



Anglo Saxons

The origins of England

12–14 March 2025 (ML 636)

From £1,010 per person

Eleven 40-minute talks with Q&As and one panel discussion spanning Wednesday afternoon to Friday lunchtime.

Esteemed historians speak on Anglo Saxon history, archaeology, art and culture.

Based at the ever-welcoming Castle Hotel in Taunton for two nights.

The Anglo-Saxon era, from the early fifth century to the Norman Conquest, is crucial to our understanding of England, for it was during this turbulent half-millennium that the foundations of the country were laid. The early English produced dazzling works of art, such as the Sutton Hoo treasure and the Lindisfarne Gospels, and works of poetry that continue to resonate. It remains a period of considerable obscurity, far less well documented than the centuries that followed. In recent decades, however, thanks to the efforts of historians and archaeologists, more and more has been discovered about this dynamic yet mysterious lost world.

The excellent Castle Hotel, Taunton, is our host. Renowned for its service, comforts and superb catering, it has been owned and run by the Chapman family for over 60 years. The symposium takes place in the Music Room.

Our speakers will include: Professor Michelle P. Brown, Dr Helen Gittos, Dr Marc Morris, Professor Rory Naismith, Professor Levi Roach.

Full programme to be confirmed.

Speakers

Professor Michelle P. Brown. Professor Emerita of Medieval Manuscript Studies at the University of London, she is a Visiting Professor at University College London and a Visiting Research Fellow at Durham University. Her former positions include the Curator of Medieval and Illuminated Manuscripts at the British Library, the Sanders Lecturer in Bibliography at Cambridge University, and Lay Canon and Chapter Member at St Paul's Cathedral. She has published on the Lindisfarne Gospels, the Luttrell Psalter, and the Holkham Bible. Her latest book is *Bede and the Theory of Everything* (Reaktion, 2023).



Early 7th-century pendants unearthed in Kent. (Metropolitan Museum of Art)

Dr Helen Gittos. Associate Professor, Colyer-Fergusson Fellow and Tutor in Early Medieval History at Balliol College, Oxford. Her work focuses on the history of the church and its rituals in the Middle Ages, and she is as interested in buildings, objects and archaeological evidence as in written texts. She is the author of several works on medieval liturgy, including *Liturgy, Architecture and Sacred Places in Anglo-Saxon England* (2013). A second strand of her research has been about language, and in particular the role and status of English in relation to Latin; She has also been researching aspects of the conversion of the Anglo Saxons to Christianity.

Dr Marc Morris. Author of the *Sunday Times* bestseller *The Anglo-Saxons: A History of the Beginnings of England* (2021), as well as *The Norman Conquest* (2012) and biographies of Edward I and King John. Marc studied and taught at the universities of London and Oxford and is a fellow of the Royal Historical Society. He presented the highly acclaimed TV series

Castle and wrote its accompanying book. He regularly writes for history magazines and broadcasts on radio and television.

Professor Rory Naismith. Professor of Early Medieval English History at Corpus Christi College Cambridge. His research focuses on economic and social developments in Anglo-Saxon England. He is interested in the cross-fertilisation of material and written sources, and has worked particularly closely with coinage. At present he is preparing a major study of the social impact of monetisation in early medieval England and its neighbours, to be published by Princeton University Press.

Professor Levi Roach. Professor of Medieval History and Diplomatic at the University of Exeter. He is the author of *Kingship and Consent in Later Anglo-Saxon England* (Whitfield Prize 2014 proxime accessit) and *Æthelred the Unready* (Longman-History Today Prize 2017, Labarge Prize 2017) and *Forgery and Memory at the End of the First*

Anglo Saxon: The Origins of England

Millennium (Princeton University Press, 2021).
His latest book is a popular history, *Empires of the Normans: Makers of Europe, Conquerors of Asia*.

Practicalities

Prices, per person. Two sharing: standard double or twin £1,010; garden room £1,260.

Single occupancy: deluxe single £1,010; double for sole use £1,210.

Included: hotel accommodation for 2 nights; breakfasts and 2 dinners with wine; admission to the talks; drinks reception; refreshments during breaks; gratuities for hotel staff.

Accommodation. The Castle Hotel, Taunton (the-castle-hotel.com): the hotel's bedrooms are individually and charmingly decorated. Doubles and twins are mainly of a good size, and the largest – Garden Rooms – overlook the garden. The majority have a bath with a shower fitment (only four have a walk-in shower, so please request when you book if you require one of these).

The hotel has a lift, though some bedrooms do then involve some step access. There are no bedrooms on the ground floor. The Music Room is on a mezzanine level, which can only be reached via a flight of stairs from the lobby.

Taunton lies on the doorstep of Exmoor and the Quantocks, areas with some of the loveliest countryside in England.

Group size: maximum 68 resident participants.