

# The Trowel

Newsletter of the Archaeology Section, University of Chester  
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## Staff News

**Professor Howard Williams** is back from his research leave but still continues to work on his Leverhulme Trust funded project, 'Speaking with the Dead' recently conducting a research trip to Canterbury Cathedral with Leverhulme Trust PhD student, Ruth Nugent.

**James Pardoe** just returned from a research exchange in Denmark. He has also been invited to speak on heritage matters at an international conference to be held in Budapest in June.

Rhynie's ([www.reaparch.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.reaparch.blogspot.co.uk)) amazing results means **Meggen Gondek** has been in high demand as a speaker at a range of conferences and seminars – so far hitting Durham, Cardiff, Preston and, of course, Chester!

**Amy Gray Jones** recently celebrated her doctoral achievements (awarded last year) at her graduation from the University of Manchester (alongside her archaeology other half!). She has also presented a paper at the EAA conference in Helsinki on cremation in the Mesolithic.



Dr Amy Gray Jones and Dr Barry Taylor.

## Chester Archaeology Society Dissertation Prize

The 2012 Chester Archaeology Society annual Dissertation Prize was awarded to **Andrew Radford**

for "Early Medieval Sculpture of the Northwest: a material medium for social signaling." Honorable mention should also go to the other nominee for the prize: **Heidi Archer** for "Landscapes of the Dead: The Commemorative Practices of Cheshire, England."

## Department Fieldwork & Research Round-up

The third and final season of **Project Eliseg**, co-directed by **Howard Williams**, saw the excavation of the west side of the mound and the discovery of an intact cist packed with cremated human remains. These are likely to be of Early Bronze Age date and two other disturbed cist-graves were also found. Visit our website for more details at: <http://www.projecteliseg.org>



Revealing cists at Project Eliseg 2012.

Building on links established by Howard, **James Pardoe** was invited to Aarhus University (Denmark) in November to discuss possibilities for future co-operation and exchanges. Amongst other speaking engagements, James was invited to speak at an international seminar – *Collecting and Recollecting the Past: Heritage at the intersection of practice and analysis*, for which he delivered a paper on 'The Invention of Heritage in the UK'.

**Amy Gray Jones** excavated alongside Howard Williams on his recent rescue work in North Wales. She also spent some time digging Palaeolithic/Mesolithic horse remains and hoof prints in the Vale of Pickering.

Apart from her work in Rhynie this summer, **Meggen Gondek** spent some time excavating a possible early monastic enclosure at Dunning, Perthshire as part of the Glasgow-Aberdeen run SERF Project. She also has been working alongside the Chester Archaeological Society developing their new research project on Eccleston and digging a few test pits in the village.

### Research Student News

PhD student **Ruth Nugent** and her supervisor **Professor Howard Williams** are celebrating the publication of a joint paper looking at art on Anglo-Saxon cremation urns. You can read this paper online at:

<http://www.mikroarkeologi.se/publications/encounteringimagery/Encountering.htm>

### Mastering Heritage



*Whitley Castle, the subject of Adam Flynn's work*

The site of Whitley Castle, Cumbria, has been described as the best preserved Roman Fort in Britain, if not the Roman Empire. **Professor Stewart Ainsworth** has close links with the site having worked on a number of management, research and access issues. The site is beginning to generate lots of interest, which means it is important to plan how it can be protected, archaeologically investigated and opened to the public on a large scale.

The first step of this planning involves writing a Research Framework, and as part of the new MA in Archaeology and Heritage Practice, MA student **Adam Flynn** will be writing this important document. Adam says, 'This is a great opportunity, not just for me, but for the whole department. It's exciting to be involved as the creation of a Research Framework will affect and guide all investigations and other work around the site in the future.'

### Student News

*3<sup>rd</sup> year Single Honours student **Will Morris** was awarded a funded EASE placement this summer.*

*Will writes:*

During the summer, I was lucky enough to spend five weeks digging in northern Portugal. Castanheiro do Vento is an enigmatic well-preserved Copper Age site. Amongst the finds were vast quantities of pottery, often impressed with a series of wavy lines applied using a comb before firing - a style known as 'pentiago'. Also of interest was flint - not as common a find as it is in Britain, but here seen as rare and exciting evidence for long distance trade. I personally uncovered the largest piece ever to be found in 20 years of digging! (However, I also managed to chip it with my mattock a bit, somewhat diminishing my sense of achievement). The trip offered much besides the archaeology. The region is beautiful and the site is situated amongst vineyards and olive groves. The region also enjoys a Mediterranean micro-climate - early starts and siestas were a must - leaving plenty of free time to socialise in the evening.



*Sunrise from Castanheiro do Vento (Photo W. Morris)*

### Archaeology – not just for diggers!

A recent opinion piece in *Current Archaeology* magazine highlighted how an archaeology degree provides many experiences and skills that employers in all markets find desirable. After all, not everyone wants to be a digger, and students want to spend fees on programmes they know they will enjoy, be interested in and that will make them attractive employees. Just some of the things our archaeologists do: problem solving, report writing, analysing large data sets, IT including databases and GIS, project management, project and budget design, independent and team work, creative thinking & public speaking. This is in addition to subject skills such as survey, finds analysis, heritage management and, of course, excavation!



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