



ANNUAL
REVIEW

2022/23

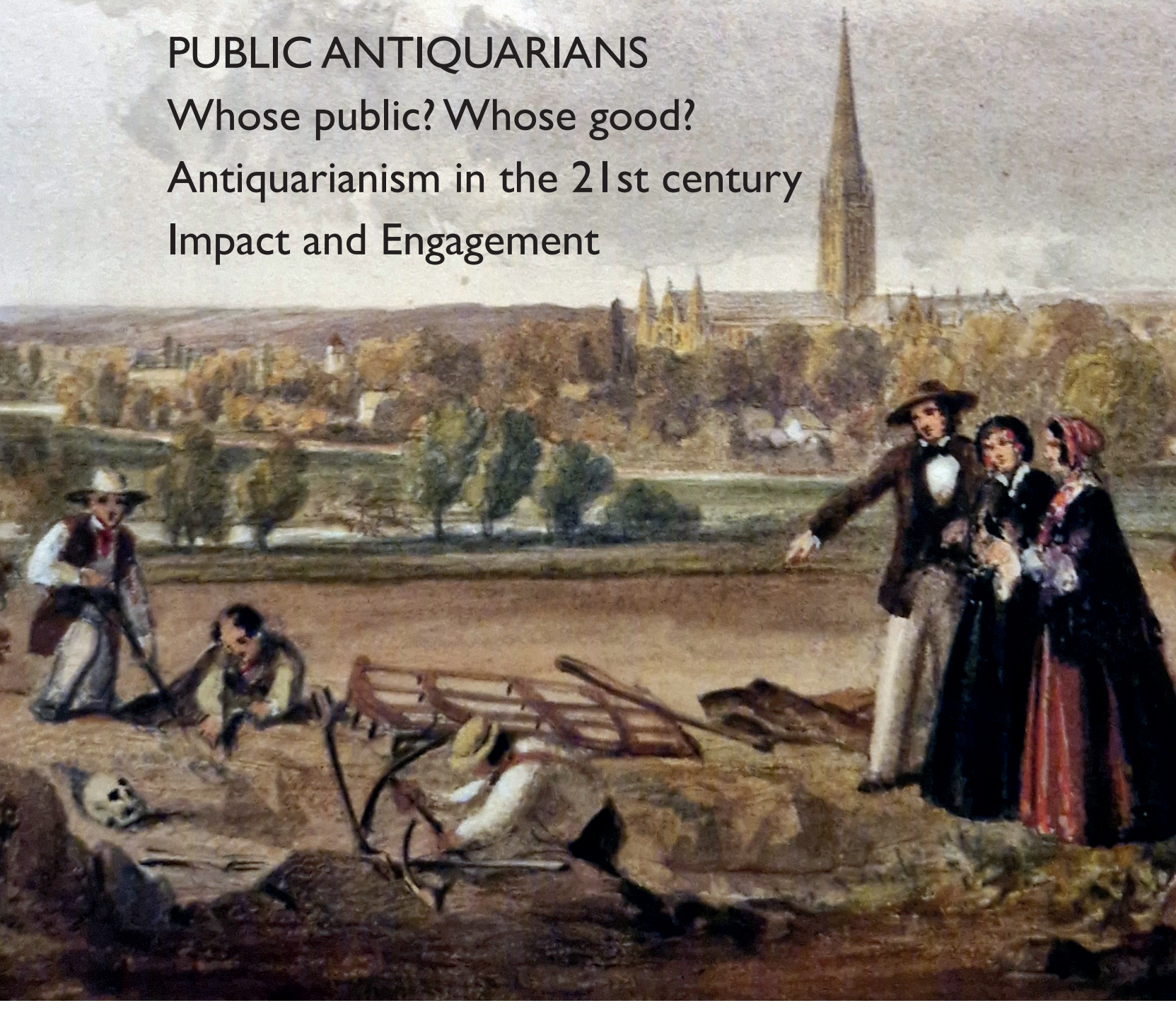
The Antiquary

PUBLIC ANTIQUARIANS

Whose public? Whose good?

Antiquarianism in the 21st century

Impact and Engagement



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ANTIQUARIES AND THE PUBLIC TODAY

The Fellowship comprises leading experts from across a range of disciplines, who have the knowledge to advance deeper understanding of the material past for everyone. In this year's issue guest editor Simon Kaner FSA discusses the power of the material past and the role of antiquarianism in the 21st century.

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Cover image: The 'Low Field', East Harnham, looking towards Salisbury, Old Sarum in the distance. SAL Wiltshire Red Portfolio I, p. 7

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The Society of Antiquaries of London (founded in 1707) is an independent learned society whose main purpose is the 'encouragement, advancement and furtherance of the study and knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other countries' (Royal Charter, 1751). With the support of more than 3,000 Fellows distinguished in various heritage disciplines, we pursue conservation, research and dissemination of knowledge of the material past through our Library and Museum collections at Burlington House (London) and Kelmscott Manor (Oxfordshire) as well as our grants, lectures and seminars and publications.



Books in Russian language being taken away to be pulped/recycled in Kyiv, Ukraine, February 2023. Photograph: Jack Hill, courtesy © Times newspapers

WELCOME

The past has been very much in the public eye in 2022. First the Jubilee and then the funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II cast minds backwards over a reign that witnessed so many global and national changes. In a different way the war in Ukraine forced many to re-evaluate the European past, with alternative histories being presented to justify political agendas in the present. Even the other big issue of 2022 — global warming — was framed within an historical continuum, typically illustrated with graphs and charts showing the cumulative and devastating effects over time of industrialisation, deforestation, and power generation.

Material culture was forefront in many of these events, whether in the rituals of royal ceremony, in the destruction of cultural property through warfare, or the loss of habitats and ways of life through environmental changes. No

better reason then, to focus in this first edition of our new SAL magazine on the subjects of the public understanding of the past, and the role of antiquarianism in the 21st century. What you hold in your hands is a new version of our Annual Review: *The Antiquary*. A new title and a new look aimed at welcoming in new audiences. 2022 saw the launch of a new SAL Affiliates Scheme, opening up membership to anyone with a keen interest in the past. *The Antiquary* also introduces new voices including this issue's guest editor Simon Kaner FSA, new sections showcasing the diversity of activities taking place at SAL, and a bit of fun. Don't panic: it still provides you with our year in focus, but now with a facelift — and let's be honest, who doesn't like a new look every now and then?

Shant

PUBLIC ANTIQUARI



Simon Kaner FSA reflects on what makes a public antiquary in the 21st century

The tallest building in Japan is the Tokyo Skytree, and I am sitting 450 metres up in the café overlooking one of the world’s great megapolises, seemingly a world away from Burlington House, ruminating on what makes a public antiquary, and wondering what Peter Le Neve (1st President of the Society – *fear not, I had to look him up too*) and his ilk would have thought of all this. Edo (the early modern name for Tokyo) had only been the de facto capital of a newly reunited Japan for a century or so when the Society was formed in 1707, but Japan already had a thriving network of antiquarians (*I would add Suzuki Hiroyuki’s excellent recent treatment of this and what happened when it*



The Tokyo Skytree, now apparently a major spiritual centre in Japan, from safely on ground level. The Skytree Archives exhibit proving that antiquaries never miss an opportunity to promote and enjoy archival research. *Photographs: Simon Kaner*



MA students from Kingston School of Art join SAL collections staff to plan future open house events

encountered its western counterparts, to any decent antiquary's book heap). And at that stage of course the Society was only concerned with British antiquities (*I should declare at this point that I was specifically asked to add a global lustre*).

The Skytree was only opened in 2012, but (*according to the leaflet I am reading*) is 'one of today's leading spiritual sites ... located on the ley line that connects Mount Fuji [*sadly lost in the haze today*], Meiji Shrine, the Imperial Palace and Kashima jingu grand shrine'. (*Note to self – look into Japanese ley lines – who knew?*). It is what is known in Japan as a 'power spot' (pronounced locally as *pawa spotto*), 'a spot where positive energy comes in'. I was impressed as I stood in the queue with visitors from around the world by an exhibition designed to take our mind off waiting which celebrated the history of this place as the *Skytree Archives*.

Reading the interview with the outstanding public antiquaries in this inaugural issue (*even at the time of writing this the title is still under discussion, testament to the importance of branding even to Antiquaries*), it is impossible not to be struck by the abundance of 'positive energy' that characterises the modern antiquarian. And the annual

Does fully engaging with 'the public' undermine the authority of professionals and challenge their professional identity? Where would a public antiquarian want to situate themselves in the future? How about: fully entangled in a fluid web of co-produced authority.

reporting that follows demonstrates how effectively the Society of Antiquaries of London is stoking that energy.

Before ascending to my current perch, I chatted with Dr Akira Matsuda FSA at the Department of Cultural Resource Studies at the University of Tokyo, Japan's premier centre of higher education. He told me how he had just participated in a conference that included a lot of self-identifying 'public' academics: historians, anthropologists, sociologists and more. Akira himself (you might have heard him speak at the recent SAL conference on the *Future of Archaeology in England*) is a specialist in 'public archaeology' [*paburikku*

aakeoroji], involved in projects across Japan as well as in Italy. Google ‘public history’ and you will find it thriving globally, from Beijing to Delhi to Paris to Washington DC and all points between. It’s got its own International Federation.

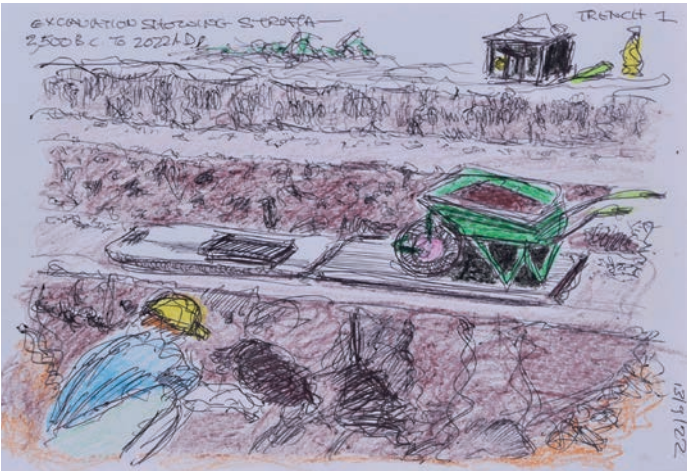
As John Hines FSA powerfully reminded us at the recent and in large measure distressing workshop on the impact of the war in Ukraine on museums and heritage there, we have a duty to inform ourselves – a duty that the Society works tirelessly to promote to broad audiences, and perhaps especially relevant in these times of fake news and intellectual turpitude in the public sphere. Geoff Cubitt, Reader in Modern History at the University of York who works extensively on public history and memory studies generously helped me inform myself about the history of public history. Of course it all started with an acknowledgement of the significance of doing history beyond the academe. Thomas Couvin’s *Introduction to Public History* is a good starting point, and then listen to Dr Julia Laite from Birkbeck. Where is ‘the field’ now? Antiquarians in British academe are all too aware of the significance of demonstrating impact, but does fully engaging with ‘the public’ undermine the authority of professionals and challenge their professional identity? Where would a public antiquarian want to situate themselves in the future? How about: fully entangled in a fluid web of co-produced authority.

My first excavation in Japan was led by Marxist-inspired archaeologist Yoshiro Kondo of Okayama University. Aside from translating V. Gordon Childe into Japanese, one of his major contributions was digging the 5th century AD Tsukinowa burial mound. A film made at the time (remastered for the World Archaeological Congress in Osaka in 2006) proudly sloganeered how the team involved (at this time Japan was reinventing itself as a ‘cultural nation’) were interested in recreating the lives of the people involved in building the great tomb rather than the life of the elite interred within. The dig was accompanied by a visionary programme of public community engagement and education – a tradition that continues in many guises throughout Japan (and indeed elsewhere), not least in the ‘Cultural Heritage Rescue’ campaign that followed the devastating triple disaster of March 2011, when communities were again having to reinvent themselves.

The Society of Antiquaries is currently supporting the Later Norfolk Prehistory Project, which is engaging with the public in many ways to re-interpret the county’s archaeology for the 21st century. Wellbeing, education and setting our local past in a global context are at the core of what we are doing. This and so many other excellent projects are demonstrating how what antiquaries of all varieties do makes us feel better. And at this time of desperate precarity and uncertainty, surely sharing that ‘positive energy’ as widely as possible is a noble cause. Perhaps we should declare Burlington House a *pawa spotto* [Are we on any ley lines ...?]

References:

- Couvin, Thomas 2016 (2nd Ed.) *Public history: a textbook of practice*. London, Routledge
- Suzuki, Hiroyuki 2022 (translated by Maki Fukuoka). *Antiquarians of nineteenth century Japan. The archaeology of things in the late Tokugawa and early Meiji Periods*. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute



Images of the Later Prehistoric Norfolk Project: (top) painting of excavation of the inner ditch at Arminghall Henge by Rob Fairclough (Restoration Trust); (centre and bottom) the re-excavation of Post Hole 3 at Arminghall Henge by volunteers. Post Hole 3 was originally dug by Graham Clark FSA in 1935.

CONVERSATIONS WITH FELLOWS

The Fellowship comprises experts from fields ranging from archaeology to heritage, architecture, and history. Today a greater emphasis is being placed on involving the public in research and sharing the benefits of research beyond academia than ever before. **Simon Kaner** talked to **Brenna Hassett** and **Richard Osgood** about their experiences of engaging with this vital work.



Undoubtedly one of the great archaeologists, Dame Kathleen Mary Kenyon DBE, FBA, FSA (1906–78) is among the many women in the 'digging' sciences — archaeology, geology, and palaeontology — whose contribution is highlighted by TrowelBlazers.com.

Simon Kaner (SAL): Tell us how you first got involved in public archaeology:

Brenna Hassett (BH): I was conscious that archaeologists could do a better job of telling and sharing the history of archaeology itself, especially the important, though overlooked, role of women. I mean, most people have heard of [Flinders] Petrie or Heinrich Schliemann but it's harder to recall the names of influential women. I remember when I was a PhD student, my professors told a great story about Dame Kathleen Kenyon terrifying the more nervous undergraduates with all her yappy dogs — but she's a woman recognised by fellow academic archaeologists but pretty much unknown to an interested public. Archaeology is, ultimately, about people and I want these great stories to be shared openly. In the current narratives, there's a dearth of particular types of archaeologists: women, notably, but also non-English or Western people: all sorts of stories have been forgotten. Trowelblazers is about connecting all kinds of people and sharing all these stories. I see it as a quest to reset our imaginations on who has done — and who can do — archaeology, who it's for.

Richard Osgood (RO): I was involved in setting up Operation Nightingale as part of a well-being initiative to help military veterans. One of the soldiers from The Rifles Regiment had been hit by a mortar and was about to be medically discharged. He was a career soldier and saw himself as having no future. One of the things that kept him going was watching Time Team on the TV. We established Operation Nightingale with him and some other servicemen, and that's why it's so important that we make it as accessible as possible. Since then, the project has grown so much, and quite a few of our participants have gone on to study Archaeology at university. Others have found that the practical



experience of fieldwork has led them into enjoying museums and other cultural heritage sites more than they had done formerly. The point is that our project is for everyone, with no prior knowledge necessary.

SAL: How important has social media been in the success of your public projects?

BH: Digital and social media has been critical for all kinds of scientific communication and making it more open for the public. In terms of Trowelblazers, our whole community is digital — we're essentially a community-sourced archive. We collect stories from anyone and everyone including former students and family members who might remember being on a dig when they were children. As well as creating this shared community space, social media has enabled us to take on an activist role: we can use the platform to raise our voices on certain issues. No-one is going to know about things aimed at a popular audience unless it's being talked about on social media.

RO: I agree, social media is a useful tool to get things out there. Facebook is good for dig reports, site instructions and so on; Twitter helps keep topics live using hashtags; Instagram is great for images. All of these are partly for participants on a particular dig but also build wider awareness within and across communities. This was especially the case during lockdown where all our activities became digital. Keeping a community like this together was helpful to so many people who would



Veterans and archaeologists from Wessex Archaeology and Operation Nightingale working on MoD land close to Netheravon, Wiltshire in 2021.

otherwise have been isolated. We encouraged people to do local research in their areas, and we also sent out calls for information. For example, we had found a toy monkey left behind at a former US airbase and this prompted all kind of stories and artefacts including paratrooper badges from E Company [the subject of the book and TV series *Band of Brothers*].

SAL: With these kinds of public archaeology projects, to what extent might the research get taken into areas with which you're uncomfortable?

BH: Some stories are easier to find than others. Most of those we get about women in archaeology are those of English-speaking, relatively wealthy white women. For

We're always doing purposeful archaeology: finding artefacts, telling engaging stories.

all kinds of social and economic reasons, these are the stories that are most easily accessible. We have tried to direct people's attention to find stories about people

that are more hidden or difficult to excavate. This takes more thought than we had originally planned for.

RO: In some ways, the military is lucky since it is already a diverse operation with a good mix of male and female, as well as various nationalities and ethnicities. We work with the Army diversity groups such as the Sikh group, the Rastafarian group and so on. We largely let them get on with things in research terms and may steer them a little. One thing we have done is to help with the interpretation of finds: for example, a military veteran finding a seax [a small one-sided sword] will tend to jump to the conclusion that it's a weapon, when it could actually be a weaving tool!

SAL: Where do you find the inspiration for your projects?

RO: Our guiding principal is to do no harm. That said, we're always doing purposeful archaeology: finding artefacts, telling engaging stories. Things don't have to be hundreds or thousands of years old: a crashed spitfire, for example, has made a fantastic project.

SAL: What about funding? And how do you keep the momentum going?

RO: It's really tricky and funding is a big challenge. When we first started there was more charitable funding going, especially with the military being in Afghanistan and Iraq. We have some MoD money because of the veteran wellbeing component, and we try to keep our costs to the minimum, such as camping on site. But



An excavation to find evidence of a Bronze Age roundhouse and dwellings at Dunch Hill on Salisbury Plain. Photograph: courtesy of Harvey Mills ARPS.

funding is always at the forefront of my mind. There's a philanthropic component – and begging!

BH: I agree, we get hugely invested but there isn't a standard stream of funding, it all gets pieced together from bits and pieces from different sources and we always struggle to sustain it. We join up, where possible with like-minded organisations such as the CiFA Equality group, English Heritage and so on. Public archaeology is one of those things where there's a huge amount of interest and pressure to be public-facing, and it's incredibly rewarding – but it's also immensely difficult without support, including financial.

RO: It can also be challenging to keep the momentum going all year round. The digging season of roughly May to October is fine but we have to find other things to do in the rest of the year. So much of this is personality driven, you just need people to keep things going.

BH: Yes, there are four of us in Trowelblazers which allows some balance in the demands but losing even one person makes everything difficult.

SAL: If you could commission a new TV series on any aspect of the past, what would it be about?

RO: I'd bring together all those programmes like Spring Watch, Countryfile and nature programmes into something unified about landscapes. Especially after lockdown, we all need more outdoor stuff.

BH: I always want to see the hidden histories of the

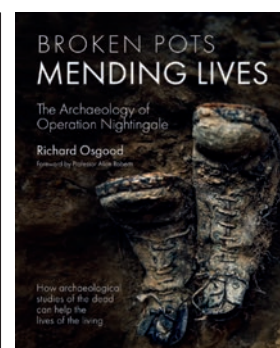
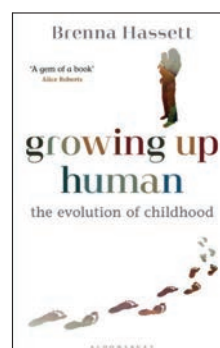
people doing the digging. But knowing my sense of humour, it would be more like Digging for Britain... the Black Adder version!

SAL: Finally, what are you proudest of from your projects?

BH: I'm pleased to have all the usual academic outcomes of books and so on, but I'm proudest of the Trowelblazers doll. She's not Barbie-shaped and is a fossil-hunter. When she was being designed I got to tell the doll manufacturer to put more pockets in her jacket!

RO: My proudest moment was receiving a note from one of our participants which told me that I probably wouldn't know this but that Operation Nightingale had stopped him committing suicide.

Brenna and Richard's latest books are available now!



KELMSCOTT MANOR

After 31 months of construction work Kelmscott Manor reopened to visitors on 1 April 2022. Curator **Kathy Haslam** describes how the project delivers a new vision for the visitor experience.

‘The house truly lives again, both as a pleasing country home and as a memorial to [William] Morris.’ So wrote architect Donald Insall in 1970, three years after SAL’s first project to repair and re-present Kelmscott Manor had been completed.

Over fifty years down the line the Society undertook to repeat the venture, though with the aim of moving beyond the rather anodyne ‘country home and memorial’ paradigm by developing a more ambitious and challenging vision with much-broadened appeal. William Morris FSA still stands centre stage, but this is Morris as a prism through whose brilliant polymathic legacy SAL can explore and share the inspirational impact of this emphatically atmospheric place on the man, his ideas and his work. And, equally importantly, place Morris in the continuum of Kelmscott’s history by both looking back beyond him to its deeper past and celebrating the unique qualities of this precious

CARP community archaeology test pitting with members of North Wiltshire Young Archaeologists’ Club.



pupils to print-making for dementia sufferers; from partnerships with community archaeology and arts organizations to sensory tours for the visually impaired and a plethora of self-led activities every Open Day.

The stripping away of museological and institutional elements as part of the *Kelmscott and Morris: Past, Present and Future* project achieved a renewed emphasis on the homelike qualities of the Manor’s period spaces:



Learning & Outreach Officer Hannah Britton with Key Stage 1 pupils in the Learning Barn

place within the context of resonant contemporary concerns, from biodiversity management to mental wellbeing. It is a site for intellectual, creative and imaginative engagement, and visitors seem to appreciate the change: ‘Amazing transformation since last visit’.

In the early years of SAL’s ownership, public access to the Manor was occasional — six days per annum or by appointment — and the visitors largely ‘pilgrims’. Now, the site reflects Morris’s open-armed inclusivity: ‘I do not want art for a few, any more than education for a few or beauty for a few’, and welcomes visitors (27,000 in 2022) four days a week between April and October, with a year-round learning and outreach programme. The Kelmscott Manor team is determinedly building its appeal and accessibility to a wider base of audiences and fashioning a richer experiential offer, much of it informed and inspired by the values and ethos of Morris. From nature-based learning sessions for primary school

PUBLIC ANTIQUARI



The Green Room fireplace with its reinstated overmantel, designed by Philip Webb (1831–1915).

integrity of materiality, decorative coherence and through these, ambience, have been reclaimed. The disposition of furnishings and objects is comprehensively evidence-based, guided to a notable degree by the ghostly curatorial hand of Morris’s younger daughter, May, who made provision for the Manor’s future in her Will. Integral to visitors’ engagement with the ‘new’ Manor is its interpretation, now thematic, and incorporating child-friendly elements in most of the rooms, whilst object information, hidden narratives and broader context are shared with visitors by the Manor’s other team-members, its dedicated volunteers.

When visitors come to Kelmscott Manor today they discover and share in a small yet powerful place, where every

aspect is impactful: history, beauty, nature. All coalesce into an enriched, and enriching, visitor experience. The Manor stands, rooted in its landscape and community as it has for so many years, as ready now as it was in 1871, when William Morris first saw it, to enthrall and delight; it is an exemplar, in his words, of ‘the power of making the past part of the present.’

LIBRARY & COLLECTIONS

Chiara Betti is researching the Society's printing plates. Her work is uncovering some of the unpublished public histories hidden in the SAL archives.

The wonderful collections preserved by SAL are studied and used daily by Fellows. However, not many are aware of the valuable collection of printing plates at Burlington House. Since September 2022, new attention has been dedicated to the plates. As part of a career development activity for my PhD, I have been cataloguing and researching some 160 printing plates in order to make them available to browse on SAL's website.

The plates can be grouped into three categories: those commissioned by the Society to George Vertue in the early eighteenth century, William Fowler's plates of stained glass and pavements (c 1800–32), and Thomas Streatfeild's plates (c 1800–48).

The Streatfeild plates have been an exciting discovery, if not the most exciting. Thomas Streatfeild (1777–1848) was an esteemed antiquary who devoted his life to preparing the publication of a History of Kent. Between 1778 and 1799, Edward Hasted published his



Printing plate: a thin, flat sheet of metal (commonly copper) on which an image is engraved or etched. Once inked, printing plates are used to transfer the said image onto another surface (paper, silk, vellum...) with a rolling press.

History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent, and a second edition appeared between 1797 and 1801. Although Streatfeild was only a few years younger than Hasted, he intended to publish a new, more accurate and highly illustrated history of the county.

Streatfeild was a skilled draughtsman and collected material for his History throughout his life. He regularly employed artists, wood engravers, and engravers to illustrate his work with several hundreds of woodblocks and plates. The plates depict portraits of Kent nobility as well as ruins and historical buildings in that county. Unfortunately, Streatfeild never saw the work through the press. He only managed to publish a prospectus, known as *Excerpta Cantiana* (1836), before being hit by paralysis, which vanished all his plans.

Streatfeild passed away in 1848, and in 1890, a Mrs Streatfeild (possibly his daughter-in-law) donated his copper plates and woodblocks to the Society. Further research is needed to shed light on such an extraordinary collection. However, we may tentatively assume that no one tried to publish Streatfeild's work after his death, despite the large number of subscribers indicating a keen interest in the publication. Apart from two or three, the printing plates were never printed and are in pristine condition.

It is unusual to find so many unpublished printing plates and blocks. Probably, Mrs Streatfeild hoped that the Society would one day decide to bring to light Streatfeild's *History of Kent* and gifted the plates and blocks to allow that. Hopefully, the re-discovery of the plates and their digitisation will foster new research into the material and perhaps the printing of some of the Streatfeild plates. So much could be done with this collection: from studying the plates' production and the so-far anonymous engravers who created them to critically re-examining the places and objects depicted in the plates. The Streatfeild plates are an authentic, unspoilt treasure that waits to be studied and understood.

RIANISM AT SAL



GRANTS

The SAL supports ‘the furtherance of the study and understanding of antiquities in this and other countries’ through a variety of grant programmes. Recipients of a Janet Arnold Award in 2022, **Beatrice Behlen** and **Jane Malcolm-Davies** describe how the grant has enabled them to re-examine an iconic royal relic.

‘Then the King put off His Dublet, and being in His Wastecoate, put his Cloak on again, then looking upon the block, said to the Executioner, You must set it fast.’ This description of Charles I’s last moments was published in 1649, probably soon after the king’s execution. For almost one hundred years, the Museum of London has owned a garment knitted of fine blue silk believed to be the king’s ‘wastecoate’. This was the contemporary term for an undergarment, which was not usually visible in wear. Thomas Herbert, gentleman of the bedchamber to Charles I, remembered in 1678 that the king decided to ‘have a Shirt on more than ordinary ... by reason the season is so sharp as probably may make me shake’, so as not to appear fearful.

According to a handwritten note accompanying the waistcoat when it was first sold at auction in 1898, the royal ‘relic’ had been given to physician Thomas Hobbs and preserved in his family. The garment changed hands again in 1902 before being acquired for the London Museum by the silk merchant Ernest Samuel Makower in 1924.

A grant from the SAL has inspired a major re-investigation of this iconic object — although this is not the first time the waistcoat has been put under the microscope — both literally and metaphorically. Research over the past thirty years focused on the nature of the stains on the garment’s front, with inconclusive results. Using a combination of traditional

The knitted waistcoat, said to have been King Charles I’s, photographed in 2020.



methods for object analysis and more recent scientific tools, as well as practice-based research, the aim of this project is to find out more about the materials used, and to establish when and how the waistcoat was knitted.

The project is guided by Jane Malcolm-Davies, associate professor of textile analysis at the University of Copenhagen, who has some experience in applying analytical techniques commonly used for archaeological material to early modern knitted textiles. The Museum of London gave permission to take a few small samples according to its rigorous protocol in order to apply these techniques. The samples have been taken to laboratories in Switzerland and Portugal for radiocarbon dating, Fourier transform infrared spectroscopy (FTIR) to confirm the garment’s material, and for raman and fluorescence spectroscopy to ascertain the dyes and mordants used to achieve the waistcoat’s colour. The garment has also undergone microfading to guide decision making on lighting for future displays.

These scientific analyses are complemented by systematic examination and description of the waistcoat according to the *Knitting in Early Modern Europe* protocol (www.kemererearch.com) as well as comparison with similar extant examples of men’s underwear. Historic spinning and knitting experts will test assumptions about how the garment was made with the aim of achieving a full reconstruction. The purported provenance of this relic, particularly its very early history, will also be scrutinised. The project team looks forward to sharing the results of these different strands of research in a richer story of this rare survival.

Until 16 April 2023, the waistcoat is on display in the Executions exhibition at Museum of London Docklands.



Senior Conservation Scientist at the National Archives, Marc Vermeulen, undertaking microfading testing with Museum of London textile conservator Emily Austin, 2022.

EVENTS

For Halloween 2022 SAL hosted performances of the works of author, medievalist and Fellow, M R James. Here, **Linda Grant FSA** considers how M R James balanced antiquarianism with his love of the macabre.

It's not hard to imagine 'Monty' settled in the studious quiet of our Library, surrounded by manuscripts, engravings, yellow-paged folios and first editions jotting down notes for his notoriously unnerving and deliciously eerie stories. Generations of spooked readers have felt the hair rise on the back of their necks as the most unexpected and often mundane objects release weird and malicious occult phenomena.

But there's something odd going on in M R James' work which is worth thinking about: and that's the extent to which his stories project a kind of anti-intellectualism, a positive disincentive to do the sort of investigative and in-depth research for which the Society stands. James was himself, of course, an academic: he was a distinguished medievalist with interests in manuscript illustration, Biblical scholarship and church architecture. And yet, story after story showcases the horrors that might emerge when a scholar looks a little too closely at a dark mezzotint, when he (and scholars are pretty much all 'he' in James' tales) turns the pages of an aged book or when an archaeologist digs up a buried treasure.

The story 'A Warning to the Curious' is a good



Montague Rhodes James, FSA (1862–1936), pictured in 1900.
Image: Wikipedia Commons



'A Warning to the Curious' was published in 1925, 14 years before excavations at Sutton Hoo, just 25 km south-west of Aldeburgh, discovered the famous Anglo-Saxon ship burial. Amongst the finds is this gold, garnet and millefiori purse-lid.
Image: © The Trustees of the British Museum



In the atmospheric surroundings of the Meeting Room and Library, performer Robert Lloyd Parry brought two of M R James' eeriest and most entertaining stories back to life for a rapt audience. Photo credits: Annabel Harrison and Shelagh Bidwell

example of this strange tension between James' scholarly profession and status as a Fellow, and the message that so much of his work projects: intellectual curiosity, that driver of scholarly rigour and excitement, is proven to be not just risky but to have downright terrifying results, and the 'lesson' inscribed in this story is to leave the artefacts of the past untouched and buried. Indeed, the digging up of a priceless pre-ninth century silver Anglo-Saxon crown 'set with some gems, mostly antique intaglios and cameos'¹ in a fictionalised Aldeburgh is explicitly positioned in this tale as an act of sacrilege and the doomed amateur archaeologist knows that even returning the find to the burial ground, as he does, cannot assuage the revenge that will destroy anyone who touches the crown.

How fascinating, then, that James, notable scholar and Fellow, is best remembered today for his unsettling stories that so often turn on, as he termed it, 'the malice of inanimate objects' – and cautions us in his fiction to leave the artefacts of the past well alone!

¹ All quotations are from M.R. James: Collected Ghost Stories, ed. D Jones 2011, Oxford University Press, Oxford

PUBLICATIONS

In vol 102 of *The Antiquaries Journal* **Elizabeth Hallam Smith FSA** wrote about the discovery of a ‘secret doorway’ in Westminster Hall. The find sheds light, not only on the architecture of the Palace, but also on the Victorian craftsmen who worked within it.

The rediscovery of a ‘secret doorway’ concealed in the west wall of Westminster Hall made headlines worldwide in 2019. In reality a disused Stuart door-passage, once the main route to the House of Commons, it turned out to be a remarkable time capsule. One of our most striking finds there was a pencil graffito scrawled on its plaster by a little band of stonemasons who worked for Charles Barry on his new Palace of Westminster.

Graffito of 1851
written by Thomas
Porter. Photograph: ©
Adam Watrobski.



(above) Liz Hallam Smith shows ITV News Political Correspondent Carl Dinnen the secret doorway, 26 Feb 2020; (right) Concealed panel of 1950 providing access to the door passage. Photograph: John Crook.



[the fan vaults of the cloister].
August 11th 1851
Real Demorcrats (sic)

Although the least skilled amongst them, Thomas Porter was clearly their ringleader and scribe. For before crawling out through his small escape aperture, he also scrawled ‘Tom Porter Bricklayer’ in very large letters on the plaster at the top of an adjoining wall. From this we can deduce that he was reasonably literate — in common with around two-thirds of working men at the time; and thanks to the 1851 census we can track him down to the now lost Water Street near the Strand.

All five of Tom’s stonemason companions who ‘witnessed the articles of the wall’ can also be identified. One, Richard Condon, lived in Nightingale Street, St Marylebone, whilst the other four — James Williams, Henry Terry, Thomas Parker and Peter Dewal — all inhabited Ponsonby Place, a terrace of houses which still survives. In 1851 in multiple occupancy and in a rather run-down area near to the Millbank Penitentiary, today these residences are highly desirable Pimlico real estate.

In Tom’s cheerful and mildly inebriated scrawl the camaraderie, professional pride and radical views of these men are vividly captured. Their subversive and witty claim to be the ‘real demorcrats’ links them with the kind of radical Chartist views that ran strongly within the building trades of London, and which had brought work on the Palace of Westminster to a halt in 1841–2 through a damaging strike. This assertion was a clever play on place as well as rank, for in their own eyes it set Tom and the stonemasons above the MPs who were leading the nation from their temporary House of Commons — a mere stone’s throw away from where these craftsmen were so skilfully preserving for posterity a rare fragment of Westminster’s past.

Between 1849 and 1852 these élite craftsmen painstakingly repaired the Tudor fabric of St Stephen’s cloister — a complex and prestigious task. The unassuming little door-passage, which was blocked up on the Hall side but opened onto the west walk of the cloister, was evidently a convenient messroom for them.

But then in August 1851 they had to brick it up. Clearly regretting its loss, after a final ceremonial libation there they left a message inside for the future:

This room was enclosed by Tom Porter who was very fond of Ould Ale.
The parties who witnessed the articles of the wall was
R. Congdon Mason
J. Williams
H. Terrey
T. Parker
P. Duv[a]l
These Masons w[ere] employed refacing these groines

FELLOWS' TALES

Members of the Society are known as Fellows of the Society of Antiquaries (FSA). To be elected persons shall be 'excelling in the knowledge of the antiquities and history of this and other nations' and be 'desirous to promote the honour, business and emoluments of the Society'. Here, **Adrian James FSA** explores the reasons why the very eminent medieval historian J H Round never became a Fellow.

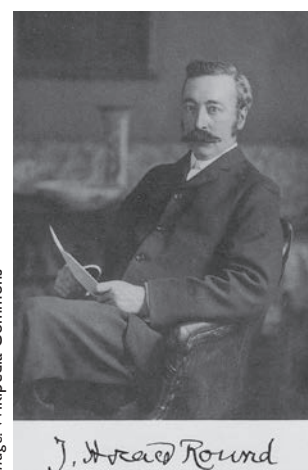


Image: Wikipedia Commons

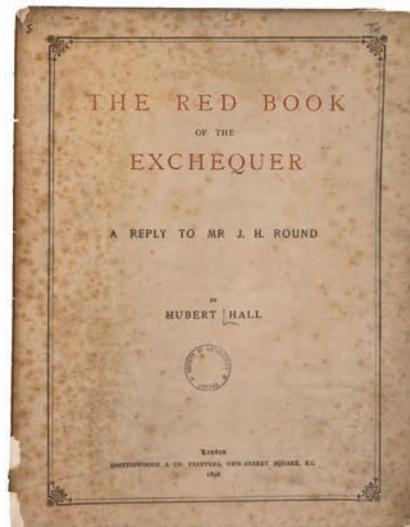
Few scholars of English medieval history are more conspicuous by their absence from the lists of the Society's Fellows than the great authority on feudalism John Horace Round (1854–1928), whose distinction is now commemorated by the blue plaque affixed to his home in Brunswick Terrace, Hove. Why did J H Round disallow the Society's Assistant Secretary, William St John Hope, to issue a blue paper canvassing his candidacy for Fellowship? The ostensible reasons for his refusal are advanced in two letters addressed to Hope in the Society's archive of correspondence. Impecuniousness, principally, is pleaded on 23 January 1898; 'in these distressful times for landowners, I have to limit my subscriptions.' Nevertheless, Round is amenable to Hope's 'flattering suggestion', while adding, insouciantly, 'I presume there is no entrance fee', which is the subject of a subsequent letter written three days later, instructing Hope 'to postpone altogether the matter of my election. When I wrote consenting to join, it was...under the impression that there was no entrance fee. I was rather taken aback to discover that there was.'

Round, in fact, possessed an ample fortune, and could surely have afforded the fee that he cited as an impediment to joining. He travelled frequently abroad, was attended by typists, and left a large estate. A more compelling reason for Round's reluctance is that in 1898 he was engaged in a vitriolic dispute with Hubert Hall

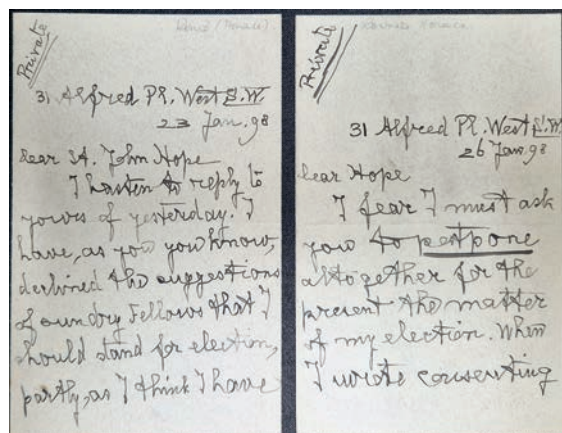
FSA, having withdrawn from co-editing with him the *Red Book of the Exchequer* for the Rolls Series and privately printing his objections to Hall's editorial practices, to which Hall retaliated with a pamphlet from which bleeds a sense of injury on every page. 'Mr Round,' declares Hall, 'has striven with all the perverted learning and all the distorted rhetoric at his command to darken and blight my official and literary life — to denounce me as an impostor, a fraud...' Round's 'appalling act of literary dishonesty' is anathematized, his 'deliberate misrepresentation of facts', his 'sordid criticism' and 'degraded scholarship' with its 'tissue of glaring misstatement' motivated by 'petty spite' in 'a long and violent tirade.'

Although allegedly defective scholarship was the occasion for Round's adversarial sallies, it was his zealous Toryism and contempt for whiggery that was apt to move him to animosity. (Joseph Ritson, the disputatious eighteenth-century literary antiquary, was similarly rebarbative, contriving to embrace both Jacobitism and Jacobinism in his extremes of political wrath.) Given that Hall gladly collaborated with the Fabians Sidney and Beatrice Webb in their history of English Local Government, Round's harassment of Hall may have had a concealed political motivation. It is inconceivable that Round would ever have co-operated with self-confessed radicals.

The attacks on Hall, a much-respected man, would have disposed some Fellows to cast blackballs against Round had he come to ballot. Since the needful ratio of 'yes' to 'no' votes is four to one, Round may have feared a rebuff and hence been discouraged from seeking to accede to the Fellowship.



Hall's *The Red Book of the Exchequer: a reply to Mr. J. H. Round* (London, 1898). Round's retort to this pamphlet has long been missing from the Society's library!



Round's letters to the Society's Assistant Secretary, William St John Hope are immediately identifiable by his large and scrawly handwriting.

THE REPORT 2022

FROM THE PRESIDENT

This was a busy year, with several initiatives that have been long in development coming to fruition, marking significant efforts by the Society's staff and many Fellows. We celebrate these achievements, noting that behind the scenes the long struggle to secure a sustainable future at Burlington House has continued. The year began with

KS2 pupils write creatively about Kelmscott Manor in the Garden Hall



the retirement of our General Secretary John Lewis and the arrival of his successor Andrew Macdonald. We marked John's retirement with a party and wish him well for the future.

Discussions with government on the leases at Burlington House have continued throughout 2022–3. While some progress has been made, there was a hiatus in the second half of the year when much normal government business was put on hold. In the autumn a new Minister, Baroness Scott of Bybrook, was given the Burlington House brief. Her visit on 19 January 2023 afforded the opportunity to highlight the significance of the 'intellectual ecosystem' around the Courtyard. We expect a follow-up meeting to take place in early 2023. We are grateful to everyone who has been part of the Burlington House campaign group, especially our advocates in Parliament.

At the beginning of the year, we celebrated the re-opening of Kelmscott Manor by HRH the Duke of Gloucester at a memorable event held in the spring sunshine. Through the NLHF-funded refurbishment the Society is fulfilling its core aims of conservation, research, and communication to a broad public. Following almost three years of construction work and a much longer period of planning, it was a delight to see Kelmscott Manor re-opened to visitors for the summer season. With three public opening days a

week and a good summer, we exceeded our admissions target, receiving just under 27,000 visitors. The new learning barn allowed the manor to welcome school and community groups and to develop an education programme that seeks to enthuse the next generation. The refurbishment and reopening stimulated much excellent publicity with highly favourable reviews of what the Society has achieved. The next stage of the **Kelmscott, Past, Present & Future** project is the delivery of the activity plan with further events and exhibitions over the next few years. Alongside this, staff are working with Cotswold Archaeology on a community archaeology project which seeks to engage the villagers, local schools, and volunteers in research on the environs of the Manor.

Our second long-discussed development saw the launch of a new Affiliate Membership scheme on 1 July. Through this the Society aims to achieve broader public benefit, enhancing access to those with a general interest in our subjects, broadening and diversifying our membership base and developing wider, long-lasting support for the Society. We exceeded our recruitment target for Year 1, with 284 new members, and we have welcomed many of them to the library and at our meetings. We are enormously grateful to Fellows for supporting the scheme by sharing the details with friends and colleagues who would most benefit from a close relationship with the Society. We are particularly pleased to report that our Affiliates include students, researchers and people who work in the wider heritage sector.

Finally, work on publications has also seen a new development. Alongside *The Antiquaries Journal* we have re-launched *Archaeologia* in its new form as an occasional, wholly digital and open access imprint. The first paper by Gabor Thomas *et al* reassesses the archaeological evidence for the early medieval church of

Students from the UCL Institute of Archaeology at Burlington House



SS Mary and Ethelburga in Lyminge, Kent. We have also published Research Report no. 83: *The History of King Richard the Third*, by Sir George Buc, *Master of the Revels*, edited with introduction and notes by the late Arthur Noel Kincaid. This discusses Sir George's position in the literary and scholarly world of his day and traces the text's transmission.

During the year we hosted a variety of well attended series of lectures and events at Burlington House. With pandemic restrictions no longer in force, we saw a return of good numbers to our weekly meetings and one-off special events. Investment in the Meeting Room meant that we were also able to reach wider audiences by simultaneously streaming lectures on-line and, at the same time, building up a library of YouTube recordings of lectures that continue to be viewed later. This represents a valuable legacy of the pandemic years, significantly increasing the reach of our events. We held several conferences throughout the year, with two being of particular importance. First was *Caribbean Literature in English – Writing Back and Writing Forward*, which welcomed a whole new audience and presented ideas and perspectives from international speakers. This was soon followed by *The Future of Archaeology in England*, a seminar which looked at the points raised in the Society's 2020 manifesto of the same name. A truly unique event for the Society was held on Halloween, *A Warning to the Curious: Two Ghost Stories by M R James FSA*, where performer Robert Lloyd Parry brought two of the eeriest and most entertaining tales of his back to life. Reaching new audiences has been high on our list of priorities, and through increased digital outreach we hope to encourage those who might not have previously heard of us, to join us at Burlington House.

Our Library, Archive and Museum Collections have also seen increased use this year, whilst the team have continued with key enhancement projects. All the monographs in the Fellows Room, Main Library, and Inner Library, have now been barcoded, and this work is continuing through the rest of the collection. Further cataloguing of our archives has been greatly accelerated thanks to the help of Oxford student interns and a growing team of volunteers. With the support of donations from Fellows we have made a great start in cataloguing our collection of around 3,000 printing blocks. Furthermore, the Kelmscott Manor collection is currently being catalogued and added to the Society's Collections Management System which will make it visible and searchable online for the first time. In collaboration with Nottingham Trent University our Roll Chronicle and our Pedigree of the Kings of England underwent state-of-the-art scanning and digital images will be available on our website very soon.

Of especial importance to Fellows who find it difficult to get to London, the Society has joined the SCONUL access scheme and over 160 of our Fellows have taken advantage of and have signed up to gain access to other participating libraries across the UK.

A comprehensive survey of library users provided important insights that are informing future planning. One immediate response to feedback provided by our Fellows will be the trialling of new evening and Saturday

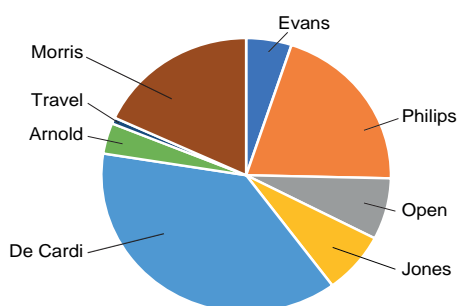
Library opening hours in 2023–4.

Our rolling programme of conservation saw our unique arch-topped (cusped) portrait of Henry VII undergo essential structural conservation at the Hamilton Kerr Institute, Cambridge, and both our longcase clock and Vulliamy regulator clock received remedial conservation, the latter of which allowed us the opportunity to welcome 2nd- and 3rd-year Horology students from West Dean College of Conservation to Burlington House for a live conservation study day.

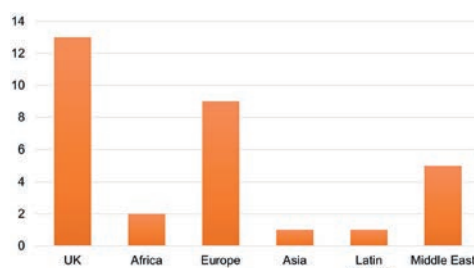
Finally, 2022 saw several items in our collection feature prominently in major international exhibitions, starting with *'Power and Image: Royal Portraiture and Iconography'*, held as part of London's official Platinum Jubilee celebration in June. Key items also travelled to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for the five-star reviewed *'The Tudors: Art and Majesty in Renaissance England'*, the Musée La Piscine, Roubaix, for *'William Morris: L'art dans tout'*, and the Stonehenge visitor centre for the current exhibition *'A Circle of Stones: Stonehenge and Japan'*. Our temporary loans programme allowed objects from the Society's collection to be viewed and enjoyed by over 320,000 people last year.

GRANT PROGRAMMES

In 2022, the Society gave out £138,000 in research funding split between our Research Grants and William and Jane Morris Church Conservation Grants.



As usual, we received applications from a wide and diverse range of projects including 'Puffins in the Past: Investigating Seabird Decline' to 'Mapping the Indigenous Heritage and Sacred Landscapes of the Upper Orinoco' and analysis of Roman 'baby bottles' and Roman villas in Canterbury.



For further details about our grants programmes, see our website: www.sal.org.uk

LAMP OF KNOWLEDGE

One may already recognise depictions of this object from across the Society's publications, website, and represented in brass on the floor of the entrance hall of Burlington House. It is a small, 13 cm high, bronze oil lamp that was presented to the Society in 1736 by Sir Hans Sloane — a well-known physician and collector — and was adopted as its emblem in 1770. Drawing from an analogy between the lamp and the belief in knowledge and discovery at the heart of the Society's activities, the depictions of the lamp are often accompanied by the Latin inscription *non extinguetur*, which translates as 'shall not be extinguished.'

At first the lamp was presumed to be Roman; it was found in 1717 at St Leonard's Hill, Windsor, together with other Roman remains, and closely resembles oil lamps discovered in Pompeii and Herculaneum. However, it is now known to date to the fourteenth century and may be Jewish in origin: lamps similar to this were lit in preparation for the Sabbath. Originally designed to be suspended, the lamp would have had a drip-pan hanging below the burners to collect leaking oil.



CABINET OF CURIOSITIES

A Society antiquarian
that studies all things
humanitarian
from the agrarian to
Bulgarian
proletariat to
Shakespearean
are treated in a mode non-
sectarian

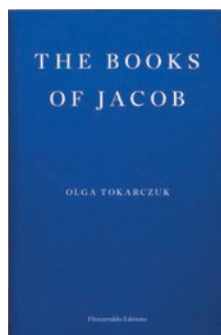
COURTYARD GUARDIAN

Our unsung hero: this
beautiful girl keeps watch over
Burlington House. Eagle-eyed
visitors may catch a glimpse of
our feathered friend early in the
morning!



WHAT'S ON YOUR BEDSIDE?

Book recommendations
from our staff.



LINDA GRANT, Governance Manager
Currently reading: The Books of Jacob by Nobel Laureate Olga Tokarczuk, set in the eighteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian commonwealth and which thinks about what 'history' is, how nationality and borders are contingent and pliable, and as filled with bustling life as a Breughel painting.



Next up: Pollak's Arm by Hans von Trotha featuring the real-life Ludwig Pollak, a Jewish archaeologist and antiquarian, caught in 1943 Rome with the Nazis intent on rounding up the city's Jewish population the next day.



DOMINIC WALLIS, Head of Development
Black Spartacus by Sudhir Hazareesingh is the astonishing story of eighteenth-century slave born revolutionary Toussaint Louverture, who triumphs over French, Spanish and British to pave the way to Haitian independence.



COCKTAIL CORNER

This year, Finance and Membership Manager **Devon Hewitt's** has come up with cocktail in honour of her late Majesty.



It's well known that one of HRH Queen Elizabeth II's favourite drinks was her Dubonnet cocktail, comprising two parts Dubonnet and one part gin. She reportedly loved the drink so much that she gave Dubonnet a Royal Warrant in November 2021 and in September of last year many suppliers ran out of it as the public bought bottles to toast her reign and honour her memory.

This twists the Dubonnet cocktail and leans it towards the classic Negroni adding bitters to give it an additional layer of flavour.

It's a very quick and easy cocktail to make, all being in equal parts and without any complicated techniques. You can use a standard UK measure of 25ml or similar depending on what you have on hand.

Ingredients

- 1 x Gin
- 1 x Sweet Vermouth
- 1 x Dubonnet
- 1 Dash Bitters (Angostura or Peychard's depending on your preference.)

Method

Add all the ingredients to a cocktail shaker with some ice cubes. Give it a good shake and then strain into a cocktail glass. Add a lemon or orange twist, if you wish.

Depending on your palate, feel free to use either Angostura or Peychard's bitters. If you prefer your drinks a bit sweeter, then Peychard's would be the better choice with its sweeter notes complimenting (and adding to) the vermouth and Dubonnet. On the other hand, Angostura bitters cuts through some of the sweetness and you'll be heading closer to the flavour profile of a Negroni with this option.

FROM OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

Our top tweet in 2022, from 19 August, shows public antiquarians a hundred years ago. This wonderful photograph found in our collection shows Stonehenge on 12 April 1901. You can see an array of archaeologists as well as the owners of the land at the time: Sir Edmund Antrobus and his wife lady Antrobus. #WorldPhotographyDay Follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at @SocAntiquaries



GET INVOLVED

Affiliate Membership of the Society of Antiquaries

From £5 per month (£3 for students): FREE entry to Burlington House; use of the Library, workspace, WiFi and borrow up to 4 books; Receive SALON, the Society's bi-monthly online newsletter; Invitations to attend Ordinary Meetings, Lectures and Seminars at Burlington House; Invitations to Regional Fellows Group Meetings (York, Cardiff and Exeter); Concessionary entry to historic Kelmscott Manor, William Morris's Cotswold home; Get involved in volunteering opportunities at Burlington House and Kelmscott Manor; Find out more about the past as you get to know other Affiliate members and Fellows who are experts in their fields.

<https://www.sal.org.uk/affiliatemembership/>

DONATE

ANGELS are needed to help us conserve Kelmscott Manor's rare and fragile seventeenth-century Samson Tapestries and re-hang them configured in the Tapestry Room as they were during the Turner and Morris families' time. It was tapestries such as these that inspired Morris to learn the technique himself and set about reinventing it. If you would like to help, please get in touch with Dominic Wallis, Ph: 020 7479 7092; Email: dwallis@sal.org.uk



ADOPT one or more eighteenth- and nineteenth-century wooden printing blocks from £10 and your name will appear in perpetuity on the Catalogue in the Society's Collections Management System. The digitisation of 3000+ printing blocks will culminate in an exciting display and will pave the way for future research activity, shedding more light on the collections' origins, use, and significance. See: <https://www.sal.org.uk/collections/adopt-printing-block/>.

WITH OUR THANKS

We are extremely grateful for the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Historic Houses Foundation, the John Murray Charitable Trust, the Rose Foundation and Ecclesiastical Insurance, as well as the following Affiliates, Fellows and supporters for contributing to the Society's special projects: Alan Aberg FSA; Barry Ager FSA; Nathaniel Alcock FSA; Mark Armstrong; David Atkinson; Tracy Bergstrom; Claire Berman; Lee Bilson; Mr Richard Blurton; Janice Bridges; Dr Diana Briscoe; Kim Brooks; David Bryden FSA; Kaitlin Buerge; CAF America; CAF America; Patrick, Lord Cormack FSA; John Cruse FSA; Dr Michael Danti FSA; Dr Leo John De Freitas; Alison Deegan; Prof Stephanie Dickey; Jennifer Dodson; Reverend Gregory Dunstan; Charlotte Evans; Dr Paula Feldman; Christopher Foley FSA; Dr Jenny Freeman FSA; Prof Clive Gamble FSA; Brian Glover; Prof Joscelyn Godwin FSA; Dr Mark Gray; Dr Neil Guthrie FSA; Autumn Haag; Dorothy Halfhide; Richard Halsey MBE FSA; Edwards Harris MBE FSA; Jacob Head; Nicola Henshall; Prof Stephen Hill FSA; Dr Jill Hind FSA; Historic Houses Foundation; Prof Maurice Howard VPSA; Ann Hutchison and James Carley; Mike Ives; Daniel Johnson; David Johnson; Dr Caroline Jones; Dr Belle Jones-Pierce; Kingston University; Nicole Leconte; Lowell Libson FSA; Canon Brian Lodwick FSA; Pamela Loetterle; Andrew Macdonald; Aaron Macks; Stephanos Mastoris FSA; Mr Robert Sutton-Mattocks; Andrew McGeachin; Caitlin McGeever; Barry McKay; Julian Mitchell FSA; Michael Molcher; Gregory Monk; Dr Elaine Morris FSA; Dr Helga Müllneritsch; John Owen FSA; Pontypool Park Estate; Jonathan Parkhouse FSA; Andrew Payne; Dr Julia Poole FSA; Prof Priti Joshi; Richard Rastall FSA; Jacquie Richardson; Dr Mandy Richter; Judith Ridley; Michael Riorden; Jennifer Roberts; Kay Rodrigues; The Rose Foundation; Jane Rose; Andrew Roush; Andrew Roush; Sir Paul Ruddock FSA; Roland Saam; Mrs Samantha Danti; Sanderson Design Group; Dr Elizabeth Savage; Dr Suzanne Karr Schmidt; Prof Mark Schoenfield; John Shillito; Brian Simmons FSA; Keith Smith; Patricia Snell; Mrs Angela Stott; Charles Tolkein-Gillett; Warner-Treloar; Jacqueline Reid-Walsh; Mary Warnement; Robert Weaver FSA; Martin Williams FSA; Richard Williams; Jonathan Wilson; Jonathan Wilson; Judith Winters; George Woodman.



Donations from Fellows have allowed us to employ Lolo Walton — pictured here with Peyton Skipwith FSA — to begin cataloguing our collection of around 3,000 printing blocks.

LEGACIES: We received bequests from George Eogan FSA, Suzanne Mary Eward FSA and John Tarn Nelson FSA. Their generous gifts will help the Society plan for the future.

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

If you have feedback or suggestions about the new look magazine then please do email: admin@sal.org.uk