes of Roman religion, propaganda, status, and the relationships between invaders and native populations.

The production of the replicas was fully-funded by local organisations and the museums team also worked closely with the small, independent Hallaton Museum to acquire and display their own replica.

### **Use Lives and Past Lives: The Use Wear Analysis of Gold Bracteates as a Path Towards the Re-Humanisation of Past Individuals**

*Olivia Russell, PhD Candidate, Newcastle University*

Past interpretations have painted bracteates, gold disc pendants found in Late Antique/early medieval contexts across northern Europe, as powerful, even magical objects that convey ample information about the societies in which they existed. I believe that the use wear analysis of bracteates can inform smaller-scale interpretations, particularly those involving early medieval individuals. Using the preliminary findings from my current doctoral research, I investigate how the microscopic use wear analysis of gold bracteates helps us answer questions about human-object relationships, interpersonal relationships, and the polysemy of bracteates in the societies of Late Antique Britain. This presentation will feature one case study from my first sample of bracteates. An overarching theme throughout this discussion is how the microscopic use wear analysis of bracteates provides a fresh lens through which we can study bracteates and, in turn, the individuals who wore them. Furthermore, this method allows us to produce snapshots of past human interactions and reminds us that past individuals were much more than the material culture they left behind.

### **Ancient Egypt at the Horniman Museum: A lifeline for archaeology in the anthropology collection**

*Alice Williams, Research Fellow, UCL Institute for Archaeology*

Archaeological objects and human remains have a complex and contentious history in anthropology museums. Extensively collected and displayed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, archaeological collections played a significant role in colonial

anthropological narratives of western civilisation and progress. However, as the disciplinary boundaries between anthropology and archaeology solidified, anthropology museums turned away from past practice and began to focus more on contemporary fieldwork and collecting, leaving their archaeological collections isolated, under used and under theorised. This paper presents 'Mobilising Collections Histories for Institutional Change' an ongoing AHRC-funded project at UCL which aims to critically address this complex history and its legacy today.

Working in partnership with the Horniman Museum, the project explores the museum's ancient Egyptian collection, its history and significance for the first time. Following a year-long collections review, incorporating both object and archival research, the project aims to not only gain a clearer picture of what the museum holds, but also to examine how the collection is and could be better used and understood across the museum. By exploring some of the ways in which Egyptian archaeology, and archaeology more broadly, can engage with and be better incorporated into this anthropological context, it is hoped that the project can breathe new life into this little known and under studied collection.

### **Buried in the Archive: Research, retention and reburial of unprovenanced human remains at Colchester Museums**

*Jack Eggington, PhD Candidate, University of Reading*

*Glynn Davis, Senior Collections and Learning Curator, Colchester and Ipswich Museums*

The United Kingdom has a long tradition of excavating and curating human remains. Throughout the 21st century there has been increasing ethical concerns for the curation of human remains in museums, resulting in the establishment of guidelines for the care, accession, and repatriation of human remains (e.g. DCMS Guidelines 2005). To date, unprovenanced human remains, with poorly defined archaeological stratification, are seldom mentioned in these discussions, despite museums acknowledging their problematic retention in their collections.

Deeper discussions surrounding the fate of these individuals is overdue, and their reburial should be more seriously considered for two important reasons. Firstly, museums only have finite storage space. Unprovenanced human remains retain little research value, and yet take up large quantities of space within museums stores. Secondly, the study of human remains is a privilege and not a right, and therefore it is appropriate from an ethical standpoint, that if these remains retain no perceivable research or teaching value then they should be reburied.

This paper will discuss the impact of engaging an osteologist in documenting Colchester Museum's large collection of historic, unprovenanced human remains and the importance of collaboration with doctoral/early career researchers. Jack Eggington undertook a formal, funded, 3-month placement, arranged through the University of Reading, as part of his doctoral programme. In this time, he was able to analyse a large commingled/disarticulated assemblage of unprovenanced human remains (837 individual bones). These were analysed macroscopically and considered alongside

available associated documentary evidence. This helped produce a significance assessment and rationale for museum disposal: reburial, retention, or donation. This paper highlights the best practice for osteological analysis of unprovenanced human remains and emphasises the importance for consultation with a trained human osteologist that can assess the significance of the remains and suggest long term plans for reburial or retention.

### **Exploring Past Lives Through Archaeology**

*Tom Booth, Senior Research Scientist, Frances Crick Institute*

The study of DNA extracted from ancient remains (aDNA) continues to develop at a rapid pace and in some ways is now exceeding its early promise. Analysis of DNA sampled from ancient human remains is now routinely being used to estimate an ancient individual's genetic sex, ancestry and close relationships with other ancient people. Predictably, these analyses are being applied to questions of past migration and social organisation but are also being used in unanticipated ways, such as helping to provide refined chronologies

of sites and artefact typologies. These developments have expanded the research potential of archaeological collections of human remains within a wide range of disciplines, including archaeology, medicine/disease, evolution, history and anthropology. In addition, direct-to-consumer genetic ancestry testing companies such as 23andMe have recently begun taking advantage of publicly-accessible ancient DNA databases to make genetic connections between their customers and ancient people. This is a new way in which the public can engage with individuals in collections, but the way these services are marketed can lead to misunderstandings and enquiries to museum professionals which are difficult to deal with and carry a troubling biologically determinist ideal of heritage. Here I will discuss the ways in which ancient DNA methods are boosting the research potential of collections of ancient human remains by outlining some of the discoveries we have already made in the ancient genomics laboratory at the Francis Crick Institute. I will also discuss the trickier implications raised by the way DNA data from archaeological collections are being used by commercial genetic testing companies.

### **Keynote Address - Biographies in Welsh Archaeology**

*Dr Elizabeth A. Walker, Amgueddfa Cymru*

In a conference devoted to Archaeology Lifelines I shall adopt biography as a dynamic approach to determine how archaeologists may view people, artefacts, assemblages and places. This presentation will adopt two approaches: first the linear biography, starting with birth and ending at death. Then I shall explore biographies of artefacts, artefact assemblages or places looking at a circularity of life-cycle, considering how this can apply to present-day archaeology.

My presentation will pursue some biographical case-studies using evidence gleaned from the wealth of people, artefacts, museums, sites, monuments, buildings and landscapes that interconnect to form the rich cultural heritage we have in Wales today.

It will consider how important these inter-sections and inter-connections are towards our role as museum archaeologists now and into the future.

**Bridging the Social Isolation Gap with Collections Work and Engagement with Rural Populations: Shropshire Museums Archaeology Lab Volunteering Program**

*Katie Miller, Collections Project Officer, Shropshire Museums Collection Centre*

The Shropshire Museums and Archives developed the Archaeology Lab Project to re-innervate our volunteering program and to deconstruct access barriers to our museums, archives, and archaeology collections. The COVID pandemic exacerbated existing issues of social isolation and digital exclusion, particular for the older and isolated population of Shropshire. Through community outreach and partnering with Library Services, Shropshire Social Prescribing Network, and other community organizations, the Archaeology Lab has become a warm and welcome space to dismantling such barriers by providing skill-building opportunities and the development of vibrant community. This paper will discuss testimonials and wellbeing evaluations from the volunteers working in the Lab, in addition to considerations that should be made when working with socially vulnerable populations on collections-based projects and the greater impact of Heritage and Wellbeing projects on a rural county.

**Dig The Castle: the positive economic and social impact of a community excavation and the subsequent revitalisation of local identity through collective experience.**

*Emily Wapshott, Commercial archaeologist, 'Archaeologists Engage'*

*Belinda Tibbets, Independent Researcher (Biological Anthropology)*

*Aisling Tierney, Lecturer (Bristol Institute for Learning & Teaching, University of Bristol)*

*Donal Lucey, Principal Heritage Consultant for Arcadis UK*

The Dig the Castle is the winner of the Marsh Award for Community Archaeology Project of the Year 2024. The project is the result of volunteer collaboration between the international charity Archaeologists Engage and the community of Great Torrington. Great Torrington is a small town in North Devon with a rich archaeological history. This legacy is, however, muted in contemporary understandings, to the detriment of social identity. To remedy this and attempt to revitalise the town's visitor economy, as well as enrich the archaeological record of the little-studied motte and bailey castle, a new research project was initiated. To enable the best local outcomes and meaningful co-production, the research team prioritised collaboration, with community members embedded in management. Cultural institutions in the town were brought on as project partners, as well as local business providing core support and funding. This effort enabled 168 adult volunteers to work within the dig and 150+ local children to engage through education programmes. Hundreds more were involved through public talks and open days. These efforts have enabled widespread and continued commitments to the project locally, and generated excitement for archaeology and a renewed sense of place and purpose in Great Torrington.

Of particular value, was how Dig the Castle created new intra-community avenues for socialising across demographics. Community participants also acquired new skills to interpret their past, with an integral training programme. The community benefitted from an invigorated sense of agency and ownership of their previously neglected heritage.

This presentation will outline the motivations behind the project and how the positive impacts for the community were embedded as a core pillar of the project. This will be followed by a retrospective discussion of the benefits for the community and the research team.

### **Temporary Exhibitions on Hadrian's Wall; the impact and effort**

*Frances McIntosh, Curator of Hadrian's Wall and the North East, English Heritage*

Temporary exhibitions can be a way to promote repeat visitors, extend dwell time and garner press attention. When complete museum overhauls are impossible due to financial restraints, they are a key tool in refreshing our offer. However, their impact in terms of work load should not be under-estimated.

Over the last 3 years I have created a variety of temporary exhibitions/displays for the 4 English Heritage sites along Hadrian's Wall; Corbridge, Chesters, Housesteads and Birdoswald. Topics have ranged from recent excavation finds, artistic responses to objects, Edwardian excavators and shells from around the world. These have been prompted by external collaborations, anniversaries, cool objects and wider events. Two of the exhibitions were funded by ACE through a wider funding bid for Hadrian's Wall 1900, whilst a third was helped through the SMA grants scheme.

This paper will look at the impact these displays have on the sites through visitor numbers, engagement and reputational improvement. It will also discuss the resource required to put on these exhibitions, from financial input to staff time.

### **SMA Funded Digitisation Project at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Shropshire**

*Sarah Roberts, Archivist, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust*

In 2023, the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust (IGMT) was fortunate to receive a grant from the SMA to digitise a selection of archaeology plans. The plans were generated by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Archaeology Unit, which operated between 1981 and 2010, and worked both locally and across the UK. Following the closure of the unit, the excavation archives were transferred to the Museum's Department for Collections & Learning. Within this legacy collection there are several hundred large (A3 and larger) original plans generated during excavations, many of which have never been published. Working with a dedicated team of volunteers, the Industrial Heritage Support Officer for England (IHSO), Dr Mike Nevell, and with professional heritage digitisation company Solid Imagery, thanks to the SMA grant a proportion of the plans have now been digitised. The priority for the digitisation project was to select plans relating directly to the archaeology of the Ironbridge Gorge World Heritage site, and while there is more



work to do on cataloguing the collection, the digital images are already being used in academic research, and to inform ongoing works on the Museum's properties.

### **The Use of Archaeological Collections and Beyond**

*Aisling Nash, Senior Project Officer, MSDS Marine Archaeology*

In 2022, with funding from Historic England, the SMA and MSDS Heritage embarked on a unique project to quantify the use of archaeological collections. Working with 15 organisations, (museums and other archive holders), the project aimed to collect data on how archaeological collections are being accessed, by whom and what for. Working with a small number of project partners allowed detailed data to be collected over a long period of time. This has resulted in the creation of a unique evidence base which can be used to demonstrate how archaeological collections are being used.

The data has been collected over the last 18 months and has highlighted the depth and range of enquiries which museums receive on a monthly basis. The project has also highlighted the issues that museum staff face in making their collections accessible. This paper will present the findings of the project and showcase just some of the work that museums undertake to create lifelines to their collections.

### **Resilience & Change: Local Authority Archaeology Services (and other 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology)**

*Rob Lennox, Policy & Advocacy Manager, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists*

*Aisling Nash, Senior Project Manager, MSDS Marine Archaeology*

The 21st-Century Challenges for Archaeology programme (21CAP) aims to improve archaeological practice in England. Led by Historic England and the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists, the programme brings together colleagues from across the archaeology sector to deliver key improvements in how archaeology is understood and managed, and how it engages with its different audiences.

This paper will focus on one current work stream of 21CAP which is exploring the present context of external pressures which are influencing the delivery of local authority archaeology services. The paper will focus on the project's aim to understand how users of local authority services experience the range of models for delivery. How easy is it to engage with Historic Environment Records as a member of the public? How effective are the processes of liaison with museums for archive deposition? And are the outcomes of planning-led archaeology managed in a way that leads to the best outcomes for the public?

The paper will also give an overview of the wider 21CAP work and describe how it is contributing to a future where archaeology maximises its public and social benefit and ensures a more sustainable profession to meet the challenges that lie ahead.

### **A Spiderweb of Stakeholders: Building relationships and linking people together through the Northamptonshire ARC**

*Ben Donnelly-Symes, Archaeological Curator, Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre*

This paper will look at three case studies of relationships that have been built between the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre and different types of external stakeholders and how they interlink. These case studies include our work with a key volunteer who has led a group of other volunteers undertaking osteological work, working with an external stakeholder on a mental health and wellbeing project and with an academic partner on...well everything we do... It will explore how these relationships can grow from a chance or scoping meeting into key partnerships that far exceed any initial expectations where both sides gain greatly from them. I will look at the impact of these relationships on both sides as well as volunteers, other organisations and the wider public and the sometimes unexpected outcomes from them. The paper will include videos of the stakeholders themselves explaining their work in their own words and of those who have benefited from them. Finally, I'll have a few thoughts on how evaluate and track this type of networking work and linking organisations to maximise benefits for all involved.

### **Emerging Voices: Early Career Professionals: Visions for Archaeology in a Challenging Sector**

*Anna Robson, Graduate Intern Archaeology and Bioscience Collection, Durham University*

*George Ellison, MSc Zooarchaeology Student, University of York and Young Advisor, Council for British Archaeology*

*Ihini Aambreen, MPhil Student Archaeological Science, Cambridge University*

If young people ran the sector for a day, what would it look like? What are the conditions, hopes and anxieties of current early career professionals, and what active strategies do young people propose to help solve these issues?

This paper will introduce this scenario, using the hypothetical as a springboard to explore current issues within the archaeology and heritage sector, many of which are particularly felt by early career professionals (no matter what age) when entering the field. Using real lived experiences and evidence-backed issues, this paper offers suggestions for solutions to highlight that change can be made one step at a time. We will outline our three strategies for change: Accessibility, Opportunity, and Mitigations for Financial Barriers. Using a mixture of case studies and direct anecdotes from real young people and early career professionals, we will highlight real current issues such as criteria for 'entry-level' roles, excessive conference and networking ticket prices, and a lack of disability assistance.

We will subsequently propose an 'ideal' early careers sector, exploring ideas such as better early career networking resources, more transparency, and the creation of relationships between university departments and archaeology organisations. A desire for dramatic change within sectors is often either tokenistic or dismissed as too ambitious. The aim of the young people presenting this paper is to begin a wider, active, and youth-led consultation project that delivers change.

Following from consultations gathered in a previous conference, this paper will briefly discuss these findings and will offer you to do the same, assisting us in creating an all-encompassing bank of suggestions which will be used to inform the continued work of the Youth Advisory Board.

### **Hosting an employability placement for students in a museum setting**

*Laura Miucci, Finds Liaison Officer (Cornwall and the Isles and Scilly), Portable Antiquities Scheme and Archaeology Collections at Museum of Cornish Life, Helston.*

This paper will explore a series of firsts, experienced as part of a collaborative project between the Portable Antiquities Scheme in Cornwall, and University of Liverpool archaeology, history and heritage students in June 2024. Headed by Laura, the new Finds Liaison Officer for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, an online employability placement, held at the Museum of Cornish Life, sought to introduce students to a variety of heritage professionals, and their roles within heritage, with the over-arching aims of tailoring your voice to different audiences. You might know your Archimedes from your Aristotle, but can you explain how a Bronze Age flint arrowhead is made to an 8 year old? The paper will end in discussing the real-life application of community training into the museum calendar, whether online or in-person: the challenges, benefits and successes of doing so.

### **Panel discussion**

*Tamsin Russell, Workforce Development Lead, Museums Association*

*Angie Bolton, Curator of Archaeology, Oxfordshire Museums Service*

*Phil Pollard, Heritage Careers Pathway Manager, Historic England*

*Sarahjayne Clements, Networking & Communications Officer, Enabled Archaeology Foundation*

### **Unlocking Old Windsor – Reviving an Old, Unpromising and Scattered Archive**

*Roland Smith, Assistant County Archaeologist, Wiltshire Council*

*Gabor Thomas, Associate Professor in Early Medieval Archaeology, University of Reading*

Damaged, incomplete, dispersed and outdated, the late Brian Hope-Taylor's archive of his important excavations in the 1950s at Old Windsor, Berkshire, had several significant barriers to anyone seeking to unravel the story of this Saxon and early Norman 'royal complex' and precursor to New Windsor. Hope-Taylor failed to publish the results of his excavations and he retained the excavation archive until his death in 2001. His archive, in poor condition, was then rescued by and deposited with Historic Environment Scotland in Edinburgh, while the finds and post-excavation records had previously been deposited with Reading Museum in Berkshire. Some of the archive was lost when Hope-Taylor's house was partly cleared before the archive could be rescued.

Professor Gabor Thomas and Roland Smith will present on the results of an Historic England funded project that aimed to revive the Old Windsor archive and to remove the considerable barriers to future research on this nationally important site. The project has sought to unify the archive as far as possible through a programme of digitisation,

to evaluate its potential for future analysis and interpretation, and to signal its potential to future researchers through publication.

The project is therefore a good example of the value of such old, split, and unpromising archives and demonstrates that they do have a future if the arguments for their revival can be well made. An essential component of the project was the collaboration of the Berkshire Archaeological Society and the involvement of their volunteers, who have learnt new skills in archaeological processes, helped to achieve a successful project outcome, and will help deliver outreach and education at the end of the project.

### **All along the line: domestic rituals on Roman Watling Street**

*Cameron Moffett, Curator (Collections), English Heritage*

Recent research into the English Heritage collection from the excavations undertaken at Wroxeter, Shropshire by JP Bushe-Fox at in 1912-14 identified a very large number of complete ceramic vessels which had been deliberately buried in pits and wells. Structured deposits such as these are generally understood to be related to the foundation or commencement of a building or other structure. This practice was relatively common in the south-east of Britain and more so in Gaul, and this paper looks the variety of rituals of this kind occurring at Wroxeter and the role of Watling Street as a conduit of social and religious practices. This work is an example of what can sometimes be extracted from very old collections which had only limited publication and for which there are no surviving archives.

### **‘Making the Museum’: Towards an archaeology of the lives of the makers of the Pitt Rivers Museum**

*Beth Hodgett, Postdoctoral Researcher, Pitt Rivers Museum*

Lieutenant General Pitt Rivers did not make the museum that bears his name, or the objects within it. The real makers of the museum are the people who lived (and live) outside its walls; who made and used the objects on display, the people whose lives are captured in the photograph collections, and the people who spoke the languages and sang the songs that appear in the sound collections. The PRM database holds only a partial record of the lives of these ‘makers’ of the museum; there are over 324,000 objects in the museum collection but only approximately 12,000 of these objects have any information about the people who made them. ‘Making the Museum’ is a ground-breaking prospect; a new three-year AHRC funded project to investigate the identities of the makers of the PRM collection.

Surfacing the identities of makers and the subjects of photographs requires very different research methodologies to those traditionally used to explore museum collections. The names of field collectors and museum donors abound in the Pitt Rivers Museum database—the database holds 274,081 object records with a named field collector and 321,991 object records with a named donor—and these records are often supplemented by extensive archival documentation. In contrast to this abundance of information, the lives and names of makers are rarely so well documented on paper.

And yet, this is not to suggest that these submerged maker identities cannot be recovered. One of the most formidable strengths of archaeology as a discipline lies in its expertise in interpreting the material remains of the past in the absence of written records. In this paper I dive into some of the lesser-known archaeological collections held by the PRM. I argue that thinking about archaeological artefacts can help us develop methodologies for surfacing the identities of ‘makers’ and photographic subjects across the entirety of the PRM’s collections. Furthermore, I make the case that archaeological methods and theory—in particular the concepts of formation and assemblage—can provide new strategies for conducting archival research, in doing so bringing us closer to uncovering the lives of the real makers of the PRM.

## Speaker Bios

### **Ihini Aambreen**

*Emerging Voices: Early Career Professionals: Visions for Archaeology in a Challenging Sector*

### **Angie Bolton**

*Panellist*

As with many archaeologists, Angie’s career started in muddy fields digging before becoming a Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, starting when it was a pilot in 1997. Angie never specialised in finds from one period, instead she knows a bit about everything, a lot about objects which really captures her imagination, and knows who to ask to fill in the gaps. She worked for the Scheme for 22 years, leaving it as a Senior Finds Liaison Officer and joined the Oxfordshire Museum Service as the Curator of Archaeology. An opportunity she couldn’t miss.

### **Tom Booth**

*Exploring Past Lives Through Archaeology*

Dr Tom Booth has a BSc in Archaeological Science, an MSc in Human Osteology and Funerary Archaeology and a PhD in Bioarchaeology from the University of Sheffield. He is currently a Senior Laboratory Research Scientist in the Skoglund Ancient Genomics Laboratory at The Francis Crick Institute. Over the last ten years, Tom has been involved in different projects at the Natural History Museum, The University of Bristol and The Francis Crick Institute involving sampling of archaeological collections of human remains for biomolecular analysis, predominantly DNA. He has been deeply involved with trying to synthesise results from genetic analyses with other archaeological data and encourage greater collaboration and understanding between genetics and archaeology.

### **Steve Burrow**

*Archaeology at Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales*

Steve has worked at Amgueddfa Cymru since 1997, starting as an archaeology curator and then moving through a range of curatorial, management and leadership roles within the organisation, before returning to archaeology in 2019. He now manages the curatorial and PAS Cymru teams and leads on the delivery of the Treasure Act in Wales.

### **Katie Churchill**

*Buckholt Wood Community Dig*

Kate Churchill is an archaeologist and the founder of Churchill Archaeology. With twenty years' experience in commercial archaeology, Kate specialises in landscape archaeology, archaeological evaluations and heritage management, but has a specific interest and experience in Monmouthshire where she is based.

### **Sarahjayne Clements**

*Panellist*

Sarahjayne works as a Community Heritage Officer for Neath Port Talbot Council. She is currently doing a doctorate at the University of Hertfordshire looking at disability inclusion in archaeology with focus on chronic illness and the workplace as well as volunteering with the Enabled Archaeology Foundation as the Networking and Communications Officer.

### **Glynn Davies**

*Buried in the Archive: Research, retention and reburial of unprovenanced human remains at Colchester Museums*

Glynn Davis is the Senior Collections + Learning Curator at Colchester Museums. He is a specialist in Roman archaeology and material culture and has published on the subject of Roman small finds. He has previously worked at the Museum of London's Archaeological Archive where he created and delivered award-winning projects that engaged the public with the country's largest archaeological collection.

### **Andrea Dolfini**

*Exploring Past Lives through Metalwork Wear Analysis*

Andrea Dolfini (PhD Cantab) is a Professor of Archaeology at Newcastle University, specializing in the social dynamics of material culture in Neolithic, Chalcolithic and Bronze Age Europe. He researches prehistoric metallurgy and copper-alloy artefacts through scientific methods including use-wear analysis and experimental archaeology. His research also covers warfare and violence in early human societies, technological innovation, and prehistoric Italy. With several books and 60 journal articles and chapters published so far, he is an experienced academic writer and public speaker, engaging with peers, heritage specialists, students, and the general public.

### **Ben Donnelly-Symes**

*A Spiderweb of Stakeholders: Building relationships and linking people together through the Northamptonshire ARC*

Ben is the Archaeological Curator for the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre which is the county archaeological archive store for Northamptonshire. He is also in the first year of a part-time PhD-by-practice at the University of Leicester studying non-academic/non-specialist use of archaeological archives and how we evaluate it based on the work at the Northants ARC.

**Judith Doyle**

*Heneb – the Trust for Welsh Archaeology*

Judith Doyle BA (Hons) MBA FSA MCIfA is Heneb's Head of Region for Glamorgan Gwent. She has more than 35 years' experience, covering both fieldwork and advisory stewardship in the historic environment sector.

**Jack Eggington**

*Buried in the Archive: Research, retention and reburial of unprovenanced human remains at Colchester Museums*

Jack Eggington studied Bioarchaeology at the University of York. During his MA he developed an interest in post-medieval health and paleopathology, receiving a prize for the best dissertation in his cohort. He is currently a PhD candidate (funded by the AHRC) at the University of Reading where his research focuses on health, diet, and social inequality in industrial Britain, from a mother-infant perspective. He has extensive experience in the exhumation of human remains from both articulated and disarticulated/commingled archaeological contexts.

**George Ellison**

*Emerging Voices: Early Career Professionals: Visions for Archaeology in a Challenging Sector*

George Ellison is studying for an MSc in Zooarchaeology at the University of York, having recently completed his undergraduate degree at the University of Cambridge. He is a member of the Council for British Archaeology's Youth Advisory Board and a Young Producer with English Heritage. His interests are widespread and include Zooarchaeology, Medieval Archaeology, Community Engagement, and Youth Participation.

**Claudine Gerrard**

*Heneb – the Trust for Welsh Archaeology*

Claudine Gerrard BSc Hons MPhil MCIfA is Heneb's National Specialist Lead for Heritage Management.

**Beth Hodgett**

*'Making the Museum': Towards an archaeology of the lives of the makers of the Pitt Rivers Museum*

Beth Hodgett is the Postdoctoral Researcher on the Making the Museum project at the Pitt Rivers Museum. Beth has trained in archaeology and anthropology and works across both disciplines, using methodological approaches and theoretical insights from each discipline to interrogate museum and archival collections. Their PhD research (based between Birkbeck, University of London and the Pitt Rivers Museum) explored the photographic archive of the early twentieth century archaeologist O.G.S. Crawford, and reflects Beth's broader research interests in photography and visual culture. Beth also holds an MSc in Visual, Material and Museum Anthropology (University of Oxford) and a BA in Theology (University of Oxford).

**Rob Lennox**

*Resilience & Change: Local Authority Archaeology Services (and other 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology)*

Rob Lennox is the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists' Policy and Advocacy Manager. He works with ClfA's professional membership to communicate their collective expertise to decision-makers and other stakeholders in the historic environment and in parallel disciplines. He leads on the development and communication of ClfA's policy objectives. Rob has a PhD from the University of York which focused on the political relevance of public value in the historic environment sector. He has also worked for other heritage organisations, including the Council for British Archaeology. Rob has particular interests in place-making, landscape, and in rural cultural and natural heritage overlaps.

**Donal Lucey**

*Dig The Castle: the positive economic and social impact of a community excavation and the subsequent revitalisation of local identity through collective experience.*

Donal is an Irish archaeologist with a background in commercial fieldwork in the UK and Ireland. He is a Member of the Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (MCIfA). His particular areas of interest are the transition from the Late Roman Empire to the Early Medieval period in Britain and the development of early Christianity in North-West Europe. He is currently a Principal Heritage Consultant at Arcadis and provides cultural heritage expertise to a wide range of major development projects including road schemes and new towns. He volunteers with the Bristol and Avon Archaeological Society and is Excavation Co-Director for Project Nivica Archaeology in Albania. Donal is passionate about promoting public engagement with archaeology and increasing the accessibility and diversity of archaeology as a profession.

**Francis McIntosh**

*Temporary Exhibitions on Hadrian's Wall; the impact and effort*



Dr Frances McIntosh is the Collections Curator for Hadrian's Wall and the North East, working for English Heritage. She is an archaeologist by training, and her research interests are the material culture of Roman Britain, and the antiquarian discovery of Hadrian's Wall.

**Katie Miller**

*Bridging the Social Isolation Gap with Collections Work and Engagement with Rural Populations: Shropshire Museums- Archaeology Lab Volunteering Program*

I began my career in archaeology during my undergraduate (UC: Santa Cruz) and postgraduate studies (University of Bristol) focusing human osteology, mortuary practices, and isotopic analysis to investigate social and cultural changes through time. The last two years, I have been the project lead for the Archaeology Lab as the Collections Project Officer for Shropshire Museums and Archives. I am currently transitioning roles to be Collections and Engagement Curator in Archaeology for the Herefordshire Museums and Galleries. This role will focus on increasing the engagement with the unique lives, materials, and stories of Herefordshire.

**Laura Miucci**

*Hosting an employability placement for students in a museum setting*

Laura Miucci is an archaeologist, qualified educator, polyglot and experimental ceramicist. She graduated from University College Dublin (UCD) with a MSc in Experimental Archaeology & Material Culture in 2021, and presented at the 2023 EXARC conference.

She currently holds the post of Finds Liaison Officer for Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, and previously worked for Cornwall Archaeological Unit. Additionally, she collaborates with UCD as a research associate, as well as running archaeology sessions with different GirlGuiding units across Cornwall.

When not at work, she is actively pursuing academic research, mud-larking, and training to become a Medieval pottery specialist.

**Cameron Moffett**

*All along the line: domestic rituals on Roman Watling Street*

English Heritage Curator of Collections and Interiors for the West Midlands. My areas of interest include the evidence for mead making and honey in the Roman and early medieval periods and Roman magic and religion. Recent research includes a consideration of the relationship between jet and gender in late Roman Britain. I was part of the EH team that worked on the recent complete redisplay of the museum at Wroxeter where we also developed new interpretation for the site.

**Aisling Nash**

*The Use of Archaeological Collections and Beyond*

*Resilience & Change: Local Authority Archaeology Services (and other 21st Century Challenges for Archaeology)*

Aisling Nash is a Senior Project Officer at MSDS Heritage and has 16 years' experience working in the historic environment sector in a variety of roles including local authority archaeology services. She is currently managing the Society for Museum Archaeology project, Quantifying the use of museum archaeological collections on behalf of MSDS Heritage. This project involves working with 15 museums and other organisations that hold archaeological collections to collect data on their use. Her previous experience in local authorities in combination with this 2-year project has enabled Aisling to gain a greater understanding of the issues that museums face.

**Richard Nicholls**

*Heneb – the Trust for Welsh Archaeology*

Richard Nicholls is Chief Executive of Heneb having previously held roles as the Director of Development for Amgueddfa Cymru – National Museum Wales, Deputy Head of Development for the University of Liverpool and Director of Operations for Arts Council Wales.

**Philip Pollard**

*Panellist*

Phil Pollard is Heritage Career Pathways Manager at Historic England, where he manages their strategic approach to improving workforce skills and careers. He chairs the Historic Environment Trailblazer, which has developed 7 new apprenticeship standards, and he also chairs the Historic Environment Skills Forum, which has recently published a Skills and Careers Action Plan for England that highlights post-excavation skills in Archaeology as one of its priority areas.

Phil is a Trustee of the Council for British Archaeology, an Associate Member of ClfA and is Vice Chair of the ClfA/UAAUK Degree Accreditation Committee.

**Sarah Roberts**

*SMA Funded Digitisation Project at the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Shropshire, UK.*

Sarah Roberts is the Archivist at IGMT. Having studied Archaeology at Sheffield and Lampeter, they subsequently completed the Archives Administration course at Aberystwyth, first working in the special Collections at UWTSO before taking up the post in Ironbridge. As a product of Sheffield, a city permeated by industrial archaeology, the industrial past has been a lifelong interest. The collections at Ironbridge are a fantastic resource which illustrate so much, from the global impact of the developments made in the Gorge, to the personal concerns of individuals living and working at the heart of the Industrial Revolution.

**Anna Robson**

*Emerging Voices: Early Career Professionals: Visions for Archaeology in a Challenging Sector*

**Calli Rouse**

*Heneb – the Trust for Welsh Archaeology*

Calli Rouse BA (Hons) MCI(A) is Heneb's National Specialist Lead for the Historic Environment Record.

**Tamsin Russell**

*Panellist*

Tamsin's career has focussed on workforce and organisational development in private and public sectors. Tamsin joined the cultural sector 23 years ago, at the Science Museum Group, then joining National Museums Scotland, Historic Environment Scotland and the National Trust for Scotland.

At the Museums Association Tamsin leads on workforce from strategy to delivery, providing career guidance, speaking on ethics, equity, and wellbeing; and leads their professional development programmes, the Associateship, the Fellowship, Mentoring for All and Online Learning.

Tamsin volunteers on the Recognition Scheme Panel, the UK Accreditation Committee, and as an Executive Board Member for the Heritage Volunteers Group.

**Olivia Russell**

*Use Lives and Past Lives: The Use Wear Analysis of Gold Bracteates as a Path Towards the Re-Humanisation of Past Individuals*

Olivia Russell is a PhD candidate at Newcastle University whose research focuses on how all stages of a bracteate's life, from manufacture to deposition, show how Late Antique individuals used bracteates to articulate their identities. Before returning to Newcastle for her PhD, Olivia worked as a field archaeologist and assistant project manager at Goodwin and Associates, Inc., a commercial archaeology firm based in New Orleans, LA, USA.

**Helen Sharp**

*Re-creating a Roman Cavalry Helmet: Using 21st century techniques to reveal the secrets of a 2000-year-old object*

Helen Sharp is Curator (Archaeology) at Leicestershire County Council Museums. Their archaeology collections are wide-ranging and feature some nationally important finds such as the Hallaton Treasure, Bosworth Battlefield collection, the earliest evidence of coal-mining from the Lounge mine and the Waite Collection - Lower Palaeolithic tools dating back 500,000 years. Leicestershire Museums are the repository for developer-led archaeological archives and she takes a close interest in improving conversations and practices between museum repositories and archaeological contractors.

**Roland Smith**

*‘Unlocking Old Windsor – Reviving an Old, Unpromising and Scattered Archive’*

Roland Smith has directed, managed and published archaeological projects throughout southern England, largely with Wessex Archaeology. He has always had an interest in the many challenges posed by archaeological archives both in his roles in private practice and more recently as a local authority archaeological advisor in Berkshire and currently Wiltshire.

**Gabor Thomas**

*‘Unlocking Old Windsor – Reviving an Old, Unpromising and Scattered Archive’*

Professor Gabor Thomas specialises in the archaeology of the early medieval period. His research explores early medieval life through the archaeology of places and through the social and cultural meanings of objects. He is currently directing research excavations on the site of an early medieval monastery on the River Thames at Cookham, and has previously directed large-scale excavations at the early medieval royal centre and monastery of Lyminge, Kent.

**Belinda Tibbetts**

*Dig The Castle: the positive economic and social impact of a community excavation and the subsequent revitalisation of local identity through collective experience.*

Dr Tibbetts is an independent academic researcher in the field of Biological Anthropology specialising in the analysis of human remains. She holds a PhD and MSc in Bioarchaeology (Human Osteology) as well as a BSc (Biological Sciences) and a BA (Hons) in Ancient History and Archaeology. Belinda is a member of the British Association of Biological Anthropology & Osteoarchaeology and a co-founder of Archaeologists Engage. Her previous public engagement for archaeology includes the Çatalhöyük Project (Turkey), the Mill Point Project (Queensland, Australia), as well as programmes for both school groups and the public in Australia and the UK.

**Aisling Tierney**

*Dig The Castle: the positive economic and social impact of a community excavation and the subsequent revitalisation of local identity through collective experience.*

Dr Aisling Tierney is a Lecturer working across academic staff development, curriculum development and pedagogic research at the University of Bristol. She holds a PhD in Historical Archaeology and a Masters in Maritime Archaeology. Aisling is a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy (AdvanceHE), a Visiting Fellow at the Cultural Heritage Institute (Royal Agricultural University) and a member of the Council for British Archaeology’s (CBA) Working Group for Heritage and Wellbeing. Previous public engagement for archaeology projects include DigBerkeley (UK), DigHatteras (USA) and Project Nivica (Albania). Aisling also maintains research interests in student co-production, sustainability and AI.

**Elizabeth Walker**

*Keynote Speaker – Biographies in Welsh Archaeology*

Elizabeth commenced her association with Amgueddfa Cymru, as a student working the early Neanderthal site at Pontnewydd Cave, Denbighshire. She secured her first paid employment as a temporary research assistant in 1986 and has been there ever since, now Principal Curator: Collections & Access and specialist curator for Palaeolithic & Mesolithic archaeology.

Elizabeth has directed Palaeolithic and Mesolithic excavations in Wales. She publishes others' earlier work at Welsh cave sites and manages the Museum's archaeological collection. She won the G.T. Clark Award for Prehistory in 2017; was President of the Cambrian Archaeological Association 2022-23, is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, and currently chairs the National Panel of Archaeological Archives in Wales.

**Emily Wapshott**

*Dig The Castle: the positive economic and social impact of a community excavation and the subsequent revitalisation of local identity through collective experience.*

A British commercial archaeologist and historic buildings specialist, with over fifteen years of experience, beginning by digging in her parents' garden as a toddler, Emily's passion for archaeology led to volunteering on her first large-scale site at eight years old. Receiving great aid in her career trajectory from the archaeologists who facilitated her childhood experiences, Emily has dedicated her life to 'paying it forward', sharing her discipline with others, as a passionate advocate for the social prescribing benefits of archaeology. As an independent researcher, Emily is also involved in the fields of gender archaeology, early medieval metallurgy and public engagement. Emily is a founding member of the outreach charity Archaeologists Engage and the Project Director of Dig the Castle.

**Alice Williams**

*Ancient Egypt at the Horniman Museum: A lifeline for archaeology in the anthropology collection*

Alice is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London where she is working on the AHRC-funded project 'Mobilising Collections Histories for Institutional Change: Egypt at the Horniman Museum'. Alice has over ten years of experience working in museums in both research and collections management roles, particularly with collections of Egyptian archaeology and their associated archives. Her research interests include the history of museums and exhibitions, in particular the acquisition, display, and reception of collections from Egypt.