

# Programme

Lifelong Learning – The Archaeology of Southampton from the Ice Age to the Middle Ages Study Day – Saturday 17 February 2018

## Study Day Programme

- 9:30 Registration and coffee
- 10:00 Welcome
- 10:10 **Ice Age Southampton, and the Palaeolithic** - *Francis Wenban-Smith* (Department of Archaeology, University of Southampton)  
 The earliest, Palaeolithic occupation of Southampton took place during the Pleistocene. This period, colloquially known as "The Ice Age", lasted from approximately 1.8 million years ago through to 11,700 years ago. Rather than being one sustained cold period, the Pleistocene was characterised by alternating cold periods, when much of Britain was covered by glaciers and uninhabitable, with periods of similar warmth to the present day. The Palaeolithic history of Southampton is mostly represented by flint artefacts found in surviving remnants of Ice Age river gravels (the "Solent River") that underlie much of Southampton
- 10:50 **Southampton's later prehistory** - *Matt Leivers* (*Wessex Archaeology*)  
 Approximately 10,000 years of evidence of prehistoric occupation lie hidden under the remains of later human activity in and around Southampton. Unlike on much of the surrounding southern English chalklands, where the Neolithic and Bronze Ages especially are typified by large ceremonial earthworks and barrows, Southampton's record is very much more elusive, consisting mostly of chance discoveries (but not necessarily chance losses) in and alongside the rivers, and buried in small pits, and otherwise invisible under the accretions of later ages.  
  
 This talk will take a brief look at what evidence has been recovered for the last hunter-gatherers and earliest agriculturalists to have lived in and around the city, and attempt to cast some light on what sort of society these people might have lived in.
- 11:30 Refreshment break
- 11:50 **From Barbarian to Classical-a coming of age for Southampton** - *Andy Russel* (*Archaeology Unit, Southampton City Council*)  
 This talk will present the evidence for Iron Age and Roman Southampton; what was life like before and after the Roman invasion? Iron Age Southampton is elusive, but recently a number of later Iron Age sites have been discovered. Their distribution favours the middle slopes of the river valleys, with 'Iron Age Southampton' lying under the parks, running from inside the medieval walls to Charlotte Place. Pottery suggests the people who lived there belonged to the social group who occupied the Test Valley area. Evidence of the Iron Age/Roman interface has been found in Shirley. A small late Iron Age farm of a type associated with stock-keeping remained in use into the Roman period, but the evidence suggests the coming of the Romans was not kind to the people who lived there or the environment around them. The position of Roman Southampton has been known about since the 18<sup>th</sup> century, when it was named 'Clausentum'. Occupying the Bitterne Manor peninsula, it perhaps was an invasion base for Vespasian and his troops, before becoming a port. The extensive jetties and traded goods show it was a major port for two centuries, exporting Britain's wealth in exchange for Roman luxuries. In the late Roman period it was fortified with a stone wall and towers, and was home to a goldsmith!
- 12:30 Lunch

13:15

***Hamwic: the Saxon settlement in the St Mary's area of Southampton*** - Matt Garner  
(Archaeologist)

The Saxon settlement of Hamwic flourished on the west bank of the River Itchen from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> centuries. Investigations in the St Mary's area have revealed the layout of this town; with a grid of streets, a western ditch, houses, workshops, wells, cess-pits, and rubbish deposits. The discovery of cemeteries, in several parts of Hamwic, has given the opportunity to study the beliefs, health, and demographic composition of the population. The excavated rubbish provides evidence of diet, crafts, and trade. The people of Hamwic made textiles and objects of bone, antler, glass, and metal. Artefacts from beyond the English Channel include pottery, quernstones, and coins. Hamwic is the most intensively investigated town of the period in England and is of international significance. This talk will consider the reasons for the founding of a settlement at this location, how it flourished for 200 years, and why the population centre then shifted to a site alongside the River Test.

14:00

**Environmental archaeology: past environments, plants, animals and people** - Frank Green  
(New Forest National Park Authority)

It is fascinating to discover what people ate, their living conditions and how the local soils and ecology impacted on Southampton people's lives in the past.

Much can be learnt from detailed study of the animal bones, plant remains and other biological materials that can be recovered from archaeological sites in the city and adjacent areas.

The archaeological work in Hampshire from the 1970s onwards and in particularly Southampton lead the way in the retrieval, analysis and interpretation of these types of data. For the medieval period the archaeological evidence often compliments the excellent sources of information in the cities Port Books and other records. The session will outline the techniques used to obtain environmental information and will then specifically look at what we have learned from past work in Southampton in a local context.

14:40

Refreshment break

15:00

**A Life in Pieces** - Duncan Brown (Historic England)

The pottery of the medieval town of Southampton came to prominence with the 1975 publication of *Excavations in Medieval Southampton*, which included a host of imported types hardly recognised in England. Subsequent work on Saxon assemblages has emphasised further the importance of Southampton as a trading centre and although the Romano-British finds have not yet reached the same levels, here too lines of international commerce can be drawn. This talk will focus mainly on the post-Roman story, identifying key groups, prominent personalities and significant publications as we take a tour through the development of pottery studies in Southampton, and by association, the impact on methods and interpretations further afield. The town retains a high profile in the field of ceramic analysis and this talk will show why that is and how it has persisted.

15:40

Discussion and Questions

16:00

Event ends

**How to book**

Please use the link and QR code below to book your place for this exciting study day.

<https://www.southampton.ac.uk/lifelonglearning/news/events/2018/02/17-archaeology-of-southampton-study-day.page?>

