

## Meeting Report, 17 June 2022

### *Eleanor Yates*

15 members met at God's House Tower in Southampton for drinks before the lecture in the Crawford Room. Matt Garner was, until 2017, the project officer for Southampton City Council Archaeology Unit for 33 years and worked on numerous sites within the city.

He is currently working on the Graffiti Survey for Southampton Archaeology Society and the Hampshire Field Club, and showed us pictures of the carpenters' assembly marks found at Eling Tide Mill. The survey of Testwood Mill has also started but was paused by the Covid pandemic. Matt showed us an image of a salmon labelled '44.5' carved into a brick wall. This might be a record for a fish caught in the River Test!

Prehistoric ritual sites – like burials, but without a body – have been found in Southampton with remains of pottery, freshly flaked flints, and stone rubbers (used with saddle querns). Saddle querns were in use from about 4000 years ago.

In the Saxon period the querns, now rotary, of which remains have been found, were made from lava from Mayen Niedermendig in the Eifel Hills near the Rhine, which would have made for easy transport. (Millstones were still cut from this area into the late medieval period). The quern stone remains show the marks made by the stone dresser.

The centre of Southampton was at Hamwic, which was a busy and successful Anglo-Saxon port where excavations have produced the remains of pottery shards and coins, which show mercantile activity but not industry; so milling was, presumably, still done domestically.

Excavations in the French quarter have produced collared, projecting hopper, dished pots, and other querns and millstones made from limestone or lava; they included a stone cut with concentric grooves, not a cut used in other millstones. The site of the demolished Customs House has also produced, under piles of roof tiles, a 14th century stone with concentric circles.

An animal powered mill site has been found, during excavations at Orchard Place. It is 8.5 metres in diameter with fragments of burr stone, wood, and quern fragments of lava and greensand. The animal's track was still visible.

The group's meeting was arranged for God's House Tower because Matt was sure that, looking at old maps, documents and drawings of the building, and examining the relieving and other arches, it must have had a tide mill. The later construction of a canal has complicated the water channel remains in this area. However this information is not yet in the public domain so we could not be told about it.

More recently, mills in Southampton were built for Walter Taylor (1734-1803) who was a very successful engineer; following Mr Messer and his father, he developed a business making blocks for naval rigging. His properties included Weston Mill and Woodmill. His mills were originally powered by water but later by steam. (His wikipedia entry is well worth reading). Weston Mill has had a sewer dug through the site, but it looks as though it was built on the site of an earlier water mill with a deep wheel pit.

The site known as Chapel Mills, adjacent to the River Itchen just north of the bridge, includes the site of Trinity Chapel (which was dissolved by Henry VIII)..Excavation here located the foundations of a mill, built within the chapel, and a wooden axle with two iron collars

preserved in the ground. Two tidal mill ponds are clearly recognisable on the early maps that Matt showed us.

The adjacent American Wharf area became a corn mill making biscuits for naval rations, with buildings from 1781, 1800, mid-19th century and 20th century. It had a very early atmospheric engine, said to be of Newcomen-type, and made by Wasborough of Bristol.

Matt then kindly answered questions. A very successful afternoon, despite the heat, the traffic, the parking, and the access problems found by members.