

The Trowel

Newsletter of the Archaeology Section, University of Chester
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Staff News

The department is very pleased to welcome **Dr Amy Gray-Jones** to the archaeology team. Amy received her PhD in Archaeology from the University of Manchester in July 2011. Her research concentrates on human osteology and funerary archaeology, particularly the treatment of the body after death (e.g. practices such as the dismembering of fleshed bodies). She is an active field archaeologist and is involved in projects in the Vale of Pickering, East Yorkshire, investigating the Mesolithic occupation of the important sites of Star Carr and Flixton School House Farm.

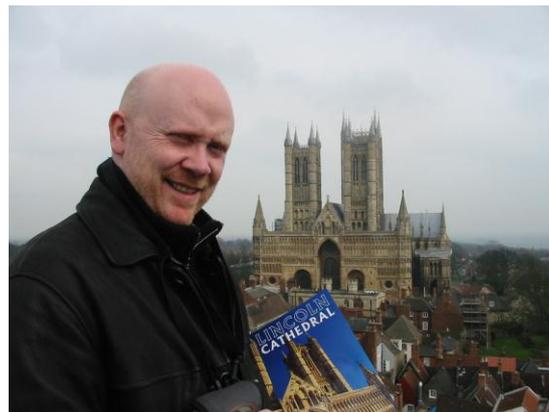


Dr Amy Gray-Jones has joined the department.

Anne Teather spent part of the summer months on a research trip to the Preseli Mountains as part of the 'Stone of Stonehenge Project' with Prof. Mike Parker Pearson (Sheffield), Prof. Colin Richards (Manchester) and Dr Josh Pollard (Bristol). Anne reports they may have found one of the quarry sites for the rhyolite stones for Stonehenge! Anne was also an invited speaker at a seminar series at University College Dublin's School of Archaeology in October.

James Pardoe recently gained his PhD on 'Homes and Haunts: Memorialising Romantic Writers' from the University of Manchester, Centre for Museology. He has also been curating the Queen's Diamond Jubilee Exhibition 'The Head that Wears the Crown: Decoding Royal Portraits in Chester' at the Grosvenor Museum (14th Jan – 1st Apr). Other new work on his agenda is a pan-European

research project on 19th century memorial museums involving academics from the University of Göttingen, Germany.



Dr James Pardoe heads up our heritage modules.

Howard Williams is currently on sabbatical (sponsored by the Leverhulme Trust). He has recently seen the publication of a major piece of research on animal commemoration, 'Ashes to asses: An archaeological perspective on death and donkeys' in the *Journal of Material Culture* (vol. 16:3). He also continued his work on **Project Eliseg** in collaboration with archaeologists from the University of Bangor. The 2011 season identified at two cist burials within the cairn and there are plans for further excavation in 2012.

Meggen Gondek spent August directing an excavation at the church in Forteviot as part of the Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot project. She also presented, alongside her REAP co-director Dr Gordon Noble of Aberdeen, the exciting recent results of the Rhynie Environs Archaeological Project 2011 excavation at a workshop on Runes, Monuments and Memorial Carvings in Uppsala, Sweden.

Chester Archaeology Society Dissertation Prize

The 2011 Chester Archaeology Society annual Dissertation Prize was jointly awarded to **Gary Duckers** for *Polygons and 'Place: An Exploration of Alternative Methodologies of Historic Landscape Characterisation in Cheshire* and **Dean Paton** for *Things aren't always what they seem: A critique of recent approaches to Early Medieval Assembly Sites in Britain, with a case study focusing on Thingwall,*

Wirral. Special mention also to the other nominee for the prize: **Jacqueline Martin** for *The Shaping of History: Mold Riots Revisited*.

Student wins national dissertation prize

Dean Paton has also won the 2011 John Hurst Dissertation Prize for the best undergraduate dissertation in medieval archaeology for his work on early medieval assembly sites. The prize is awarded by the Society for Medieval Archaeology. The annual award is made to the undergraduate dissertation selected from submissions from the UK and Ireland that makes the most original contribution to medieval archaeology (from AD 400 to 1,600). This is the second year running that a Chester undergraduate has won this prestigious award.

Spotlight on: Excavation and media



Joseph Tong, left, films at Eliseg 2011.

As archaeologists we are passionate about discovering the past and we want to inspire others to have as much passion for it as we do. In addition to talking to our students, we have been working on ways to communicate to the world at large. In 2010, we began the CAER Project blog (<http://www.univchester-parkdig.blogspot.com/>) with students and staff offering daily updates and photographs of the yearly excavations in Grosvenor Park. More recently, **Professor Howard Williams** has been exploring the potential of a range of media to get the information out about Project Eliseg. Project Eliseg Media has its own Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Project-Eliseg-Media/169085143168656>). Current final year archaeology student **Joseph Tong** took charge of the filming and editing. He says, 'Excavation is a dynamic process. Videos and blogs can go straight to a viewing point where the information for the public can be easily and reliably accessed.'

A trip over the water...

In late October, an intrepid minibus full of final



Visiting Newgrange in Ireland (l to r: Dr Anne Teather, Sophie Hill, Michael Donlea, Shameem Guilliano, Harry Grocott, Andrew Radford and Jenny Watson).

year archaeology students studying modules on the Neolithic and on Early Medieval sculpture hopped a ferry to Dublin for a fieldtrip. Led by Anne and Meggen, the trip offered the chance to visit the National Museum in Dublin, the famous passage grave at Newgrange, the Hill of Tara and the impressive monuments at Monasterboice. Anne even managed to squeeze in giving a seminar at the School of Archaeology at University College Dublin! Meggen also offered to lead a 'bonus fieldtrip' to the smallest pub in Dublin, which was also quite popular. The trip was branded 'the best fieldtrip ever' despite a rather early departure and bumpy boat ride back!

Research Student News

Archaeology has seen the addition of five new research postgraduates this year. Profiles of students can be found on our new PG webpage <http://www.chester.ac.uk/departments/history-archaeology/research/pg>.

Three of our PGs presented at the Society for Medieval Archaeology's Student Colloquium this autumn. **Ruth Nugent** presented in the 'Deviancy and Burial' session, **Rachel Swallow** spoke in the session on 'Elite Landscapes' and **Jon Coley** gave his paper in the session on 'Church in Context.' **Jo Kirton** presented her work on early medieval carved stone monuments at December's Theoretical Archaeology Group (TAG) Conference in Birmingham in a session on 'Past Mobilities.'



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