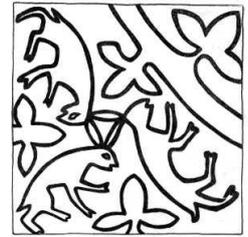


The Trowel

Newsletter of the Archaeology Section, University of Chester
Winter 2007. Issue 2



Staff announcements

Since term started in October we've had some big changes. We said goodbye to Dr David Petts, who moved to the Dept. of Archaeology at Durham University. A great goodbye event was held at the Chester Bells, where we were even serenaded by archaeology-themed songs. We wish him the best of luck in his new position.

The Department is very pleased to announce our new member of staff, **Dr Howard Williams**. Howard is a specialist in early medieval archaeology and has interests in both landscape and public archaeology. He is an internationally recognized leading scholar in mortuary archaeology, particularly in the British Isles, but also extending to Scandinavia and north-west Europe. His most recent book, *Death and Memory in Early Medieval Britain*, was published by Cambridge University Press in 2007. Howard has also edited several volumes and published highly regarded papers in collected volumes and leading journals. He will be joining us at the start of February – so watch out for an announcement of a welcoming 'do' around then!

Dr Meggen Gondok, the Programme Leader for Archaeology, was recently made Senior Lecturer.

Students in the news!

Our students have been gracing the pages of a number of newspapers and magazines reporting on the excavations in Grosvenor Park as part of last year's Training Excavation run by Chester Archaeology. You can see their smiling faces on the pages of *Cheshire Life* and *Chester News*. Surely, a guest spot on Hollyoaks won't be far behind for them!

A recent work-based learning project conducted by Amy Treble, Gavin Smithies and Hannah Clipson focusing on heritage issues at Grosvenor Park, Chester was published online by the Council for British Archaeology. This is a fantastic achievement for all involved. Well done!

Dissertation prize

The annual Chester Archaeology Society

undergraduate dissertation prize was awarded in 2007 to **Helen Lincoln** for her work *A Standing Building Report on St. Mary's the Virgin Farleigh Surrey, which considers the church's lack of architectural development and its place in the landscape*. Special mention should also go to the other nominees Sam Chadwick (*The Damage Done To Chester During the Civil War*) and Jackie Clulow (*How significant is the contribution of Viscount Leverhulme to the Cultural Development of the North West?*).

Spotlight on Heritage

Have you ever wondered why you have to pay to visit Westminster Abbey but not the British Museum? Would you know how to display Pictish Symbol Stones or create an exhibition on the Saxons for schools? Have you ever held a Roman glass vase that has survived for 2,000 years and thought how it might continue to survive for another 2,000? The answers to these questions and many others are explored in the heritage modules that are part of Archaeology at Chester.

James Pardoe leads our heritage modules, which are designed to develop knowledge, skills and experience that students can take into the world of work in one of the UK and Europe's biggest industries. Chester graduates can be found working for the likes of CADW at Conwy Castle and English Heritage at Beeston Castle and Brodsworth Hall. Others have been successful in obtaining places on heritage postgraduate programmes as far afield as St Andrews and Bournemouth.



3rd year heritage students at Newstead Abbey.
Photo by Gavin Smithies (3rd year Combined Hon.)

Constantly praised for innovative teaching methods, the modules investigate both the theory and practice of heritage management. Consequently, students frequently find themselves in the field learning how to handle objects in a museum or debating with a curator the best way to present a house with a 900 year history. Recent field visits have included investigating the cavernous storerooms of English Heritage and exploring the, allegedly, haunted corridors of the poet Byron's ancestral home.

News from the Historical, Archaeological and Heritage Society

- contributed by Bill Sheppard, President HAHS



Members of the society stop for a break at the hillfort of Tre'r Ceiri in Wales.

It was a busy first term with a wide range of activities, social events and cunning plans taking place. Events included film nights with viewings of **300** and **Life of Brian**. A few brain cell damaging, although highly popular, historic pub tours got us out enjoying the heritage on offer in Chester. We also managed a couple of day trips. The spectacular hillfort Tre'r Ceri on the Llyn Peninsula was outstanding and already a definite highlight of the year. We also have a regular series of guest speakers coming to offer informative and enjoyable insight into their particular fields of study.

As for next term, plans are well advanced for our regular Tuesday evening meetings and the word is out about our residential trips to **Hadrian's Wall** in February and to **Stonehenge** and **Bath** in late April. There is also much muttering about an international visit at the end of the academic year – watch this space!

Experience counts: geophysical survey in Handbridge

Gaining a variety of practical experiences in archaeology during your degree is not only fun, but also can be critical when applying for archaeology jobs after you graduate or when thinking about options for postgraduate study.

The department aims to provide extra training through volunteer opportunities in addition to experience gained during the degree. One often asked-for experience is geophysical survey. Over two weekends in November, Meggen brought a team of students to the site of Hayward's Castle Field in Handbridge near Chester. This small survey project was in association with Chester Archaeology Society's ongoing research into the lost village of Claverton. The objective was to test resistivity and magnetic surveying methods for their potential to reveal archaeological information. The team was also looking for signs of a structure that could be associated with the 'Hayward's Castle' of the placename.



Connor Emerson (2nd year Single Hon.) conducts resistivity survey.

The resistivity survey provided good results and clearly showed up recent features like field drains and post-medieval and medieval field boundaries. The magnetic surveying was much faster, but unfortunately did not show much archaeology. Students commented on how different the experience was to what they saw on TV – 'there's no wire on Time Team!' being one of the comments.

The students all got first hand experience in planning and setting out grids, working the equipment and the inevitable technical difficulties! Practical experiences offer you a chance to put knowledge into practice, develop your field skills and gives a great sense of achievement – you feel like a 'real' archaeologist!



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