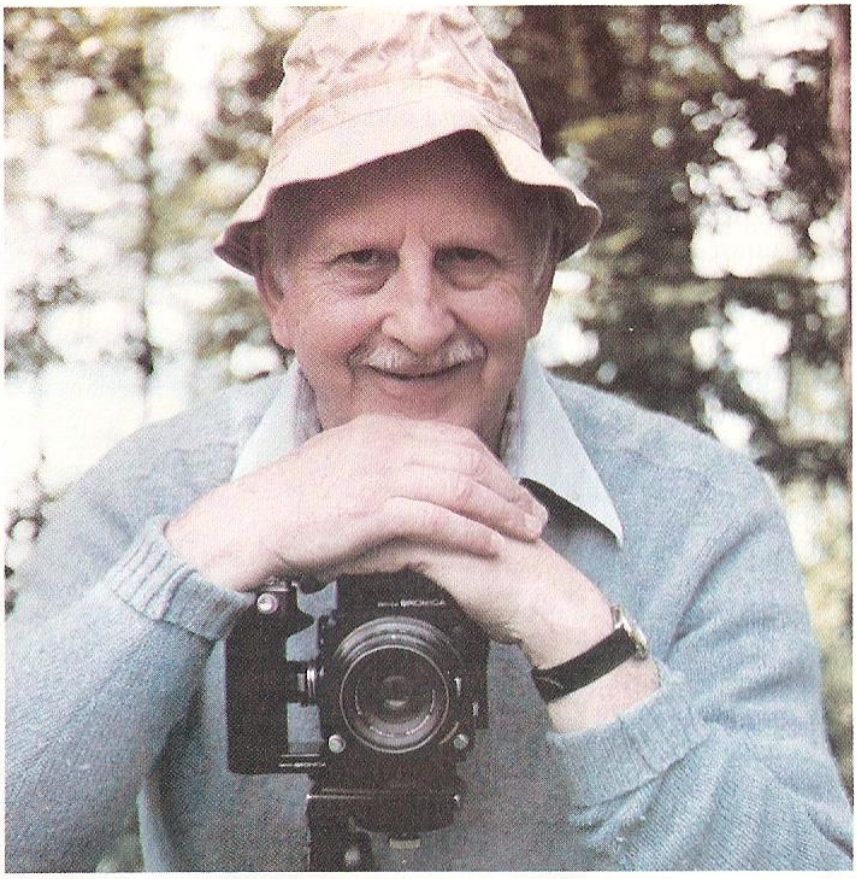
IVOR NOEL HUME OBE (36-39)

The following is taken from Autumn 1992 Magazine and Spring 1993 Magazine.



Hume in digging mode

OBE for Ivor Noel Hume

Starting under the Chapel Hume dug his way into America's history

The award of the OBE to IVOR NOEL HUME (36–39) in the Queen's Birthday Honours List 'for services to British cultural interests in Williamsburg, Virginia' adds one more honour to the long list (see his entry in *Who's Who in America*, right) of an OF who rates one

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of the shortest of all entries in the College Register – only his birthday and time at school.

Hume is one of America's most distinguished archaeologists who, before retirement, was Director of Colonial Willamsburg's archaeological research programme in Virginia.

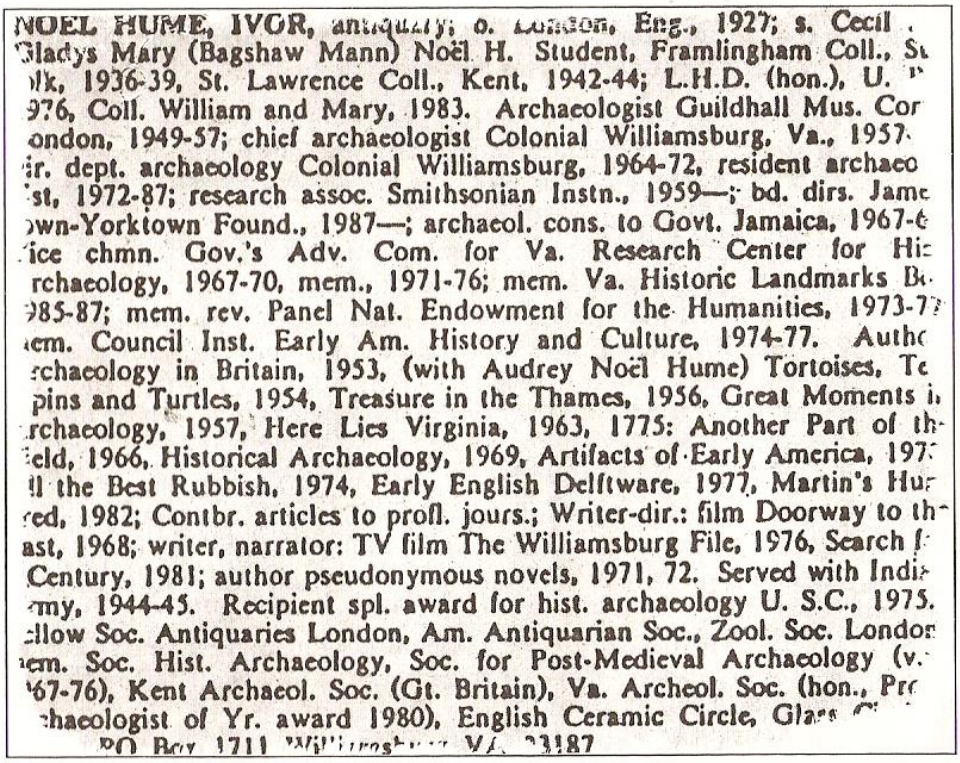
But even retirement hasn't stopped him digging. A long article in the *Los Angeles Times* reports his discovery of 'The Cradle of American Science', where he has been directing excavation, on Roanoke Island off North Carolina.

'The find is an old, buried laboratory once used for metallurgical research, says the report.

'Although specialists seeking metals were part of early expeditions to the New World, Hume said the laboratory represents "the first time they planned to stay for any length of time and actually set up a research center."

'Hume, in a telephone interview, added that "it's the first archeological evidence we have for a laboratory in America."

'Remnants found at the site include fragments of glass, crucibles, pots for ointments, and broken distilling apparatus. Hume said the thin shards of glass – perhaps


NOEL HUME, IVOR, antiquary; b. London, Eng., 1927; s. Cecil .
Gladys Mary (Bagshaw Mann) Noël H. Student, Framlingham Coll., St
olk, 1936-39, St. Lawrence Coll., Kent, 1942-44; L.H.D. (hon.), U. P
976, Coll. William and Mary, 1983. Archaeologist Guildhall Mus. Cor
ondon, 1949-57; chief archaeologist Colonial Williamsburg, Va., 1957-
ir. dept. archaeology Colonial Williamsburg, 1964-72, resident archaeo
st, 1972-87; research assoc. Smithsonian Instn., 1959—; bd. dirs. Jame
own-Yorktown Found., 1987—; archaeol. cons. to Govt. Jamaica, 1967-6
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rchaeology, 1967-70, mem., 1971-76; mem. Va. Historic Landmarks Bd.
985-87; mem. rev. Panel Nat. Endowment for the Humanities, 1973-77
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Century, 1981; author pseudonymous novels, 1971, 72. Served with Indi
my, 1944-45. Recipient spl. award for hist. archaeology U. S.C., 1975.
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67-76), Kent Archaeol. Soc. (Gt. Britain), Va. Archeol. Soc. (hon., Pre
haeologist of Yr. award 1980), English Ceramic Circle, Glass
PO Box 1711 Williamsburg VA 23187

The 'Who's Who in America' entry to which the OBE must now be added

used in apothecary work – are the oldest examples of English glass ever found in America. Other artifacts include a piece of metallic antimony, slag, clinkers from a forge and traces of molten materials.

'The site on Roanoke Island is where the legendary Lost Colony was supposedly

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situated. Two groups of Englishmen – both sponsored by Sir Walter Raleigh – had settled here, the first in 1585, the second in 1587. The second group vanished.

'Roanoke Island today is a sandy stretch of land 12 miles long by three miles wide, between the North Carolina shoreline and the Outer Banks, occupied by vacation condominiums and small fishing communities.

Elegant speaker

'The first settlement, Hume said, was established after a scouting party had visited the island for six weeks. That settlement was abandoned a year later, however, as relations with local Indians deteriorated. Although the Indians had first been described as "friendly, civilized and welcoming them as brothers," Hume said the men in the colony "managed to fall out with the Indians in a hurry."

'While relations with the Indians were going sour, Hume said, the colonists were also awaiting a resupply mission from England led by Admiral of the Fleet Sir Richard Grenville. "Grenville hadn't shown up with the supplies by late fall," Hume said. When a fleet did arrive, it turned out to be that of Sir Francis Drake, fresh from forays against the Spanish to the south. "They were disappointed by it not being Grenville, so they decided to go home. The Indians were harassing them."'

The well-known author, James Michener has said of him: 'Ivor Noel Hume is one of the world's most elegant speakers and writers on archaeology. His record of successful work in this field is brilliant and America is fortunate that he has spent so much of his time digging up our historical record.

Hume first came to our notice because of correspondence with BOB GILLETT which included some pre-war reminiscences about Framlingham. In this he said: 'I was interested to hear that the rooms under the chapel became an ammunition store. Perhaps that was why the recessed window was bricked up! It is sad that the museum collection was disposed of. Some of the Great War relics would now be of great interest. Perhaps they went to the Imperial War Museum or (with luck) to the National Army Museum,which has only limited collections.

'Strangely, I have no recollection of the air raid shelters being dug near the chapel. I recall the blackout curtains going up, but my recollection is that they were green on one side and black on the other and were roller blinds. It is odd how little things stick so firmly in mind. My wife often notes that I am incompetent to recall what she was wearing yesterday or even this morning!'

In a subsequent letter to the Editor he says: 'although my few years at Framlingham were not the happiest of my life the fact that my career destiny was charted there will make me want to read *The Second Sixty Years*'.

'He has also volunteered to write, for a future issue "some recollections of my proto-archaeological experiences at Framlingham that began under the chapel and ended at Sutton Hoo in the summer of '39'.

Contemporaries may recall that at school Hume had a hyphenated surname. That too he has explained for their benefit and that of whoever produces the next issue of the Register: 'Legally the surname is in two words, there being no hyphen on my birth certificate. However, having a two word surname (and using the first as a Christian name – Ivor being hated and used only by my wife at moments of great displeasure) results in filing confusion and double billing. No doubt the Framlingham bursar felt the same way and applied the hyphen.'

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Brown boots, bad arrows and a boring boat

IVOR NOEL HUME (36–39), one of America's leading archaeologists, to whom the award of an OBE was reported in the last edition, was invited to write about how Framlingham nurtured his interest in the past. His article below supports the claim, made by James Michener, among others, that he is one of the most elegant writers on archaeology.

'I was not, I must confess, a role model for Junior Framlinghamians, and my end of term reports reflected a paucity of originality on the part of masters writing in the column that called for comments. "Could do better" comes immediately and repetitiously to mind. Fortunately, or so it seemed at the time, my mother's interest in my education was limited to ensuring that I went to boarding school – and stayed there. Consequently, poor reports held no terrors, no threats of treats withheld.

My father had remarried, sired another son, and sent him to Shrewsbury. So why, one might ask, was I enrolled at Framlingham?

Simply because my cousin, Hugh Horsely (1933–38), was already there and could be relied on, said his mother, to look out for me. He, however, was a senior, a sub-prefect, a member of the Football XV and secretary of the Debating Society, and could not be expected even to look *at* me, let alone out for me.

Born with rickets, I had spent my first years with legs encased in plaster, and by the time I arrived at Framlingham at the beginning of 1937 I was still forced to wear ankle-supporting boots. In those days boots were the kiss of sartorial death at a Public School and so for me were a source of constant embarrassment. Unable to shine at sports, and being a single child from a home that would have preferred none, I was not a good mixer. Instead, I hid behind walls of imagination, escaping reality into the heroic worlds of Charles Kingsley and Sir Walter Scott, of *Hereward the Wake*, of *Ivanhoe*, of *Kenilworth,* and Stevenson's *The Black Arrow*.

> 'My arrow heads were newly chipped from bits of roof slate'

Framlingham, with Roger Bigod's 12th-century castle grandly visible across the meadows, was the ideal venue for a small boy with a taste for medieval mayhem. Alas, the castle was stictly out-of-bounds to juniors who only escaped from the school grounds when parents visited or on supervised crocodile walks – walks which never went near the castle.

Neither then, nor since, have I warmed to the idea of walking there and back to see how far it is. So, using a stratagem that I no longer remember – it may have been the boots – I contrived to be excused the walks in favour of unsupervised rambling that took me down to the brook between school and castle where I spent halcyon hours catching sticklebacks in my cap. The castle, I discovered, was too far away, but it gave me the idea of fabricating ancient artifacts that I could carry back and show to the master in charge of walks as proof that I had been usefully, even educationally employed. Why or how I got away with this disgraceful deceit, I shall never understand, for my artifacts were arrow heads newly chipped from bits of modern roof slate. This, nevertheless, was my first encounter with the evocative world of archaeology.

When I told an uncle (who later paid my school fees) that I wanted to become an

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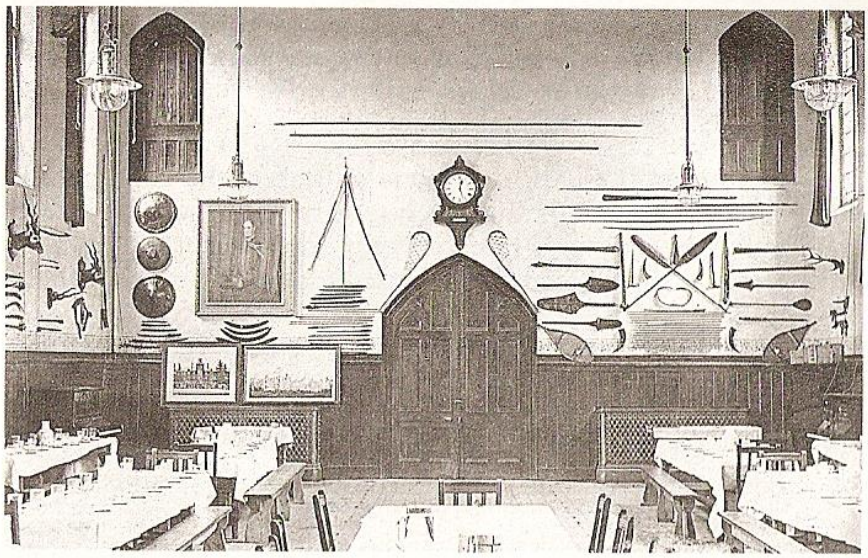
archaeologist, he turned purple at the neck and thundered "Young man, archaeology is an avocation, and not a profession!" By all the rules of reason, he should have been right. But in my case – he wasn't.

Over the last forty years I have been asked many times why it was that I chose archaeology. In truth, it chose me. But that's another story. Nevertheless, to explain my interest in the artefacts of the past, and for want of a better answer I contend that it began in the dining hall at Framlingham.



The dining room walls which inspired the author before the war.

In my first terms the hall's walls were hung with the trophies of empire, presumably presented to the school by old Framlinghamians returning from the colonies: Assagais, Zulu shields, clubs, Indian knives, muskets from the Afghan War, European swords, flintlock pistols, and much, much else that I cannot remember. But for a small boy with an empty plate and a fertile mind, these relics were catalysts, tickets to journeys of the imagination.

> 'The lost treasures of the dining hall walls had left their indelible imprint'

Consequently, on returning to Framlingham after a holiday (probably in the autumn of '38), I was dismayed to discover that the dining hall had been renovated and the dust-collecting relics of the glorious past had been banished. Light brown paneling, doubtless installed at great expense, skirted walls freshly plastered and evocative of absolutely nothing. Nevertheless, the lost treasures had left their indelible imprint, if not on the dining hall walls, in the mind of this little boy.

Those youthful encounters with history both manufactured and imagined, might today be pointed to by psychiatrists as classic examples of the fact that it is not what is taught at school but rather what one learns there, that colours the rest of one's life. Well, not necessarily.

Before being removed from Framlingham at the outbreak of war, I was to have one more close encounter with the past. And this time it was to be the real past – with a capital P.

At the end of the summer term in 1939, the Junior School's Scout troop went to camp on the land of Mrs Edith Pretty beside the River Deben – land which even as we erected our tents was entering the annals of world archaeology. The site of the Sutton Hoo Saxon ship burial, it was being excavated by a team led by some of the soon-be-great names in the archaeological profession. And as a special treat, our troop was allowed to visit them.

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A long, oval, sandy hole and a cluster of men down on their knees at the bottom, is virtually all I remember – that, and a man coming up a ladder with a bucket and asking me to empty it. Otherwise we stood for the longest time watching nothing happen. Archaeology, it seemed, was not half as exciting as I had imagined it.

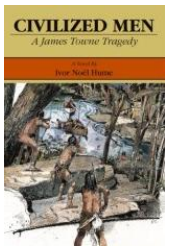
That same summer, a girl of my age, Audrey Baines, visited the dig as the guest of Mrs Pretty, and she, too, went away bored and disappointed. It was not until pictures of the fully excavated ship and some of its treasures appeared on the back of *The Times* (or maybe it was the *Daily Telegraph*) a few days before war broke out that I realized I had been a witness to something memorable and important.

> 'We stood for the longest while watching nothing happen'

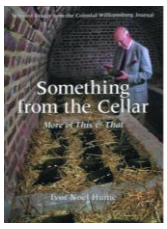
Ten years later, the girl who had yawned at Sutton Hoo, joined me on the staff of London's Guildhall museum, and for several years thereafter we struggled to save the city's Roman and later relics from the jaws of the developer's bulldozers. Married in 1950, and Sutton Hoo's boredom notwithstanding, we have ever since worked together as an archaeological team – currently at Roanoke Island, the site of Sir Walter Raleigh's 1585 settlement and Britain's first American colony.

After more than forty years of digging I still wonder what part, if any, those hated brown boots, the freshly napped arrowheads, and the mist-shrouded battlements of Framlingham Castle, really played in shaping my career. And not mine alone, for I am told that two subsequent generations of American archaeologists claim to have chosen this profession as the result of reading my books.

It was Alfred Lord Tennyson who wrote "For man is man and master of his fate." Sometimes I'm not so sure.'



Since writing the above articles, he has produced a novel about Jamestown, Virginia, USA in 1610 titled *Civilized Men*. It has been nominated for the Virginia State Library's fiction award for 2007.

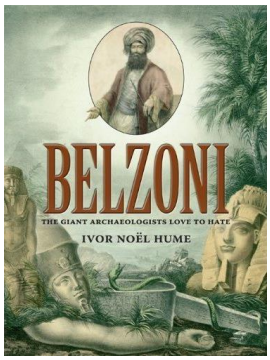


He has also recently had published *Something From the Cellar,* which includes selected essays by him. This is a collection from the pages of Colonial Williamsburg, a popular history journal.

He has also written a play about colonist John Smith called "Smith! Being the life and death of Cap'n John". It premiered on 5 April 2007 at the Kimball Theatre in Williamsburg, Virginia and ran until December 2007. It was written to mark the 400th anniversary of the Jamestown Landing. The play was revived in a new production in Maryland in September 2008.

With those behind him he also completed work on another novel, *The Bicyclist*, which chronicles the collapse of the United States in the not too distant future. This book has not yet found a publisher.

In 2008 he completed a new play about Samuel Pepys titled "Dapper Dicky or Pepys in Person" and a small book on William Strachey titled "Wreck and Redemption", which was published in March 2009. He's finished writing his autobiography, titled *A Passion for the Past* and this will be published by the University of Virginia Press in 2010.



At the end of 2009 he was completing a book on the 19th-century Egyptologist Giovanni Belzoni *Belzoni: The Giant Archaeologists Love to Loathe*. This book was published by the University Press of Virginia and in 2012 made the *New York Times's* list of the 100 best books. The publisher was ecstatic as this was the only American university press book to make the list.

He died on 4 February 2017 in Williamsburgh, Virginia, USA at the age of 89. The following article was published in the Virginia Gazette on 7 February 2017

Ivor Noël Hume, famed archaeologist, dies at 89

Famed archaeologist Ivor Noël Hume, who established historical archaeology within the field and spent 30 years as Colonial Williamsburg's Chief Archaeologist, passed away at his home Saturday. He was 89 years old.

Born in London, Noël Hume made his name in the U.S. as Colonial Williamsburg's chief archaeologist, a position he held for three decades, from his move to the area in the 1950s. He was a research associate for the Smithsonian Institution and in 1964 took the helm of Colonial Williamsburg's Department of Archaeology.

One of his most notable discoveries was of a 1600s settlement at Carter's Grove, unearthed in the 1970s. Nick Luccketti, an archaeologist with the James River Institute and First Colony Foundation, helped with that excavation.

"He was brilliant," Luccketti said. "Everyone in the preservation community should be grateful that he chose our field to spend his life in. He would have been brilliant at any career path that he may have chosen, so we were fortunate to have him as part of the archaeological community."

Born in 1927, Noël Hume studied in England at Framlingham College and St. Lawrence College, and served with the Indian Army in World War II. His archaeology career took off when he was hired at London's Guildhall Museum in 1949, before he moved to Colonial Williamsburg in 1957.

Luccketti kept in touch with Noël Hume, working with him over the years and always asking for his advice. They worked together again investigating the "Lost Colony" on Roanoke Island in North Carolina after Noël Hume retired from Colonial Williamsburg.

Just two weeks ago Luccketti met Noël Hume to work on a manuscript they were preparing, compiling finds from the Roanoke excavation to be sent to Fort Raleigh National Historic Site, which owns the island.

Noël Hume's legacy goes far beyond mid-Atlantic archaeology circles, Luccketti said.

"He's the Babe Ruth of historical archaeology," Luccketti said. "But the principals he espoused in his books about how to conduct proper archaeology pertained to the discipline as a whole."

And as for books, Noël Hume wrote dozens of them.

A curator for the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, Bly Straube said his writing was eloquent, and he had a knack for making history and research understandable to everyone.

"He made it so accessible to the general public — history, archaeology," Straube said. "We all tried to emulate him in that way."

He is the reason Straube pursued a career in the field. As a young, "wannabe archaeologist" in 1973, she wrote him a letter — and he wrote back.

"He's the kind of person where you are amazed that you're living in the same space and time with him, he's a legend," Straube said. "He's just one of those people that the younger archaeologists would have thought he must already have been dead, he was so legendary."

Noël Hume's first wife Audrey was also an archeologist and curator, and she worked alongside him at Colonial Williamsburg. The couple never had children and she died in 1993.

Among his long list of recognitions was being named an Officer of the British Empire by Queen Elizabeth II in 1992.

Noël Hume is survived by his second wife Carol Noël Hume and her four children.

The following extensive obituary appeared in *The Times* on 17 March 2017

Ivor Noël Hume

Wilfully eccentric British archaeologist renowned for his work on excavating America's early colonial history

Ivor Noël Hume examining shards of melted glass in Rosewell, Virginia COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

When Ivor Noël Hume saw a sprinkling of pottery shards in the plantation soil, he had no idea that beneath lay the site one of the most dramatic incidents in American colonial history — the tale of a bloody massacre in 1622 in which several hundred English settlers had died.

The British archaeologist was the director of Colonial Williamsburg's archaeological mission in Virginia from 1957 to 1988, richly deserving his reputation as one of the best-known excavators of the oldest traces of America's New World colonies.

He had begun his career excavating the foggy mudbanks of the Thames after the Second World War, and became a much-loved and distinguished figure in the archaeological community in the US, marked out by his double-barrelled name and mannerisms, including a penchant for white tennis shoes. His keen sense of showmanship — some might say he possessed all the eccentricities of the Englishman abroad — extended to lavish displays of pyrotechnics from his house on the banks of the James River in Virginia, where he also routinely paused for afternoon tea.

After his macabre discovery in 1979 at a site named Wolstenholme Towne, Noël Hume spent several summers painstakingly labouring amid swarms of flies and the high Virginia temperatures. Winters were spent identifying and piecing together his findings.

What he unearthed were the remnants of a town that had been hidden for 350 years, since hundreds of settlers had been butchered in their homes and out in the fields in a surprise attack by Native Americans.

As word spread, crowds began to appear as Noël Hume and his crew dug up broken skulls and bones. The massacre had taken place three years after the town was founded by 220 men and women who had arrived from England on the ship Gift of God.

He fondly called one contorted skeleton "Granny". "She was struck down and mutilated, we think, and then revived and crawled off into a rubbish pit, where she died," he said. Noël Hume thought she had died in agony, but during a bout of flu he spent several days lying in bed and awoke to find himself in the same position. Forensic pathologists told him it was a characteristic posture of an exposure death, in which the victim suffers no discomfort. He had found metal hair rollers still attached. "It was a style long out of fashion, but then she was a very old woman, perhaps 40," he said.

Other victims had been defaced. "And by 'defaced' I mean 'de-faced', literally, the flesh flayed from the living person," he would say, waving about grizzly lifesized photographs. He wrote a bestselling book, Martin's Hundred, cataloguing the discovery.

Ivor Noël Hume — always known as Noël — was born in 1927 in London to Cecil Noël Hume, who worked at an American bank, and Gladys Mary Bagshaw Mann, nicknamed Dimps, a socialite with a taste for Tatler and Fortnum & Mason. The pair had met at a tennis club, but were badly matched and separated when Ivor was young.

He was largely brought up at the top of the family's grand Chelsea house by a nanny. After his father quickly remarried, he lived with his mother, who found a series of benefactors.

Noël Hume had rickets as a baby and spent his first years with his legs encased in plaster. At boarding school — Framlingham — he was forced to wear ankle-supporting boots. Unable to play sport, he "hid behind the walls of imagination". He spent hours catching sticklebacks in his cap in a brook. His first taste of archaeology was fabricating ancient artefacts to offer as proof to a master that he had undertaken daily walks to the nearby castle.

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He was evacuated to Devon during the war, where a kindly Greek neighbour would recount Aegean myths and gave him five ancient Greek coins. He described the first thrill of touching something that was thousands of years old. Often he trawled the beaches for discarded food boxes, ammunition belts and overshoes from US ships.

However, when he told an uncle — who paid his school fees — that he wanted to become an archaeologist, "he turned purple at the neck and thundered, 'Young man, archaeology's an avocation, not a profession!' "

He created an incendiary device that fired spuds from his back garden

At the end of the war, he tried to become a playwright. During a break from pounding the streets to meet agents, he heard a radio programme describing the unearthing of treasures in the Thames. When the tide was down he too began to explore the banks. Early finds included coins, a typewriter and a bus sign, as well as pewter badges from medieval pilgrims, marbles, tobacco pipes and wig curlers.

He deposited them with the Guildhall Museum and within a few years he was running it.

Rooting through London's postwar rubble and bombed-out buildings, Noël Hume recalled days spent cold, wet and wrapped in a duffel coat. His tools were limited to what he could carry on the bus: an old museum camera, notepad, handful of nails, a trowel, hand brush and tape measure.

He found the first human skull from the Boudicca era and helped to unearth a Roman-era "bikini" made of goat skin.

Among his colleagues was a young woman, Audrey Baines. On one dig in 1950, resting among some ruins and spattered in mud, he asked her to marry him. A few days after their wedding, they were back in the London mud.

In 1956 an invitation came from Williamsburg, one of the earliest colonial towns in the US and a growing tourist attraction. He struggled at first to get his bearings amid the white-painted clapboard houses in a "worsted English suit under a scorching summer sun". However, the Noël Humes quickly settled into a routine of work for the Colonial Williamsburg museum and evening martinis on verandas with colleagues.

Taking up a permanent role, he and his wife found homes back in London for their 42 tortoises and terrapins, a lizard, hedgehog and several crows. They took one giant turtle, named Tigellinus, to America. He flew first class with them in a basket, kept warm by a hot water bottle and several blankets.

At the time, artefacts being dug up were neglected in favour of building remains and were neither recorded nor preserved. Often outspoken and prickly, he demanded: "Why are we being paid to save this stuff if we don't show it to the public?" Instead he put objects wherever there was space. "My attitude was that this belongs to the public," he said.

Noël Hume with Richard and Pat Nixon in 1981 COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG

When he excavated a settlers' tavern in the Sixties, he built an exhibit entitled The Traveler's Room with 40 objects, ranging from fireplace tiles to a blanket on the bed and chamber pot. "The room was as it might have been had the traveller just gotten out of bed," he said. Visitors soon numbered 15,000 a month in the summer and included President Nixon.

In Noël Hume's view an archaeologist's function "is no different from that of the police detective asking, 'Who done it?' The splintered window, the fingerprint on the glass, the bloody blade are important only if they lead to the killer; in archaeology the shattered pitcher and the stained earth are only valuable if they help us to determine who did what, why and to whom."

While fishing on the James River in 1963 he found a spot for a house. He designed a one-storey painted-brick affair. His wife cultivated an English garden full of roses and sweet peas that faltered in droughts. A British flag hung from their porch.

After she died in 1993, he married Carol (née Grazier), a colleague whom he had known for almost 20 years. Not having children of his own, he acquired four grown-up stepchildren: Andrea, who works for a non-profit organisation; David, who works in finance; Michael, in property development; and Kristen, a retail manager.

His dinner parties would often include a demonstration of his "potato cannon" — an incendiary device that would launch spuds from his back patio into the river several hundred feet away.

In retirement he continued to dig. In North Carolina he found an old, buried laboratory once used for metallurgical research, with fragments of glass, crucibles, pots for ointments, and broken distilling apparatus. He claimed it as "the birthplace of American science".

He continued to churn out excavation reports, articles for decorative arts journals and books with such titles as If These Pots Could Talk: Collecting 2,000 Years of British Household Pottery.

He often joked that in all his digging he had only ever found two gold coins.

Ivor Noël Hume, OBE, archaeologist, was born on September 30, 1927. He died on February 4, 2017, aged 89

We are indebted to **Charles Simpson (K65-72)** who came across a fascinating long interview with him about his life – you can view here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6i3k2BKz-WA