

The Trowel

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Staff News

James Pardoe recently published a review in the *Journal of Heritage Tourism* on Richard Sharpley and Philip R. Stone (eds) *The Darker Side of Travel: The Theory and Practice of Dark Tourism*. He has also been busy representing the University on a number of heritage panels and giving expert advice. These have included CWAC's Conservation Management Plan for Chester Rows Working Party and the EU Portico Project: towards future-proofing historic cities. James took part in the University of Manchester Centre for Museology's annual research forum discussing subjects ranging from the notion of invisibility of monuments in Greece to an analysis of the use of light at the Victoria & Albert Museum's galleries.

Meggen Gondek saw the publication of a paper looking at the landscape and construction of carved stone monuments from Tillytarmont, Aberdeenshire in the volume *Early Medieval Enquiries* as well as two book reviews for the *Archaeological Journal*. This summer she has been invited back to the Strathearn Environs and Royal Forteviot Project as one of the project team members. Meggen and Howard will also be presenting papers on the theme 'Medieval Monuments as Technologies of Remembrance' at the International Medieval Congress in Leeds in July.

Howard Williams recently published papers on his research including a co-authored (with Sam Walls) exploration of Second World War memorials on Slapton Sands, Devon in the *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* and a paper in the popular archaeology journal *Minerva* about his research into how we depict early medieval graves in museums and in artist's reconstructions. In April, Howard organised a session with Melanie Giles of the University of Manchester at the conference of the Institute for Archaeology (IfA) addressing the popular culture of mortuary archaeology in Britain today, from the myth of the mummy's curse to the recent excavation of the First World War 'Fallen' among the trenches of the Western Front. He has also been keeping his Scandinavian links alive through speaking at a conference of the Jelling Project, organised by the Danish National Museum, and travelling to the University of Aarhus to examine a doctoral thesis.

Academic Prizes for 2009-2010

The Department sends our warm congratulations to the recipients of this year's academic prizes. The University Prize for History went to **Louise Clarke**. The Blue Coat Archaeology & Heritage Prize was awarded to **Ruth Nugent** and The Rhys Williams Prize for Study in Archaeology went to **Karen Gavin**. Well done!



Final year students (l to r) enjoy the goodbye reception: Alice Roberts, Rebecca Lawrence, Sherry Kennett, Jasmine Hopkins and Jessica Murray.

Spotlight on: plans after graduation

As the end of the academic year looms, many final year students' minds turn from concentrating on their dissertation to thinking about their next step. We asked one student to tell us about what she's doing next. Rebecca Lawrence was a Combined Honours (Archaeology and English) student. She writes:

'One of the main highlights from my three years studying Archaeology at Chester was the heritage modules. The way in which the modules were taught, both theoretically and practically, inspired my own passion for this subject. This led me to volunteer at the National Trust property, Chirk Castle, to gain experience and here I learned more about the MA in Heritage Management at the Ironbridge Institute (University of Birmingham). I had considered a number of other postgraduate courses around the country but after researching the Ironbridge Institute, I realised this was my best option. It appeared to have a similar small and friendly department like that in Chester and the course itself sounded fantastic. After being interviewed, I was lucky enough to be given an offer, which will now lead me to a career within the

heritage industry maintaining prehistoric ancient monuments. Without the thought-provoking, informative, fun and helpful teaching provided by James Pardoe, I may not have been inspired to continue in a career in heritage, so many thanks go to him and the History & Archaeology department!

CAER Project launch

This spring saw the launch of a new research project called the **Chester Amphitheatre Environs Research (CAER) Project** in association with Cheshire West and Chester's Historic Environment Team. The project aims to bring together different strands of investigation surrounding Chester's famous Roman amphitheatre to better understand how the area was used not only in the Roman period but also in prehistory and later periods. The project this year excavated in Grosvenor Park for four weeks in May and served as our 2nd years' training dig.



Students populate the trench on one of the Open Days in Grosvenor Park.

The successful dig not only trained students in all manner of archaeological skills but also uncovered remains of buildings associated with the once grand Cholmondeley Mansion house. Cholmondeley's mansion was destroyed when the park was laid out in the 19th century but it was also the site of fierce fighting during the Civil War in the 17th century and it probably incorporated medieval buildings originally associated with St John the Baptist Church.

As part of the project, two public Open Days were held at the end of week three. The students and staff gave site tours, showed off our finds, guided members of the public in some 'hands on' activities such as finds washing and using a level, engaged young archaeologists with the 'mini-dig' and also helped potter Andrew Macdonald make medieval tiles. Over the two days, an estimated 1,000 people stopped by to learn more about the project and have some fun.

In future seasons the project hopes to continue investigating the remains of Cholmondeley's mansion and look into the evidence for earlier

Medieval and Roman activity. For the first time, our diggers kept a public record of their experiences. If you want to follow the story of the dig, check out the site blog at <http://www.univchester-parkdig.blogspot.com/>.

Halkyn Landscape Project 2010

This year saw the third field season of the Halkyn Landscape Project where our first year archaeology students got a taste for fieldwork on an intensive earthwork survey. The focus this year was a reservoir with an intriguing double bank and integral leat on one side. Students conducted four days of topographic survey using tape and offset techniques plus levelling and some work with a total station.



The field survey team at Halkyn in April 2010.

Welcoming new research students to the department

The department welcomes two new research students in archaeology this year. **Joanne Kirton** began her research in January looking at early medieval sculpture and its context in Chester and its hinterland. Her work hopes to focus on landscape approaches and cultural biographies of sculpture. She is currently researching a stone from Shocklach in association with the Grosvenor Museum.

Jonathan Coley began his work at the start of June. Jonathan's research focuses on both the history and archaeology of Chester's great churches – St John's and St Werburgh's - between the 11th and 14th centuries AD.



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Contact us:

Dept. of History &
Archaeology
University of Chester
Parkgate Road
Chester
CH1 4BJ
01244 511000
archaeology@chester.ac.uk