

# sca Newsletter

FROM THE SOCIETY FOR CHURCH ARCHAEOLOGY

Summer 2009  
Issue No. 10

## Foreword from the Chair

This year has brought the Society continuing success, with a membership of some 280 individual members and 32 institutional members. This is very good for what is still a relatively new society, especially in a time of financial recession. We realise that the economic climate is difficult for many of our members, so for this year we are not putting up our subscription rate.

Our Editors David and Evelyn Baker have been working hard to catch up on the backlog from the years before they took on the editorship. Volume 11 for 2007 is now at the printers and should be with members by the beginning of August if not before. Work is now underway on volume 12 for (2008), which we hope to publish by the end of the year.

The Society had an extremely enjoyable and enlightening conference on the archaeology of post-medieval religion in Norwich in 2008. This was

held jointly with the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology and attracted delegates from both societies and also a good attendance by local people. We are most grateful to the SPMA, and especially to Chris King from SPMA, for all the hard work that went into making the conference such a success. There is a full report on the conference elsewhere in this Newsletter.

This year's conference will be held in Lincoln from 25th to 27th September on the theme of The church in Lincolnshire from the Romans to the Romanesque, organised by David Stocker. This will give members a rare opportunity to gain access to the concealed passages in the Romanesque West Tower of Lincoln Cathedral. The conference itself is being held in the historic Judges' Lodgings, which should be an extremely interesting experience. We hope to see as many of you there as possible.

Planning is already well underway for next year's conference, which will be held in York, with an excursion into North Yorkshire and a

unique opportunity to visit the English Heritage store at Helmsley. We hope that the conference will focus on the Reformation. The likely dates are 24th to 26th September 2010.

I must end on a sad note. As members will already be aware, the Society's very dedicated Membership Secretary, Mike Davis, passed away earlier this year. Mike was assiduous in his attendance at Committee meetings and conferences and in his attention to detail in dealing with the membership information. Mike, with support from his wife, Vivienne, had set up a new computer system to improve handling of membership details. I attended his funeral, together with the Vice-Chair and the Editors, which was a very moving event that demonstrated the wide range of interests that Mike had and showed how much he will be missed.

*Margaret L Faull*





# obituary

## Michael Clement Jancey Davis (1940–2008)

It was with huge regret that the Society learnt of the premature death of the SCA Membership Secretary, Mike Davis.

Mike was a man of many parts, interested in literature, music, history and the countryside in general. The son of a clergyman, who introduced him to the art of ‘church crawling’ as a child, he became a soldier. For many years he was a volunteer for the Soldiers Sailors, Airmen and Families Association, supporting ex-servicemen and their families in numerous ways, both visiting their homes and bedsides at the Spinal Injuries Unit at Stoke Mandeville hospital.

His archaeological career was wide and varied. He dug at Frilford as part of his Oxford studies, and with the Chess Valley Archaeological & Historical Society, managing to break both wrists and a leg in

his enthusiasm! He was Chairman of both the Fabric Committee and the Friends for Missenden Abbey, Captain of the Tower (bell-ringing) and Chairman of the Inspection Committee of the Buckinghamshire Historic Churches Trust; he was also willing to take on the less attractive jobs like gutter-clearing, despite a fear of heights.

He decided to formalise his considerable archaeological interests with several extramural courses at Oxford, culminating in an MSc in Applied Landscape Archaeology: his dissertation subject being the hilltop churches in the Chilterns, which he completed on a laptop in his hospital bed, valiantly battling with cancer of the liver. His academic contribution included ‘St Radegund’s Abbey – a re-assessment of the Abbey Church’, published in 2006 in *Archaeologia Cantiana*. Volume 11 of *Church Archaeology* contains Mike’s review on a Guide to Norfolk Churches.

Over the years, bit by bit, he followed medieval building tradition by building and

rebuilding his own ‘Saxon’ church, St Pomegranate’s, out of tiny wood blocks, finally drawing up plans for an octagonal west tower which was, alas, never to come to fruition.

Above all, Mike must be remembered as a modest, charming man who had a deep Christian faith, who loved people and was greatly loved in return; these qualities were reflected in his busy life, and the deep affection in which he was held by all whose path he crossed.

*Evelyn Baker*





# society news

## New membership secretary: Sarah Botfield

**M**y name is Sarah Botfield and I have recently taken up the post as Membership Secretary for the Society of Church Archaeology. I graduated in 2007 with an honours degree in Landscape History and Archaeology, the ceremony, very appropriately, being held at Peterborough Cathedral. I say appropriately as several months later I became

employed through an Institute for Archaeologists workplace learning bursary to work on a GIS project at Peterborough Cathedral (Geographical Information Systems) with a team of people, including Cathedral Archaeologist, Dr Jackie Hall.

As my children became more independent, I decided to embark on a career in archaeology, a subject which I have always been extremely passionate about. I have always had an interest in architecture, having worked for many years in a historic house in Northamptonshire. The Cathedral GIS project involved both these areas and I felt extremely lucky to have played an active role within it.

My background involves several years volunteering as Membership Secretary at Flag Fen the Bronze Age site in Peterborough, and it felt natural to progress to an area which I am also becoming increasingly enthusiastic about – churches! My local church became redundant in 1980, a sad occasion as the community lost part of its focus and had to fit

into a slightly different set-up. Our small, tight-knit congregation lost its momentum and people dispersed to churches of their own choice. This appears to have happened in other areas and I am keen to explore how great an impact church redundancy has on a community and on congregation numbers.

I look forward to working as Membership Secretary, to the 2009 SCA conference in Lincoln and to meeting many of you there.

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## Website News

We are still trying to build up our society email list, as a way of expanding and improving the ways in which the society keeps in contact with its members. The email list is the best way to get important announcements, website updates, and other news to you quickly. In the future, we are hoping to offer you the choice of having society mailings delivered in this manner if you would prefer, both for your convenience and to help save paper.

*[cont. on p.9]*



*Sarah Botfield, our new Membership Secretary*





# 2008 conference

## The Archaeology of Post-Medieval Religion

Societies for Post-Medieval Archaeology and Church Archaeology; Norwich, 12-14 September 2008



*And it rained – Members visiting the church of St Mary, Bylaugh, 2008*

The Norwich conference, a collaborative venture between the Society for Church Archaeology and the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology, was intended to follow on, chronologically and thematically, from the Society of Post-Medieval Archaeology's successful Archaeology of Reformation conference in 2001. It would extend the focus on religious buildings, landscapes and mortuary archaeology into the later post-medieval period. Over 70 delegates attended, including a large number who were employed in various fields of heritage management and ecclesiastical preservation and management, providing a welcome opportunity to present the work of both Societies to a wide audience of interested parties and professional alike.

The conference was organised by Chris King, of the University of Lister, and he decided that a good reason to focus on Norwich this year was the opportunity to support the academic papers with extensive visits and tours within England's early modern 'second city'. Norwich, as well as

Norfolk as a whole, is famous for its medieval cathedral and churches. Not everyone realises their magnificent legacy of post-medieval churches and monuments and nonconformist places of worship and so this event proved the perfect opportunity to promote that understanding.

Unfortunately the weather was not in our favour on the first day of the conference. Despite this Nick Groves led a small coach tour of Norfolk churches and chapels, favouring the little-known and sometimes eccentric buildings of the 18th and 19th centuries. Meanwhile Ian White led a city tour of Norwich's nonconformist heritage, including the magnificent Old Meeting and Octagon chapels. Delegates were welcomed back to our comfortable venue at the Maids Head Hotel, one of the oldest inns in the heart of the city, with a wine reception and evening meal providing plenty of chances for members of each Society to introduce themselves to one-another.

Papers presented over the next two days were as wide-ranging





as such a broad subject area demands. On Saturday morning we heard lectures on many different aspects of on-going religious change and controversy in later 16th- and 17th-century Britain and Europe. These included John Mabbitt on architectural differences between 'Puritan' and 'High Church' Anglicanism in 17th-century England; Philippa Woodcock on iconoclasm and rebuilding of churches in the French Wars of Religion; Matthias Range on the development of Lutheran church fittings in Schleswig; and Margit Thoenner on the impact of Danish Lutheranism on the development of the Jacobean church, positing James I's Queen Anne of Denmark as an important influence on styles of worship at court. Paul Belford presented research which suggests the ongoing influence of Catholic recusant families on the industrial development of the Ironbridge Gorge, refuting any easy association of this with a 'Protestant work ethic', and Simon Roffey successfully extended his research on late medieval chantry chapels to critically assess the reintroduction of private burial chap-



*The Society as Congregation at Outlon Chapel, 2008*

els in the 19th-century church and their possible relationship to the Anglo-Catholic movement. All contributions clearly demonstrated the ongoing importance of archaeological study of religious buildings and material culture to understand the complexity of religious identities and practices in the post-Reformation world.

Papers on the second half of the day widened the focus to include discussion of the archaeology of those outside the established church, including papers on nonconformist immigrant communities by Grieg Parker and myself; Peter Benes on the development of Puritan religious architecture in New England between the 17th and early 19th centuries; and a series of papers presenting important new research on 18th- and 19th-century nonconformist buildings

in different regions the UK, by Harold Mytum, Claire Strachan, Jeremy Lake and Matthew Butler. The day was concluded by an impressive keynote lecture by Andrew Spicer on the subject of changing religious architecture and the re-drawing of ecclesiastical landscapes in post-Reformation Scotland. All of these papers shared a concern with the need to consider wider 'landscapes of nonconformity', in which buildings and objects were embedded and through which religious identities were actively shaped and negotiated.

The focus on Sunday 14th shifted from landscapes of the living to landscapes of the dead. The archaeology of post-medieval cemeteries and burial practice has seen a real flourishing in recent years, with the publication of several important sites, and these







*Members scrutinising the alabaster Suckling Memorial in St Andrew's Church, Norwich (1613) in 2008*

papers were at the forefront of this wider trend. We heard reviews of new and unpublished cemetery excavations in London (Natasha Powers), Norwich (Rachel Clarke) and Sheffield (Diana Mahoney-Swales and Richard O'Neill). These highlighted the wide range of evidence available through post-medieval cemetery excavations, including the osteoarchaeological analysis of skeletal populations, and insights into religious and social differences in the past.

Another way of considering burial was presented by Rosie Morriss in her analysis of the traditional folk practice of the use of funerary garlands. The distinctive burial practices of nonconformist communities of different forms was an important theme, picked up in Annia Cherryson's review of Protestant nonconformist burial between the 17th and 19th centuries, and Barney Sloane's engaging presentation of a population who were 'nonconformist' in another way, the

rediscovery of the forgotten cemetery of Newgate Gaol in London.

Final comments were provided by David Gaimster, who highlighted the importance of this relatively new area of post-medieval archaeology. And as formal proceedings drew to a close, the warm September sun shone as many delegates took the opportunity for another walking tour expertly led by Brian Ayers, allowing them to see this 'fine city' at its very best.

The Society of Church Archaeology would like to extend its thanks to its members for attending this successful event specially those who participated in thought-provoking debate and discussion throughout the weekend. The conference proceedings will be published as an SPMA monograph co-edited by Chris King and Duncan Sayer, which we both hope it will stimulate the development of new research agendas for the archaeological study of post-medieval religion for many years to come.

*Duncan Sayer and Chris King*





# article

## Request to re-bury important Prehistoric remains: The response of the Society of Church Archaeology

In 2006 the Council of British Druid Orders requested the reburial of prehistoric human remains in the Alexander Keiller Museum, Avebury, Wiltshire. A consultation was posted jointly by English Heritage and the National Trust who hold these remains in the Museum for research purposes. In January 2009 the Society for Church Archaeology responded to this consultation on the sensitive question of reburial. It was felt that, although the Society's remit is mainly places of worship and associated monuments, the question of reburial of pre-Christian human remains raises wider issues that may affect all stored human remains and future archaeological investigation; our remit is to cover all faiths and denominations.

We believe that the archaeological and spiritual communities are at present only part way through the debate on a subject that presents complex issues; so that it would be premature to agree to the Druid Orders' request until the question had been debated by all religious and spiritual groups currently represented in the British Isles and Europe. Indeed, both early and more recent Christian practices derive from pre-Christian (or pagan) traditions: the days of the week, religious holidays and many of the physical attributes of rituals. While it is not the Society's place to question the validity of the Neo-Pagan interest, we must stress that we are of the opinion that these remains are as important to the rest of society as they are to the individuals who made the request. English Heritage and the Church of England have recently compiled a document detailing best practice for the treatment of Christian remains. It was the view of the Society that this example should be met by the production of an industry-wide guidance for best practice for the treatment of our pre-Chris-

tian and Christian ancestors alike.

The consultation was responded to by hundreds of archaeological and religious groups, and it was agreed that Council of British Druid Orders is an organization which represents some, but by no means all, Pagan groups, and that there is no reason to believe that the genetic relationship of its members with these human remains is any closer than the relationship of most of the present population of Western Europe. The redrafting of a new document that covers Christian and Pre-Christian remains is under consideration. More information is available on the English Heritage Website at: <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.19822>

*Duncan Sayer*





# research

## The Society of Church Archaeology Research Grant

In 2008 we advertised what it is hoped will become a regular annual feature of the Society for Church Archaeology: an Annual Research Grant. Application were to be made by the 31st January 2009 for a grant of £1000 and was open to Members of the Society with an interest in conducting field work and research in any aspect of church archaeology or its related topics. To encourage a wide spectrum of research and applications we decided to keep the field as open as possible and invited commercial archaeologists, researchers, research students and amateurs alike to submit proposals.

As we had hoped, the advertisement was a success and we had a number of strong applications from these four categories. Selecting one project to award this research grant proved to be impossible, so It was decided to award two

grants this year, based on the strength of the application and the potential for their research to lead on into further work that promotes the study of church archaeology. The committee selected one researcher and one PhD student to receive the grant and we look forward to reporting more about their research in future.

The successful candidates were Dr David Petts, University of Durham and Kimberly Thounhurst, Bangor University. Summaries of the successful projects are below:

### Kimberly Thounhurst

The central research concern of the project is to define the nature and extent of the cross sculpture tradition in south-east Ireland during the early medieval period (c AD400-1200), and to use this information to illuminate the nature of the sites on which the sculpture was recorded.

Unlike many sculpture studies which focus on iconography or epigraphy, this project will use the sculpture primarily as a source of archaeological

evidence to study the early Irish Church and its signature on the landscape. Emphasis will be placed on augmenting knowledge of monumental cross sculpture by assembling the corpus of minor sculpture in the study area. Minor sculpture is a neglected source in archaeological inquiry; this project will help maximise its value by studying it in the context of monumental sculpture and other monuments.

The main aim of the study will be to better understand the nature and function of both the sculpture and the sites -- and how the role of both may have changed over time. It is hoped that this approach will generate new insights into the organisation and evolution of the early Irish Church and its interactions with secular society.

### Dr David Petts

This project aims to map the evidence for early Christianity (AD400-1200) in Western Normandy using archaeological and architectural evidence to supplement the sparse documentary material, with a view to developing a better under-







# web

[cont. from p.3]

standing of the development of the Church in this understudied region. The Cotentin peninsula was a border region throughout the early medieval period and the early church was strongly influenced by missionary activity from both Brittany and Ireland; for example, the monastery at Orval was founded by Columbanus.

Existing investigations into the early churches of Normandy have generally focused on high-status and elaborate structures, particularly within the Norman heartland, and there has been virtually no research into the survival of early fabric in the parish churches. This project is the first phase of what will be a larger research programme to assess the following questions which will develop of better picture of church buildings in this important area:

- i) How much evidence is there for Merovingian religious activity on later church sites?
- ii) How was this activity structured? Was it centralised and limited to a small number of monastic sites or is ecclesi-

astical provision more decentralised?

iii) Can this be used to assess the extent to which Viking settlements really disrupted ecclesiastical activity in the region?

iv) To what extent does Romanesque and pre-Romanesque fabric survive in existing church structures?

v) How can this evidence be used to understand the development of the ecclesiastical organisation in the region following its integration into the Duchy of Normandy in the 11th century?

vi) To what extent can archaeology be used to explore the development of the church in an area with limited contemporary documentary evidence?

*Duncan Sayer*

The list will not be used heavily, so you do not need to worry about us overloading your inboxes, and you can also control subscribing to it and unsubscribing from it yourself. To sign up for the list, go to <http://www.britarch.ac.uk/socchurcharchaeol> and enter your email address in the SUBSCRIBE box on the front page. You will get a confirmation email from Google Groups immediately afterwards, and you will need to click on the link in that email to confirm your subscription.

We are also trying to gather members' email addresses for the society records, so we can keep in contact with you better. If you've never given SCA your email address, or you have changed it since you last gave it to us, please drop a line to Sarah Botfield, our Membership Secretary, at [Sarahjaynebr7@aol.com](mailto:Sarahjaynebr7@aol.com). Please also remember to let us know your email address each year when you renew your membership, even if you have told us before, so we can keep our records up-to-date.

*Aleksandra McClain*





# 2009 conf.

# events

## The Church in Lincolnshire from the Romans to the Romanesque

SCA Conference  
September 25–27 2009

Lincoln has twice been one of Britain's premier urban centres: during the Roman period and between the 10th and 13th centuries. This year's SCA conference aims to consider results from church archaeology during these two periods and explores links between them.

Conference Fee (coffee, tea and buffet Saturday lunch, plus wine receptions) £35.00  
Conference Dinner (Saturday Night) £25.00  
Sunday coach tour (including lunch) £20.00  
Student Member Discount

Contact SCA Lincoln Conference c/o David Stocker  
Manor Farm House  
Main Street  
Thorpe on the Hill  
Lincolnshire  
LN6 9BG

*Below: Lincoln Cathedral, photograph by kind permission of Brian Ledgard.*



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## Canons, Clergy and Churchmen: The Monumental Brass Society Conference 2009

4–6 September 2009  
Sarum College, Salisbury  
<http://www.mbs-brasses.co.uk/page439.html>

The conference will include eleven papers by leading scholars on monumental brasses as well as members of the Monumental Brass Society. There will also be visits to a number of city churches, and a tour of Salisbury Cathedral led by the architectural historian Tim Tatton-Brown.

## St Wilfrid 1300th Anniversary Conference

10–11 September 2009  
St William's College, York  
<http://www.yorkarchaeology.co.uk/involved/stwilfrid.htm>

This conference, organized by the York Archaeological Trust, will include papers by Professor Richard Bailey, Paul Bidwell, Eric Cambridge, Professor Thomas Charles-Edwards, Dr Katy Cubitt,

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Dr Richard Hall, Dr Jane Hawkes, Professor Éamonn Ó Carragáin, Professor Alan Thacker, and Professor Ian Wood. The conference will be followed on Saturday 12th September by a coach excursion to Wilfrid's foundations at Ripon and Hexham, and also to Escomb church.

## Church Towers

3 October 2009, London  
<http://www.ecclsoc.org/>

The Ecclesiological Society's annual conference will be on the theme of church towers. Further details to follow on the society website.

## Church Monuments Excursion: Northwest Norfolk

18 July 2009  
<http://www.churchmonumentsociety.org/news.html>

Starting from Kings Cross Station or Downham Market, Norfolk, the excursion will visit the churches of Narborough, West Acre, Swaffham West Dereham, and Stowe Bardolph.

## Norman and Early English Architecture at Deerhurst: 2009 Deerhurst Lecture

12 September 2009  
 Deerhurst Church  
[http://www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk/lectures\\_and\\_events.htm](http://www.deerhurstfriends.co.uk/lectures_and_events.htm)

The speaker will be Malcolm Thurlby. Tickets can be purchased in advance from information on the above website, or on the door.

## Sacred Britain –The Midlands Experience

4 November 2009  
 Bluecoat School, Coventry  
<http://www.churchestourismassociation.info/>

The annual convention of the Churches Tourism Association will feature case studies, workshops, and speakers all aimed at highlighting best practice, new ideas, and the latest research on improving and innovating church tourism. It will be of interest to all who are involved in making churches more accessible and welcoming to visitors.

## Buildings for worship in Britain: Celtic and Anglo-Saxon

8-10 January 2010  
 Rewley House, Oxford  
<http://www.ecclsoc.org/>

A weekend course exploring the nature of early medieval Christian sites and buildings in Britain. Starting with the evidence for Christianity in Roman Britain, speakers will explore the setting of worship in both Celtic and Anglo-Saxon worship of the British Isles from the sixth to the tenth centuries. Speakers include Barbara Yorke, Martin Henig, Sarah Semple, Sam Turner, Tomás O'Carragáin, Sally Foster, Nancy Edwards, and Gabor Thomas.





# article

## Peterborough Cathedral Historic Precincts Research Survey and GIS

This project has now been running for over a year. With generous support from English Heritage, the IfA bursary scheme, Peterborough Cathedral, the Church Commissioners, the Anthony Mellow Memorial Trust and the Marc Fitch Fund, the Cathedral and City Council have been creating a Geographical Information System for the historic precincts.

This started with a new physical survey of the precincts, with the help of Oxford Archaeology, the other partner in the project. This is a wonderful starting point both for locating archaeological discoveries, and for more detailed building surveys. It is also the base plan for the GIS which gathers together archaeological, documentary and visual information (see fig) in the

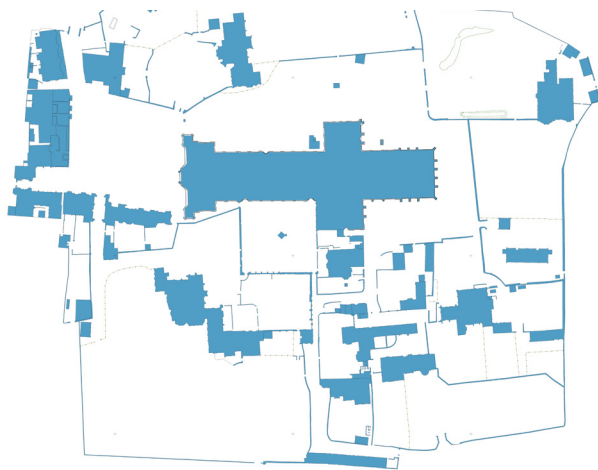
form of Historic Environment Records and in a new image and documents database, both accessible separately or via the map.

By gathering together old and new information, and by carefully analysing archives such as the Chapter Architectural Plans (held at Northamptonshire Record Office) and Commonwealth and Restoration papers (held at Cambridge University Library), for information relating to particular buildings and spaces, new interpretations are beginning to emerge. This is vital not just

for the development of new understandings of the Anglo-Saxon abbey, the post-Conquest medieval abbey and the cathedral founded in 1541, but also for the proper management of this nationally important ecclesiastical landscape.

We are aiming to make the databases available to the public in the autumn and to publish some of the emerging interpretations in the coming years.

*Jackie Hall (Peterborough Cathedral Archaeologist) and GIS Team*



*Detail of the base plan of the historic precincts of Peterborough Cathedral, created using a Geographical Information System*

