



# Annual Review 2025

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# BRITISH ASSOCIATION FOR BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY AND OSTEOLOGY ANNUAL REVIEW

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## **WELCOME TO THE ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2025**

**Annual Review Editor**  
*Veronica Tamorri*  
*University of Leicester*

Welcome to the BABAO Annual Review for 2025! It has been another fantastic and incredibly productive year for bioarchaeological research within the BABAO community!

The amount of work that was carried out by our members is impressive for its quality and diversity, as you all will read in this year's contributions to the Annual Review.

In September, Dr Sarah Inskip and Dr Anna Davies-Barrett hosted the BABAO conference at the University of Leicester with the help of a fantastic team of volunteers from the School of Archaeology and Ancient History. It was a great success thanks to their work and dedication!

Congratulations to all new 2025 MA and PhD graduates in biological anthropology and osteoarchaeology! Good luck with your future career endeavours.

Thank you so much to everyone who shared their contributions with the BABAO community! This is my last year as Editor of the Annual Review, so I would like to thank Jelena first and foremost for her support (especially with Trends!) and all my fellow Trustees, whom I hold in very high esteem both personally and professionally!

I hope you all enjoy this year's Annual Review!

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## **ASSOCIATION NEWS**

**Presidents Report**  
*Jelena Bekvalac*  
*London Museum*

Firstly, my sincerest thanks to all the trustees with the diligent work that they continue to do in support of BABAO and the time that they give. Also, for all their kind help and support for me in what was a difficult year navigating through bereavement with the passing away of my mother.

Many thanks to the trustees who stepped down from their roles and for all the hard work and time that they gave to BABAO whilst in their roles – Hannah Liedl (Secretary) and Matthew Lee (EDI Trustee). It is very much appreciated with the demanding work schedules that everyone has and to give the additional time to BABAO when taking on a trustee role. We welcomed Morgan Adams in August to the role of Secretary and more recently in October Anna Freed taking up the role of EDI Trustee. Thank you to all the membership for your valued support of BABAO and in doing so enabling BABAO to continue to be able to support members in a variety of ways and through the different grant schemes, awards, and conference prizes.

It has been a busy and interesting year with a lot going on. I completed the series of questions on behalf of BABAO for REF 2029, as it is important that BABAO's views are represented for the REF 2029 Panel recruitment process. The Law Commission made contact to say that they will continue to send details and updates. Ben Neil kindly shared with us the work undertaken for conducting a survey on human bone marking, which was most interesting and to share the resultant data.

The main area of work led from the parliamentary debate in March by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Afrikan Reparations (APPG-AR) and the activities following the parliamentary debate by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Afrikan Reparations (APPG-AR) and the policy brief

published by AFFORD (African Foundation for Development) 'Laying Ancestors to Rest'. In response to this I drafted a statement with invaluable support from Heather, Trish, and Lauren, which was shared with the membership on March 14th.

#### BABAO Statement – APPG-AR Policy Brief & House of Lords Debate 13th March 2025

Earlier this week, a policy brief written by the African Foundation for Development (AFFORD) was published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Afrikan Reparations (APPG-AR). A statement taken from BABAO's Trading and Sale of Human Remains Task Force website was included in the document. BABAO was not involved in the creation of the document or any consultation carried out by AFFORD or the APPG-AR. The APPG-AR is independent of government, and its recommendations are not government policy. On the 13th March a House of Lords short debate considered "The offence caused to the indigenous peoples affected by the sale of human body parts in public auctions, and their display and retention in public collections".

BABAO supports the appropriate and ethically considered retention of human remains that follows established guidance and as outlined in the BABAO mission statement and guidance documents for working with human remains. This includes the principle of open and constructive dialogue between museums and communities and consideration of requests for return as detailed in the DCMS Guidance for the Care of Human Remains in Museums.

In response to the debate, Baroness Twycross (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for DCMS) stated that the government is in a position to set up a cross-Whitehall meeting of relevant ministers and policy officials to discuss options, including change to the law, to prohibit the sale of human remains, which BABAO considers a positive step. We will continue to take an interest in this important issue as it progresses.

Following on from this March parliamentary debate I was contacted by Professor Sue Black, Lady Black of Strome who was at the debate

and contributed to the debate with a focus on the sale of remains held in private collections, and was able to say that this received a very positive response from the Parliamentary under-Secretary of State, Baroness Twycross. From this positive response it was felt that there could be a role for BABAO to play, acknowledging the experience within BABAO and Professor Sue Black asked if this would be appropriate. I was very much in favour of BABAO having a role and that to assist the Government in taking steps to move forward it would indeed be appropriate for BABAO to be involved and as such that I would be happy for BABAO to play a critical role in these discussions.

Alongside a call for an outright ban on the sale of human remains Professor Sue Black, Laura Broekhoven and Lord Boateng, who together had already been working closely on the matter, advised that it would be desirable for a group be set up to assist the Government as it moves forward.

I was able to highlight the great work of the BABAO subgroup, The Trading and Sale of Human Remains Task Force, brilliantly led by Dr Trish Biers and Dr Lauren McIntyre, which over the years has done an incredible amount and has such a lot of experience in raising awareness of the issue and educating the public about the commercial trade in human remains. Trish and I, representing BABAO and the Human Remains Task Force are now connected as part of this parliamentary group with Professor Sue Black so that we can contribute and be part of any ongoing discussions.

Leading on from and again in consideration of the Laying Ancestor To Rest report by the APPG-AR, Ben Donnelly-Symes as Chair of the Society for Museum Archaeology (SMA) asked if BABAO would sign a joint statement which after consulting with the trustees we agreed to do. The joint statement raised important points in response to the report and advocated why we retain human remains from excavations that take place within the UK and asked alongside BABAO, for ALGAO, CBA and APABE if they would be supportive of

signing a joint statement on this issue. It was felt that a joint statement from all the key representative organisations in relation to this issue would have a greater impact. A suggestion from further correspondence was the potential in the future for having possibly an organised study day with invited speakers for wider discourse.

Roland Hughes a freelance journalist interviewed me about the sale and trade of human remains, for an article he was writing following on from the discourse in parliament around human remains and Roland having been invited to connect with the parliamentary advisory group. I was pleased to be able to answer his questions about a critical issue which BABAO through the Taskforce has taken an active stance in raising awareness.

At the end of August there was an informal meeting with BABAO and CIFA to discuss the AFFORD policy paper, to determine if and how CIFA and BABAO would like to engage with the paper. First steps to make comment on the policy recommendations from the fourteen points in AFFORD document to share with the CIFA Osteo SIG committee for discussion.

In the summer, ITV contacted Trish and I, to ask if we would be willing to meet in August with Sam Holder, a journalist, who was conducting an investigation into the sale and trade of human remains and be interviewed as part of a segment for ITV News. In discussion with the BABAO Taskforce there was a consensus that BABAO should participate adding a voice to emphasise the illegal trade in human remains. The segment Death dealers: The growing trade in human remains was broadcast Thursday 28 August 2025 at 7:25pm on ITV media platforms.

After a great deal of demanding work and all the endeavours of The Trends Working Group getting things in place to try to have a BABAO New Trends publication the final decision, shared by Veronica, Editor in Chief, with the membership, after much discussion was that unfortunately it was not going to be viable for having a publication.

We are extremely fortunate to have such dedicated members in the BABAO subgroups who have continued throughout the year to undertake work in support of the EDI objectives EDI and the unrelenting vigilance of The Trading and Sale of Human Remains Task Force. The accomplishments of the subgroups are certainly something for us as a membership to be proud.

My great thanks to Dr Sarah Inskip and Dr Anna Davies-Barrett, the conference lead organisers and the conference team Jo Appleby, Richard Thomas, Alvaro Ortega González, Judith López Aceves, Alette Blom, Elliot Elliott, Taylor Peacock, Vassilina Louka, Ben Donnelly-Symes, and Emma Tollefsen for such a successful and enjoyable conference in Leicester with the added bonus of fab lanyards and stickers. There were several challenges faced along the way in the planning and preparation of the conference, but Sarah and Anna worked tirelessly in order to be able to secure a venue for the conference to take place and bring everything so impressively together.

There was not one overarching theme for the 2025 conference, instead the session themes were decided based upon the abstracts submitted, but from the final programme the papers and posters covered an exciting and stimulating range of topics, highlighting the endeavours of those studying and working in the field. The optional organised workshops on the Thursday proved to be extremely popular and are something that would certainly be good to consider doing again in future conferences. It was a wonderful opportunity to have the drinks reception in Leicester Cathedral and a chance to see the final resting place of Richard III, whilst enjoying the delightful canapes and super skull napkins. The setting for the conference dinner was a splendid location with lots of fun from the photo booth and a fiendish quiz. My thanks to everyone who took part in the annual conference and the time given by all, enabling us to have such an enjoyable time in coming together and more fully appreciate the impressive array of work undertaken by the membership.

I was delighted to be able to announce the winners of the conference prizes for the Jane Moore (Best podium presentation) and Bill White (Best poster presentation). Congratulations again to Rachel Hall being the Jane Moore podium winner and the two winners Fin Taylor (Friday) and Sarina Riechmann (Saturday) for the Bill White poster presentation. Where there had been such a high number of poster submissions, it was decided to have a winner for the Bill White Student poster session on the Friday and Saturday. Many congratulations again to the winner of the Don Brothwell (undergraduate) award: Stephanie Demetriou (University of York) "Exploring Diet Across the Life Course: An Isotopic Study of Individuals at the Archaeological Site of Bulla Regia, Tunisia". Supervised by Prof. Michelle Alexander and Dr Sophy Charlton. And the two winners of the Holger Schutkowski (master) award: Annie Bones (University of York) "Examining childhood diet in Iron Age Orkney using compound specific isotope analysis". Supervised by Dr Paola Ponce and Carlos Silva Carvalho (University of Bradford) "Worked to the Bone: An Investigation into Labour Division in a Transylvanian, Hungarian-Szekler Community (AD 1050-1800)". Supervised by Dr Jo Buckberry.

For the BABAO Mentor Award I was really pleased to be able to congratulate Dr Joe Wallace-Walser III. The nomination was incredibly detailed, and heart felt in sharing how much great support had been given during graduate studies and helpful ongoing advice for professional development.

The BABAO annual conference in 2026 will not as in other years be hosted working with a university department. Work is underway for planning and organising the conference in September 2026, with one option that it may be possible to have the conference at the Northamptonshire Archaeological Resource Centre (ARC), <https://www.northamptonshireheritageforum.co.uk/heritage-sites-and-archives/northamptonshire-archaeological-resource-centre> based at the Chester House Estate, located in Little Irchester, close to

Wellingborough,  
<https://chesterhouseestate.org/>

A number of factors will need to be considered for deciding with the hosting of the conference with accessibility and cost being primary influences. Discussions about the conference location will be carefully thought through and shared with the membership, so that it will be possible once a decision has been reached, to enable then the preparation of a conference website. To provide details for submission of abstracts and going forward developing the conference programme and booking conference tickets.

Looking further ahead for future hosting of annual BABAO conferences, I would like to thank the kind suggestions and offers for the possible locations being in York, Cardiff, and Lancaster.

My heartfelt thanks again to all the Trustees past and present for their continued hard work and dedication to BABAO, to the membership for their sustained support of BABAO and Veronica valiantly getting all the pieces together the Annual Review. Allowing us a chance to be able to read and learn about the range of fascinating commercial projects and innovative research studies.

With the continuing support of the trustees and the membership in all the many activities of BABAO, I look forward to 2026 being another busy year bringing positive things for BABAO. If the Trustees or I can be of help to you, please do contact us. With all good wishes for 2026 and I will look forward to us getting together for the conference in September.

Jelena

London Museum, January 2026

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### **Report from the Membership Secretary**

*Kirsty Squires  
University of Staffordshire*

At the end of 2025, BABAO had 506, slightly down on the 518 members which the society had at the end of 2024. BABAO recruited 124

new members during 2025 in comparison to 95 new members during 2024 (both figures included re-joining members); this is greater than the average during the last five years (95.4). Overall, the general membership decrease observed over the past several years plateaued during 2024. This is likely due to an overall increase in student members' retention at the end of year – which could be reflective of a more, inclusive, accessible and student orientated BABAO Annual Conference at Keele in September 2024. This same year also saw the highest proportion of undergraduate members in the society since at least before 2018.

The composition of our membership remained similar to the previous year: over half of the membership comprised of waged members (282, 55.7%), as well as student members (174, 34.4%), unwaged members (35, 6.9%) and retired members (15, 3.0%). A greater number of new student members (90, 17.8%) received a free year of BABAO membership, when compared to 2024 (67, 12.9%). A fifth of the membership (115, 22.7%) comprised of overseas members: the majority of which represented members from Europe (76, 66.1%), as well as North America (29, 25.2%), the Antipodes (6, 5.2%) and elsewhere in the world (4, 3.5%) – these proportions were similar to those in 2024.

Less than half of BABAO members (234, 46.2%) provided information regarding their area of occupation (individuals were able to select up to two categories). Most reporting members were found to be employed within academia (106, 45.3%), followed by commercial archaeology (70, 29.9%), with smaller proportions in curatorial roles (24, 10.3%), as forensic practitioners (13, 5.6%) and as medical specialists (6, 2.6%).

Additionally, some members (15, 6.4 %) also declared other forms of occupation (including a *Teacher, Chartered Accountant, Editorial Assistant, and Customer Service Representatives*). Of the 174 active student members, over three-quarters (170, 97.8%) provided information regarding their level of study. The reporting students were recorded as

being engaged in doctoral (74, 43.5%), masters (76, 44.7%), undergraduate (19, 11.2%) and other (1, 0.6%) courses.

More than half of the membership (355, 70.2 %) provided information on their areas of interest. *Human bioarchaeology* (322, 90.7%) and *forensic anthropology* (228, 64.2%) were the two most popular areas of interest, followed by *medical anthropology* (99, 27.9%), *human evolution* (79, 22.3%) and *primatology* (11, 3.1%). Additionally, some members (37, 10.4%) also declared additional areas of interest (including *3D analysis, aDNA, applied human anatomy, archaeology, archaeological science, archeothantology, bioethics, biomolecular, computational modelling, craniofacial identification, dental anthropology, funerary taphonomy, heritage, palaeopathology, palaeo-imaging, mummy studies, osteoarchaeology, statistics, taphonomy* and *zooarchaeology*).

In September 2025, Dr Bennjamin Penny-Mason completed his tenure as Membership Secretary. The Trustees would like to thank Bennjamin for his important contributions made in this role and the ongoing support he continues to offer the new Membership Secretary, Professor Kirsty Squires. Members get in touch with Kirsty using the usual methods via the membership email address ([membership@babao.org.uk](mailto:membership@babao.org.uk)).

Additionally, we would also like to encourage all members who have not completed a 'change of details' form recently to do so – the forms are available from the membership section at [babao.org.uk/get-involved/join/current-member](https://babao.org.uk/get-involved/join/current-member). Please do let us know of any updates on changes in job titles, positions, affiliations, personal details, and postal addresses.

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### Report from the Grants Secretary

*Maia Casna*

*Universidad de Santiago de Compostela*

In 2025, the BABAO Board of Trustees awarded three academic research grants, two commercial research grants, and one DDOBA research grant. We also awarded two Get

Involved grants. Additionally, we awarded the Don Brothwell and Holger Schutkowski awards for the best bachelor's and master's theses!

### **Project summaries Research Grants**

#### Academic grants

Marta San Millán Alonso (University of Girona, Spain) - £1000

*Sex and age differences in the acetabular shape by geometric morphometrics: implications in human identification*

This project is an exploratory, non-destructive investigation into the applicability of sub-surface changes of the acetabulum for age-at-death and biological sex estimation. This project will analyse CT images, as opposed to skeletal remains, to permit a more contemporary and non-destructive analysis of sub-surface acetabular changes and, derive novel trabecular age, and sex estimation methods. The correlation, if any, between trabecular changes of the acetabulum and these identifiers will be established. Error rates for age and sex estimation will be computed using Bayesian analysis/ Machine Learning to augment the global applicability of these findings within medico-legal, archaeological, repatriation and humanitarian contexts.

Elizabeth Garnett and Alexandra Strang (Natural History Museum, London) - £1000

*Investigating the genomic history of Iron Age and Roman England using Ancient DNA*

Ancient DNA (aDNA) analysis offers the opportunity to build an understanding about individuals and populations in the past. This research aims to analyse the genomes of 11 individuals from Iron Age and Roman burial contexts from sites across Britain to learn about their ancestry as well as build upon current knowledge of population genetic biographies and how they relate to the transition between Iron Age to Roman periods. Sites with different material cultures will also be analysed and compared to published individuals from both Britain and Europe to explore evidence for cultural transmission prior to the Roman occupation.

Alex Tutwiler (Leiden University, the Netherlands) - £1000

*Cross-Sectioning Child Labour: Assessing activity-related cross-sectional geometric variation in the non-adult skeleton*

This project will investigate the ways in which participating in intense physical labour throughout childhood influenced the shape, size, and strength of the arms and legs of children from three post-medieval Dutch populations with documented child labour practices. This will be accomplished using cross-sectional geometric analysis, a means of quantifying the ways that long bones adapt to different types of physical activities. Through assessing overall variation in the cross-sectional geometry at multiple points along the humerus and femur between these populations, this project will highlight the impact of labour practices on the very young.

#### Commercial grants

Lucy Koster (Vrije Universiteit Brussel, Belgium) - £750

*The multi-period crouched inhumations of Sedgeford, Norfolk*

In the UK, crouched inhumations were practiced across the pre-Christian period. We have identified three individuals, separately buried in this manner within one excavation in Sedgeford, Norfolk. The first two individuals have been radiocarbon dated to two very different periods: 2450-2200BC (late Neolithic/early Bronze Age) and 373-203BC (middle Iron Age). We aim to use radiocarbon dating and isotopic analysis to understand how this third individual fits with these other geographically close crouched inhumations. This will help reconstruct the life histories of these individuals and provide insight into the extent of common burial practice across time periods for this area of East Anglia.

Ceridwen Boston (Wessex Archaeology) - £1,740

*A possible mastoidectomy from Roman Somerset*

The left temporal bone of a Romano-British young adult male was penetrated by a large

smooth-walled sinus or well healed trepanation. The location and size compare closely with osteological examples of a partial trepanation from Roman York and two mastoidectomies from medieval Europe. Mastoidectomy facilitates pus drainage from an infected mastoid process, usually secondary to middle ear infection. CT scanning is required to identify internal structural changes associated with chronic infection and the surgery. Osteological evidence of Roman surgery is extremely rare and will significantly enhance our limited knowledge of surgical care in this period.

#### DDOBA grant

Varsha Warriar (Natural History Museum Vienna/Vienna Doctoral School of Ecology and Evolution, A) - £935

*Age-at-death and biological sex estimation using the acetabulum: An exploratory investigation using trabecular changes*

This project is an exploratory, non-destructive investigation into the applicability of sub-surface changes of the acetabulum for age-at-death and biological sex estimation. This project will analyse CT images, as opposed to skeletal remains, to permit a more contemporary and non-destructive analysis of sub-surface acetabular changes and, derive novel trabecular age, and sex estimation methods. The correlation, if any, between trabecular changes of the acetabulum and these identifiers will be established. Error rates for age and sex estimation will be computed using Bayesian analysis/ Machine Learning to augment the global applicability of these findings within medico-legal, archaeological, repatriation and humanitarian contexts.

#### **Get Involved grants awarded in 2025**

James Elliot (Canterbury Christ Church University) will develop an online course on radiological imaging and paleopathology open to all BABAO members.

Anna Davies-Barrett (University of Leicester) has organized a workshop on Transitional Analysis 3 at the last BABAO Annual Conference in Leicester

#### **Winner Don Brothwell thesis prize 2025**

William Wells (University of York), supervised by Dr Paola Ponce

*An Exploration of Two Cases of Unhealed Proximal Ulna Fractures in Skeletons Excavated from an Early Medieval Cemetery in Lincoln, UK*

From the skeletal assemblage excavated at the site of the Lincoln Eastern Bypass in Lincolnshire, UK, there were two cases of unhealed oblique olecranon fractures. Despite being unhealed at the time of death, the bone fragments show remodelling across and around the fracture line consistent with attempted union suggesting that the fractures were ante-mortem. Due to the rarity of such fractures in the archaeological record, the aim of this dissertation was to understand the nature of proximal ulna fractures and to interpret the aetiology and circumstances surrounding these fractures. Through a palaeopathological examination, firstly, the age and sex of these individuals was determined: both were male, an old middle adult and a mature adult. Secondly, in conjunction with clinical literature, an aetiology was established; it is the conclusion of this study that the fracture patterns observed in these cases are indicative of an overextension of the elbow which occurred during a low-energy fall from standing height onto an outstretched hand. In the time succeeding the trauma event, the fractures of both individuals failed to heal thus establishing non-union. Radiographic analysis uncovered areas of sclerosis, indicating a prolonged period of non-union before death. Osteometric analysis, calculated the robusticity indices of both humeri which revealed that both individuals were likely to have been right-handed and that, following the fractures, both continued to use the arm of the fractured elbow. The collation of archaeological examples of olecranon non-union fractures revealed that most examples present as isolated cases at a site.

#### **Winners Holger Schutkowski thesis prize 2025**

Annie Bones (University of York), supervised by Dr Nathan Wales

### *Examining childhood diet in Iron Age Orkney using compound specific isotope analysis*

The role and significance of marine resources to human diet in Iron Age Orkney is insufficiently understood, and it is generally accepted from the results of carbon and nitrogen bulk isotope analysis that any marine consumption would have been at most, minor. The greater dietary precision of amino acid compound specific isotope analysis offers up an exciting new approach to investigate Orcadian diets however, and teeth from the remains of two middle Iron Age humans from The Cairns provides the opportunity to reconstruct childhood diet at the site. Combined with multivariate analysis and Bayesian modelling, clear variations in diet can be observed between the two humans during their early lives, with one human contributing convincing evidence to support the consumption of marine resources over that of terrestrial animals such as cattle. This study demonstrates that the consumption of marine resources was not avoided at The Cairns during the middle Iron Age, opening up the possibility of a wider practice of marine resource exploitation throughout the Orkney Islands during this period.

Carlos Silva Carvalho (University of Bradford), supervised by Dr Jo Buckberry  
*Worked to the Bone: An Investigation into Labour Division in a Transylvanian, Hungarian-Szekler Community (AD 1050-1800)*

Activity related skeletal change (ARSC) refers to changes in bone morphology due to mechanical stress. Certain increased activity markers such as developmental defects (os acromiale, unfused acromion), robusticity (bone thickness relative to size), and enthesal change (location on bone where muscle attaches) have been noted on modern overarm throwing athletes and archaeological archers. Further studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of ARSC in understanding historic division of labour, specialised activity and introduction of new industries. The following dissertation aims to produce the first insight into activities undertaken by medieval

Szekler communities. Therefore, a sample from the Papdomb site (1050-1800AD) in Văleni (HU: Patakfalva), modern day Romania was used (n = 178). To understand sex-based division of labour and time-based changes in activity, developmental defects, robusticity and enthesal changes were analysed. Statistical comparisons were made between males and females, in addition to pre and post 16th century groups. The results presented no significant difference in robusticity and enthesal changes (except M. pectoralis major) between males and females, suggesting both groups participated in equally mechanically straining activities. Also, no differences were observed between time-periods, indicating a continuation in equally straining activities. Difference in the robusticity of the distal humerus between sexes in the post 16th century sample suggests a change in sex-based division of labour. Papdomb males presented high prevalence of os acromiale (right 14.29%, Left 11.11%) in line with what has been previously observed in military populations (9.2-12.5%). The Results were in line with what is expected from an agricultural society.

### **Update BABAO Research Grants 2026**

The BABAO Grants application round for 2026 will open on February 9th and will close on May 1<sup>st</sup> 2026. The application forms as well as further guidance and information on eligibility, how to apply, and what can be funded can be found at the following page <https://www.babao.org.uk/grants-and-prizes/research-grants/>.

In 2021, BABAO started a new grant scheme: the Decolonising and Diversifying Osteology and Biological Anthropology (DDOBA) Grants, which supports the decolonisation of our research, learning and teaching, and diversification of our profession. This grant scheme operates alongside the current research grant scheme. The amount of funding available, application process, general eligibility criteria and deadlines are the same as the research grant scheme. Both academic (for independent researchers, members employed in research/teaching and students) and commercial applications (where members require 'buy-out' from their roles) will be

considered. For more information, please visit <https://www.babao.org.uk/grants-and-prizes/decolonising-and-diversifying-osteology-and-biological-anthropology-grant/>.

Please note that we are currently working on updating and improving our funding schemes. Any change will be communicated to the membership in a timely manner, but if you are considering applying, please keep an eye on your inbox!

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### **Report from the Sub-Group for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

*Matthew Lee  
Durham University*

In 2025, the EDI sub-group saw a big transition with the end of Matt Lee's tenure as EDI trustee and elections for a new Trustee taking place, with Anna Freed voted into the role in October, with the group undertaking several pieces of work prior to this.

The first main piece of work for the year was reviewing the data from the second EDI survey, which was run at the end of 2024. This was designed to function as a continuation of the survey run at the end of 2019, with questions about membership demography, education and employment included, as well as an opportunity for members to reflect on the EDI work of the last five years. The summary report for this was sent out to the membership in April of 2025 and is now available in the EDI resources section of the BABAO website. Quick demographic takeaways from this suggest that BABAO is not recruiting younger members as strongly as in the past, a slight increase in the range of ethnic diversity present, and an increase in the number of members who would identify as having a disability. The majority of members also reported that they were aware at some level of the work undertaken by the EDI sub-group, with the majority of members also feeling that the work of the EDI sub-group has had a positive impact on BABAO.

The second piece of work the EDI sub-group undertook was reviewing the Association's Code of Conduct and the Complaints Standard

Operating Procedure. This was focused on considering how the association may be able to appropriately handle member behaviour external to BABAO where it may still have a negative impact or create a safety risk for other individuals, both inside or outside of BABAO spaces (i.e., any meeting affiliated with the association, either in person or online). The updated documents were sent out to the membership at the start of September and are available on the BABAO website.

The election of Anna into the EDI Trustee position then brought the year for the EDI sub-group to a close. I would also like to thank Sarah Inskip, Anna Davies-Barrett, and their team for running an incredible conference this year in Leicester. Not only were there great talks, but it was clear that a lot of effort had been made to make the conference inclusive and accessible.

For newer members, the EDI sub-group is comprised of the BABAO Board of Trustees and ordinary members who volunteer their time to take part. If you are interested in learning more about the sub-group or potentially joining the sub-group, more information can be found on the BABAO website or by emailing Anna Freed, the EDI trustee ([edi@babao.org.uk](mailto:edi@babao.org.uk)), or Alice Rose, the EDI secretary ([edisecretary@babao.org.uk](mailto:edisecretary@babao.org.uk)).

Thank you for your support.

Matt Lee (EDI Trustee 2022 – 2025)

Anna Freed (EDI Trustee 2025 - )

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### **The Trade and Sale of Human Remains Taskforce**

*Trish Biers  
The Duckworth Collections  
University of Cambridge*

The Trade and Sale of Human Remains Taskforce continues to educate the public about the commodification of the dead and members of the group have been interviewed in print and on the news across numerous outlets. The collective has published on the trade - To Sell or Not to Sell: The British

Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology's Position on the Trade and Sales of Human Remains in the UK. The Historic Environment: Policy & Practice, 1–19.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17567505.2025.2492398>.

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## **NEWS & PROJECT UPDATES**

### **CRM and Physical Anthropology On a Native American Reservation**

Rose Drew, PhD, FRAI, FA-III (cert)



Rose Drew, Working for Heritage Sites, Department of Resource Management, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, Cass Lake, Minnesota USA. The Reservation is approximately 20 miles from the Headwaters of the Mississippi, which flows out of Lake Itasca as a small stream and then wends its way through large lakes, gaining water and strength as it flows south towards the Gulf of Mexico.

This report has been read by the assistant THPO of the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. She is aware that I discuss the importance of tobacco, sage, cedar and red cloth. It is acknowledged that I work and live on lands that were once held by LakotaSioux and are now stewarded by the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

I am the Archaeological Field Director, as well as the local forensic anthropologist. Though I miss my family in York, I am having a brilliant time here. Most projects are Cultural Resource Management (CRM) assignments. Each summer we walk 70 - 80 miles of road per project as we sink Shovel Tests pits in advance of utilities being installed. In late August 2024, during the American bank holiday known as Labour Day, I served as the forensic anthropologist for a police case involving

disturbed burial mounds. I periodically respond to sites undergoing commercial development, when workers uncover bones, usually non-human animal remains.

Because we do occasionally disturb human skeletal remains in the course of CRM investigations, my "dig bag" now includes ceremonial medicine with which to apologise: tobacco, cedar, sage. When we restored the disturbed burial mounds, these plants, and red cloth, are very important to have on hand.

About 30% of our work is carried out on behalf of Indian Health Services, for which we excavate Shovel Test pits in advance of work to replace old septic and well systems, or to identify optimal placement for new systems. Another 40% of our field work relates to Phase I surveys of Reservation, County, State, or Forest Service lands in advance of utility lines being installed, including gas pipes, and electrical and broadband cables. Other typical investigations include monitoring the dredging or rebuilding of harbours, or in advance of house construction. We respond to public sightings of historic or prehistoric artefacts. During Phase I surveys, it is preferable not to find artefacts and definitely not human skeletal remains – though, we occasionally do. I have co-authored one Phase II report, with two more in preparation, related to research projects in which 3 to 5 units have been excavated to sterile soil (70-80 cmbs), and for which quadrants of soil from each 5cm level have been water-screened.

My adult daughter has visited for extended periods during two Summer dig seasons. I have excavated 7000- to 8000-year-old tools; survived Rabies shots after an encounter with a bat; fed an orphaned bear cub; and my daughter and I made it through the June 2025 tornadoes. We love attending Pow-Wows, and the annual Beltrami County Fair - complete with rodeo. And best of all, I have two Indigenous students happy to learn about human skeletal materials.

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## **MUSEUMS AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS REPORTS**

### **MOLA (Museum of London) *Don Walker***

#### **News and Project Outlines:**

MOLA information and blogs can be found on the organisation websites:

<https://www.mola.org.uk>

<https://www.facebook.com/MOLArchaeology>

#### **Excavation and Contract Work:**

##### **All Hallows Staining, Fenchurch Street, London, EC3**

Recording is continuing on a burial ground of c 4000 individuals excavated by MOLA from the parish churchyard of All Hallows Staining. The burials potentially span a period of over 600 years from c 1218–19, until the closure of the churchyard in the mid-19th century. Parochial churchyards in the City remain underrepresented in the archaeological record. This work has the potential to provide important information about the lives of a subset of the medieval and post-medieval London population and the development of a churchyard through time.

##### **Holborn Viaduct, Farringdon Street, London EC1**

Osteological assessment work has now been completed on the two burial grounds from Holborn Viaduct (overall site assessment is still underway). An area of what was open ground on the eastern bank of the Fleet River was utilised as an overflow ground for St Sepulchre parish and contained the remains of 21 late medieval burials, together with a large assemblage of disturbed disarticulated bone. The site also contained evidence of Roman funerary activity in the form of 17 inhumations and eight cremation burials. Many of the burials are contemporary with the early years of Roman settlement, although funerary activity continued into the later Roman period. Some burials were richly furnished, and the proximity of the Fleet provided some

exceptional preservation of organic materials, doubling the number of Roman wooden coffins excavated in London. There is also a rare example of a form of bed burial.

##### **Landmark Court, London SE1**

Assessment work has been completed on the 85 late Roman inhumation burials from Landmark Court, Southwark Street, London SE1. Future plans include full analysis of the assemblage together with possible selective biomolecular testing to assist in characterising the burial population.

##### **King's Place, London SE1**

Excavations during the course of 2025 at King's Place revealed Roman funerary activity in an area of what was agricultural or marginal land to the south of the main focus of settlement. The works recovered 14 inhumations and a single urned cremation burial. The inhumations included a 'chalk burial' and a prone burial.

##### **St Thomas's Hospital, London SE1**

The results of the archaeological investigations at Shard Place have now been published as a MOLA Study Series: Henderson, M., Miles, A., and Walker, D., with Pearce, J., 2025 A 17th-century burial ground of St Thomas's Hospital, Southwark: Excavations at Shard Place 2014–17, MOLA Archaeology Study Series 36. The skeletal remains of 794 individuals, the majority of whom must have been inmates at St Thomas's Hospital, provided an insight into the health of the population and the diseases from which they suffered. The burial ground revealed early evidence of hospital medical practice in the form of surgical limb amputation. Skeletal evidence of venereal syphilis was also identified, consistent with records of specialist 'foul wards' at St Thomas's Hospital, provided for those suffering from this chronic condition.

##### **Land at Netherhampton Road, Salisbury, Wiltshire**

A programme of archaeological works in 2023 revealed two Early Bronze Age inhumation burials, each recovered from the centre of barrows. The assessment of the human remains was completed in 2025. The adult male

individual in the larger barrow was closely associated with a cremation burial of an adult. Two further cremations in pits were revealed to the south-west and the south-east of the large barrow. Analysis is now underway with some additional C14 samples being processed. Work is due to be finished next year, followed by publication.

### **Land at Feering, Colchester, Essex**

Two urned and four unurned cremation burials of suspected Bronze Age date were recovered during evaluation trenching at Feering between November 2024 and February 2025. The burnt bone was poorly preserved, limiting the recovery of demographic information from all but one of the deposits, where a single adult individual was identified.

### **Lambeth Palace, London SE1**

A partial inhumation was revealed in the lowest deposits below the Guard Room during archaeological works at Lambeth Palace. The burial, which contained the legs and feet of an adult individual, was found below a medieval chalk foundation and is thought to be either early medieval or earlier in date.

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### **Centre for Human Bioarchaeology, London Museum**

*Jelena Bekvalac, FSA*

The focus of work at the museum continues to be with the preparations for moving from the location at London Wall to the new museum building at Smithfield. All the museum collections as part of the process for the move have had to be packed following standards and audited. With the scale of the different collections this has been a considerable undertaking and for the osteological collection being such a large collection this has been a major project. We remain working in the rotunda with the preparation of the many boxes to ensure the safeguarding of the skeletal remains with the moving of them from the rotunda.

With the launch in December, 2025 of the new Research area on the museum website there is now a section for Bioarchaeology which is

where information can now be found for the osteological collection and details for cemetery sites from different periods shared. A few sites have been added, and other pages with cemetery site summaries will continue to be added. In having now the new webpages and Bioarchaeology area on the website, we will no longer be known as The Centre for Human Bioarchaeology (CHB) and if there are enquiries in relation to the osteological collection, sites and research the emails will need to be directed to the new research enquiry email address [research@londonmuseum.org.uk](mailto:research@londonmuseum.org.uk). If you indicate that the enquiry is about osteology/bioarchaeology that will help in them being correctly directed.

Although at present my focus of work is concentrated around the preparation and packing of the osteological collection, I was fortunate in between to be able to participate in outreach engagements. In March I had the pleasure again of being able to give a talk about the London Museum osteological collections as part of the programme for the Archaeology of London module at the UCL Institute of Archaeology (IoA). At the museum in May I was able to be involved in the Careers Insight Day and meet with school students to talk about my career path and working as a curator in a museum. The school students were all very engaged and enjoyed learning about the many varied aspects of working in a museum and the heritage sector.

In the summer I was very pleased to again be able to talk about the osteological collections and research from the collection for overseas summer school students from Arizona State University, USA, Colorado University, Canada and Brigham Young University, USA. It is always a pleasure to meet the students and enjoyable to answer the many and varied questions. I was delighted to be kindly asked by Dr Romola Davenport to speak as part of the Interdisciplinary Workshop on Urban Health in Cambridge, June 30th-July 1st, 2025, based upon the findings of the research project that I worked on with Gaynor Western the Impact of Industrialisation on London Health. It was an excellent workshop, and the two days

were incredibly interesting with the papers presented and the discussions provided a fascinating insight on the health consequences of urbanisation.

In September I greatly enjoyed being at the BABAO conference in Leicester, meeting everyone and learning so much from the super presentations and posters. Once again in October I was able to be part of the programme for The London Month of the Dead and with the kind support of St Bride's church did two tours of the crypt and gave a joint talk at the chapel in Brompton Cemetery with Dr Rachel Ives on Subterranean Sanctuaries. Also, in October I was pleased to be able to attend and participate in the End of Project Seminar for the Tobacco, Health and History interdisciplinary research project looking at the long-term consequence of tobacco use in a population. It was a very enjoyable day and a great opportunity for learning about the outstanding work from the project and the significant resultant data outcomes.

While the preparations and work continue still for the move to the new location, we cannot unfortunately support research visits. It is always a pleasure to help with enquires about the osteological collection and so please do make contact if you need assistance and I am happy to help as much as I can.

For BABAO members who may not have seen the message posted in December 2025 about the London Museum bioarchaeology webpages I copy the details here.

The London Museum is pleased to announce the launch of the first phase of its bioarchaeology webpages (Osteological Database | London Museum), which share datasets and information about the human remains in our care.

On those webpages, you can find summaries of cemetery sites excavated across London and download osteological data and information about the human remains curated by London Museum. Photographs of human remains are available for some sites, and several sites have additional paper-based records (available as

pdfs) about individual human remains. Our 'Bioarchaeology at London Museum' page provides information on how to download, use and cite the cemetery summaries and data downloads.

The museum can only provide data for cemetery sites and remains that have been deposited with the Archaeological Archive or are in its care. In the future, London Museum will be adding more medieval and post-medieval sites, as well as ones from other archaeological periods (e.g. Prehistoric). Please note that the Archaeological Archive and Curator of Osteology will not provide data on request. The new contact email is [research@londonmuseum.org.uk](mailto:research@londonmuseum.org.uk)

Due to critical collections work, including the complete reorganisation of the museum's storage, research access is currently closed to all collections at London Museum Spaces and London Museum Stores, including the Archaeological Archive. This essential work is being undertaken as part of the move to our new museum in Smithfield, where we will showcase more of the London Collection than ever before.

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### **National Museums Scotland**

*Jess E. Thompson*

Following a successful funding bid to the AHRC RICHeS grant stream, 2025 has been a particularly busy year at National Museums Scotland. Our project, *Scotland's Archaeological Human Remains Collections* (SAHRC for short) is a collaborative project led by National Museums Scotland (NMS) with Historic Environment Scotland (HES): [Scotland's Archaeological Human Remains Collections | National Museums Scotland](#).

In February 2025, we appointed the first Curator of Osteoarchaeology at NMS and in Scotland as a whole, Dr Jess Thompson. Jess, as part of a wider team at NMS, including Dr Matt Knight, Bethany Simpson, Vesna Podrzaj and Dr Adrián Maldonado, is implementing new initiatives to enhance how we store and care for archaeological remains for the long

term in an ethical and sensitive way, as well as enabling greater accessibility to the collections for researchers. The first major phase of work involved an infrastructure project to expand the human remains facility at our National Museums Collection Centre (NMCC) in Granton, Edinburgh, allowing us to improve the storage of the archaeological human remains collections, and ensure we can provide space for assemblages which will be allocated in future. This work was completed in Autumn 2025, and the new facility also benefits from equipment which enables sampling of human remains for radiocarbon dating and isotopic analysis to be carried out on site, including pre-sampling 3D modelling using newly-purchased Artec structured light scanners. Alongside colleagues at HES, including Dr Kirsty Owen, the team are working on transfers of human remains historically excavated under HES' Human Remains Call-Off Contract. In September, the first transfers from AC Archaeology Group to NMS were successfully carried out, allowing human remains from X sites to be made available to future researchers. We are also developing sector-wide strategies for the ethical care, curation and research of human remains through collaboration with national, regional and local partners.

In November 2025, we hosted 9 curators from museums across Scotland at NMCC to share knowledge and experiences around the display, storage and sampling of human remains in Scottish Museums. It is hoped that 2026 will see the online publication of an inventory of the archaeological human remains on NMS' website, alongside developing other research strands with collaborators. This work is supported by the [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#) (AHRC), part of [UK Research and Innovation](#) (UKRI), through the [Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science](#) (RICHeS) programme.

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**Wessex Archaeology**  
Charlie Robertson

Burial Archaeology Team

Principle Osteoarchaeologist – Jacqueline McKinley (JMcK); Senior Osteoarchaeologist – Ceridwen Boston (CB); Osteoarchaeologist – Charlie Robertson (CR)

### Summary

The team has been busy with assessments, analysis and external research collaborations while continuing to advise and assist the excavation of human remains. CR presented a poster on Anglo-Saxon dentistry evidence at BABAO this year, CB was awarded a BABAO grant to undertake further investigations on evidence of potential surgical intervention from Hadspen Roman Villa, Somerset. JMcK was presented The Peter Clark award from the Prehistoric Society and spoke on Life Scientific on BBC radio 4. CR, on behalf of Operation Nightingale (initiative aiding military personnel recovery through archaeology), was awarded the C.U.B.A grant to enable isotopic analysis of individuals from Avon Camp Anglo-Saxon cemetery at Netheravon, Wiltshire.

### Assessments (excluding those under confidentiality)

*Church Lane, Climping, West Sussex* (CR, JMcK) – an unurned cremation burial, pyre debris in the top of an Iron Age ditch (potentially related to the burial remains) and a Romano-British ditch, unburnt long bone fragments from an Iron Age ditch.

*EGL2 Peterhead to Drax Onshore Cable, Yorkshire* (CB, CR) – an Early Bronze Age cremation burial (with grave goods) within a ring ditch/barrow, an Iron Age/Romano-British unurned cremation burial, a partial cranium in a ditch, a prehistoric inhumation burial and one (possibly two) Romano-British inhumation burials.

*Viking Carbon Capture and Storage Pipeline, Lincolnshire* (CB) – a Romano-British inhumation burial, an unurned cremation burial and some disarticulated bone from ditches.

*VIP North Wessex Downs, Wiltshire* (CR, JMcK) – an unurned Iron Age cremation burial, redeposited unburnt and cremated bone from a ditch and pit.

In Hampshire at *Andover Link Main Pipe Line* (CB) the remains of 17 Iron Age/Romano-British, five potentially Romano-British dated cremation burials and a redeposited bone in a Romano-British ditch fill were recovered. At *Saddlers to Grafton pipe line* (CB) the remains of two Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age inhumation burials, a potential Mid Anglo-Saxon inhumation cemetery (seven burials) and an undated cremation-related deposit all associated with barrows, and two disarticulated bones from pit/ditch fills including sharp weapon trauma on a cranial fragment.

In Oxfordshire at *South East Strategic Reservoir Option, Abingdon* (CR) the remains of a probable Romano-British inhumation burial and some redeposited bone was recorded from Iron Age/Romano-British deposits. At *Botley West Solar Farm* (JMCK) the remains of a Beaker period chamber burial and redeposited bone from a Romano-British ditch fill were recovered.

Small sites included *Five Estuaries Wind Farm, Essex* (undated unurned cremation burial; CR), *Land at Rowbarrow, Salisbury, Wiltshire* (two Early-Mid Anglo-Saxon inhumation burials; CR), *Haul Road, Science Park, Addlestone, Surrey* (an Iron Age urned cremation burial; CR, JMCK), *Worwell Farm, Tetbury, Gloucestershire* (two possible Romano-British inhumation burials; CR). Small quantities of redeposited bone came from *Banwell, North Somerset* (CR), *Highstead Park, Sittingbourne, Kent* (JMCK) and *Kimpton Down, Hampshire* (CR).

### Analysis

*Ashton Keynes, Cotswold Community, Wiltshire* (CB) – a Romano-British inhumation burial and a redeposited bone from a ditch.

*Fiddington, Ashchurch, Gloucester* (CB) – a mid-late Romano-British unurned cremation burial, seven inhumation burials and three redeposited bones from ditch fills.

*Freemen's Way, Deal, Kent* (CB) – a mid-Iron Age inhumation burial and a redeposited cranium of uncertain date. The cremated bone,

from minimum eight/nine individuals, was recovered from a group of five cremation burials with accessory vessels and pyre/grave goods (four urned, including re-used amphora and large storage jar) and a deposit of pyre debris of mid-late Romano-British dates.

*Kingsmead Quarry, Horton, Berkshire Vol. 2* (CB) – singletons, small grave groups and two mixed rite cemeteries ranging from the Beaker period to the late Romano-British; 26 unburnt individuals and 30 (potentially 54) in the cremated bone assemblage.

*Oakley Lane, Wimborne, Dorset* (JMCK) – an Early Bronze Age unurned cremation burial and redeposited pyre debris in a pit.

*Sutton Road, Langley, Kent* (CB, JMCK) – 13 early Romano-British urned cremation burials (most furnished with ceramic vessels) potentially related to a mound or central feature. Small quantity of pyre debris in two pits of Middle/Late Bronze Age and uncertain dates.

*Westwood Cross, Thanet, Kent* (CB) – three Late Neolithic/Early Bronze Age burials, five Romano-British burials and small amount of redeposited material of Romano-British and Anglo-Saxon date. Cremated bone and redeposited pyre debris from two Middle Bronze Age burials (urned and unurned) and nearby features. Eight Romano-British cremation burials (most urned) alongside a *bustum* burial and *memento mori* deposit.

JMCK progressed work on the large single rite Anglo-Saxon cremation cemetery at *Rattle Road, Stone Cross, East Sussex* and the prehistoric and Romano-British/Anglo-Saxon (as lead author) volumes of the Army Basing Program – <https://www.wessexarch.co.uk/our-work/abp>.

### Further Information:

Wessex Archaeology Open Library: <https://wessexarchaeologylibrary.org/>

Website: <https://www.wessexarch.co.uk/>

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## Oxford Archaeology, Heritage Burial Services

*Lauren McIntyre*

### Team

**Oxford office:** Louise Loe (*Head of Heritage Burial Services*), Mark Gibson, Lauren McIntyre, Helen Webb and Annsofie Witkin (*Project Officer Osteoarchaeologists*)

**Cambridge office:** Natasha Dodwell (*Osteoarchaeologist and Head of Finds and Environmental*), Zoë Uí Choileáin (*Osteoarchaeologist and Finds Project Officer*)

**Lancaster office:** Stephen Rowland (*Archaeology Project Manager*)

### Fieldwork

#### Bedfordshire

Land west of Chalton: One cremation and one inhumation were found during this evaluation. The cremation was urned and was accompanied by an ancillary vessel. A brooch and bead were recovered from the backfill overlying them. The inhumation was found in the top of an Iron Age ditch. Both burials are probably Roman, or late Iron Age/Roman.

#### Cumbria

Oxford Cotswold Archaeology (OCA) has just finished excavating a substantial Roman cemetery, ahead of upgrades to the A66. The burials, predominantly furnished and unfurnished cremations, were recently showcased on BBC's *Digging for Britain* (BBC2, 7<sup>th</sup> January). For more information, see:

<https://oxfordcotswoldarchaeology.org.uk/news/trenches-to-tv-a66/>. The episode is on BBC iPlayer at:  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m002p>

[156/digging-for-britain-series-13-1-scottish-massacre-and-70s-skate-park](#)

#### Essex

Chadwick St. Mary's: two urned Roman cremation burials in the upper fills of a ditch.

Parkgate Solar Farm, Rivenhall: one richly furnished Roman cremation burial with multiple ceramic accessory vessels, a complete amphora, glass vessels and a silver-gilded brooch.

#### Hampshire

West of Basingstoke:

Some 25 urned and unurned cremations and two inhumations were excavated, all believed to be Roman. The inhumations comprised two neonates, buried one on top of the other.

#### Norfolk

Chedgrave: Four heavily truncated Romano-British cremation burials were identified.

#### Oxfordshire

Southeast of Oxford: A total of 146 Roman burials were excavated, including 47 inhumations, 64 urned cremations and 35 unurned cremation deposits. One of the adult inhumations had a metal hook like object in the jaw, apparently deliberately placed there. The reason for this is presently unclear, and it is possible that a relatively large stone, found towards the back of the jaw (in the region of the throat) had also been deliberately placed there.

Quarry extension, west of Oxford: One early medieval crouched inhumation and four probably early medieval unurned cremations, have been excavated. The cremations were grouped together forming a square when viewed in plan.

#### Somerset

Bridgwater Tidal Barrier: A small group of Roman burials was excavated comprising two

adult and two infant inhumations and two unurned cremations.

### Suffolk

Sealink: three Bronze Age cremation burials, including one in an inverted collared urn and four unurned (undated) cremation burials.

Sizewell C nuclear power station: A nationally significant Anglo-Saxon burial ground has been discovered during excavations by Oxford Cotswold Archaeology (OCA) working on behalf of Sizewell C. At least 11 barrows, 30 inhumations and 20 cremations have been found, arranged across a prominent point in the landscape near Theberton in Suffolk.

One of the graves, an elite 7<sup>th</sup> century double burial, was discovered alongside a fully harnessed horse, weapons, and personal items and recently featured on *Digging for Britain* (BBC Two, 14<sup>th</sup> January; <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m002p159/digging-for-britain-series-13-2-our-rarest-find-and-biggest-dig>). For more information, see: [Sizewell Link Road, Theberton - Oxford Cotswold Archaeology](#).

Smaller human remains assemblages were recovered from Hinchbrook, and St Mary's Passage in Cambridgeshire, Further Clough Head in Lancashire, Stoke Doyle Road, Oundle in Northamptonshire, Curbridge Down's Farm and Hertford College Library, Oxford in Oxfordshire, and on the Bramford to Twinsted Overhead Cable Scheme in Suffolk.

### **Post-excavation assessment, analysis and reports**

#### Bedfordshire

Lower Stondon: Analysis of a single unurned Middle Bronze Age cremation burial

#### Buckinghamshire

Newton Longville: Full analysis was undertaken on 41 deposits of cremated bone and two inhumations from Newton Longville, including exploring a programme of isotope analysis to investigate the origins of the

individuals with Durham University. All these remains are anticipated to be Roman, pending radiocarbon dating.

### Cambridgeshire

Waterbeach Barracks: Analysis and reporting was completed on 65 articulated skeletons, 47 contexts containing unburnt disarticulated bone and 21 contexts containing cremated bone. The human remains assemblage is primarily Roman, but several Bronze Age, Iron Age and early medieval individuals are also present.

Eddeva Park, Worts Causeway: A total of 30 skeletons, seven contexts of unburnt disarticulated bone and 11 contexts containing cremated bone were analysed and reported on. Most material was middle Bronze Age in date and derived from three phases of burial in a round barrow. Two skeletons exhibit possible evidence of deliberate post-mortem modification.

### Dorset

Dorset Visual Improvement Scheme: Full analysis has been completed on the prehistoric inhumations and cremations. Full analysis of 150 early medieval skeletons is ongoing.

### East Riding of Yorkshire

Trinity burial ground, Hull:

Around 8,000 burials were excavated between 2015 and 2021 from this burial ground (1785-1861) ahead of road improvements. Technical reports on osteology, isotopes, DNA and coffin fittings are being integrated with stratigraphy, finds, a monument survey and historical research, to form the basis of a synthetic publication. This is an Oxford Archaeology project, in partnership with Humber Field Archaeology, for Balfour Beatty, on behalf of National Highways.

### Essex

Chelmsford Bypass: Six early Roman cremation burials have undergone excavation and post-excavation assessment. At least one

burial contained a glass vessel, two ceramic vessels and an iron object.

### Hertfordshire

Panshanger: One early Bronze Age unurned cremation deposit was analysed and reported upon.

### Gwynedd

Caernarfon and Bontnewydd Bypass: Full analysis and reporting was completed on early to middle Bronze Age cremation deposits from 13 earth cut pits.

### Norfolk

Beccles Road, Loddon: Analysis of four early Bronze Age cremation burials found within a ring ditch. These comprise a large pyre related deposit, originally presumed to be a Bustum burial, an urned cremation burial within a beaker urn, and two unurned cremation deposits.

Corner Lodge, Brancaster: Two inhumations were found relatively close together near a Roman (and later Saxon) fort. The burials date to the Roman period and comprise an older male and a female. The male has a single cut mark on the occipital bones indicating sharp force trauma.

### Nottinghamshire

Newark phase 1: Full analysis of 57 deposits of burnt bone has begun. The deposits come from 39 features and are predominantly early Bronze Age in date.

### Oxfordshire

Magdalen College, Oxford: Reporting was completed on 115 discrete, medieval articulated skeletons and a moderate quantity of disarticulated bone from the fills of features such as ditches and gullies, which had truncated burials. The articulated assemblage comprised 112 discrete skeletons from earth-cut graves within the cemetery and three discrete, young juvenile skeletons, found in

tenement plots outside (but contemporary with) the cemetery. Reporting details both the osteological and biomolecular results. The site report, including the osteology, will be published this year.

### **Social Media**

Keep up to date with all the latest news from Oxford Archaeology on our blog (<https://www.oxfordarchaeology.com/blog>), or by following us on social media at:

- @oxfordarchaeology on Instagram and YouTube
- @oxfordarchaeology.bsky.social on Bluesky
- Oxford Archaeology on Facebook

You can also check out past Burials projects, reports and publications for free on the Oxford Archaeology Knowledge Hub (<https://knowledge.oxfordarchaeology.com/explore>)

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### **York Osteoarchaeology LTD 2025**

*Jordi Ruiz Ventura, Elina Petersone-Gordina, Paola Ponce, Joshua Stead and Malin Holst*

This review does not include projects with fewer than three burials.

*Archaeological Services WYAS, Garforth, West Yorkshire, JRV, EPG*

Nine Roman skeletons contained six adults and three non-adults. Cribra orbitalia affected half the population, and DEH was more prevalent in children, suggesting poor childhood health. Traumatic injuries and degenerative joint changes were prevalent. Dental health was moderate, with much ante-mortem tooth loss and periodontal disease. A total of 55 skeletons dating to the seventh and eighth centuries AD were excavated from six multiple burials and 42 single graves. There were 34 adults and 21 non-adults. Cribra orbitalia was more prevalent in children than in adults, while DEH affected over 60% of the population. Degenerative joint changes affected over half of the adults, and dental health was moderate.

*Archaeological Services WYAS, Melton, East Riding of Yorkshire, JS*

Six inhumations and three cremation burials were excavated, which included a Bronze Age inhumation of an older juvenile who suffered from childhood stress. Two Iron Age adults included one male and one individual of undetermined sex. Three Roman neonate skeletons had been deposited in domestic features, while three Roman cremation burials contained adults.

*Network Archaeology, Buckingham, Buckinghamshire, JRV*

A total of 73 articulated 12th to 13th century skeletons were found in single, double and multiple burials. They consisted of eight non-adults and 65 adults, most of whom were aged between 26 and 35 years. Notably, 60 adults were male, and the sex of the remaining five adults could not be determined. Numerous congenital anomalies were observed, and some of these were recorded in several individuals from the site. DEH affected all of the non-adults and over 80% of the adults. Well-healed fractures were prevalent. Periosteal reactions were mostly found in the lower limbs, but also in the skull and the ribs. While the age profile of this population was relatively young, degenerative joint disease was observed in several individuals. Based on comparative analysis, it was found that the West End Farm cemetery most likely represents an execution cemetery, similar to the 10th to 13th century cemetery at Weyhill Road, Andover.

*MAP Archaeological Practice, Land off Racecourse Road, East Ayton, North Yorkshire, PP, JRV*

Fourteen skeletons dating to the 5th to 6th centuries included ten adults and four non-adults. Childhood stress and degenerative joint disease were common, and one individual had rheumatoid arthritis in both wrists and hands. Dental health was moderate.

Headland Archaeology, Woodditton Spur, B2B Pipeline, Cambridgeshire, JS, JRV, EPG  
One Roman inhumation and thirty-nine cremation burials were recovered. The latter ranged from 0.02% to 83.7% of the expected weight for a modern adult cremation. There

were 34 single burials and five adult and non-adult burials. Evidence for periosteal reactions and degenerative changes was recorded. The inhumation was a possible female adult with degenerative joint changes in the spine and inflammation in the skull, as well as poor dental health.

*Cambridge Archaeological Unit, Cemex Quarry, West Deeping, Lincolnshire, JRV, EPG*

Excavations uncovered 39 skeletons dating to the Iron Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods. The Iron Age individual was a foetus. Twelve adults and three non-adults dated to the Roman period. Cribra orbitalia affected more than half the adults and one non-adult, while DEH affected over half of the adults, suggesting poor childhood health. Trauma and degenerative joint changes were prevalent, and dental health was moderate. The Anglo-Saxon population consisted of 22 adults and a young juvenile.

*Cambridge Archaeological Unit, Somerby Hill, Grantham, Lincolnshire, JRV*

A total of 26 Roman skeletons consisted mostly of non-adults, including fourteen perinates, while most adults were mature. Cribra orbitalia was widespread, as were fractures, degenerative joint changes of the spine were prevalent, sinusitis and other forms of infection, and dental health was poor.

*Cambridge Archaeological Unit, Northstowe, Cambridgeshire, JRV*

Fifteen Middle Bronze Age cremation burials and one Roman inhumation were excavated. Thirteen cremation burials contained one individual, and two contained an adult and a non-adult. Bone representation and preservation were relatively good, ranging from 1.4% to 130.8% of the expected weight for modern adult cremations. The Roman skeleton was an adult male, who had been decapitated, with mild dental disease and joint disease in the spine, hand and hip.

*John Buglass Archaeology, St John's the Evangelist, Blackburn, Lancashire, JS*

Seven post-medieval period adult skeletons included four males, one female and two

individuals of undetermined sex. One named skeleton had DISH and poor dental health.

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## **York Archaeology**

*Vicky Owen*



Vicky Owen (Senior Project Manager, Osteologist), Carina Summerfield-Hill (Project Officer Osteologist), James Badger (Post-Excavation Officer, Osteologist), Alex Andrews (Project Supervisor, Osteologist), Valentina Perrone (Trainee Project Archaeologist, Osteologist)

### **Introduction**

After a challenging 2024, York Archaeology has seen an extremely busy work programme throughout 2025, leading to the identification of a number of sites recovering human skeletal and cremated remains - keeping the team busy, and providing opportunities for our skilled fieldwork osteos to receive training in assessment and analysis!

### **Fieldwork**

#### **Trentholme Drive, York**

Emergency monitoring by YA occurred on works carried out by Yorkshire Water in 2025 after human remains were encountered during repair works. This site is known to lie within the bounds of the Trentholme Drive Romano-British cemetery. A total of 46 fragments of disarticulated human skeletal remains were recovered along with one cremation and three partial articulated burials.

#### **York Station Gateway, York**

Monitoring of works associated with Phase 1 and 2 of the York Station Gateway redevelopment in 2024-25 produced human remains, likely related to the sprawling Romano-British cemetery that was heavily truncated by the modern station construction in 1877, and later service installations. A total of 7 articulated burials were recovered as well as 177 fragments of disarticulated human bone.

The assemblage exhibits spinal degenerative joint disease, non-specific infection, and widespread dental pathology, including severe caries, attrition, calculus, and antemortem tooth loss. Three cases of remodelled trauma were identified, alongside a congenital C2–C3 fusion consistent with Klippel–Feil syndrome.

#### **The Mount, York**

In 2025 monitoring of works at the Mount Royal Hotel uncovered what is believed to be a Romano-British watering hole cut into peat that had developed at the base of a geological kettle hole. From within this watering hole a total of 8 human skulls (two of which contained preserved brain tissue), four animal skulls and a small assemblage of disarticulated human bone was recovered. Further excavation at this site is expected in early 2026, alongside a suite of analyses - watch this space.

#### **Low Ousegate, York**

Emergency monitoring was required on Northern Powergrid cable repair works at the junction of Low Ousegate and Church Lane. The works took place within the site boundary of the graveyard of St. Michaels Church, Spurriergate. The assemblage, comprising 99 fragments of human bone, underwent rapid assessment through which an MNI of 3 individuals was determined.

#### **Wysall, Nottinghamshire**

Archaeological evaluation at Wysall, Nottinghamshire revealed two burials, of which only one was recovered in this phase. These were located outside of a probable enclosure ditch, dating to the Roman period, aligned south-east to north-west (in line with other cases of Roman rural burials). The excavated individual was identified as a probable female between 26-34 years that exhibited a range of pathological conditions including non-specific periostitis on the lumbar vertebrae, resolved scorbutic lesions and extra spinal joint disease.

#### **St Mary's Church, Newark**

Works in the Remembrance Gardens of St Mary Magdalene Church, Nottinghamshire recovered a total of 226 fragments of

disarticulated human remains associated with the church's burial ground, dating to the 18th-19th century. Findings included cases of non-specific infection, Schmorl's nodes, musculoskeletal trauma and cribra orbitalia. The remains were reburied by the rector of St Mary.

### **Willowfields, Oxfordshire**

A disturbed neonatal inhumation and several disarticulated bones dated between the Mid-Bronze Age and Roman period, were found during an evaluation at Draycott, Willowfields. Disarticulated bone was found to relate to at least two individuals, including a second neonate (of which only one radius was recovered) and an older adolescent showing signs of maxillary sinusitis and presence of dental calculus. Other human remains, such as two isolated teeth and two joining fragments of radial bones were recovered from a ditch fill and a probable post-hole respectively.

### **Repton, Derbyshire**

A total of 100 fragments of disarticulated human bones was found within the boundaries of the former nave of the Augustinian Priory, which was dissolved in 1538. Osteological analysis yielded an MNI of three. Observations of the remains indicated the predominant presence of muscular skeletal alterations related to extra spinal joint disease, but was otherwise unremarkable.

### **Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln**

Excavation of a late Bronze Age to Iron Age site in Bracebridge Heath, Lincolnshire between 2024-25 revealed the remains of 2 mid-Bronze Age urned cremations and 2 inhumations of probable Bronze Age date. Of interest was the identification and 3D recording of a brick lined culvert formerly related to St John's Asylum, which is noted in archival research as "causal to the typhoid epidemic of Lincoln" in the early twentieth century. Post-excavation work is now ongoing.

### **Linear Scheme, North Lincolnshire**

Fieldwork has *just* finished on part of a linear Scheme in north Lincolnshire, where the remains of 12 Roman to Post Roman individuals have been recovered within a dense

area of occupation and Roman industry. We hope to share more as post-excavation progresses.

### ***Ongoing Post-excavation***

#### **Kent Street, York**

An ops notice in 2023 on the site of the former church of All Saints, Fishergate, produced an assemblage of 83 articulated individuals and over 12,000 fragments of commingled disarticulated human skeletal remains, which dated from the Anglian to late Medieval periods, along with 3 identified mass graves potentially dating to the Siege of York. Analysis is now ongoing, notable findings at this stage include a possible case of early-stage leprosy, alongside the typical range of pathological conditions expected for a medieval to post-medieval population. Both sexes are represented within the mass graves, though there is an absence of juvenile internments. The haphazard positioning and complete lack of observable perimortem trauma suggests a possible infectious origin, which may have affected an isolated group. Work on the site has previously been undertaken by **Onsite Archaeology**, who identified 11 mass graves which were well organised and respectfully placed. Further work will entail radiocarbon dating and bayesian modelling to determine the date of the early to late date of the cemetery and mass burials.

#### **St Nicholas Church, Nottingham**

Remains of at least 11 18th-19th century individuals recovered from York Archaeology excavations on the St Nicholas Church overspill burial ground in Nottingham in 2019 were reburied in a small but poignant ceremony, taking place at the Wilford Hill Cemetery, West Bridgeford. They have been reinterred with individuals exhumed during earlier work within the same overspill burial ground.

#### **Former Baptist Chapel at Agard Street, Derby**

2025 saw the analysis reporting completed for c.108 individuals recovered from the Agard Street Baptist Chapel in Derby, as well as the

remains of the probable rear footprint of the chapel itself, which was demolished in the 1890's. In-house conservation efforts allowed for the identification of a number of named individuals (and their living descendants) through conservation cleaning of coffin plates and integrated archival research. This, coupled with analysis of the remains paint a vivid and unique picture of Derby in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. Trauma and disease were prevalent across the assemblage, and two instances of autopsy (craniotomy and thoracotomy) were identified, including of one infant individual. The remains are currently curated by the University of Derby School of Human Sciences, where we hope stories of these fascinating individuals will continue to be told through the University's local students and researchers. The site is due to be published in 2026, the report is now available via the ADS.

### **Kilham, North Yorkshire**

The team have now begun the analysis stage of nr.50 individuals recovered from a Bronze Age and mid-Saxon funerary landscape from Kilham, North Yorkshire, commissioned by Historic England. The analysis report is expected to be completed in 2026, with publication forthcoming.

### **Strategic Pipeline Alliance**

Analysis of just some of the remains recovered from excavations as part of a linear scheme in Lincolnshire in 2025 have uncovered four Bronze Age urned cremations within a D shaped enclosure. An isolated subadult inhumation, deriving from an Iron Age context displayed signs of non-specific infection likely attributed to pneumonia in the early stages of healing, mild metabolic vitamin C disturbance, cribra femoralis and dental pathology. Elsewhere along the scheme, disarticulated remains of Roman date were commonly identified within basal ditch fills and termini, which is broadly typical for the period and sites - including one fragment of juvenile femur displaying signs of post-mortem dismemberment.

*You can follow us in all the usual ways, and find out more information by checking out our LinkTree: <https://linktr.ee/yorkarchaeology>*

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## **DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS**

### **WMG, University of Warwick**

*Charlotte (Charlie) Primeau*

At Warwick Manufacturing Group (WMG) at the University of Warwick, the forensic department, *Forensic Centre for Digital Scanning and 3D printing*, has expanded with a part-time staff member: welcoming Dr Vasiliki (Vassilina) Louka. This reflects our increasing forensic micro-CT case work for UK police forces. Our staff therefore now consist of three BABAO members: Charlotte Lawrence, our PhD candidate, Charlie Primeau, our academic lead, and Vassilina assisting with our case work.

Charlotte is continuing her PhD research on fractures using micro-CT imaging, now in her third year, while also being the Treasurer for BABAO. Charlie's research is focused on child and vulnerable adult abuse, while Vassilina is focussing on trauma analysis and fractography.

Team members have participated in and presented research at conferences such as the American Academy of Forensic Sciences (AAFS) in February in Baltimore, USA, the Forensic Anthropology Society of Europe (FASE) in Paris in August, the Society of Radiographers of South Africa-International Association of Forensic Radiology (SORSA-IAFR) joint conference in Cape Town in September, and BABAO at the University of Leicester in September. We particularly enjoyed meeting colleagues at the BABAO conference at the University of Leicester, new and old faces. It was great seeing you all!

The department continues to support police forces predominantly in the UK, providing micro-CT scanning and 3D printing for case work such as are strangulations, hangings, child abuse, elder abuse, sharp and blunt force trauma, dismemberment cases, 3D printed weapons, traffic accidents and fire

investigations. In addition, WMG has also been involved with medical research relating to human remains, cadavers and animal bones and continues this with several ongoing projects such as improving hip replacement surgery, osseous tibial implants and failure analysis.

We would like to highlight to the membership of BABAO, that at WMG, there is funding available for free access for smaller micro-CT imaging projects such as proof of concepts, feasibility studies or method development, through the National Facility for X-ray Computed Tomography (NXCT). To contact us regarding any questions, write to: [Charlie.primeau@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:Charlie.primeau@warwick.ac.uk).

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### **Department of Archaeology, University of York**

*Paola Ponce, Malin Holst and Michelle Alexander*

During 2025 we began planning the relocation of some of the staff and facilities from the PalaeoHub and BioArch to the Berrick Saul building on campus. Supported by external funding applications (Wolfson and RICHES) and generous University investment, we are now in the final stages of scheduling the move for the summer. The new state-of-the-art facility will include dedicated research and teaching laboratories for Human Bones, Zooarchaeology and aDNA, and will house our extensive reference collections of human and animal remains as well as our radiography system.

In 2025 we also implemented the reorganisation of the academic year into semesters, first planned in 2024. At undergraduate level, Paola Ponce and Mik Lisowski taught the Practical Skills in Human and Animal Bones, providing hands-on laboratory training in identifying, ageing and sexing archaeological remains. At postgraduate level, Malin Holst, supported by Becky Knight, taught the Professional Practice, where students applied analytical methods to produce technical reports to professional standards in human osteology.

Through the 'Open Lab', students could also access skeletal collections to further develop their practical skills. These modules were taught in the PalaeoHub.

Based in BioArCh, Michelle Alexander, Sophy Charlton, Oliver Craig, Nathan Wales and Jessica Hendy taught biomolecular archaeology across our BA, BSc, MA and MSc programmes, covering stable isotopes, proteins, aDNA and lipids. Modules such as Introduction to Archaeological Science, Practical Skills in Biomolecular Archaeology, Ancient Biomolecules and Special Topic: Ancient DNA made extensive use of our state-of-the-art laboratories, collections and instrumentation, which also supported student dissertations.

During the past academic year, we jointly supervised 8 undergraduate dissertations and 14 master's dissertations, and are currently supervising 5 PhD students working on osteoarchaeological topics. We were also proud to see our students William Wells and Joseph Lyne receive the BABAO Don Brothwell and Holger Schutkowski prizes for their outstanding undergraduate and master's dissertations.

### **Ongoing PhD Students**

- Elisha Meadows: The melting pot of Eboracum: exploring diversity and personhood through skeletal and burial evidence in York during the Roman period.
- Charlotte Blacka: Developing rapid and low-cost mass spectrometry-based identification of biological sex in fossils
- Maggie Sullivan: An isotopic approach to diet and mobility in Medieval Iberia
- Carrie Ann Woollard: Exploring prehistoric experiences of child loss and grief: Navigating infant mortality in Iron Age Britain
- Jordi Ruiz Ventura: Metabolic stress markers in non-adult skeletons from medieval England

### **New and Ongoing Research Projects**

-AGE-OLD STORIES: INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF OLDER ADULTS PAST AND PRESENT is a recently awarded UKRI

Future Leader's Fellowship (2025-2029) which will explore the health and social status of older adults across European prehistory and the Roman period. Dr Lindsey Büster, two post-doctoral researchers and a PhD student (advertised forthcoming) will trial the recently-published Transition Analysis 3 method ([Boldsen et al. 2026](#)), together with novel biomolecular techniques, to refine age-at-death for adults aged 45+ years plus by traditional osteological ageing methods. Stable isotope analysis will examine the health and diet of these individuals, while examination of the funerary record will help establish the social status of these individuals in their respective communities. Partnering with AgeUK and the York Museums Trust, the project seeks to understand how attitudes to ageing in the past might shape perceptions of older age today. The project is in its initial stages and, since much of the research is in its exploratory stages, collaborations/discussions/ideas are very welcome, so please do get in touch ([lindsey.buster@york.ac.uk](mailto:lindsey.buster@york.ac.uk)).

-MEDGREENREV is a UKRI underfunded collaborative EU Synergy project (2023-2029) with the Universities of Reading, Barcelona and Granada and Prof Michelle Alexander as the PI at York. The project aims to rethink the medieval 'green revolution' in the western Mediterranean (6th-16th AD), exploring how the introduction of new forms of agriculture transformed the environment and economy of the region. A team at BioArCh are applying biomolecular analysis (isotope analysis, aDNA and organic residue analysis) to a range of materials, including human and animal bone, plants, and ceramics, to address questions surrounding changing patterns of diet, cuisine, mobility and plant and animal husbandry. See <http://medgreenrev.com/en> for more information.

-SEEING THE DEAD is an ongoing Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded project (2025-2027) led by Maureen Carroll (PI) with Michelle Alexander and Jackie Mosely as co-investigators. In collaboration with York Museums Trust, Heritage Doncaster, Wakefield Museum and MAP Archaeological Practice, and specialists including Malin Holst,

the project investigates a distinctive Roman funerary practice in 3rd-4th century CE York in which liquid gypsum was poured over coffined, shrouded bodies before burial. Using advanced scientific techniques, the project analyses gypsum casings and human remains to reconstruct biocultural profiles (osteology, isotopes, aDNA) and identify substances such as resins, dyes and chemicals used on burial textiles. Imaging methods—including X-rays, CT scanning, advanced digital imaging and SEM—are also used to reveal morphological details, generate 3D reconstructions of graves and individuals, and potentially identify grave goods preserved within the shrouds. For updates on our progress, see: <https://seeingthedead.ac.uk/>

-RoBMobS - ROMAN BRITANNIA: ROMAN MOBILITY AND SOCIETY: is an ongoing, awarded AHRC project (2025-2028), combining archaeological, isotopic and aDNA data to carry out research into mobility and society in Roman Britain. Dr Sophy Charlton is partnered with colleagues at Cardiff University on this three-year project to investigate population movements within Roman populations.

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**Report from Department of Archaeology,  
Durham University**  
*Rebecca Gowland*

It's been another busy year in the Department of Archaeology at Durham! The most significant event being the arrival of Professor Siân Halcrow from the University of Otago, who began a four-year British Academy Global Professorship with us in September 2025. We are delighted to welcome Siân to our team. Read more about Siân's funded project: 'Skeletons in the Closet: The bioethics of the use, curation, and repatriation of anatomical skeletal legacy collections in Britain' in the Projects section of the Review. Siân is also lead editor of *Bioarchaeology, Activism and Social Justice: Equitable and Sustainable Global Futures* (Springer) to be published very soon.

Becky returned from research leave in September and, after many years undertaking University roles (Deputy Executive Dean and then as Deputy Provost), she is now enjoying being back full-time in the Department! Becky continues to direct the MSc Human Bioarchaeology and Palaeopathology degree and has welcomed many home and international students for this academic year. She is also working on the Leverhulme funded project “Modelling the Black Death and Social Connectivity in Medieval England” led by Dr Alex Brown in History. The project is producing some interesting results and she’ll present some of these at the PPA in March 2026. In April 2025, Becky was awarded a Matariki Network Grant and in August travelled with colleagues Chris Gerrard (Archaeology) and Frank Krauss (Physics) to Aotearoa New Zealand to work with leading infectious disease epidemiologists on a project that aims to model the spread of the 1918 Influenza. Finally, Becky was honoured to present a keynote talk at the inspiring “Child Space” conference in June 2025 held in stunning Budapest.

Claire Hodson continues to teach across both MSc programmes and, together with Becky, has been advising the Directorate for the Authorised Intervention into Tuam. Becky and Claire were also delighted to be invited to the interdisciplinary workshop “Syndemics of Childhood, Past and Future” at Georgetown, Washington DC, in November, organised by Jordan Wilson and Timothy Newfield.

Daniel Gaudio has continued to direct the MSc Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology degree, which was accredited by the Chartered Society of Forensic Science. Daniel secured a Global Engagement Grant from Durham University to support a workshop in December 2025 on the biocultural impacts of climate change induced glacial retreat. The workshop addressed the emerging discovery of human remains in glacial regions, alongside an intersectoral assessment of the ecological, historical, archaeological, legal, and socio-cultural significance of glaciers. Over the course of 2025 Daniel was also involved in the investigation of five twentieth century

casualties from armed conflicts in Italy. In spring 2025, he delivered a public lecture at the Agorà space at MUSE, the Museum of Science in Trento, as part of a programme of events marking the 2025- International Year of Glaciers’ Preservation.

In June 2025, MSc students in Forensic Archaeology and Anthropology visited the facilities of Cellmark Forensic Services, where they participated in mock forensic examinations of evidence and engaged in discussions on case assessment and investigative strategy in forensic contexts. We are looking forward to taking our current cohort of students to Italy in July 2026 to undertake important fieldwork identifying soldiers from WWI.

Dr. Kelly Blevins is continuing her project as a Wellcome Trust Early-Career Fellow, entitled *Exploring the contribution of social inequality to the evolution of the Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex across five millennia*. She’s spent this past year assessing skeletons for a spectrum of skeletal TB lesions in the affable Burials departments of Wessex Archaeology and Oxford Archaeology. Over the coming year she and her lab technician, Amy Allan-Jones, will be generating sequencing data and refining paleopathology-informed sampling and bioinformatic screening methods for *M. tuberculosis* complex DNA.

Dr Ellen Kendall is continuing her Wellcome-Trust funded research project on wetland health and climate change. The project is going ahead well, with promising findings, and the team hopes to launch a project website in the near future, along with publications currently in preparation. Outside of the project, Ellen has forged new research relationships, engaging in participatory action research on disability perspectives and advocacy. She continues to serve as the Treasurer for the Society for the Study of Childhood in the Past, in her 9<sup>th</sup> year in the role.

Many congratulations to PhD graduates Dr Hannah Leidl, Dr Lauren Kancle and Dr Asan (Ziyi) Li. You have been wonderful and we

wish you all the very best for your future careers!

### **Outreach**

We participated in several outreach events for school children to promote the study of human remains. Led by Becky Gowland and supported by Tina Jakob and our fabulous 2025/26 MSc student cohort, we had close to 700 visitors at the World Anatomy Day held at the Old Fire Station in Sunderland. Our interactive displays focussed on human skeletal anatomy and trauma in forensic contexts, but our sandbox with 'archaeological' artefacts – mostly chocolate gold coins – proved to be the most popular activity. This year's contribution to 'Celebrate Science' held at Locomotive in Shildon was organised by Sophie Laidler and Tina Jakob with the support of our MSc students. Our stand with skeleton casts and radiographs of pathological lesions was visited by more than 5000 enthusiastic children and their families during the 2-day event.

### **New Projects**

'Skeletons in the Closet: The bioethics of the use, curation, and repatriation of anatomical skeletal legacy collections in Britain' British Academy Global Professorship Siân Halcrow with Rebecca Gowland.

Using a multi-faceted, interdisciplinary approach pioneered by the applicant in her groundbreaking work on the bioarchaeology of social justice, this project develops the first state-of-the-art, ethical understanding of historical anatomical skeletal collections in Britain. By investigating and establishing the scope, provenance and bioarchaeological composition of collections held across Britain in regional museums, and universities, the controversies of extractive past acquisition practices of human remains will be forefronted and their disproportionate effect on the marginalised in society: the poor and working class, women, children, the enslaved and those under colonial rule. Through partnership with diverse stakeholders, the project will develop the first socially informed guidelines, which could revolutionise how institutions handle human remains, leading to more respectful and equitable practices. In doing so, this project

will contribute to the international discourse on the ethical management of human remains and foster greater public awareness and understanding through outreach.

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**School of Archaeology and Ancient  
History, University of Leicester**  
*Jo Appleby*

The Tobacco, Health and History project has had a very busy year with the project officially coming to an end. First, we have published a number of papers exploring the relationship between tobacco use and health in the past with these showing disproportional effects and intersectional components. Anna Davies-Barrett published and led a key publication on a new oro-dental index which has been made a volume highlight in the IJPP. This method, co-developed with dentists, has been particularly well received among the bioarchaeological community. Sarah Inskip, in conjunction with collaborator Jason Hughes, will see the publication of the book 'Tobacco Through Time: Interdisciplinary Perspectives' which brings new ideas surrounding the approaches to tobacco research. Brian Costello is writing up the results from the Irchester Field School and other school visits highlighting the important contribution that Bioarchaeology can make to perceptions around tobacco and vaping. Finally, The Tobacco, Health and History project won the THEawards 2005 Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Project of the year and was praised for its innovative interdisciplinary approach and for its potential to reveal critical information about today. We were immensely proud to win this award and it is a testament to all the amazing research being undertaken by the talented early career researchers on the project. While the Project is officially over, we will continue working on the results for some time to come.

Sarah Inskip is now leading the TB-omics project, a three-year UKRI funded project that aims to assess changing patterns of TB through time through an interdisciplinary approach combining multiple omics fields. Anna Davies-Barrett will be leading the palaeopathology and calculus component of

the study while a new PDRA and lab tech will be joining us shortly.

Jo Appleby's AHRC-funded CreMATE network is drawing to a close and the network members are working on a set of Europe-wide guidelines for those working with burnt and cremated human remains from archaeological and forensic contexts, which we hope will be published later this year.

We are continuing to work closely with our honorary fellows. Sarah Inskip continues to work with honorary fellow Alette Blom on leprosy, while Taylor Peacock is supporting research on the human skeletal remains from recent excavations from Leicester Cathedral. Valentina Perrone, who has recently started a role at York Archaeology, has recently published on damage to dental cementum observed in smokers, with a further publication in the pipeline.

Elliot Elliott has submitted his PhD thesis on leprosy in peridomestic animals. He has shown that British red squirrels have the same skeletal involvement in leprosy as humans, which provides valuable knowledge about the pathogenesis of the bacteria. Alvaro Ortega Gonzalez, who received a NEIF grant to construct Sr and S baselines for the Nene Valley, continues his PhD on the Early Medieval Transitions working in collaboration with the BGS and MOLA.

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### **Biological Anthropology Research Centre, University of Bradford**

*Jo Buckberry*

This year has been busy for Jo Buckberry, Hannah Koon, Shirley Curtis-Summers, Andrew Wilson, Julia Beaumont and Keith Manchester. We have welcomed students on the newly re-named MSc Human Bioarchaeology and Palaeopathology degree and two new doctoral researchers to the BARC; you can read project abstracts by Lewis Scullion and Lauren Antle in the PhD abstract section of the review. Jo was awarded AHRC-NSF/SBE funding for the project *Dead and Buried: Investigating changes in health*

*during the Industrial Revolution using documentary records and human skeletal remains* with co-applicants Gillian Crane-Kramer and Justin Lowry (both SUNY Plattsburgh, USA); the project will start in March. This builds on Jo and Gillian's successful Royal Society International Exchange and will collate skeletal and documentary data on health for the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in the UK and USA in a geospatial framework.

Jo has continued her research into medieval trauma, continuing analysis of individuals from Stirling Castle for Historic Environment Scotland and working with Ronja Bågling and Patrick Randolph-Quinney (University of Uppsala Campus Gotland, Sweden) and master weaponsmith Peter Johnsson to investigate puncture injuries to individuals who died during the Battle of Visby in 1361. Patrick and Jo delivered a very successful and enjoyable trauma workshop in Visby in November. Jo has also continued her collaboration with History Hit, with a documentary released on YouTube in November and a further one in production. Shirley has been continuing her research on isotope analysis to investigate maternal-child diet and health relationships in medieval Scotland for her *Ties That Bind* project, Hannah has been busy exploring orbital roof lesions and refining combined CNS isotope methods, she was also elected Trustee and Treasurer for the International Society for Biomolecular Archaeology (ISBA). Julia continues exploring incremental dentine isotope analysis along with her retirement and extensive travel. Together Hannah and Julia have been collaborating with modern foragers to investigate isotope dietary baselines.

Andy is continuing with the scientific study of *Ballymacombs More Woman* with the National Museum of Northern Ireland alongside further work with Inca Capacocha. Doctoral researcher Isobel Grimley has had a very successful year. She was awarded the Eve Cockburn Student Prize from the Paleopathology Association for best student paper presented at the 52<sup>nd</sup> Annual North American Meeting in Baltimore, US (\$200 prize sponsored by Elsevier, and a whole load

of palaeopathology books!) in March, and in June she received a Foundation Grant (£4500) awarded by Funds for Women Graduates to help with living costs during her writing up year. Bradford is proud to be part of the Access+ consortium, who will deliver the huge HS2 post-excavation analysis.

Hannah, Jo and Andy are on the Academic Advisory Panel, advising on Archaeological Science, Human Bioarchaeology, and Imaging and Visualisation respectively. We are all consultants for the development of the osteology work package, working closely with Ange Boyle, Don Walker, Simon Mays, Sarah Stark and others to maximise the research potential of the many thousand archaeological individuals excavated. We are really excited with the progress to date and the enormous potential of the project. I'm sure we (as a consortium) will have lots of exciting things to report in coming years!

### **Completed PhD Research**

*Chelsea Landon:* Consanguineous marriages and congenital anomalies in English populations from the 8th to 19th centuries AD (AHRC Heritage Consortium).

### **Ongoing PhD Research**

*Lauren Antle:* Utilising craniofacial asymmetry to assess developmental stress in adult and non-adult skeletons during the English pre-industrial and industrial revolution  
*Corinne Feuillatre:* Bringing up baby: in search of novel biomarkers for nutrition and obesity risk using stable isotope ratios in incremental tissues in mother/infant pairs (Faculty of Life Sciences)

*Isobel Grimley:* A lost world: assessing frailty from archaeological skeletal remains of children, adolescents and young adults (School of Archaeological and Forensic Sciences)

*Lewis Scullion:* Reassessing Egyptian bioarchaeological evidence in collections and the role of digital documentation for enhancing access and understanding

**Dissertations Submitted for the MSc Forensic Archaeology and CSI (anthropology dissertations only), and MSc Human Osteology and Palaeopathology:**

*Dana Ashton:* Suffer little children? Investigating trauma patterns in late to post-medieval England

*Jessica Fox:* Vitamin D Deficiency in 19th-century Wolverhampton: an investigation using micro-CT and histological thin sections

*Millie Whiting:* The potential of cross-sectional imaging to improve the diagnosis of treponemal disease

*Niamh Mathers:* Using stable isotope analysis to identify signs of dietary stress: applications in humanitarian forensic investigation

*Ana Gonzalez Cadiente:* From healer to harlot: the role of women in late to post medieval Britain and Ireland

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### **School of History, Classics and Archaeology, University of Edinburgh** *Jonny Geber*

The past year has been a productive one at the University of Edinburgh. We were fortunate to retain Miguel Ángel Moreno-Ibáñez as a member of the teaching staff until December 2025; he has since returned to Spain to take up a post-doctoral position focusing on his research into taphonomy and human remains within Spanish prehistoric cave systems.

Furthermore, we are currently enhancing and expanding our laboratory resources. This includes fostering closer collaborative ties with the Department of Anatomy to provide enriched facilities for both staff and students in both Schools. In leadership news, we are delighted to announce that Catriona Pickard has been promoted to Professor and is currently serving as the Head of Archaeology.

The One Health Research Group hosted the “Fragmented Bodies: Workshop on Taphonomy of Anthropogenic Bone Fractures” in January 2025. Organised by Miguel Ángel Moreno-Ibáñez, the event featured a keynote talk by Dr Palmira Saladié from the Catalan Institute of Human Paleocology and Social Evolution (IPHES).

In June, Sam Leggett organised the workshop “AGAiNt the Ancient Grain: Autoimmune Gut Aetiology in the Past”, which investigates

the archaeology of coeliac disease. Later in the year, Dr Ricardo Fernandes from the Max Planck Institute of Geoanthropology delivered the 2025 Munro Lecture, entitled “Isotopic Snapshots: A 15,000-Year Journey Through the Human Story”. Dr Fernandes also conducted a specialised workshop on using FRUITS/ReSources to model past diets from stable isotope ratios—a session that was highly appreciated by students, researchers, and staff alike.

In May 2025, we held our second “mock excavation” season. Set against the scenic backdrop of the Pentland Hills—and accompanied by curious sheep, and heilan’ coos in the distance—the field school enjoyed magnificent weather. Students were trained in the excavation and recording of simulated human skeletons, which were arranged in a variety of burial postures. This module has been developed from an initiative by Linda Fibiger, and we are currently exploring avenues to expand this practical training further.

Jonny Geber completed his Leverhulme Trust-funded project, “Harvested Bodies”—which focused on late modern anatomical collections in Austria and Sweden—in May 2025. He is currently publishing the results and developing the project further; this includes the XR-Anatomica project (<https://www.fh-joanneum.at/projekt/xr-anatomica/>), directed by FH-Prof. Dr Helmut Ritschl of FH Joanneum, Graz. Furthermore, his collaborative “Passage Tomb People” project, focusing on Neolithic Ireland, has reached the dissemination stage; preliminary results were presented at the CIfA Human Osteoarchaeology Special Interest Group online conference in October 2025.

In March 2025 Sam Leggett wrapped up her Leverhulme Trust funded project “ArchaeoFINS: medieval Archaeology of Fishing around the Irish and North Seas” with lots of exciting new isotopic data from Scottish human and faunal remains, plus organic residue analysis on pottery from the same sites. Watch this space for forthcoming publications from the project! Sam is now Lecturer in

Biomolecular & Medieval Archaeology with us at Edinburgh, continuing her research and teaching.

### **Current PhD projects**

Hapanova, Vera – Childhood diet and weaning on Belarusian lands from the Middle Ages to the Modern Times

Harrison, Hannah – Home is where the heart is: Domestic infant burials in Ancient Egypt’s Middle Kingdom (c. 2055 BCE – c.1795 BCE)

Narramore, Lydia – From Empires to Kingdoms: trauma as a gateway to understanding the impact of urbanisation, and cultural and environmental change in ancient Sudan

Reeve, Indi – Morbidity and mortality in relation to the environment: a comparison of British urban and rural skeletal populations

Spencer, Emma – Maternal Care and Mortality in Medieval Scotland

### **Dissertations Submitted for MSc Human Osteoarchaeology Programme 2023/24**

Adamson, Kevin – Investigating Intra- and Inter-Observer Agreement in Dental Enamel Hypoplasia Age Estimation at the Masters Level

Butsch, Holland – Beyond the Surface: A Comparative Analysis of Accuracy and Detail in the 3D Scanning of Human Skeletal Remains

Carrón de Benito, Andrea – Stories of Aging Bodies: Analysis of Osteoarthritis in Older Individuals in Two Medieval Scottish Populations

Clark, Linsey – Cuts and Corrosion: Experimental Analysis of Sharp Force Trauma and Acidic Exposure Using Pig Ribs as Human Skeletal Proxies

Cox, Rachel – *Ubi os, ibi ignis*: A Study of Late Roman Cremation Practices at Alton Cemetery Using Stable Isotope Analysis and ATR-FTIR

Deegan, Aleksandra – Exploring the Complex Manifestations of Osteomyelitis in the Surgeons' Hall Museum Collections from a Palaeopathological Lens

Dinas, Michaela – Specific Skeletal Markers of Chronic Sinusitis and the Origin of Infection

Easton, Hope – Echoes of Agony: An Exploration Into the Impacts of Pain from Skeletal Infections in Individuals from Medieval Scotland

Fess, Emily Louise – Religion, Relics, and Violence: An Osteological Examination of Saints and Martyrs from Early Christian Rome and the English Reformation

Macartney, Emma Victoria – A Stable Isotope Analysis of Mobility at Water Lane Melbourn, Cambridgeshire

McNeal, Shayla – Dirt and Disease: Distinguishing Between Taphonomic Modifications and Pathological Changes on Archaeological Human Remains

Nelson, Ashley – Meta Analysis of Dental Health in Medieval Scotland

Recinos, Megan – Tracking Sexual Dimorphism to a Population Level Using Only the Skull

Schena, Mackenzie – Investigating Labor Patterns in the Hand Entheses of Medieval Scottish Individuals Using the V.E.R.A Method

Tucker, Jules – The Rural-Urban Divide of Physiological Stress in Medieval and Post-Medieval Scotland, AD 560–1640.

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## Bioarchaeology & Osteoarchaeology, University of Southampton (BOS)

Sonia Zakrzewski



2025 was yet another busy year in Southampton.

Prof Alistair Pike has been continuing his isotopic studies, undertaking a lot of laser ablation work. Prof Joanna Sofaer has been doing less work in osteoarchaeology, but has been working on projects evaluating the importance of heritage on wellbeing. Dr Jaco Weinstock completed analysis of the Amara West fauna from Sudan and the large Saxon faunal assemblage from Burrow Hill (an island site not far from Sutton Hoo). After studying some enormous Pleistocene megafauna in 2024, some of that megafauna has now been added to our comparative zooarchaeological collections. Prof Sonia Zakrzewski has been continuing her work looking at understanding and communicating aspects of disAbility. She has been working with Prof Brenda Baker (at Arizona State University) on a handbook on the bioarchaeology of Northeastern Africa.

Prof Jay Stock also joined the department for part of the summer through a SIAH Visiting Fellowship awarded to Sonia Zakrzewski & William Davies. This enabled them to collaborate on issues of Neanderthal mobility and locomotion (linking archaeology and biological anthropology).

Dr Sarah Stark has continued working at Historic England, but we have been able to developing our links with Historic England (as we already have with Dr Simon Mays), such as through placement students.

Despite Prof Markus Heller currently being in charge of their teaching and programmes, and thus buried under university administration, Bioengineering continues to go from strength to strength. As well as their work on

prosthetics, Prof Alex Dickinson, Prof Martin Browne and Dr Charlie Burson-Thomas were part of the Bioengineering and Computed Tomography team that has been looking at reconstructing fingerprints from high resolution CT data.

Our seventh cohort of MSc Archaeology students has now graduated. Some of these followed a wide curriculum, whereas others followed a Bioarchaeology pathway. Those following the latter pathway were required to take compulsory modules in the Bioarchaeology of Human Remains and the Analysis of Archaeological Faunal Remains, together with optional modules in palaeopathology, themes in osteoarchaeology and molecular archaeology.

### **Current Research Students**

**Elizabeth Aubin** successfully defended her PhD thesis entitled “The Rite Choice: An osteoarchaeological investigation of cremated remains to understand the reasons behind its choice as a funerary rite.” She has since been working at University of Southampton and thinking about writing papers arising from her research.

**Ishan Kapoor** started his doctoral research with Sonia Zakrzewski and Josh Pollard, looking at postmortem treatment and bodily manipulation in Neolithic cave burial sites.

Continuing Doctoral Student Research Topics:  
*Jessica Coughtrey* – Gender roles and activity patterning in ancient Egyptian populations

*Xinyue Shao* – The Ancient Genome and High-Resolution isotope analysis of horse burials in the Eastern Zhou Dynasty

*Emma van der Velden* – Real Roman Britain: a skeletal and isotopic analysis of rural and urban populations in the south

*Anna Vékony* – Aetiology, variability and morphological patterning of chronic maxillary sinusitis.

### **Dissertations Approved for the MSc Archaeology (Bioarchaeology) 2024-2025**

*Kai McRae* – Movement through Time: An Investigation into the Application of Femoroacetabular Impingement within the Archaeological Record

*Isobel Stewart* – Tracing Ancient Lives: Investigating Human Migration and Diet through Stable Carbon and Nitrogen Isotope Analysis at Burrow Hill Cemetery, Suffolk

*Amber Wood* – Handedness and Gender Divisions in Labour

**Dissertations approved for other Archaeology Masters degrees that were linked with biological anthropology, bioarchaeology, zooarchaeology and/or palaeopathology**

*Callum Barraclough* – An Experiment Testing Handedness in Gestural Communication

*Courtney Barnett* – Bones in the Sacred Landscape: Examining the zooarchaeology of Romano-British temples

*Phoebe Merrifield* – ‘Lap dogs of Late Iron Age and Early Romano Britain’: What can zooarchaeology reveal about the emergence and role of small dogs during the transitional period between late Iron Age and Roman Britain?

*Benjamin Rayner* – Modelling a Two-Step Dispersal for the Peopling of the Americas

*Molly Wilbraham* – A Taste of the Royal Navy: Food, Social Practices, Hierarchy and the Lived Experience in the Eighteenth-Century Royal Navy

*Jingzhi Xu* – Age-Gender Expressions from the Perspective of Mortuary Practices in Wangyin and Taosi Sites during the Late Neolithic Age of China

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**Keele University's Forensic Anthropology,  
Taphonomic Analysis, and Learning  
(FATAL) Group**  
*Christopher Aris*

**People:** In 2025 our research team continued to grow with Chelsea Cummings joining us as a PhD candidate in Forensic Anthropology/Palaeontology, and Kelsey Plant joining us for her MPhil in Forensic Anthropology. We're also delighted to announce that Cora Cisan has decided to stay with us, converting their MPhil into the first year of a now PhD in Bioarchaeology Histopathology! PhD candidate George Goodison has also submitted her thesis for viva this year, so excited to announce the results of this soon too!

**News and Project Outlines:** On top of the above new PGR projects, we are also really excited to have secured ESRC funding for a Historic-Modern Sale of Human Remains project which will begin later this year and last 3.5 years. Updates on how this progresses at the associated new PhD student attached (Theo Dobbs) to come in the next review! Otherwise our longer terms projects into dental stress markers, dental taphonomy, histopathology, and osteological pedagogy are still going strong with a plethora of publications this year. We have also had a placement student, River Drayke, working with us this year (continuing into 2026) to digitise our skeletal collection to produce a full 3D inventory of all our remains – we are hoping this will eventually lead to an open access resource for people to use in teaching learning.

**Department Reports:** We continue to support masters projects (on top of the aforementioned PGRs) with this year's projects focussing on identifying disability from skeletal remains and elemental analysis of cremated bone. The other PhDs in the team, namely Olga Nechyparenka and Catherine Roberts, are now moving into their final year and we hope to report their thesis submissions in the next annual review. We have also started to promote our work more on social media, including research updates, lab updates, and outreach activities. This is primarily through

the Keele Forensic Science accounts (which post about all things forensic at Keele) which are run by the team PI (Chris Aris), which you can find here:

Linked:

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/keele-university-forensic-science>

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/keeleforensics/>

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/keeleuniversityforensicscience>

Bluesky:

<https://bsky.app/profile/keeleforensics.bsky.social>

**Contract Work:** This year we have been involved with some lab analysis contract work with Dr Marie Weale and Manx National Heritage, conducting histology and microCT scanning analysis. We're delighted to have been able to continue to work with the amazing team in the Isle of Mann. We have similarly been delighted to have been able to continue working with Thames Valley Police's Joint Operations Unit to provide consultancy and training of detecting and identifying human remains in the field.

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**MEMBERS' PUBLICATIONS 2025**

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