

*'a hole worlde of things very memorable'*





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very memorable’*

Essays in Architecture, Archaeology,  
Topography and the History of Oxford  
Presented to Julian Munby  
for His 70th Birthday

Edited by

Martin Henig and Nigel Ramsay



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## Preface

In this volume of essays by members of Julian's family, working partners and academic colleagues we salute a friend who has played a major role in our lives and shared our diverse interests for as long as we have known him. We hope it reflects his many enthusiasms from Roman Archaeology (the subject he studied as an undergraduate at London University's Institute of Archaeology), manuscripts (and he attended William Urry's seminars in Oxford even earlier), the history of archaeology, vernacular architecture, railways, and a growing enthusiasm of Julian's, topographical illustration. Many of the contributions are about Oxford or include Oxford, the city in which he is rooted and which he has served in numerous capacities, including as Librarian and Council Member of the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society, Council Member of the Oxford Preservation Trust, and as Archaeologist on the Oxford Diocese's Diocesan Advisory Committee.

The first section of the volume comprises reminiscences by his children, Bea Munby and Hal Munby, about being brought up by an unusual, eccentric and inspiring father; by Jane Woodcock, formerly secretary at Greene's Tutorial College, and by Deirdre Forde and others at Oxford Archaeology on Julian at work (and play) as a professional archaeologist. Our own memories go back even further, to Julian's time as a pupil at Magdalen College school.

### **Martin Henig**

My own association and friendship with Julian begins when I came to Worcester College, Oxford as a postgraduate in 1967, and I met him at the Oxford University Archaeological Society, at whose weekly evening lectures he asked the most searching and erudite questions. So I took this lively young man, always wearing an ancient broad-brimmed hat and smoking a pipe, to be an undergraduate – in his second year, perhaps. He was already deeply engaged in serious research on topography of the fields which once underlay North Oxford (a project which has recently come to fruition in his contributions to the Oxford volume of the British Historic Towns Atlas edited by Alan Crossley and published in 2021) – yet when I asked him what college he was at, I was amazed to learn that he was still at school. He made it clear, however, that he preferred to spend his days off researching in Duke Humfrey's Library, or attending the palaeography classes of the late William Urry, rather than play competitive games. Julian became a close friend and trusted confidant almost from that moment; indeed, my own doctoral research owed far more to Julian than it did to my nominal supervisor, not least in that he showed me how to compile card indices. Apart from its lecture programme, the OUAS used to dig on Wednesday afternoons on excavations supervised by the Oxford Archaeological Excavation Committee, and Julian brought along fellow students from Magdalen College School. I remember that we excavated the medieval Greyfriars' church and the Anglo-Saxon waterfront in St Aldates, where Julian uncovered the early wattle revetment. He and I also went to dig one summer for Barry Cunliffe at Portchester Castle (Hants), where we managed to have a good time despite the weather, keeping our tempers when everyone else seemed to be losing theirs. He often came to guest nights with me at Worcester College, where, on one occasion, he introduced the MCR to playing 'Moriarty', and on another gave valuable advice to a fellow postgraduate colleague on his thesis!

Even before he went to university, Julian's interests were wide and mature, covering such aspects of the past as prehistoric hand-axes and the face-masks impressed on locally made Romano-British flagons. His particular concern at that time was the topography of Oxford and its ancient buildings; indeed he



published his first scholarly note on that subject long before he left school. Soon afterwards he embarked on rescuing a half-demolished medieval house at 126 High Street, where I found myself holding tape measures and recording late sixteenth-century paintings at the same time as finishing my doctoral thesis. Julian not only saved part of the ancient wooden structure from destruction by having it carted away to find a temporary home in his parents' garden (my job being to argue with a traffic warden until it was safely loaded on the van) but went on to publish a model report on the house and its archaeology in *Oxoniensia*.

When Julian went to the Institute of Archaeology in London, he continued to pursue his own interests, which were not always those of his teachers. Like me, I sense he found the stress on Roman forts a

little bit tiresome. One day, doubtless daydreaming of something more to his taste and hearing the word 'Carpow' – the site of a fort in Scotland – he innocently asked Professor John Wilkes, the lecturer and onetime excavator of that site: 'What is a carpow?' That has since become a catch phrase between us. Every Wednesday in term I came to London for the Roman Seminar, a convivial occasion, and just as I had established a rapport with Julian's colleagues at school, I made many other friends there including Anthony King, later Professor at Winchester, and Tim Tatton-Brown.

After the Institute, Julian taught for a time at Bishop Otter College in Chichester, then a Teacher Training College, and in the short time he was there he became as closely involved with Chichester's medieval buildings as he already was with Oxford's. There he met Michael Coker, who became a good friend; and as he had a car, enabled him to explore the wider countryside of West Sussex and far beyond. His salary was meagre and I was a little worried when he told me he had founded a dining club. Julian is a first-rate cook, and the dining club turned out to consist of Alison Macaulay, a very bright young teacher and archaeologist, her fellow-lodgers and himself, and on visits to Chichester I was accepted as an occasional member.

The lure of Oxford was, however, too strong to keep him away for long. Edward Greene, who had been a teacher at MCS and with whom Julian was friendly, had founded what was rapidly becoming a very successful as well as exclusive Tutorial College in Pembroke Street. For many people who had a toe on the academic ladder, leaving to take an administrative position would have seemed perverse. As Julian had always done his best work at night, a day devoted to organisation and conviviality was very attractive. And Edward and his new 'Usher' (as Julian was designated) on occasion enjoyed the most amazing lunches, whole turbot and haunches of venison (often cooked by Julian) and the best wines. As a friend and sometimes examination supervisor for Julian, I joined in this seemingly sybaritic lifestyle. But there were more serious things. I became editor and Julian the reviews editor of the British Archaeological Association's journal: this was very much a mutual responsibility, and given the remit of the BAA this intensified Julian's grasp of the field of medieval archaeology, laying the ground for his being offered a post at Oxford Archaeology and what many will see as just one of his enduring legacies, advocacy of the study and conservation of our built heritage.



Julian had a knack of using every situation he was in to advance knowledge. That dig as a schoolboy at Portchester Castle led ultimately to his writing up the Inner Bailey as co-author with Professor Cunliffe of a monograph on medieval Portchester, as well as to his preparing a guidebook to the castle in all its phases, for English Heritage. His undergraduate thesis, based on unpublished drawings by J. C. Buckler, was innovative: indeed, his examiner, F. H. Thompson, forgot that he was supposed to be marking a student's paper and said he wanted it for the *Antiquaries Journal*, although Julian had already earmarked 'Tackley's Inn and Three Medieval Houses in Oxford' for *Oxoniensia*. Digging a prehistoric site at Levens Park in Westmorland with David Sturdy, Julian became friendly with the Bagots, who owned Levens Hall, and he began work on the extensive archives there and was soon publishing work on the important early gardens. In his teaching career in Chichester, he found time to publish the timber roofs of the cathedral and palace in one of Alec Down's Chichester monographs as well as a splendid guidebook to St Mary's Hospital.



Most of Julian's great aptitude and empathy is innate, but he owed a great deal to the equal relationships he developed and maintained with others, both older and younger than himself. Contemporaries included my fellow editor Nigel Ramsay and David Ganz. Apart from William Urry, there were amongst the older generation A.B. Emden and Billy Pantin. He knew Jocelyn Toynbee and her sister Margaret, and he and I, much later, edited a Festschrift for Jocelyn. Perhaps the greatest influence on his development was the late David Sturdy, who was Assistant Keeper of Archaeology at the Ashmolean Museum. Julian excavated with him at the age of seven, in the days before Health and Safety regulations, and over the years David gave Julian a sound grounding in the topography and archaeology of Oxford, which later contributed to his being able to publish some of Sturdy's many unpublished excavation reports.

Finally, at school, at university and throughout life, Julian was always fun to be with, and he has been a major influence on my life for well over half a century. My part in editing this Festschrift is simply a small token of warmth and respect for him, and a thank you for my good fortune in having as a dear friend such a great archaeologist, antiquary and – especially over the past decade or so – considerable connoisseur of drawings and watercolours.

### **Nigel Ramsay**

Julian is only a couple of years older than me, but that age-gap was enough to stop my doing more than register his presence when our paths first crossed, as members of the Ashmole Club, for boys and girls interested in Oxford's history. It was at Magdalen College School that I got to know him, as we both declared ourselves Conscientious Objectors, and so were able to avoid joining the CCF. Instead, we spent Wednesday afternoons as participants in the archaeological excavations that were then beginning in



the Westgate area of the town centre. He and I were at the start of the excavation of the land below a former Indian restaurant, and I soon found his characteristic good luck making itself apparent: barely a couple of inches down he found a medieval silver penny. No professional archaeologist wants to admit to finding such a thing in so utterly the wrong stratum, and so Julian was told that he was welcome to keep it.

I somehow feel that Julian may have seen himself as following in the footsteps of T. E. Lawrence, that Oxford schoolboy archaeologist who had lived just a few hundred yards away from the Munbys' house. But though he already shared Lawrence's interest in the fabric of timber-framed structures, Julian travelled along a different route. Perhaps in part through the influence of W. A. Pantin, the medievalist who involved himself in the Westgate excavations (and whom I recall giving a memorably vivid lecture on the history of the Greyfriars and the site of their house), he made the discovery of Oxford's earlier historians. Crucially, he recognised the exceptional value of H. E. Salter's *Survey of*

*Oxford*, when those two volumes were edited by Pantin and published by the Oxford Historical Society (the second in 1969). Here you could see something that was not matched anywhere else in Europe: the history of every single plot of land in the medieval town, from the thirteenth century onwards. What a gift for the urban archaeologist!

Books have always been central to Julian's life. He has enthused to me about a few others almost as much as about Salter's *Survey* – notably, the massive work of Skelton and Harvey on *Local Maps and Plans from Medieval England* (1986). His teaching years in Chichester years are in my mind's eye linked with his discovery of second-hand bookshops there and nearby, especially in Petersfield. And then the Edward Greene years led to the appreciation of expensive stationery and the preparation of what we might now say were desktop publications *avant le mot* – always on the finest laid paper, courtesy of Greene's.

It is, however, his sociability that nonetheless stands out: the Oxford antiquaries' and archaeologists' Wednesday lunches (alas, that I so rarely was able to attend them!) and the meetings of the Society of Antiquaries in London, to take just two instances. Julian has always enjoyed both conspiratorial conversations in dark corners no less than speaking his mind, boldly and fearlessly.

I have no idea where his fascination in coaches came from. Other developments in his ever-spreading field of vision can perhaps be rationalised. For instance, it was surely the stimulus of being given part of the collection of drawings formed by his great-uncle, the medievalist Reginald Lennard, that inspired him to take up that form of collecting more seriously. The drawings of the Buckler family were an early interest, however; and a strong one, because of the Bucklers' involvement in Oxford's historic buildings. In any case, finding a rationale is not by itself an adequate explanation: in the end, it must be admitted that Julian is a multi-faceted character. He cannot be explained away any more than he can easily be pigeonholed. This present collection is far too focused to conform to the so-numerous and eclectic intellectual outlines of the Julian that we all know and are honouring in this volume.