

<!DOCTYPE html>

Session ID	54
Session Title	What have we done for the Romans?
Start Time	Mon Dec 16 13:30:00
Room	Clarke Hall (Level 3)

This session seeks to explore how two groups of people, archaeologists and the public, conceive of the Roman past. Conserving and interpreting the archaeological remains of Roman Londinium and Britain is a series of choices. What gets uncovered, kept, conserved, and published affects what stories we tell the public, and we also make choices about the content and intent of our stories. What influences the choices of the stories we tell? Even with the best intentions we may be influenced by current political events, social trends or technological drivers. But we are also interested in what and how the public knows about the Roman past. What motivates visitors to seek out sites, museums or information about the Roman past? What do they already know? What do they want to know? Should they get what they want or should we subvert and challenge their understanding? In this session we invite speakers to explore ontologies of the Roman past in London and Britain through presentation of archaeological sites, museum displays, publications, fiction and other media. We welcome speakers from the heritage, museum, and broadcasting worlds as well as from community, commercial and academic archaeology.

13:30	Howard Bengé, Public Programmes Manager, City of London Corporation; Kim Biddulph, Project Manager, City of London Corporation	What have we done for the Romans?	<p>The City of London is a Roman creation. There are remains of buildings, museum collections and archival documents from 18th and 19th century antiquarian investigation. Excavation over recent decades has increased our knowledge and understanding of Londinium and the Roman Londoners.</p> <p>The public interpretation of Londinium has also changed over the decades, reflecting our developing knowledge and the public's changing demographics and tastes. From the preservation of Billingsgate Roman House and Baths in the 1970s, to the presentation of London's Roman Amphitheatre at the end of the last millennium to the 21st century experience of London Mithraeum Bloomberg Space, the interpretive turn is clearly charted.</p> <p>What of the future? It is as important as ever to maintain the public fascination with Londinium. How do we plan for our present and future audiences, and represent it for the next 20 years?</p>
13:50	Caroline Lawrence, author, Independent Researcher	Travelling Bones and Leather Bikinis: How Archaeology Inspires Fiction	<p>Best-selling children's author Caroline Lawrence has written over thirty historical novels for kids including the Roman Mysteries, televised by the BBC in 2007/8. Now, inspired by an exhibition of four skeletons of Roman Londoners in the Museum of London and by the reopening of London's Mithraeum in the basement of Bloomberg's new European HQ, Caroline has written her first timeslip novel. The Time Travel Diaries is the story of a 12-year-old London schoolboy who is recruited to back in time to 3rd century Roman London. Find out how ancient bones, sites and artefacts inspired the plot, setting and characters of her latest book.</p>

14:10	Ruth Taylor, History Co-ordinator and Senior Teacher, University College School Junior Branch	Archaeology, the Romans and the National Curriculum: an archaeologist-turned-teacher's perspective.	<p>The Roman Empire and its impact on Britain has been part of the National Curriculum in England's schools since 1988. Indeed, this topic holds an enviable position in the Key Stage 2 history curriculum: England is rich in Roman archaeology; schools have had decades to gather resources and its ubiquity promotes familiarity, giving even non-specialist teachers greater confidence in their own subject knowledge.</p> <p>The 2014 National Curriculum promotes a focus on invasion, military might, the Romanisation of Britain and the decline of the Empire. However, aside from Boudica, the marginalised in Romano-British society- e.g. women, slaves and children- are not specifically mentioned and although Hadrian's Wall does feature, archaeology is not referred to at all.</p> <p>So it is unsurprising that the Historical Association found that archaeology is the resource least used by primary school teachers (The Historical Association 2017, p. 20).</p> <p>Archaeology has the power to make the primary history curriculum more inclusive: to encourage the children of diverse, multicultural England to see themselves reflected in the Roman past and to allow them to explore the lives of the illiterate, subjugated and disenfranchised; to help teachers communicate the modern British, spiritual, moral, social and cultural values all maintained schools are tasked by the state to promote.</p> <p>Using my experiences as a specialist practitioner in London as I teach Roman Britain to boys aged 9-10; this paper examines the accessibility of online learning resources produced by the heritage sector and assesses the relevance of their content to educators in England.</p>
14:30	Andrew Roberts, Properties Historian, English Heritage	My Roman Pantheon: Experiential Digital Interpretation at Chesters Roman Fort	<p>Chesters Roman Fort Museum displays John Clayton's collection of Roman antiquities found during his extensive excavations of Hadrian's Wall. Created in 1896, the museum still relates closely to its original layout and approaches to display, including a large collection of inscribed altars and sculptures displayed en masse across several rows. Much of the stonework is fragmentary and often of little aesthetic virtue; many of the gods featured are rare making them difficult to identify. Audience research revealed that the stonework was a barrier to audience understanding and enjoyment of the museum. As part of a wider redisplay of the collection, English Heritage worked in partnership with an interaction design team at Sheffield Hallam University to develop a digital interpretation device to attempt to connect visitors with this esoteric object class.</p> <p>The solution was to place the visitor as a new member of the fort garrison in need of the assistance of the Roman gods to help them with life on Hadrian's Wall. They are given a 'votive' lamp embedded with Internet of Things technology representing their offering to the gods and asked to select three Roman gods by using contactless 'tap' points corresponding to different sculptural representations around the museum. Upon returning the device, the visitor receives a personalised 'Roman Pantheon' on a postcard with information about each of the gods. This paper will outline the benefits of running a co-design process with an HEI, the extent to which this narrative and experiential approach returned the intended learning and behavioural outcomes (i.e. the polytheistic and contractual world of Roman religion), and reflect upon the digital interpretation of Roman archaeology, such as the advantages of this approach against the use of screen devices.</p>

14:50	Antony Lee (PhD student), Department of Archaeology, Durham University	“Experiencing the gods: Lived Ancient Religion and the interpretation of Romano-British religion in museums”	<p>Religious belief can offer profound human experiences, reassuring and frightening in equal measure, bringing communities together but breaking families apart. Religious experiences in Roman Britain must have been no less emotional, exhilarating and controversial, but are British museums accurately reflecting the lived reality of ancient belief?</p> <p>Post-colonial archaeologies offer an increasingly nuanced understanding of Roman Britain, and perceptions of religious identity and experience are developing through such approaches as materiality, phenomenology and embodiment. Despite this, there is little data on how either museums or the public have engaged with new theoretical paradigms regarding Roman Britain.</p> <p>The Lived Ancient Religion (LAR) rubric, which stresses the importance of individual experience and perceives religion as a complex and dynamic social and political presence, has stimulated recent studies of ancient Mediterranean religion. However, it has barely begun to influence thinking about Romano-British religion and has never before been applied to museum interpretation.</p> <p>This paper, based on the speaker’s ongoing PhD research, will explore whether the principles of LAR could be of value to museums in engaging visitors with the myriad subtle and personal religious experiences of people in Roman Britain. Might new paradigms predicated on the lived experiences of individuals and communities reinvigorate traditional display approaches based on the primacy of aesthetics and typological groupings? What roles do curatorial agency and practices surrounding acquisition, cataloguing and the creation of displays and interpretation play in the public dissemination of modern conceptualisations of Romano-British religion?</p>
15:10	BREAK	BREAK	BREAK
15:40	Jackie Keily, Senior Curator Prehistory and Roman, Museum of London	Curating Roman London	The Museum of London has played a key role in curating and presenting the story of Roman London since its foundation. Formed from the merging of the Guildhall Museum and the London Museum, its collections are particularly rich in the material culture of Roman London. In addition, it holds within its Archaeological Archive the archives of over 40 years of archaeological investigation in London. As the Museum plans for its move to a new site at Smithfield, we look back at how it presented Roman London in the past and forward to what a new Museum might encompass. What has changed in our interpretation and knowledge of Roman London and how can new museological developments and display methods be harnessed to tell this story anew?
16:00	Sophie Jackson, Museum of London Archaeology; Helen Chiles, London Mithraeum Bloomberg Space	Where archaeology meets technology	Join Helen Chiles (London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE) and Sophie Jackson (Museum of London Archaeology) as they discuss how London Mithraeum Bloomberg SPACE uses technology, innovation and art to showcase the Roman remains found on the site, creating a unique visitor experience. The award winning museum opened in 2017 and has now welcomed over 200,000 visitors.
16:20	Jane Sidell, Historic England	Preservation and presentation of Roman archaeology in London.	This paper will examine choices and decision making when new discoveries come to light, and old sites are revisited in London. Is preservation a given? Is every site preserved suitable for presentation, and who should be deciding these issues?
16:40	Hedley Swain, Area Director South East., Arts Council England	What have we done to the Romans?	
17:00	END	END	END