

WOMEN DOING EVERYTHING, EVERYWHERE, ALL AT ONCE



**MEET THE 1930S WOMEN WHO EXCAVATED
VERULAMIUM, AND THE FOUR COMPELLING
ANCIENT WOMEN WITH CONNECTIONS TO
VERULAMIUM 2000 YEARS AGO**



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

ABOUT THIS EXHIBITION

I'm a female archaeologist who grew up near Verulamium. I think the women you'll meet in my exhibition have not had the spotlight shone on them enough.

Women's achievements have been diminished in the past and it still happens now. I want this exhibition to inspire women and girls to think big and not let society influence who they become.

I hope some might even consider becoming archaeologists. There aren't many careers where you get to mix science and humanities in such a creative way.

Lexi Diggins – Guest Curator



Journey back to the 1930s digs at Verulamium with a focus on the role of women. Tessa Wheeler along with her husband Mortimer led the digs. Day to day, it was Tessa in charge.

We see her through Helen Carlton-Smith's diaries, a schoolgirl who volunteered on all the digs, as well as through written correspondence, photographs and dig notebooks.

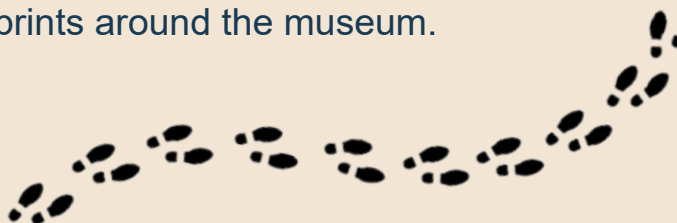
Her legacy combines the museum you are standing in, the co-founding of the Institute of Archaeology in London and the mentoring of some of the best women archaeologists of the 20th century.



As part of this exhibition, travel further back 2000 years to meet Boudica, Regina, Flavia and Sabina. Each woman existed during the Roman occupation of Britain and has an archaeological link to either Verulamium or the Catuvellauni tribe.

We know from the archaeology that the female population of Roman Britain was a very diverse one reflecting the enormity of the Roman Empire, taking in Syria and parts of North Africa.

To find out about these women and listen to their stories, follow the footprints around the museum.



EXPERIMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY

There are numerous ways to bring the past to life for modern senses. We worked with two specialist archaeologists to create soundscapes and a graphic artist to bring the women to life.

Hearing the Past



James Lloyd is an archaeologist and expert in the musical instruments of the Greco-Roman world. He is currently a Marie Skłodowska-Curie Postdoctoral Fellow at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. He played the Carnyx for our Boudica soundscape and the tibia, rattle, sistrum and bell for Flavia.



Graham Taylor from 'Potted history' is an archaeologist and potter who uses ancient techniques to recreate the pottery of the Iron Age and Roman Province of Britain. He recorded the sounds of his pottery studio so that we could recreate a similar audio landscape for Sabina at her pottery master's studio in Verulamium.



We asked St Albans women to tell us who they would like to voice from our list of women. We had some great applicants and the modern women who voiced Helen, Boudica, Regina, Flavia and Sabina really connected with them.

Seeing the past



Gary Erskine has worked in the comic industry for near thirty years for MARVEL, DC Comics, Vertigo and Dark Horse Comics. He brings energy and life to the women in this exhibition including our near life size Tessa, Boudica, Regina, Flavia and Sabina.

ARCHAEOLOGY HUNT



We have shrunk our women down and hidden them in the museum next to objects or collections linked to them.



TESSA

Museum dedication panel - Look for the dedication to Tessa in the flint gallery.

Trowel - Tessa lost her glasses and her notebooks but she never lost her trowel. Look for the trowel in the Roman wall.

The shell mosaic – Tessa was instrumental in developing a technique to safely lift many of the mosaics found at Verulamium.

BOUDICA

Lead slingshots – These may indicate Boudica's last stand with the Roman Army. They were found not far from the outskirts of Verulamium.

Enamelled pendant from the trappings of a horse – Iron Age craft people were skilled in metalwork and were famous for using war chariots drawn by horses like the one in the pageant photo next to Boudica.

Bronze tubes from a carnyx – You will hear a real carnyx in the first Boudica soundscape. These wind instruments were used in ritual and battle.



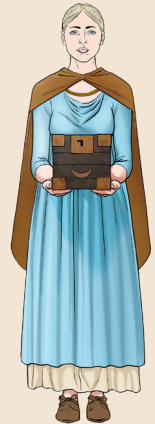
ARCHAEOLOGY HUNT

REGINA

Cremated bone from the Turners Hall Farm Burial – this was tested and found to be a woman. She was buried with arrow heads. If her bones had not been tested it may have been assumed ‘she’ was ‘he’.

Transport – Discover how Barates and Regina may have travelled to Arbeia Fort by looking for the transport cabinet in the ‘Merchants and Markets’ section.

Mediterranean Trade – Barates was from Palmyra in Syria. He may well have been involved in Mediterranean trade. Learn more about this in the ‘Merchants and Markets’ section.



FLAVIA

The Sandridge Hoard – Flavia was a wealthy woman. Learn more about other signs of wealth like gold coins from local archaeological sites.

Jewellery – Flavia and the other women who made silver and gold votive offerings at Ashwell would have owned valuable jewellery like the ones in the display cases in the centre of the gallery

Ritual and religion – explore the cabinet that lies midway along the side gallery to discover more about the way Romano British people worshipped.



SABINA

Writing instruments – Look inside the cabinet next to the large Sabina. Can you see something that could have been used to scratch her name?

Samian Pottery – Learn more about the Samian ware that is imported from Gaul.

Verulam Pottery industry – This is the type of pottery that Sabina would have learnt how to make. There is archaeological evidence to suggest that in Roman Britain pottery making was a family business and in Gaul there is evidence of the hands of women and children working clay.



WHICH IS YOUR FAVOURITE WOMAN OF VERULAMIUM?



THANKS TO:

Archaeologists

Dr Lesley McFadyen, Dr Tim Reynolds, Professor Jennifer Baird, Dr Philippa Walton, Dr Tess Machling, Dr David Roberts, Dr Denise Wilding, Dr Rosalind Niblett, Dr Kris Lockyear, Dr Isobel Thompson, Dr James Lloyd, Graham Taylor, Duncan Mackay, the original squirrels, Tessa Wheeler and Helen Carlton-Smith and her daughters.

Verulamium Museum

David Thorold, Catherine Newley, Dani Cavender-Handley, Jo Dickinson, Laura Lennard, Caroline Wilkins, Katie Arnold, Eleanor Payne and the Visitor Services staff.

Colchester Museum

Glyn Davis, Ben Paites and Laurie Taylor Straiton for the loan of Boudica's helmet, breast plate and inspirational tour of their Gladiator exhibition.

Ashwell Museum

Peter Greener and Sarah Talks and volunteers for the loan of their replica gold votive plaque and their tea and scone in a storm.

Volunteers

The St Albans women who voiced our Verulamium women and special thanks to Niamh Shepherd and Frances Hornby.

Care4Calais asylum seekers and Sally Radcliffe

For taking me to the Museum that day in October.

WIN SOME MUSEUM TREASURE

For the chance to win a selection of goodies from our shop, circle the image of your favourite woman from the exhibition overleaf, tear this slip off at the perforation, leave your name and email address below and post it in the Roman letter box.

Alternatively post a photo of one of the life size figures on Instagram, Facebook or X tagging @stalban museums with the hashtag #Womenofver to be in with a chance to win. Make sure you follow us so we can contact you.

Name:

Email address: