

Trade and Prosperity, War and Poverty

An archaeological and historical investigation into Southampton's French Quarter

by Richard Brown and Alan Hardy

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Front cover – Southampton in 1454: Sarah Lucas' artwork enhancing a representation of Matt Jones' 3-D computer model and render of medieval southampton

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Summary

Southampton was one of England's leading medieval ports. During the 13th century and again in the 15th century, its trade in major commodities such as wine, wool and cloth made it one of the most prosperous and cosmopolitan towns in the country. From the later 16th century, however, much of the international trade was lost to other ports (principally London) and Southampton suffered a long decline, until its fortunes revived with the growth of passenger trade to America in the mid 19th century. During the Second World War the city suffered devastating bombing, and here, as elsewhere, post-war reconstruction paid little regard to the historic character of the old town. Medieval property plots were widened or ignored, building heights increased, and the construction of the Castle Way inner ring-road during the 1950s sliced through the medieval gridded street pattern.

In 2006 Oxford Archaeology were appointed by CgMs Consulting, acting on behalf of Linden Homes Southern, to carry out an excavation in advance of the construction of apartment blocks in the town's

medieval 'French Quarter'. The site covered approximately 0.5 ha, bounded to the west and east by the historic frontages of French Street and the High Street (formerly English Street), where an impressive sequence of medieval vaulted cellars still survived. These were accompanied by numerous pits, cess pits and wells yielding significant finds and environmental assemblages, including rare and exotic items. The most significant property – Polymond's Hall – had a distinguished history and was home to notable residents such as the Venetian Consul in the 15th century, and poet and hymn writer Isaac Watts in the 18th century.

This book uses new evidence from the excavations to revisit many ongoing debates on the origins and development of Southampton. It also seeks to provide an evocation of the depth and richness of the town's history and an insight into the lives of the occupants of the excavation area, in the heart of the late Saxon and medieval town. From the 13th century onwards, this included 22 tenements that survived for 650 years.

Acknowledgements

While an archaeological publication may contain a great deal of data recorded during an excavation and even some information on the planning background or other impetus for the work, it is rare for the actual mechanics of the process – of how an excavation and publication come to be and are carried out – to be explained. The authors therefore thought it might be interesting to combine some form of explanation as a framework for acknowledging the roles of the many people who have been involved in this project.

When Linden Homes began discussions with Southampton City Council (SCC) in regard to development of the French Quarter Alan Morton, in his role as City Archaeologist and planning advisor to SCC, made it clear that any such development would require a full excavation of the site. An evaluation carried out by SCC Archaeological Unit showed that medieval basements and deposits several metres deep survived on the site and an excavation would be a massive logistical and financial undertaking. Dave Harrison (Project Manager for Linden Homes) contracted consultant archaeologist Rob Bourn of CgMs Consulting to manage the archaeology of behalf of Linden Homes.

Rob Bourn organised a tender competition for the excavation project, which was ultimately won by Oxford Archaeology (OA). OA's bid was put together by Ben Ford aided by Dan Poore and overseen by Bob Williams. Richard Brown was appointed as Project Manager for OA and confirmed final contract details with Rob Bourn, Dave Harrison and Dave Macoll of Linden Homes who administered the contract. Rob Bourn monitored the works throughout the excavation and during the publication on behalf of Linden Homes. A project design for the excavation was produced by Richard Brown and Anne Dodd. This was assessed and approved by Alan Morton.

Richard Brown managed the excavation, which was run on a day to day basis by OA Project Officer Paul Murray. Paul was supported on-site by Project Officers Gerry Thacker and Dan Sykes, Supervisors and Archaeologists Magnus Alexander, Neil Armstrong, Mike Bardill, Veronica Bisio, Rosie Blackwell, Abigail Brown, Sharon Cook, Chris Davies, Brian Dean, Anne Doherty, Leanne Ellis, Laura Gadsby, Mark Gibson, Erica Gittins, Mark Grindey, Jacek Gruszczynski, Laura King, Sarah Lane, Alex Langlands, Joanna Laver, Wadjan Majeed, Alan Marshall, Rowan Mcalley, Hefin Meara, Chris Naisbitt, Charlie Newman, Lucy Offord, Libby Philpott, Phillipa Puzey-Broomhead, Neville Redvers-Higgins, Chris Richardson,

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All survey and CAD work was managed by Anne Kilgour Cooper aided by Victoria Wilkinson and Robin Latour. Building recording was undertaken by Jody Morris.

Environmental sampling was overseen by Rebecca Nicholson. Dominique de Moulin, scientific advisor for English Heritage, visited the site and provided additional advice for the sampling strategy. Finds management was by Leigh Allen, on-site pottery dating was carried out by John Cotter, while Duncan Brown provided a talk on local and imported pottery fabrics to the excavation team. Subsequent to excavation, databases, CAD work and finds data sheets were integrated into a GIS system by Steve Teague.

Finds and environmental assessments were conducted by a range of specialists, many of whom also undertook the subsequent analysis: each individual is warmly thanked for their contributions. In addition, assessment of the pottery was carried out by John Cotter and petrology by David Williams. Of the contributing specialists, David Higgins would like to thank Jan van Oostveen for confirming the Dutch mark identification and Dr Susie White for producing the clay pipe illustrations. Rebecca Nicholson extends her thanks to Alison Locker, Sheila Hamilton-Dyer and Fay Worley for helpful information and access to reference collections. Wendy Smith would like to thank Gill Campbell, Wendy Carruthers, Alan Clapham and Alan Poole for confirming the identification of cumin. English Heritage is thanked by various specialists for providing access to unpublished reports.

Documentary research was carried out by Liz Rothery and Louise Fairbrother under the guidance of Tom James at Winchester University. Tragically Liz died during the time she was carrying out the research, which was completed by Louise and is a major contribution to the publication.

Plan drawings for the publication are most frequently Anne Kilgour Cooper's original CAD work, filtered through Steve Teague's GIS which was then exported to Illustrator and completed by Sarah Lucas. Other illustrations were completed by Sarah with the help of Rosylan Lorimar, Magda Wachnik and Dan Bashford. Reconstruction drawings and the cover image were produced by Mark Gridley. During the publication work Richard Brown was contacted by Matt Jones from

Southampton University who was in the process of creating a 3D model based on the Southampton Terrier of 1454 Terrier. Richard supplied OA's CAD data to Matt which forms part of the ground plan of the model and is included as an illustration in Chapter 7. Matt was given the 3DVisA Student Award 2007 for his work.

The draft publication was edited, improved and brought to completion by Liz Popescu who also added insight from her experience in the east of the

country, particularly the recently published results of excavations at Norwich Castle.

Alan Morton retired from Southampton City Council in September 2009 after a long and distinguished career as an archaeologist. He provided useful comment on the draft text prior to publication. The finer points of this publication are inspired by Alan's thorough knowledge on the subject of his home town and the frank manner in which he has always communicated them.

Richard Brown and Alan Hardy

Abbreviations

DOCUMENTARY

A2A	Internet access to the National Archives (http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/a2a/)
Black Bk	Wallis Chapman A B (ed.) <i>Black book of Southampton</i> , (Southampton Record Society, vols xii, xiv, xvii; 1912-15)
CAL QC	Calendar of Queen's College, Oxford
Carr	Carr, A M, 1969 <i>A Documentary Survey of Property in Medieval Southampton</i> , MA thesis (Leicester University)
CGH	Kaye, J M (ed.), 1976 <i>The Cartulary of God's House, Southampton</i> , Southampton Record Series 19 and 20 (Southampton)
CPSD	Blake, E O, 1981 <i>The Cartulary of the Priory of St Denys near Southampton</i> , 2 vols, Southampton Record Series 24 and 25 (Southampton University Press)
GH	God's House rental
GHD	God's House Deeds. A typescript calendar
GHM	Kaye J M, (ed.), 1984 <i>A God's House Miscellany</i> (Southampton)
HGH	Hospital of God's House
HRO	Hampshire County Record Office
LR	Langabulum Roll. A terrier compiled about 1224-1240 with additions of 1273-1285 recording the obligations of property owners to pay rent to the King
Platt	Platt, C, 1973 <i>Medieval Southampton</i> (London)
QCO	Queen's College Oxford
RA	<i>Rotulus Antiquissimus</i> . A list of God's House properties compiled between 1235 and 1249
SC	Southampton Corporation Records
SRO	Southampton Civic Record Office
Terrier	Burgess, L A (ed.), 1976 <i>The Southampton Terrier of 1454</i> , Southampton Record Series 15 (London: HMSO)
TNA	The National Archive

GENERAL

D	Diameter
L	Length
OA	Oxford Archaeology Ltd
SCC	Southampton City Council
SCCAU	Southampton County Council Archaeological Unit
SFB	Sunken-featured building
W	Width
Wt	Weight