

# A DAY AT THE SHOPPING MALL CSI LAB (CONSERVATION SCIENCE INVESTIGATIONS)

June 30, 2012 Dana Goodburn-Brown Community Archaeology, Conservation, Day of Archaeology 2012, Illustration Anglo-Saxons, Archaeology, artist, Canterbury Archaeological Trust, Clothworkers' Foundation, Community Archaeology, conservation, conservation manager, CSI, CSI: Crime Scene Investigation, CSI: Miami, CSI: NY, family illness, heritage studies, Hitachi, Illustration, interviewing artist, Italy, Kingston University, Meads cemetery, Oxford University, poster advertising summer workshops, Rob Bloomfield, Rutgers University, sculptor, Sittingbourne Heritage Museum, unemployed artist, Vicky Price, [www.anglosaxoncsi.wordpress.com](http://www.anglosaxoncsi.wordpress.com)

## **A bit of an introduction and general update:**

I am the conservation manager at “Anglo-Saxon CSI:Sittingbourne”

[<https://anglosaxoncsi.wordpress.com/> [facebook](#) / [@CSIstitt](#)], we reported from the lab last year and are very pleased to be taking part in Day of Archaeology again...

Our project has had some periods of closure due to lack of funding over the past year, and we are in the midst of a fundraising campaign at the moment and seeking out new ways to fund conservation of the 2nd half of the Meads cemetery; as well as expand and take forward the CSI shopping mall lab concept. We are open 10-4 Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays at the moment, and possibly might add Saturdays for July and August. Although we had to stop conservation work for a large part of last year, work on recording the large bead assembly, and reviewing the results of the conservation work took place, and the Assessment Report for Meads II is with the Canterbury Archaeological Trust editors and hopefully out soon. I shall be away for most of the

next 2 months (family illness and then conserving on site for Rutgers University Dig in the Upper Sabina Tiberia Valley, Italy). So today we started to confirm plans to ‘down scalpels’ and carry out a further review of the conservation work and invite volunteers and visitors to attempt reconstructions of our grave groups while I am away. We also need to compile a list of research questions we may have about materials we might want to investigate further, with the portable Hitachi Scanning Electron Microscope (SEM) that is coming to the lab soon – thanks to a generous scientific equipment grant that has recently been awarded to Oxford University (RLAHA) for the CSI project and general conservation use, by the Clothworkers’ Foundation.

Our partners, Sittingbourne Heritage Museum have counted well over 18,000 visitors to date; and last summer’s count of conservation volunteer hours topped 5,000 !!

### **The morning’s activities:**



*Heritage Studies MA student Vicky Price interviewing artist Rob Bloomfield about his work with CSI.*

Volunteer Vicky Price (Heritage Studies [contemporary practice] Kingston University, MA student] and I discussed her work on shield studs from grave 111, and her main task for the day –

her desire to interview me and our resident artist, Rob Bloomfield for our views on the relationship between art & science in our work, and processes of how we are working with the CSI project, for her dissertation (working title: “Narrative, craft and the investigative conservator”)

Vicky’s interview with Rob then turned into a larger discussion about authenticity vs. creativity in his drawings and also his observations that the work of the investigative conservator is a bit like that of a sculptor, but at opposite ends of the spectrum... and he came up with the term “intricate deconstruction”. It is great to have such a wide mix of people involved with this conservation project... and really great to have Rob’s fabulous range of illustrations – today he was sketching ideas for a poster to advertise summer workshops and this also resulted in a possible new T-shirt design, an Anglo-Saxon Warrior (We have an unusually high proportion of warrior graves at our site)... unfortunately, the sword ended up looking more Roman than Anglo-Saxon, so this is not the final copy – it is an interesting and sometimes tricky collaboration... Rob is an unemployed artist, and this is his first experience working with a professional archaeological project.



*Rob’s sketches for designing a poster advertising summer workshops “Hands on the Past”*



*Rob's Anglo-Saxon Warrior drawing (although sword and scabbard should be longer)*