



The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service

Newsletter of The Wallingford Historical and Archaeological Society

June Meeting

Wednesday 9 June 2021

'Excavation of the cemetery of St Augustine's, Stoke Quay, Ipswich'

A talk by Elizabeth Popescu

(Post-Excavation & Publications Manager, Oxford Archaeology)

During 2012, Oxford Archaeology and Pre-Construct Archaeology carried out the excavation of a substantial site at Stoke Quay, Ipswich. The town is one of England's oldest urban centres and has long been understood to have been a trading place of royal power within the eastern Saxon kingdom.



Photo OAU website

The Stoke Quay excavation included some 1100 burials associated with the medieval church of St Augustine, ranging in date from the late 9th/10th century to the late 15th century.* Earlier burials and settlement features dated from the heyday of 'Gipeswic' as a major Saxon port, and included a rare Ipswich-ware pottery kiln and a pristine Saxon glass cup retrieved from a barrow grave. The size of the burial population provided an excellent opportunity to investigate many aspects of medieval life and health using the latest scientific methods. This talk will summarise the results of analysis, which have recently been published in the East Anglian Archaeology monograph series.

**Similar to the date range of burials found in Wallingford under the new Waitrose building*

We hope you can join us for this virtual talk which begins at 8.00pm

The Zoom link will be given in the email sent with this TWHAS Now

Coldharbour Farm update

Lindsey Bedford writes:

Although it is still going to be a little while before I can say when we might get on the field again at Coldharbour Farm, at least it is looking much more hopeful that it will happen. The uncertainty is due more to the weather now than Covid restrictions and it depends what June is like weather-wise. The rather unpleasant Spring has meant the growth of the crop has been a little slow so it has a bit of catching up to do. I am hoping for late July or beginning of August for a couple of weeks on the field where a Roman cemetery was excavated by TWHAS in the 1990s.

(CHF3 on the Google Earth image; we did CHF5 last year)



There are also lots of Iron Age pits and a small enclosure which was partly visible on aerial photos and on Google Earth in 2009. Several pits and part of this enclosure were also previously investigated by TWHAS. We are ultimately looking for a focus of Roman settlement but anything that helps us understand the area better is a good result.

Like last year, we will be gridding the whole field with canes and then doing 4 different surveys with teams working simultaneously. We will do magnetometry (that's the royal We of course!) over the whole field, resistivity over selected target areas, metal detecting and field walking also over the whole field.

The report for 2020 is now completed so if anyone would like to read it then drop me an email and I can send it to you as a PDF (email - linbee2@hotmail.com). If you are not on the Coldharbour Group mailing list and think you might like to participate this year then please contact me, no experience is necessary as full training will be given!

A little bit closer to the time I will send everyone who has expressed an interest a form to fill in for contact details, potential availability and task preferences (more the better!). If you are already on the list I will send it to you automatically in case anything has changed so no need to contact me about it (unless you want to unsubscribe). I am also opening it up to non-TWHAS members from BARG and SOAG as there will be plenty of work to be done.

I look forward to seeing lots of you in the field in just a couple of months time!

Museum Re-Opening 22 June

We shall be delighted to open the downstairs museum displays to the public on Tuesday 22 June!

The exhibits will include the interesting **new model of Wallingford Castle**, created for us by architectural model-maker Ben Taggart showing the castle in the mid-fourteenth century to a scale of 1:300; it is the culmination of years of detailed research by our whole team.

Also on view will be '**The Willis family of Wallingford - artists and artisans'** exhibition in the new meeting room, which was open for just two weeks in 2020 before the first Lockdown! The Willis family came to Wallingford from Hagbourne in the early 19th century, living and working in High Street and in what is now *The Dolphin* public house. An industrious Quaker family, all their six sons had artisan or professional careers.



Wallingford Castle view painted by George, when aged about 14

The exhibition spotlights the careers of George (1822-1907), an artist who depicted local scenes (see left) and flora and fauna for engraved book illustrations, and William (1814-1883) also an artist but whose main business was engraving and inventing ways to fix early photographs. He patented the aniline process of copying and his son, also William (1841-1923) patented what became the universally acclaimed and commercially successful platinotype process.

'**Wallingford Before the Town**' (including the ever-popular archaeology sand-pits), and the **Agatha Christie Room (including Midsomer Murders)** will be also accessible as usual.

All our planning for re-opening has been subject to government guidelines for Covid-19 prevention and we have sought to create a safe environment for custodians and visitors alike, so for the time being our upstairs areas will be closed to the public, and numbers of visitors at any one time will be limited.

As we cannot offer the usual full experience, we have decided to allow FREE entry to the museum for the present - but donations will be gratefully received! All arrangements can be followed on our website: www.wallingfordmuseum.org.uk

Until June 22 our second-hand bookshop will continue to be open from 10.30am - 1.00pm on Fridays and Saturdays.

Thanks for offers to be Custodians

We are delighted to have received several new offers from people wishing to become Museum Custodians and are delighted that most of our present custodians are longing to get back to the Museum again! There are still opportunities for others who would like to join the team - so do please contact Jenny Carpenter on jenacarpenter@hotmail.co.uk or call 07885 189629 - she will be delighted to talk to you.

Community Ventures

Phone box Challenge



Today's St George's Rd box could soon look like...

Recently some old telephone boxes in the town were offered for potential community use. One of our members, Lisa Haynes, applied to take over the box in St George's Road with a view to using it for displaying exhibitions about local history.

As a result, the box was eventually offered to the Museum, which accepted it, and Lisa has happily taken on the daunting task of cleaning it up, giving it a repaint and then preparing a small exhibition on the History of Clapcot (in which area the box is situated), inspired by Chris Eke's book on the subject.

It's a great idea and if anyone is inspired to give a hand, please contact Lisa on 07717 410810.



... this beautiful re-conditioned Box in Brightwell. WOW!!

Agatha Christie's Winterbrook House for sale

A somewhat bigger challenge is facing a small group of local people (including the Mayor, Marcus Harris) who are setting out to raise money to secure this £2,750,000 property for the town in order to set up an Agatha Christie Centre which would attract tourists to the area. A BBC South item about it last week, included the Museum, featuring our own Agatha Christie display, and on 28 May *The Times* devoted the story a whole page, plus a 'Leader' which declared '*it would be a noble gesture to throw open the doors of Agatha Christie's home*'. I have been asked to advise on the history of Agatha and Max Mallowan's time at the house, and am working hard to keep this as accurate as possible! Raising awareness is a massive task, for which there has been little time to prepare, but if you wish to know more, please google [Save Agatha's home - a Heritage crowdfunding project](#) The clock is ticking!

Summer Events to Come!

Family Archaeology Day - 24 July 11.00am - 4.00pm

This year we will be in the back yard of the museum to take part in the UK's celebration of archaeology. We're focusing on **Fossils and Finds** and encouraging people to come and meet our experts, including Steve Head of fossil fame, and also to bring along any special fossils and finds from gardens, allotments, fields and beaches to show us and identify. There will also be plenty of other activities and things to see, for young and old. The event is **free**, so why not just drop-in and see us?

September 11-12 Weekend is Agatha Christie time, plus the Museum's official 40th birthday!

We are still planning a special weekend of events, which we will finalise when we are into the next phase of the government's 'roadmap'. So watch the website, and we'll have more details next time.

Other Diary Dates:

15 June: TWHAS/Museum Committee, Zoom 7.30pm

14 July: TWHAS talk, 8.00pm Zoom: '*The River Thames - How it Shaped our Region*', by river expert Steve Capel-Davies