



Landscapes of dispersed settlement
tend to be sparsely populated...
far from major routeways...

... at least, far from trunk roads. There's not much
development pressure (not yet, at any rate). So
there's less archaeological fieldwork. Every piece
of the puzzle is, therefore, really valuable.
From tiny snippets of knowledge, big ideas can
start to spring. The uncommon ground reveals
its history.

RH 1/10/21



finding medieval rubbish in ploughsoil helps us
work out not only when settlements originated,
but also how people managed the land.

RH 2/10/21

#archink The languages of Archaeology learning Latin...
 #inktober
 ...is one of the challenges of medieval archaeology - Documentary sources are crucial, and many were written in Latin
 RH 3/10/21

Past presented:

The artefact:

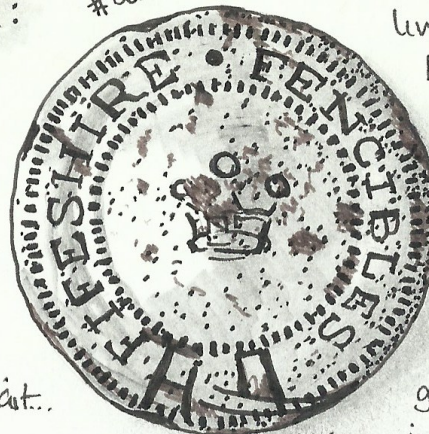
An ordinary button.

An unremarkable database entry.

↳ But wait..

The record:

#archink



... it's from a short lived (1794-1803)

home service regiment, raised in Fifehire, which served in Ireland.

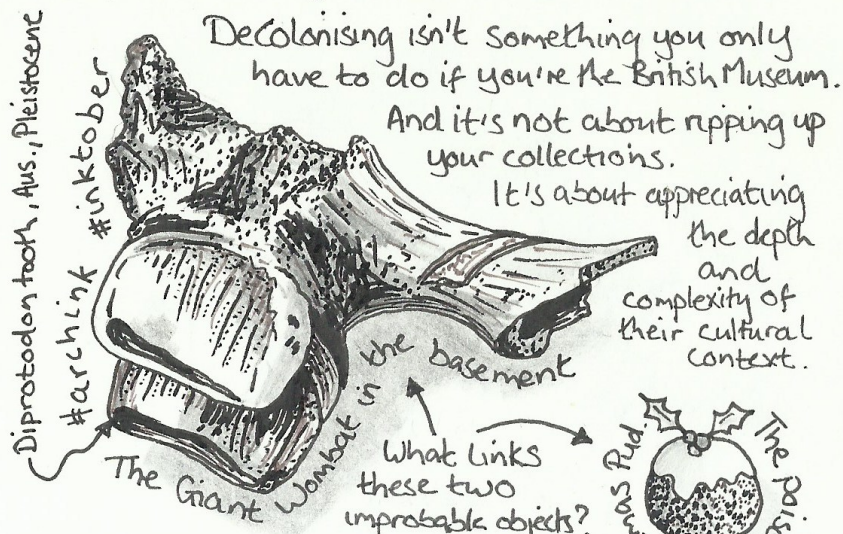
How did it get into a field in Worcester?!

#inktober

| | | | | | | |
|-------|--------|---|----|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| R 709 | (1087) | △ | 2g | COPPER ALLOY | TUNIC BUTTON | POST-MEDIEVAL |
|-------|--------|---|----|--------------|--------------|---------------|

I think I know how it got here. It's an extraordinary story. But how should it be presented? It's worth more than a row in a database, deserves more than a sentence in an obscure report.
 RH 4/10/21

Decolonising Methodologies:

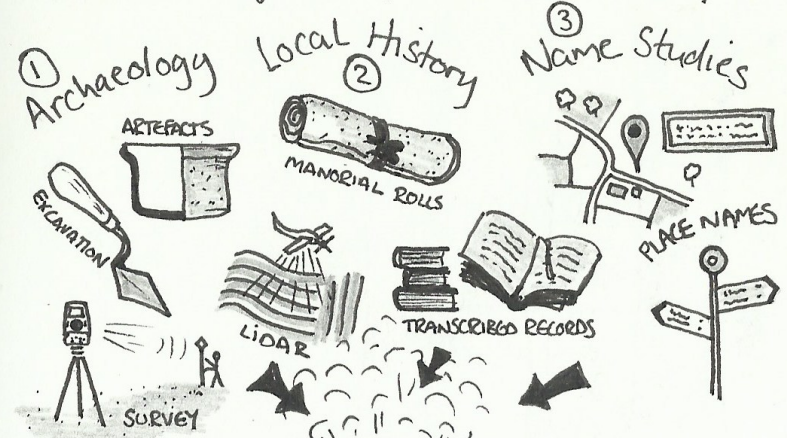


Decolonising isn't something you only have to do if you're the British Museum. And it's not about ripping up your collections. It's about appreciating the depth and complexity of their cultural context.

And how are they connected to Worcester? Find out at <https://wp.me/p75mCb-xX>

RH 5/10/21

Research Design: My research spans 3 disciplines



Each sheds its own light on different aspects of the lives of people in medieval settlements...

...the challenge is how to design the project to get the best out of each of them.

RH 6/10/21

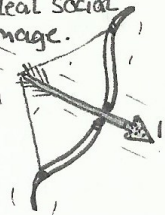
#archlink #inktober

The Social Life of Things, Arjun Appadurai, 1986

A book which was influential in artefact studies, feeding into a developing appreciation that objects are more than an aid for dating and functional interpretation.



These wristguards are a good example. They're not functional, but serve as pan-European markers of an ideal social image.



"We have to follow the things themselves, for their meanings are inscribed in their forms, their uses, their trajectories."



#archink #inktober PH 7/10/21

Archaeologies of the heart

'Crown and heart' motifs shift from a religious meaning in the medieval period to a secular celebration of love by the 16th century



The crown and heart had Royalist and/or Catholic connotations. At various points, wearing it could be a statement of loyalty or an act of defiance.

PH 8/10/21

SOURCE: Lewis, M, Datasheet 46, findsresearchgroup.com

Archaeological Theory in Dialogue

Harris:
"The act of burying this body helped to code the landscape in new ways."



Moore: "non-humans also sing"

BYZANTINE CHURCH

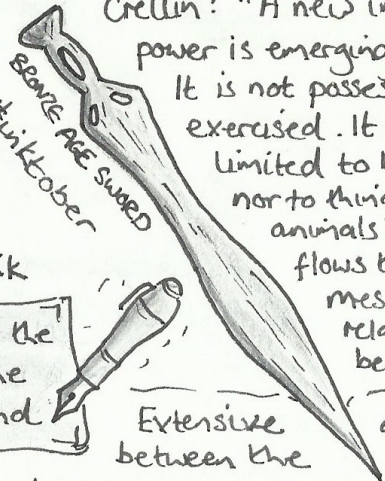


Cipolla: "We are part of the pasts that we write and the differences that we find"



Montgomery: "Dwelling in discomfort - critical self-reflection is an important step towards coming to terms with the colonial baggage of anthropology."

Crellin: "A new image of power is emerging here. It is not possessed or exercised. It is not limited to humans, nor to things or animals; rather, it flows through the messy relationships between them."



Extensive dialogue between the authors

is woven through the book: as a result, it has a rare and welcome flow. It feels like the reader is a fly on the wall overhearing an important conversation, and it is to the authors' great credit that the result is a must-read.

RH 9/10/21

In Small Things Forgotten

All the earthenware plain and flowered



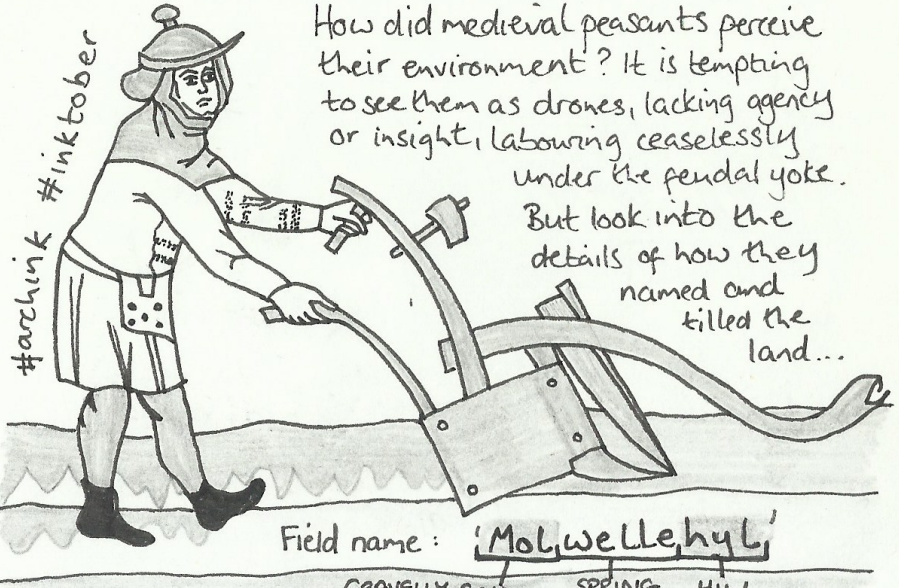
#archink #inktober

"Ceramics are part of a living totality, and they must be understood in the functional and symbolic role!"

James Deetz's 1977 classic traces the ceramic links between the factories of the English West Midlands and the households of 17th to 19th century America.

RH 10/10/21

The Perception of the Environment

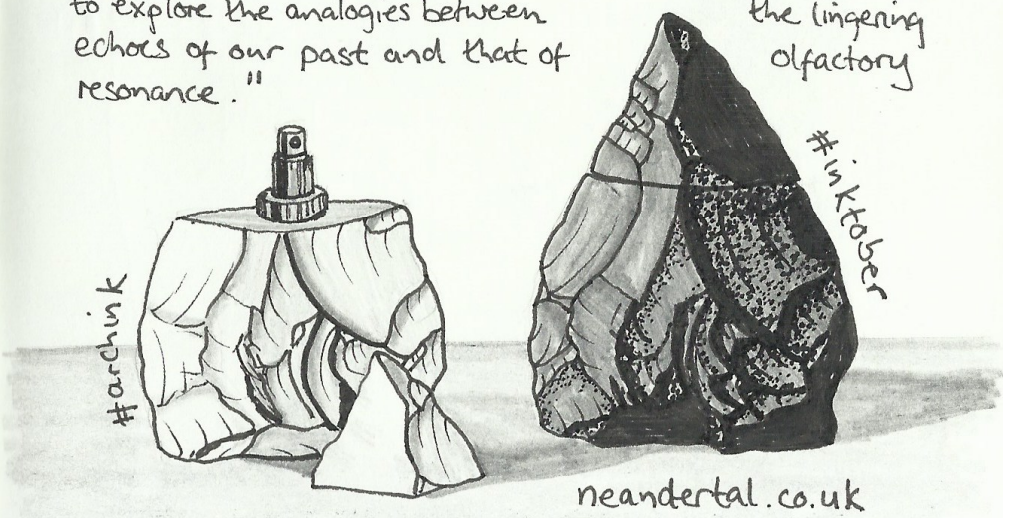


How did medieval peasants perceive their environment? It is tempting to see them as drones, lacking agency or insight, labouring ceaselessly under the feudal yoke. But look into the details of how they named and tilled the land...

... and it becomes clear that they understood something of the medieval scientific worldview. For more on the complexity of peasant life, check out Dr Susan Kilby's book: *Peasant Perspectives on the Medieval Landscape* (2020)
RH 11/10/21

Archaeology is a brand

"Kentaro Yamada created Neandertal perfume as a way to explore the analogies between the lingering echoes of our past and that of resonance."

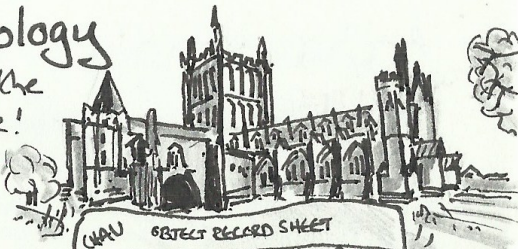
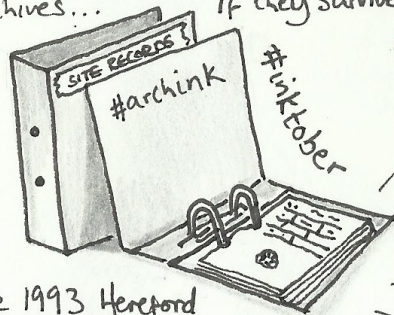


RH 12/10/21

The stoneware bottles are based on handaxes found in Norfolk, U.K. "As a pair, Neandertal dark and light speak to the impermanence of the world around us; the rise and fall of different species, cultures, civilisations"

Reconstructing Archaeology

All the best stuff is found in the archives... if they survive!



OBJECT RECORD SHEET

| | | |
|---------|-------|-------|
| HE 934 | 3589 | 13 |
| 1 | FLINT | PLATE |
| 38 x 19 | | |

SKETCH:

The 1993 Hereford Cathedral dig yielded a small but significant group of flint artefacts. Unfortunately, they were chucked out in 2001, with no specialist analysis.

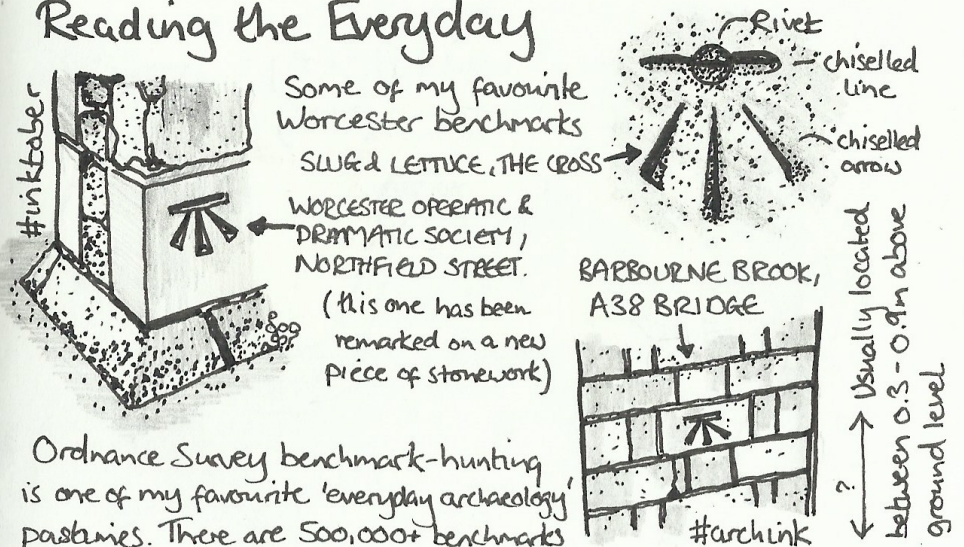
Fortunately, the site's finds team had made little sketches of each artefact.

Their sketches and notes were good enough to allow me to write a report, even though the objects were long gone.

I always make notes as if I'll be the last person to see an artefact... because there's just a chance that some poor archaeologist in the future will be sifting my records trying to reconstruct the archaeology!

RA 13/10/21

Reading the Everyday



Some of my favourite Worcester benchmarks

SLUG & LETTUCE, THE CROSS

WORCESTER OPERATIC & DRAMATIC SOCIETY, NORTHFIELD STREET.

(this one has been remarked on a new piece of stonework)

BARBOURNE BROOK, A38 BRIDGE

Ordnance Survey benchmark-hunting is one of my favourite 'everyday archaeology' pastimes. There are 500,000+ benchmarks across Britain, spanning the 1880s to 1980s, so chances are there's one near you. Often located on significant buildings (eg churches) or at junctions, they were a reliable datum point, marking a known height above sea level.

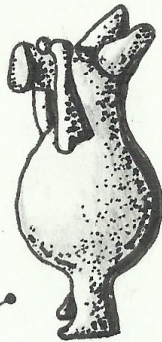
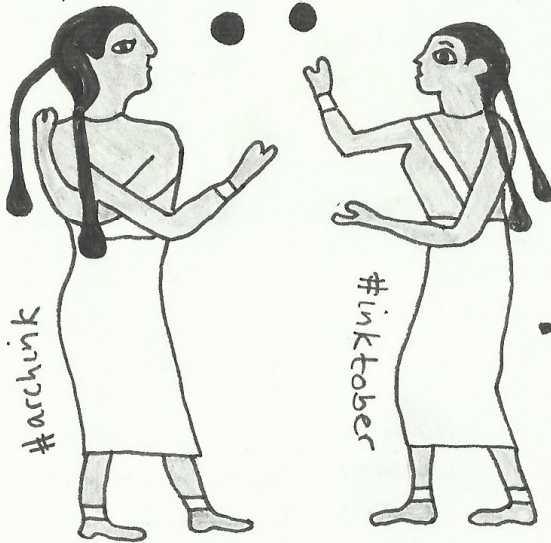
Useful for surveyors, engineers, and archaeologists!

Although GPS has largely made them redundant, you can find a list here: ordnancesurvey.co.uk/benchmarks

Happy hunting!

RA 14/10/21

Choose-your-own-adventure:
 The Usborne Book of World History
 Dr Anne Millard, Illus: Joseph McEwan
 (1985)



INDUS VALLEY TOY
 PIG, c.2500-1500 BC

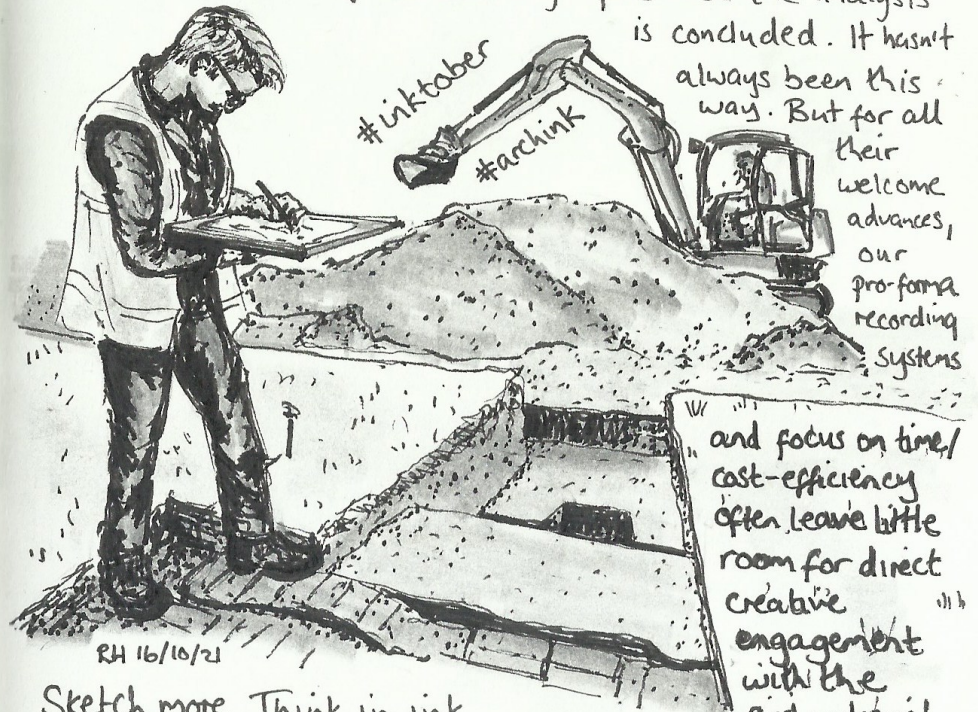
ANCIENT EGYPTIAN
 TOMB PAINTING OF
 CHILDREN'S BALL GAME
 c.3100-1500 BC

Imagining child's play
 brought places and people
 to life for me.

This book got me hooked on history. It's a children's global history up to 1914, and for its time is impressively comprehensive. It has also taught me the power of illustration. Even now - 25 years later - I realise the mental images I have of Benin, of Babylon, of the Incas, of Sumer... they were all shaped by the thousands of intricate watercolour panels in this book.

RH 15/10/21

Archaeological illustration is too frequently relegated to the end of the process. Drawing a plan as the machine backfills. Drawing a pot once the analysis



RH 16/10/21

Sketch more. Think in ink.
 Illustration is a process, not a product.

is concluded. It hasn't always been this way. But for all their welcome advances, our pro-forma recording systems

and focus on time/cost-efficiency often leave little room for direct creative engagement with the archaeological record.

The Place of Stone



Limestone fragment of vault rib, late 12th century

#archink #inktober

Lich Street, Worcester: In the cellar of No. 6, amid coarse blocks of red sandstone and tile fragments, was a piece from a medieval vault. A bright limestone jewel in a place of dark and damp. The cellar was built in the 17th or 18th century. By then the limestone fragment was already 5 centuries old. Where did it originate? Possibly in the nearby church of St Michael, a casualty of renovation work. The church - demolished in 1841 - stood in the shadow of the cathedral. Or maybe our vault once graced the cathedral priory itself, laid low after the Dissolution.

It's still there, our fragment. Recorded and backfilled. After its brief return to the light, it now lies in darkness once more; over it, the College Street traffic rumbles.

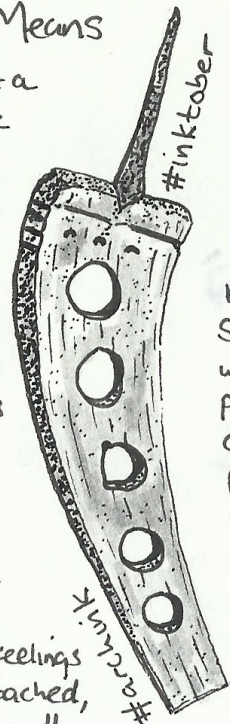
RH 17/10/21

What This Awl Means

Feminist Archaeology at a
Wahpeton Dakota Village
Janet D Spector, 1993

"Writing... a story about a Dakota girl who lost a carved awl handle a century and a half ago, brought back thoughts and feelings I had experienced as a young girl drawn to archaeology.

I was reminded of... a longing to discover essences, images, and feelings of the past - not detached, distanced, objective."



#inktober

#archink

I first encountered this book as an undergrad, at a time when I was hooked on typology, classification... all the 'what and when' of archaeology. I'd lost sight of the 'who and why'. Janet Spector just blew the field wide open. Showing it was possible to be personal. You can be grounded in rigorous fieldwork, in close observation - but you can take that work in different directions, telling the stories of those whose voices are missing from the technical reports and the old narratives.

RH 18/10/21

How things shape the mind



"The processes of making are not an issue of human will over material. Rather, the properties of maker and metal, of tools and fire come together... the maker's hammer blows, aimed at the edge of the sword, affect the crystalline lattice of the metal... Working the metal in this way changes the neurons in the craftsman's brain, it develops their muscles in specific ways, and may even leave marks on their skeleton, thus both sword and maker emerge changed from this process."

Rachel J Crellin, *Change and Archaeology* (2020) RH 19/10/21

Dr Space Junk vs. The Universe (2019)

Alice Gorman's book examines how human attitudes to space and its material culture are linked to the trajectory of exploitation, via early Space Age diners and playgrounds.



This particular sentinel - part of the summer's 'Rocket Round Leicester' trail, is Betti Moretti's 'Relaxing Rocket', outside the University Library. Inspired by Sir David Attenborough, it is a rocket rooted in nature, a symbol of speed telling us to take things slowly, to stop and look down before we blast off. To paraphrase Jacquetta Hawkes, perhaps each generation gets the Space Culture it deserves - and desires. RH 20/10/21

Hacking the academy

Only 14% of UK archaeologists work in universities. Some more will be affiliated - hon. fellows, p/t research students, uni-linked field units. But even so, those with access to academic library subscriptions probably comprise <25%. Yet our work is rightly expected to be well-referenced & keep up-to-date with the latest developments.

Many resources are paywalled. Without uni access, at >\$30 for a PDF of a journal article, the cost is prohibitive.

There are ways... authors are happy to share, the growth of Open Access and preprint sharing is helpful... but if you have a few hours to write a report which needs 5 papers, access is costly, difficult, or both.

My research now gives me access to a lot, but for most of my career I've been out in the wilderness.

The logo of Sci-Hub: either "an awe-inspiring act of altruism or a massive criminal enterprise, depending on whom you ask"
- Bohannon, J (2016) Science 352.

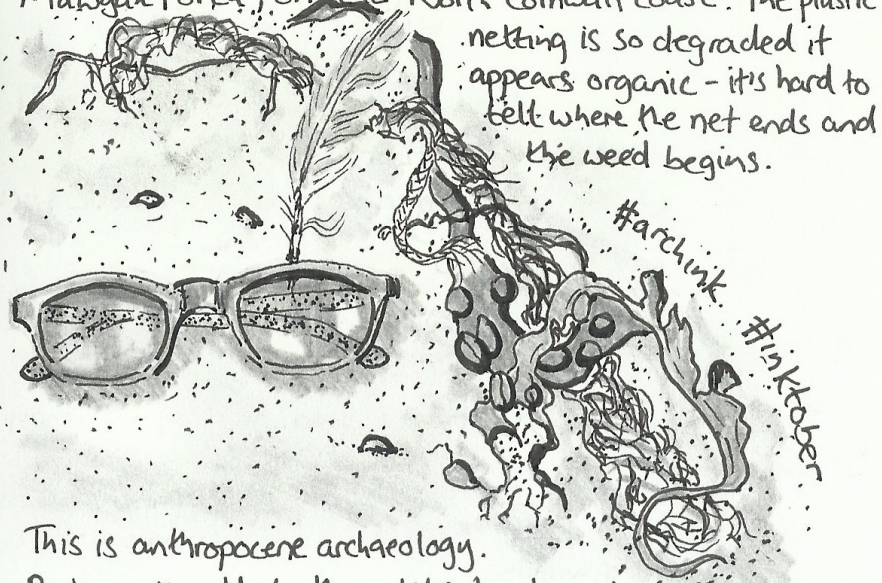
There are ways and means, of course ;). But archaeologists shouldn't have to break the law to get their work done.

RH 21/10/21



Entangled

Strands from old fishing nets, entangled with seaweed, dune grass and feathers on the tideline at Mawgan Porth, on the North Cornwall coast. The plastic netting is so degraded it appears organic - it's hard to tell where the net ends and the weed begins.



This is anthropocene archaeology.

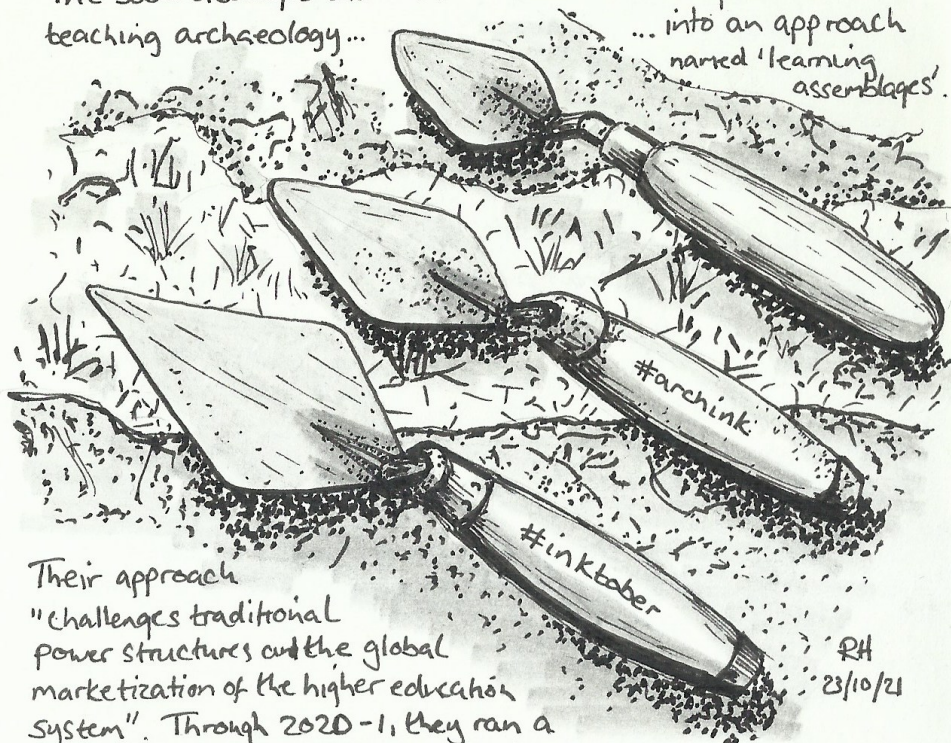
But more than that: the nets' entanglement mirrors the web in which we exist: 'natural' is not a useful category, for all is enmeshed with human action.

Beside them, on the sand, sits a curious next stage in the object biography of a net: my sunglasses, made from recycled fishing gear (and very nice they are too - you can find them at waterhaul.co) RH 22/10/21

Assembling Archaeology: Teaching, practice & research

Dr Hannah Cobb & Dr Keirna Croucher (2020).

The book develops the authors' considerable expertise in teaching archaeology... into an approach named 'learning assemblages'.



Their approach

"challenges traditional power structures and the global marketization of the higher education system". Through 2020-1, they ran a series of brilliant round-table online sessions to share best practice in teaching archaeology. Many can be found online, at archaeologytandl.wordpress.com

RH
23/10/21

Hungry Listening

" I have no money to buy pullets,
Nor geese nor pigs but two green cheeses
A few curds and cream, and a cake of oats
And two loaves of beans and bran to bake for my children
And yet I say by my soul, I have no salt bacon
Nor eggs, by Christ, to make collops;
But I have parsley, leeks and many cabbages
And a cow and a calf, and a carthorse,
To draw dung to my field while the drought lasts
And by this livelihood might we live to Lammastide
By when I hope to have my harvest in my croft
So I may sene a dinner to my heart's delight!"

William Langland, *Piers Plowman*, passus VI (B'-text). Trans. Terence Tiller.



Adapted image of labourer with Spade. From 1427 'C'-text, Bodleian MS Douce 104.

Whenever I read this passage, written c.1377, I imagine how it must have sounded to those who knew the dangers of the 'hungry gap' - the time in Spring where winter stocks from last year's harvest have run low, but the new year's crops are far from ready.

RH 24/10/21

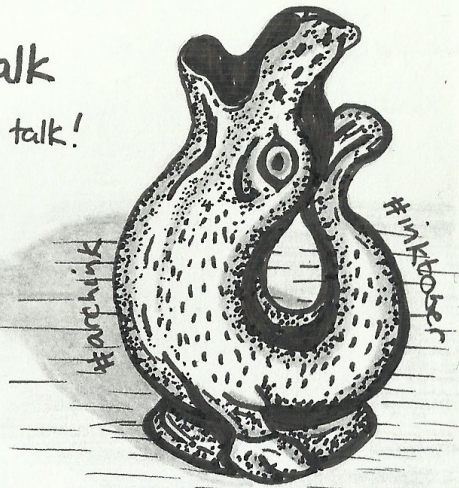
If these pots could talk

Well, here's a pot that does talk!

Variouly known as 'gluggle', 'glug glug' or 'gurgle fish' jugs, these have their origins in the late-19th century but were popularised in the 1950s by Dartmouth Pottery. This example was made by Kemewek Pottery in Cornwall. Versions are still made today (see glugglejugs.co.uk). But how do they 'talk'?

When pouring water, they make a unique and satisfying deep, glottal 'glug glug' sound.

RH 25/10/21

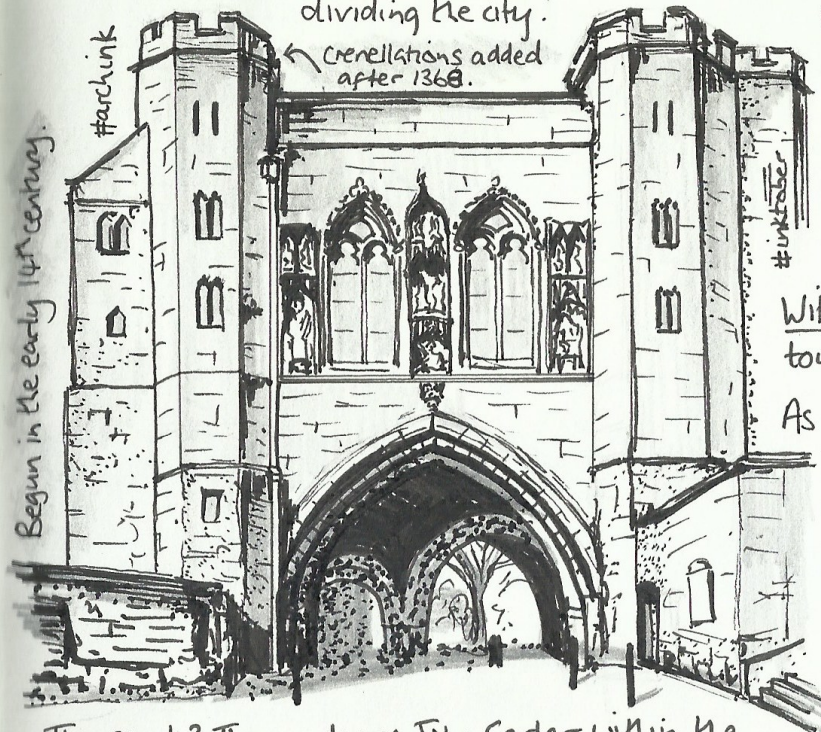


Gurgle jug, late 20th century
Kemewek Pottery Ltd.
Goonhavern, Cornwall
(Reg Foster studio)

Unusually, this one is not a fish! Although it follows the general Dartmouth form, the snout, flipper and tail are those of a seal.

Revolt

The Edgar Tower, Worcester - an imposing gatehouse dividing the city.



Within:
the medieval monastic community of the Cathedral Priory.

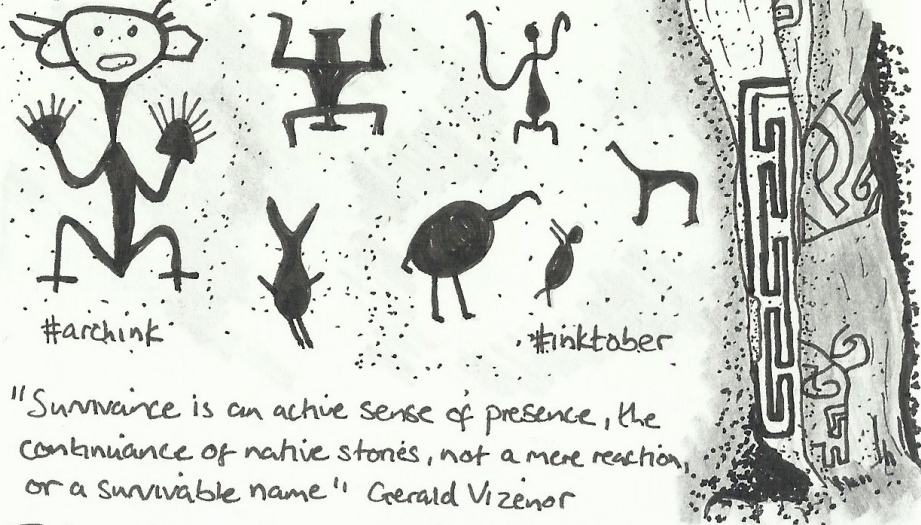
Without: the townsfolk.

As the Black Death raged in 1349, tensions boiled over into revolt.

The spark? The murder of John Carter within the churchyard. The Prior claimed the right to act as coroner, incensing the townsfolk. They broke through the great gates, and "terribly besieging the monasterie with fire which they brought, endeavoured to burne it." The damage was reckoned at over £100 (approx., for comparison, 50 x a labourer's annual wage) RH 26/10/21

Objects of Survivance

Taino pictographs, Dominican Republic



"Survivance is an active sense of presence, the continuance of native stories, not a mere reaction or a survivable name" Gerald Vizenor

Taino pictographs got me hooked on anthropology. I spent day after day covered in guano in sweltering caves, drawing & recording them in the El Pomier caves. They are so expressive - playful, even. But blasts from the nearby limestone quarries betrayed the official apathy toward them. European narratives of Taino history emphasise their 'extinction' in the 16th century. But within Cuba, Puerto Rico & the Dominican Republic there is a growing movement to emphasise the survivance of elements of Taino ancestry, life ways, and cultural heritage. RH 27/10/21

Identity Crisis

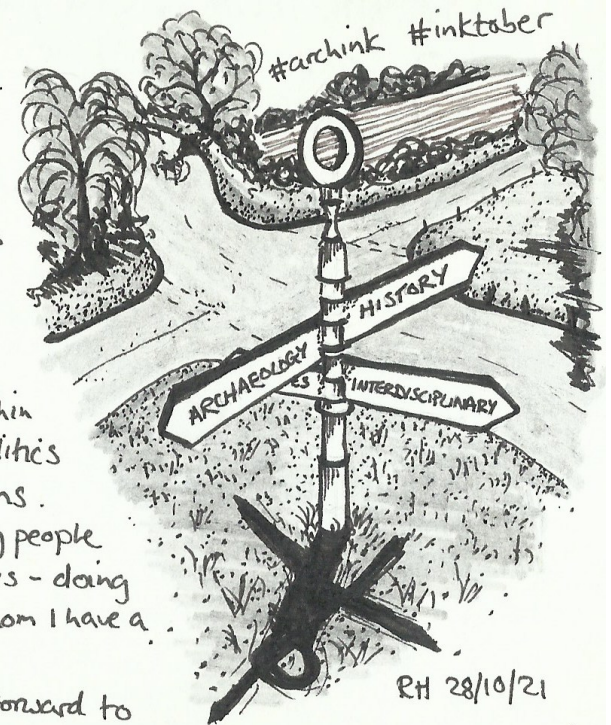
I've always loved interdisciplinary working, combining archaeology with local history, geology, natural history, museum studies ... but I've always been defined primarily as an archaeologist.

But my PhD research is based in the Centre for English Local History, within the School of History, Politics and International Relations.

I'm delighted to be meeting people from all sorts of disciplines - doing amazing research - from whom I have a lot to learn!

To be honest, I'm looking forward to the prospect of leaving the roads that channel our perspectives, and exploring the interesting spaces in between.

An intellectual crossroads



RH 28/10/21

Voice and Vision

#inktober
#archink

In the name of God Amen: The XXVIth day of September in the year of our Lord god 1626 Henry Jetto of the Parish of Holte doe make my will and Testament.

... So begins the will of Henry Jetto. Written in a steady and confident hand in 1626 by a yeoman in Holt, on the banks of the Severn a few miles north of Worcester. We hear his voice; we read his vision. Henry was in his mid-50s when he wrote the will: married to Persida, they had 5 children, plus at least one illegitimate son mentioned in the will. There is a warning to Richard & Margaret - two evidently unruly children. His legacies come to £17 15s 8d. As a yeoman, Henry owned land and was able to vote in local elections.

He hadn't always been prosperous: arriving in Holt c1596 as Sir Henry Bromley's servant, and listed as his gardener in 1607. But by his death in 1627 Henry Jetto was an affluent citizen.

Henry Jetto was Black. The remarkable thing about lives like his - and there are many - is how ordinary they were: Black people were simply part of the fabric of everyday life in 16th/17th England. Henry's story was first encountered by a descendant, Martin Black. It's thanks to research by Onyeka Nubia that we have his will and more of his life-story, which can be read in Onyeka's book *Blackamoors* (2013)

RH 29/10/21

"When the Roman empire fell, it was largely as a result of uncontrolled immigration. The empire could no longer control its borders, people came in from the east, all over the place, and we went into a dark ages, Europe went into a dark ages that lasted a very long time" Boris Johnson

Frauds, Myths and Mysteries

As Boris Johnson spoke these words in front of the Coliseum, I was walking around Tintagel Castle.

The idea that 'immigration' as we understand it was responsible for the 'fall of Rome' is nonsense.

And the notion of a post-Roman 'dark ages', in which insular Britain languished in mud huts and bad mead, is equally fictitious.

Johnson places no more weight on this opinion than on any other blithe statement to please or provoke an audience.

The issue is not that he seriously believes this ahistorical fantasy, but that he is willing to conjure it at will. Refuting this airy rhetoric is tiresome. But words matter.

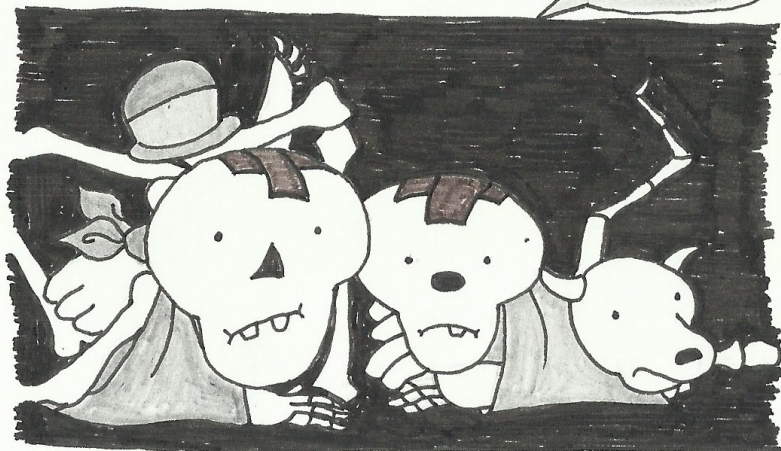


#archink #inktober TINTAGEL RH 30/10/21

For all that Tintagel itself is shrouded in myth and mystery, its very existence as a seat of post-Roman influence belies Johnson's statement. 1500 years ago, this rock was a Citadel speckled with around 100 buildings; ships brought wine, olive oil and luxury goods from the Eastern Mediterranean to the royal court of Dumnonia, here on the Cornish coast.

The Human Bone Manual

"Send for
Dr Bones!"



#archink #inktober BBC TV BONES IN THE NIGHT 1992

I can't be the only archaeologist of my generation who has 'Funnybones' imprinted on the brain. Janet and Alan Ahlberg's 1980 book, and the 1992 BBC TV series, follow a hapless pair of skeletons and their long-suffering dog on nocturnal adventures, during which they frequently disintegrate and ineptly attempt to reassemble one another. Excavating human remains is not something we do or take lightly, but I must confess that - faced with a jumble of bones in a charnel pit or congested graveyard - there's a tiny voice calling from my childhood, and it's saying, "Send for Doctor Bones!". RH 31/10/2021