

# **Staffordshire Archaeological and Historical Society**

## **Lecture Season 2023-2024**

**6th October 2023**

**Dr Kate Round**

**BY ZOOM**

### **Stourbridge Glass - A History**

This talk is a good introduction to the subject of Stourbridge Glass, and traces the roots of Stourbridge glassmakers back to the 8thC BC, from The Alabastron of Sargon II to their arrival in Stourbridge. We explore the hot side of the industry, the workings of our unique glass cones, and the distinctions between the hot and cold side of the industry. I explain how glass is made, the source of the ingredients and the importance of the canals and associated trades. On to the cold side of the industry we look at the innovations in glass decorating and the skills and fame of local craftsmen including the reproduction of The Portland Vase. This is a fascinating look at how the geology of Stourbridge shaped its history, its wealth and the health and working lives of its people.

Dr Kate Round is an outreach presenter and tour guide for Dudley Museum Service. In the glass industry, her interests include the historical development of the industry in the Stourbridge district, how the geology and geography impacted on the wealth and sociology of the area, driven by the rivalries of our Glass Dynasties. In a previous life, Kate was a research chemist and lecturer so understand the chemistry of glass having worked on the synthesis of 'zeolites' (silica based materials) with her work published in International Journals. Kate has always lived in the Black Country and have a strong industrial family heritage, and also been proud to serve my community as a local Magistrate for twenty years.

20th October 2023  
LIVE AT THE GUILDHALL

Dr Mark Knight

Transforming the Trent Valley Archaeology,  
Incorporating the Investigation at  
Catholme Neolithic Site.

Dr Mark Knight is the Cultural Heritage Officer  
with The Trent Valley Partnership.

A revitalised and treasured landscape of wildlife-rich waterways and wetlands is being made possible thanks to the 'Transforming the Trent Valley' scheme successfully securing a large grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund in December 2018 to deliver a multi-million pound scheme in the Trent Valley across 200km in Staffordshire and Derbyshire.

Transforming the Trent Valley is a partnership project of 18 organisations working together to restore and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the Trent Valley, with Staffordshire Wildlife Trust at the helm.

The lecture will cover all of the above paragraph with the Investigation of the Catholme site being the prominent subject.

3rd November 2023  
LIVE AT THE GUILDHALL

Dr Imogen Peck

The Aftermath of the Civil War in  
Staffordshire

Dr Peck studied for a BA in History and Politics and an MSc in Political Theory at the University of Oxford. After a brief stint working in various charity and media roles she returned to academia to study an MPhil and then a PhD at the University of Bristol. On finishing my PhD in 2018 she was appointed as a Teaching Fellow at the University of Warwick. Dr Peck joined the University of Birmingham in autumn 2022.

Dr Peck is a historian of memory and communities, with research expertise in local and family history, the social history of archives, and the mental afterlife of conflict. She is especially interested in the ways memory and the representation of the past shapes individual and

collective identities, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of non-elite men and women.

**17th November 2023**

**Gillian White**

**BY ZOOM**

**Bess of Hardwick**

Bess of Hardwick is one of the most fascinating women of the sixteenth century and her most famous building, Hardwick Hall in Derbyshire, survives as a fine example of Elizabethan creativity, magnificence and pride. This talk outlines Bess's remarkable life and then will briefly touch on the architecture and contents of Hardwick Hall, surely her lasting monument.

Dr. Gillian White specialises in the history and visual arts of late medieval and sixteenth-century England. She began her career at the Warwickshire Museum and then worked for the National Trust as Curator / Collections Manager at Hardwick Hall, about which she then wrote her PhD at Warwick University. She now teaches art history part-time in the Continuing Education Department at Oxford University, as well as freelance lecturing and teaching. This lecture is the fourth outing for Gillian with the Society.

**1st December 2023**  
**LIVE AT THE GUILDHALL**

**Teresa Gilmore**

**Portable Antiquities Scheme - Staffordshire**

Tonight's lecture will bring the Society up to date with the finds from Staffordshire.

Teresa has been working with finds since I finished degree in 2002. Although on all university excavations, she tended to end up in the Finds Hut as opposed to out in the trenches with everyone else. Once the degree was finished, she started working for Cotswold Archaeology within their finds department. It was during this time, that I gathered all the knowledge about the different types of pottery. After that she started working within the PAS West Midlands. There was a short spell with the Cheshire & Merseyside PAS team followed by a short spell at Wardell

Armstrong before returning to the West Midland PAS team.

Teresa is currently the Finds Liaison Officer (East Staffordshire and North West Midlands) for the Portable Antiquities Scheme/ Birmingham Museums Trust.

**1st March 2024**

**BY ZOOM**

**Matthew Jones**

**Roman Warwick**

Matt Jones has been doing archaeology for nearly 20 years, starting paid archaeological work in the school holidays between terms.

He studied at Cardiff University doing student excavations at Durrington Walls as well as the 'Islands in a common sea' project on the Isles of Scilly.

Matt has worked all over the country: started in Canterbury before stints in Gloucestershire, Chester, Worcester, back to Canterbury, before settling in Cambridgeshire for over 10 years before starting with Archaeology Warwickshire in 2020.

His main interests are Prehistoric and Roman archaeology, with a focus on transitions, such as Bronze Age to Iron Age/ Iron Age to Roman as well as the beginning of monumentality in the UK.

This presentation is centring on Roman Warwick, which, up to this point there has been relatively scant evidence for. Archaeology Warwickshire have excavated two sites within Warwick and a third very close by which all have varying scales of Roman occupation. These sites are: Warwick School (WS17); Europa Way (WE19) and The Asps (BTA21)

At Warwick School a Roman building, likely an aisled barn or similar building, was uncovered along with a series of other structures including corn dryers and a potential tile kiln. The building was also related to a series of ditches and pits with the likelihood that there was an earlier prehistoric phase of occupation. The site was in use between the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries with its floruit between the 1<sup>st</sup> to end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century.

Europa Way was a little less intensive with a series of field boundaries and associated pits identified, these potentially representing an area of communal grazing/pasture for Roman Warwick? The Asps has found some of the first tangible evidence for settlement within the vicinity of Warwick, this consisting of an enclosed Roman settlement. The Roman settlement was associated with a wider agricultural landscape including boundary ditches and pitting with a likely focus of grain production. ( The Asps may not be included as it is dependent on the site owner granting permission).

**15th March 2024**

**Speaker to be confirmed**

**LIVE AT GUILDHALL**

**West Midlands Buildings at Risk**

Synopsis to follow

**29th March 2024**

**Christopher John**

**BY ZOOM**

**Castle Bromwich Airfield**

Christopher John has a long interest in military history particularly WWI in France and Flanders and local sites of interest. He is a badged battlefield guide of the Guild of Battlefield Guides and is vice chair of the Birmingham WFA branch. Chris has led different tours of the WW1 battlefields and has a particular local interest in the history of Castle Bromwich airfield.

The talk looks at the history of Castle Bromwich airfield from its first beginnings as a cradle of early British aviation, through WW1 when it was a major training centre for the RFC and RAF. The talk looks at some local burials of trainee pilots and tells their story. In between wars it developed a civilian role as well as being the home of 605 County of Warwick squadron of the Auxiliary Air Force, to its role in WW2 where it became a powerhouse of Allied aircraft production with the majority of all Spitfires being produced and test

flown from here. A look at the testing programme headed by Alex Henshaw and his team of test pilots. Now a housing estate and retail park the importance of the airfield in two world wars cannot be overstated.

**12th April 2024**

**LIVE AT GUILDHALL**

**Dr. Mathew Morris**

### **The King Under the Leicester Car park**

The search for the last known resting place of King Richard III is the subject of the talk tonight and will cover all aspects of the site project work followed by the scientific analysis and the DNA results.

Mathew has worked for University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) since 2004, excavating a wide range of rural and urban archaeology across the Midlands, from the Prehistoric period through to the Industrial Revolution. He graduated from the University of Leicester in 2003 with a BA in Archaeology and an MA in Landscape Studies. His interests include urban archaeology, community archaeology along with Roman and Medieval archaeology. In his spare time he helps run the Leicester Fieldworkers and the Leicester branch of the Young Archaeologists' Club.

**26th April 2024**

**BY ZOOM**

**Elizabeth Thomson**

### **Brick making in the Black Country/Brickyard Wenches of the Black Country**

Elizabeth has worked for British Waterways and the Canal and River Trust for over two decades on the conservation of its historic estate. She has been involved in several restoration projects including Stourport Basins and more recently the Grade II\* listed Roundhouse in Birmingham. In 2018 she started a part-time PhD on the brick

making industry of the Black Country at the University of Birmingham. The collaborative studentship is funded by the Black Country Living Museum as part of the Forging Ahead development which Elizabeth has worked on as part of the PhD.

Synopsis to follow.

**10th May 2024**

**LIVE AT GUILDHALL**

**Dr. Roger White**

### **The Wem in Shropshire Hoard**

Dr Roger White has presented lectures to the Society on several occasions, the most recent one however was in 2017 and was "*A Clash of Arms: The Romans in the West Midlands*".

This evenings lecture is centred on the Wem Hoard that was discovered in 2018 by metal detectorists with the site-find being excavated by Dr Roger White in 2019. The find is of key importance to Shropshire's history where there is limited evidence of people living within the County during the 5th century.

**24th May 2024**

**BY ZOOM**

**Stuart Pierson**

### **Coleshill Hall, Moats and Gardens: Wealth, Treason, War and Pleasure**

Stuart is a Senior Project Officer at Wessex Archaeology, where he directs fieldwork projects. From 2018 to 2022, Stuart was responsible for directing Wessex Archaeology's major infrastructure project at Coleshill Hall, Warwickshire, where he managed the on-site works of evaluation and mitigation in advance of High Speed 2.

Stuart studied archaeology at University Centre Peterborough and The University of Sheffield, with a focus on landscape and experimental archaeology. He took part in several research excavations including Flag Fen, the Lost City of Trellech Project, and the Sedgeford Historical and Archaeological Research Project.

Between 2018 and 2022, Wessex Archaeology have carried out extensive excavations within the original grounds of Coleshill Hall, between the M6 in the south and the M42 in the north.

Archaeologists discovered a nationally significant site which contained the best-preserved 15th & 16th century gardens ever found in the UK and remains of the Coleshill Hall, moats, and gatehouse.

**7th June 2024**

**LIVE AT GUILDHALL**

**Dr. Katherine Farr**

**You Are What You Eat:**

**How Isotopes Dish the Dirt on Historical Puzzles**

Dr Kate Farr was until recently a Senior Lecturer in the school of Sciences, University of Wolverhampton having there taught for 32 years. Her interests are in the impacts of humans on their environment over the last 10 000 years since the last Ice Age. She has examined cores of mud from many lakes and bogs to examine pollen, algae and other evidence to find out what the environment was like in the past and what humans were doing there. One of the most tricky sites we cored was the bottom of Loch Ness where we used a mini submarine to check all was well, as this is the deepest and probably darkest lake in Britain.

Dr Kate is also interested in the scientific techniques that can be applied to archaeology to learn more about sites and objects. For example, ancient DNA can show us that the Body in the Leicester Car Park was indeed Richard III and stable isotope analysis has shown us that after a very meagre childhood diet he drank an awful lot of wine as monarch! In the lecture she will introduce you to some of our newly discovered ancient ancestors and consider what happened to the Neanderthals and the Beaker People. Kate will show you how new techniques such as Isotope Analysis can reveal so much more about



our ancestors by analysing what we eat after any other remains have decayed away completely.

Hence the title "You Are What You Eat".

Archaeologists are now having to be much more careful about throwing anything away as science has shown that in future there may be a wealth of further information in the most unpromising finds.