

ASM Ink

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Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.



www.marylandarcheology.org

Digging inn at Barwick's Ordinary

It was a long time between Eastern Shore digs but ASM made it back across the Chesapeake for the 2022 edition of the Tyler Bastian Field Session and the preliminary report indicates it was a good move.

The site, 18CA261, near Denton, is believed to be the location of Barwick's Ordinary, a mid- to late-18th Century tavern and one-time county seat of Caroline County.

Under the direction of Julie Markin of Washington University in Chestertown, 10 2x2 units were started. Some 24 new features were uncovered, including some believed to be associated with the tavern. These included postholes, molds and a possible hearth.

Artifacts included mid-18th Century ceramics of various types, the ubiquitous pipe stems and prehistoric items such as lithics and ceramics. A more complete list of accomplishments will appear in next month's newsletter.

Both Dr. Markin and the new Maryland chief terrestrial archeologist, Zac Singer, were pleased with the session.

Altogether, 46 ASM members volunteered at the site for various lengths of time.



Photo/ John Fiveash

Zac Singer named new State Archeologist

Zac Singer is going to be a very familiar face for ASM members. That is because he has been named Maryland's new State Terrestrial Archeologist, replacing the recently retired Charlie Hall.

A native of Maryland, Zac got interested in archeology at Towson High School, where he interned with Bob Wall, studying Paleo-Indian material gathered at the Barton Site in western Maryland. He went on to get his B.A. at College Park, then on to the University of Connecticut for his master's and doctorate.

He came back to Maryland to teach at Washington College and conduct research for Anne Arundel County and also the Lost Towns Project. He joined the Maryland Historical Trust as a research archeologist in January, 2020, and was appointed to his new post this May.

Hi's research interests include archeological geophysics, 3d photogrammetry and lithic technologies. He may be reached by telephone at 410-697-9544 or by email at zachary.singer@maryland.gov.

Meanwhile, Charlie and Mary will be moving from their Monkton estate to Lexington, Virginia in a few days but he promises to show up in Maryland every once in a while.

Upcoming events

August 27: Workshop in Archeology, Crownsville

September 10: Board meeting.

October 1: ASM annual meeting. Marshy Point, Baltimore County

Nov. 4-6: ESAF annual meeting, Shippensburg, Pa.

Volunteer opportunities (non-covid)

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT participants and other ASM members:

Not Maiden's Choice: MHT and the Western Maryland Chapter are going to be returning to a historic site in Washington County discovered in November while looking for something else. April 7-10. If interested contact mathew.mcknight@maryland.gov

ASM Volunteer Lab, most Tuesdays: The lab in Crownsville. Contact Zachary Singer at Zachary.Singer@maryland.gov It is currently working on the Maiden's Choice collection, which is a late 18th to early 19th Century dwelling in Washington County

The Smithsonian Environmental Research Center seeks participants in its Citizen-Scientist Program in archeology and other environmental research programs in Edgewater. Field and lab work are conducted Wednesdays and on occasional Saturdays. Contact Jim Gibb at jamesggibb@verizon.net

Charles County for lab and field work volunteers, contact Esther Read at ReadE@charlescountymd.gov

For more information, contact Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com.

The Anne Arundel County Archaeology Program and the Lost Towns Project welcome volunteers in both field and lab at numerous sites. For diggers, the Linniston site on Gibson Island Fridays from 8 to 3. The lab will be open some weekdays at the Anne Arundel collection facility at 7409 Baltimore-Annapolis Blvd. in Glen Burnie. For more information email Drew Webster at volunteers@losttownsproject.org or call 410 222 1318.

UPAG/Howard County Recs and Parks invites volunteers interested in processing collections and conducting historical research to contact Kelly Palich at Kpalich@howardcountymd.gov or 410-313-0423.

Montgomery County for lab and field work volunteers, contact Heather Bouslog at 301 563 7530 or Heather.Bouslog@montgomeryparks.org

Mount Calvert. Lab work and field work. 301 627 1286.

Jefferson Patterson Park invites volunteers to take part in its activities, including archeology, historical research and conservation. Contact 410 586 8554.

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide. Call up www.archaeological.org/fieldwork to get started.

CAT corner:

We're planning a workshop Saturday at Crownsville in June. Zac Singer will present the Lithics and Native American Ceramics workshops. Date TBD.

If your email address changes please remember to let Tom know. It's the only contact we have for many of you. For more information on the CAT program contact Tom McLaughlin at mclaugh01@verizon.net

Are you interested in holding an ASM office?

This is an election year for ASM and all offices are up for grabs: President, vice president, secretary, membership secretary, treasurer and six board of trustee seats. If you would like to fill one of these positions, send your name to myronbeck@verizon.net to be placed on the ballot.

Smithsonian revises collection policy

By Peggy McGlone

Condensed from the Washington Post, May 4, 2022

A year after it set out to review its collection practices, the Smithsonian has decided it will allow shared ownership of items and the return of objects for ethical rather than legal reasons.

In the case of colonial-era objects, it is no longer enough to say "we didn't steal it," Smithsonian officials now believe. In addition, the National Museum of Natural History and the National Museum of the American Indian will apply the federal law dictating the treatment of Native American remains to other human remains in their collections.

"We are codifying what is becoming contemporary museum practice. More and more, we are seeing museums sharing authority of the things we possess and their interpretation, and that requires engagement with their originating communities," said Kevin Gover, the Smithsonian's undersecretary for museums and culture, who noted that this approach has been used at the American Indian Museum and the Anacostia Community Museum for many years.

Last week, the Smithsonian adopted the first significant revision to its collections management since 2001. The policy outlines new "values and principles" but offers no details on how they will be implemented by the Smithsonian's 19 museums, which are responsible for the care of more than 155 million objects, including artwork, historical artifacts and scientific specimens.

The museums have six months to craft procedures for deaccessioning and returning items for ethical reasons. The Smithsonian's Board of Regents must approve returns that are of significant monetary or historical value.

The new policy will affect only a fraction of the collection, Gover said.

"There might be a few high-profile cases, like the Benin Bronzes, but those will be rare. I'd be surprised if it were even 1 percent," he said, referring to artifacts stolen in 1897 by British forces, which the Smithsonian is planning to return to Nigeria.

"We are not going to have the researchers go back through the catalogue cards for all 155 million objects," Gover said.

Several categories, including items taken by colonial violence, human remains and sacred and funereal objects, will be most affected. Federal law already regulates the process for repatriating Native American remains from the United States.

The new policy will affect future acquisitions by raising the bar on what is known about an item before it is acquired. There are no current examples of acquisitions that have been abandoned as a result of the new policy, Gover said.

Non Sequitur by Wiley Miller

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Jamestown: one eye on the dig, the other on sky

Michael E. Ruane

Condensed from the Washington Post, May 4, 2022

JAMESTOWN, Va. — The dig site where archeologist Sean Romo has just found the ancient fragment of armor is surrounded by a double layer of green sandbags to keep out water. A dig site nearby is covered by a grate where a tarp can be quickly spread if it starts to rain.

And out in the James River, barges filled with stone are waiting to bolster the century-old concrete sea wall that is failing under the relentless pressure of the river.

The 400-year-old Colonial site here is losing its battle with climate change, experts say, and Wednesday the National Trust for Historic Preservation placed it on a list of the country's most endangered historical places.

"Jamestown is a world-class archeological site and a place of national and international significance," said James Horn, president of the Jamestown Rediscovery Foundation, the nonprofit that conducts archeology and cares for the original settlement site.

The threat to the site of one of the nation's "very first cultural hubs ... brings home the challenges that climate change pose to our entire society," he said.

Katherine Malone-France, chief preservation officer for the trust, said, "Jamestown demonstrates that the threats to our cultural resources from a changing climate are incredibly urgent. "We have a five-year window to make an impact. ... This isn't something that can wait 10 or 15 years."

Jamestown, in 1607, became the place of the first permanent English settlement in what would become the United States. The earth here holds the bones of hundreds of the early colonists and the artifacts that are clues to their lives.

It is also the place where, in 1619, the first enslaved Africans arrived, and where generations of Native Americans had already lived for centuries.

In recent years there have been spectacular discoveries, including the location of the colony's "lost" fort, the remains of Colonial VIPs and evidence that the first settlers, facing starvation, may have resorted to cannibalism.

But the location is on a low-lying tidewater island menaced by the river on one side, a swamp on the other and what the archeologists believe are increasingly frequent deluges of rain caused by climate change.

Archeologist Mary Anna R. Hartley said the archeologists keep their smartphones tuned to weather reports and one eye on the sky over the mile-wide river. "When you see a storm directly across, it's almost too late," she said. "You better hurry up and close what you can."

"Our defenses are always the sandbags," she said.

"And then we have this really high-quality plastic that we lay down ... to catch the water and pump it off or bail it off the sites," she said.

"If you get that much rain that fast, it's pretty much like a hurricane or a nor'easter," she said. "And almost on a weekly basis, we'll get one of those rain events. ... The inundation is outpacing us."

"The subtleties of the past can easily be washed away," he said.

Last week, as archeologists scraped away dirt in the sandbagged pit, several construction barges were anchored in the river awaiting government permission to start shoring up the sea wall that has protected Jamestown for over 100 years.

But Jamestown needs more than just a reinforced sea wall, Michael Lavin, director of collections and conservation for Jamestown Rediscovery, said. The landscape needs to be adjusted to cope with the continuing impact of climate change.

Roads should be raised. A modern drainage system needs to be created. And a special flood berm needs to be built on the site.

Lavin said the cost will be in the "tens of millions" of dollars. And time is critical.

ASM will be selecting a person to win the William F. Marye Award for outstanding contributions to Maryland archeology. A nomination form appears with this month's newsletter, let us know who you think deserves this award.

Slew of cannons found in Savannah River

By Amanda Holpuch

Condensed from the New York Times, April 30, 2022

The first cannon pulled up from Georgia's Savannah River surprised the workers for the Army Corps of Engineers who dredged them out of the riverbed's clay.

The next two piqued their interest and brought divers, archeologists and sonar operators to search for more centuries-old treasures.

Then they pulled up 12 more cannons, covered in rust, sediment and mussels and when experts began to lecture about the discoveries, they didn't even know that yet another cannon had been found.

By the time the dredging project ended in March, the corps had brought 19 cannons to the surface, all thought to be relics from ships sunk during the American Revolution, when the British occupied Savannah.

Andrea Farmer, an archeologist for the Savannah district of the Army Corps of Engineers, said the cannons were most likely from the HMS Savannah, one of several British vessels sunk in an area called Five Fathom Hole. The Savannah was sunk to block the advance of French troops, who were allied with the rebels, in September 1779.

"There are historical records from the time period that state it was sunk so quickly that they left everything: the armament, the provisions, pretty much the only thing that was not on board were humans," Farmer said.

By the fall of 1779, George Washington was trying to organize an offensive against the British along with the revolutionaries' French allies. That October, American and French forces assaulted the city of Savannah by land in one of the deadliest battles of the war, known as the Siege of Savannah. But they failed to dislodge the British, and the French fleet sailed for home before the start of hurricane season. The British didn't evacuate Savannah until years later, in 1782.

Several entities have an interest in the future of the cannons, including the federal government, the British government and the state of Georgia, which owns the water where the cannons were found.

The Army Corps of Engineers found the first cannon in February 2021, as it worked on a \$973 million project to deepen a 40-mile stretch of the Savannah River. The engineers had to temporarily stop dredging after they found the first three cannons, and they brought in sonar equipment and divers to search for and recover the others buried under the sediment.

Conditions did not cooperate. Divers worked with little to no visibility in the river water and sonar failed to detect the last of the cannons — which were found only after dredging resumed this year.

To date the cannons, researchers considered their size and looked at structural details such as the placement of trunnions and bolts, hoping to figure out where they were made and compare them to existing weapons records.

Farmer said at least four of the cannons were 70 inches long and were "more than likely" manufactured in France. The other 15 are about 60 inches long and were built for heavy use, but researchers have not been able to find similar cannons in any historical records.

For now, the cannons are sitting in troughs lined with plastic and filled with fresh water, to better preserve them until they are sent to a conservation lab. Unexploded ordinance technicians have also confirmed that the cannons are not a safety concern, though the water baths provide an extra layer of protection.

In its construction projects around the world, the Army Corps of Engineers has a long history of uncovering artifacts.

Drawing on its expertise, the corps also created a program in 2009 for military veterans to process the many artifacts, such as pottery shards and stone tools, that it has collected over its many decades of infrastructure projects.

He finds site underneath his house, and digs

By Patrick Kingsley

Condensed from the New York Times, April 30, 2022

MI'ILYA, Israel — In the middle of Eilia Arraf's home — between two living rooms, a cactus garden and a makeshift gym — there are two large pits, each containing the ruins of a church that archeologists believe was built about 1,600 years ago.

Arraf found large sections of the church's mosaic floors under his house in 2020 as he tried to convert his aunt's bedroom and an olive oil storeroom into a new kitchen. The kitchen project was quickly abandoned. Instead, Arraf turned the central part of his house into an archeological dig — and later, a minor tourist attraction.

"We did lose part of our house," said Arraf, 69, a mustachioed electrical engineer. "But what we have underneath us is something that money can't buy."

In practically any other village in Israel, Arraf's decision to dig up his home would have been unheard-of. But in Mi'ilya, a hilltop village of some 3,200 people, mostly Arab Christians, in northern Israel, he is part of an eccentric trend of privately funded archeological excavations.

Since 2017, four families have begun the process of excavating 10 private homes, searching for ruins. Hundreds more families have funded a villagewide project to restore part of its crumbling Crusader castle.

In the process, the villagers have discovered the largest-known winery from the Crusader era, a Crusader town wall, a Roman cistern and Iron Age cooking equipment — as well as the Byzantine church underneath Arraf's home.

"It was a domino effect," said Rabei Khamisy, an archeologist from the village who is the driving force behind the project. "In Mi'ilya, excavation became something like a tradition."

Separate menu for nobles not that likely

By Maria Cramer

Condensed from the New York Times, April 29, 2022

Anglo-Saxon kings have long reigned in the popular imagination as rapacious meat lovers, eagerly feasting on thick slabs of mutton and beef, washed down with copious amounts of mead and ale.

It appears, however, that their diet leaned more toward vegetables, cereal and bread, according to a study published this month in "Anglo-Saxon England" which could undermine the menu choices at modern-day restaurants that claim to replicate medieval times.

"There is no sign that elite people were disproportionately eating more meat," Tom Lambert, a historian at Sidney Sussex College at the University of Cambridge and one of the study's two authors, said in an interview.

"When they were not having these big public feasts," he said, "they were eating a vegetable broth with their bread like everyone else was."

The findings are based on an analysis of more than 2,000 skeletons whose remains were buried in England from the 5th to 11th centuries.

A chemical analysis of the bones suggests that meat was an occasional treat and was usually consumed at large feasts that were attended not only by members of the ruling class, but also by commoners, who provided the food, said Sam Leggett, a bioarcheologist at the University of Edinburgh and the other author.

She said she analyzed the bones of 300 people and examined published data on the bones of about 1,700 other people buried at around the same time.

"I was surprised," said Robin Fleming, a professor of early medieval history at Boston College. "I had assumed that they had a barbecue every evening."

She said that the image of early ruling elites in England as voracious meat eaters was cemented in the literature of the 18th and 19th centuries, when the aristocracy regularly consumed meat while poorer people subsisted on grains and vegetables. Hollywood perpetuated this theory in movies and television, she said.

The analysis makes "a very convincing case of why historians need to pay more attention to archeology," Fleming said.

Chapter news

Central Chapter

All Meetings will be held on Zoom the third Tuesday of every second month. For more information and to be added to the Zoom list contact: Katharine Fernstrom at kwfappraising@gmail.com

Charles County

Meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the second Thursday (September-May). The next few will be virtual. Contact President Carol Cowherd at ccasm2010@gmail.com for Zoom access information. Website ccarchsoc.blogspot.com and Facebook @ccasm2010

Mid-Potomac

Until further notice, all meetings will be by Zoom starting at 7 p.m., with the presentation at 7:30. For up-to-date information, including links to Zoom meetings, check our Chapter website at www.asmmidpotomac.org or contact Don Housley at atdonhou704@earthlink.net or 301-424-8526.

Thursday, June 16 (in-person): Annual chapter picnic at Needwood Mansion from 6 to 9 p.m.

Monocacy

Meetings are at 7 p.m. Community Room of the C. Burr Artz Library, 110 East Patrick Street, Frederick. For more information, visit the chapter's web page masarcheology.org or call 301-378-0212.

Wednesday, June 8: Guy R. Neal will present a program about 23,000 years of rhyolite use in the mid-Atlantic region.

No meetings in July or August.

Northern Chesapeake

A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Dan Coates at 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

St. Mary's County

Meetings are the third Monday of the month at 6:30 p.m. at the Joseph D. Carter State Office Building in the Russell Conference Room, Leonardtown. For information contact Chris Coogan at Cloogan@smdm.edu

Upper Patuxent

Meetings the second Saturday or Sunday of the month, virtual or at the Heritage Program Office, 9944 Route 108, Ellicott City, unless otherwise noted. www.facebook.com/pages/Upper-Patuxent-Archaeology-Group/464236446964358 or www.upperpatuxentarchaeology.com or call Kelly Palich, 410 313 0423.

Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. Unitarian Fellowship Hall, 211 S. Lee Street in Cumberland, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Email: wmdasm@yahoo.com
Website: <http://tinyurl.com/wmdasm>

The Archeological Society of Maryland Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization devoted to the study and conservation of Maryland archeology.

ASM members receive the monthly newsletter, ASM Ink, the biannual journal, MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10-percent discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Ethan Bean, 765-716-5282 or beans32@comcast.net for membership rates. For publication sales, not including newsletter or journal, contact Dan Coates at ASM publications, 716 Country Club Rd., Havre de Grace MD 20178-2104 or 410-273-9619 or dancoates@comcast.net

Submissions: Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 3126 Gracefield Rd., Apt 106, Silver Spring, MD. 20904 or 240-867-3662 or myronbeck@verizon.net

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