

Mark Wycliffe Samuel

(1957–2025)

Mark Samuel died in November 2025, aged 67. He attended the Institute of Archaeology 1977–80, and shortly after joined the excavations at Swan Lane supervised by Geoff Egan and John Schofield in 1981. His PhD (1998) was on The Tower Houses of Cork.

He then began his speciality career as a recorder and interpreter of carved or moulded stones on a number of sites in Britain and Ireland and in London, particularly from medieval buildings – his publication and reconstructions of the 15th-century Leadenhall and the Guildhall were particularly fine. He learned the methods of careful recording carved stones from Richard Lea. In today's world of developer-funded archaeology, his standards were uncompromisingly high and possibly cannot be sustained in the future.

He was involved in the recording of stones from excavations of various monastic sites in Greater London, notably Merton Abbey, Bermondsey, St Mary Grace, St Mary Stratford Langthorne and Spitalfields. The keepers of the collections at the now London Museum must be grateful for the way he used type-stones to represent the huge assemblages of excavated stones. He must be remembered for valiantly recording material from Merton, which languished in a compound that could only be reached by crossing a rotting bridge.

Mark could be a sombre and solitary person, but had a dry sense of humour. He sometimes lapsed in forward thinking, as on one occasion when he came to St Paul's to draw stones from the medieval cathedral up in the present triforium. His kit included a transistor radio, since he liked to work to music. It did not occur to him that the sounds of Radio 3 would descend into the nave of the cathedral, washing over the visitors and the religious services.

After redundancy from MOLA in 2001, he boldly became a freelance stone specialist. His work extended outside London, for instance on the HS2 railway, at Stoke Mandeville church for L–P: Archaeology, and for a variety of archaeological contractors. His 2008 seminal publication, jointly authored with his wife Kate Hamlyn, on Blarney Castle was well received, although not necessarily by its owners, who were not happy to hear that visitors had been kissing the wrong stone since 1888.

His jointly authored architectural and social history of 12 Arthur Road, Cliftonville, Margate won the Margate Civic Society Town Pride Award in 2018. Part of the book is devoted to the Jewish communities of London and Margate which played a large part in the development of Cliftonville. Mark's other activities in Kent included a history of Ramsgate harbour's dry dock, and recording and researching the WWII defences of Pegwell Bay.

Mark will be remembered for his predilection for large aging Audi cars. He recognised their build quality, but he also recognised that, when they completed their service, they had to go. His wife Kate, whom he married in 1993, died in 2017. Mark is survived by his sons Ned and Finn.

John Schofield and Roy Stephenson



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