

The Trowel

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Academic Prizes Announced

We are very pleased to announce the winners of this year's academic prizes:

Michael Beeston - The Rhys Williams Prize for Study in Archaeology

William Morris - University Prize for Archaeology and Heritage

Jonathan Nash - The David and Betty Evans Memorial Prize

Congratulations to all our final year archaeologists! We wish you the greatest success. Keep in touch!

Two Major Conferences Showcase Chester's Research Environment



The IRMMC Network conference field trip to see the West Kirby hogback.

This spring, two major conferences were hosted by the Department of History and Archaeology. Both showcased the early medieval research interests of staff and postgraduate students. The first, held in early April, was the 2nd Workshop meeting of the Runes, Monuments and Memorial Carvings International Network, which was organised by lecturer **Meggen Gondek** and PhD student, **Jo Kirton**. The network scholars came from across Europe and the USA to present and debate issues surrounding early medieval monuments and their audiences. A keynote address by the Department's **Professor Howard Williams** held in the atmospheric St John's Church in Chester is available online: <http://vimeo.com/64725297> and free for all to view. The Network website also showcases several video clips of the conference in action (www.monumentsnetwork.org). The quality and energy of the speakers and discussion was exceptional and even the conference dinner was voted 'best ever' by several participants!



Rachel Swallow presenting work on Frodsham at EMASS 2013.

This success was quickly followed by another highly acclaimed event organised by PhD researchers **Ruth Nugent** and **Jo Kirton**. The 7th Early Medieval Archaeology Student Symposium (EMASS) was held at Chester Cathedral's medieval chapterhouse in May. EMASS is always well attended and Chester's 3-day conference attracted early career researchers from across Europe to meet and present their latest research.



Karen Gavin in charge at the EMASS reception.

Rachel Swallow, a research student in the department, gave an exciting paper on the potential whereabouts of Frodsham Castle and **Karen Gavin**, another research student, was a superb administrator throughout the event. The keynote lecture was presented by Hon. **Professor Stewart Ainsworth** in the beautiful surroundings of St. John's Church, where a wine and cask ale reception followed. Hangovers aside, the conference was rounded off with a whistle-stop tour of early medieval sites in Llangollen and Wirral, headed by our very own expert guide **Professor Howard Williams**.

Combining Archaeology and Other Subjects

One thing we are always asked at Open Days is whether it makes sense to combine archaeology with other subjects. Lots of people want to learn about archaeology, but it can be scary to sign up for a degree when you probably have not had the chance to study it before. Learning to 'think like an archaeologist' can open up a whole new perspective on the world and the transferable skills you gain can be very attractive for employers (e.g. leadership skills on fieldwork, problem solving, data analysis and management). Many historians opt for heritage modules that help them see how the story of the past can be presented to others.

Final year combined history and archaeology student **Emma Jenkin** offers us an insight into why she chose a combined degree:

'I chose a combined degree in archaeology as I wanted to try a different way of studying history. I was a little worried that I might end up disliking it, so I chose both just in case archaeology wasn't for me. I ended up loving archaeology (even more than history!). I find that working with physical evidence makes history more engaging. It also tells us more about how the everyday person, which I always find easier to associate with, lived in addition to looking at elites, like kings.'

Students combine archaeology with languages, English Literature, Forensic Biology, Geography, Theology and Religious Studies and, of course, History.

At Chester you can 'Go Medieval'!

One of the special features of combining Archaeology and History is the ability to focus on the Medieval period – from pagan Anglo-Saxons and Picts to Norman castles and wealthy trading centres on the Continent. Modules on the Wars of the Roses, Medieval archaeology, Medieval life, death, burial, art and economics are all on offer. A recent review of the department noted its 'achievement of national recognition for the strength of its medieval history and archaeology.' With the appointment of a new medieval historian, **Dr Tom Pickles**, this special focus continues to grow. Check out our modules and options on our website or ask us more at an Open Day!

Mummies & ethics on a 1st year fieldtrip

PhD researcher and Visiting Lecturer **Ruth Nugent** organised for 1st Year Archaeology students in the 'Debates in World Archaeology' module to have a back-stage tour of Manchester Museum led by Spencer Campbell, curator of The Egypt and The

Sudan collections. Students handled Egyptian artefacts and viewed the mummy stores. This not only offered a chance to see into the world of the Egyptians and museum curatorship, but students also began to debate the ethics of displaying mummies in museums. The students were so fired up, it was difficult to get them to leave – definitely a fieldtrip highlight this year.

Grosvenor Park Dig 2013



Jet bead found in Grosvenor Park.

During May, our second year students took part in the Department's annual training excavation, run in part by the excellent Heritage Environment Team from Cheshire West and Chester Council. A stone's throw from the Roman amphitheatre and the medieval Church of St John, we have been uncovering the remains of a 16th century stone building, possibly the Chapel of St Anne. Star finds this year included an ivory comb, a jet bead, and a copper-alloy seal along with huge quantities of animal bone and pottery, all revealing more about the occupants of this area of Chester. You can find out how they got on by reading our dig blog (www.univchester-parkdig.blogspot.co.uk).



Grosvenor Park Excavations 2013.



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