BLOOD GROUPINGS

Other investigations by Dr Trevor and Mr Doughty initially appeared to reveal that ninety per cent of the skulls in the crypt are male due to the greater robustness of the male skull. There is a higher incidence of blood group O in Type I than Type II, the latter resembling the modern blood group frequency in the area. The similarity between the 16th and 20th century ABO blood group frequency was confirmed by Mr Doughty’s work on blood groups of the “Mary Rose”. This might indicate that blood group O was more susceptible than other blood groups to the various diseases and epidemics occurring between the 14th and 16th centuries, however subsequent forensic research by Heron et al has suggested that antigen inhibition based testing has a lack of result repeatability and therefore this method has been considered unreliable since the mid-1990s. ¹

It should be noted that Rothwell’s bones have not been looked at in this respect. Rothwell’s bones show signs of osteoarthritis, fractures, exostoses, rickets, trauma, malignancy and Paget’s disease. Average heights are 1.72 metres for the male and 1.58 metres for the female. The medieval population for Rothwell would appear to be relatively healthy although the average age of death was probably 42 years. However, it should also be noted that there has been no work on the blood groups or DNA testing of the bones in Holy Trinity, Rothwell, and that recent analysis of the bones in 2013 by osteoarchaeologists has revealed that the true ratio of female to male is approximately 50:50.

¹ “Studies in Crime: An Introduction to Forensic Archaeology” by Carol Heron, John Humer, Geoffrey Knupfer, Anthony Martin, Mark Pollard and Charlotte Roberta