

# The Trowel

Newsletter of the Archaeology Section, University of Chester  
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## Important milestone for Archaeology

This November 7<sup>th</sup> marked an important milestone in Archaeology at the University of Chester. Chester has offered a Combined Honours degree with Archaeology since 1999. The Single Honours degree was introduced in 2005. This means that our first cohort of Single Honours Archaeology students graduated with their BA in Archaeology this year.

Students celebrated their achievements on Graduation Day and took time to reminisce over a drink at the Department's reception in the Blue Coat building. All of our Archaeology graduates in the class of 2008 deserve their success. The Department is proud of their achievements. They witnessed many important developments in the programme over their three years including the addition of new archaeology staff and the beginning of a large-scale excavation project in Grosvenor Park in Chester under the guidance of Simon Ward and his colleagues at Chester City Archaeology.



*Simon Ward (left) of Chester Archaeology and lecturer Meggen Gondek (front, right) congratulate some of the graduating archaeologists: (l to r) Lisa Williams, Lisa Brundle, Jo Melia, Rachel Edwards, Rachel Gully, Tom Reed and Robyn Pelling.*

We wish our graduates all the best in their future endeavours and hope they stay in touch!

## Students in the field

Field trips are starting up again for this academic year. In November, Howard led a group of level 6 students taking the module 'The Archaeology of the Modern World' to explore the industrial archaeology of Ironbridge Gorge including Coalbrookdale, Coalport and Ironbridge itself. They also explored the famous Coalport tar-tunnel!



*Who knew hard hats were so much fun? 'Modern world' students explore our industrial remains.*

Our first year students got their first taste of archaeology field trips at the 'lost village of Claverton' just outside of Chester. This was a chance for students to develop their fieldwork skills by identifying 'lumps and bumps' and other remnants of the past. The visit also took in the important site at Heronbridge, the probable site of an early medieval battle. By the end of the day, the students were confidently pointing out ridge and furrow, bomb craters and even made friends with one of the local ponies!

## Staff news

**Howard Williams** is pleased to see the publication of the results of his co-directed fieldwork of a Viking period boat-grave in Sweden in the journal *Medieval Archaeology*. The project was completed in collaboration with newly-appointed Visiting Research Fellow Dr Martin Rundkvist. Howard

attended the European Association for Archaeologists annual conference, this year hosted by the University of Malta, where he organised a session on the history of archaeology and presented a paper on his research on Victorian excavators of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries. This month Howard is off to the TAG 2008 conference, where he is giving two papers on his research in burial archaeology.

**James Pardoe** has been re-acquainting himself with heritage issues in the Middle East. A visit to Israel in September took in a number of sites connected with the Bible, including the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, scene of recent fighting amongst Armenian and Orthodox Christian monks, and Caesarea where the sole evidence of the existence of Pontius Pilate has been found. Issues surrounding the exploitation of these sites and their ownership have been applied to James' lectures. Published this autumn was a paper given by James at the Second International Conference on Science and Technology in Archaeology and Conservation which took place in Amman, Jordan. The paper, entitled 'The Ethics of the Restoration of Stone Monuments', considers ethical problems faced when restoring historical stone monuments from a theoretical and practical perspective.

**Meggen Gondek** presented a paper on her recent research into re-used prehistoric standing stones in the early medieval period to the Bristol Rock-Art Group conference in May 2008. In August as part of the SERF project, Meggen conducted geophysical survey around a Pictish symbol stone discovering remains of a potential cairn and Pictish period burial monuments. Meggen also spent some time working with the community Caer Alyn Project, based in Llay, near Wrexham. She helped the project conduct a gradiometer survey of the Iron Age hillfort and a potential associated enclosure. Both surveys utilized Chester and other students and served as training experiences.

Howard and Meggen have both been appointed as Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.

### Spotlight on Chester's New Honorary Appointments

The Department has confirmed the honorary appointments of 3 new archaeologists.

**Dr Martin Rundkvist** has been appointed Visiting Research Fellow. Martin is a specialist in the early medieval archaeology of Sweden and the Baltic. He has researched the Migration to Viking Period cemeteries of Gotland and has conducted fieldwork with Howard at Viking Period burial sites in 2005 and 2006. Howard and Martin have co-authored

two papers and Martin has contributed to Howard's 2007 co-edited book *Early Medieval Mortuary Practices - Anglo-Saxon Studies in Archaeology and History volume 14*. A group of Chester students dug with Martin this summer in Sweden adjacent to a large burial mound.

**Dr Eva Thäte** has been appointed Visiting Research Associate. Eva is a specialist in the early medieval archaeology of northern Germany and Scandinavia in the late first millennium AD. Her doctoral thesis was published in 2007 as: *Monuments and Minds: Monument Re-use in Scandinavia in the Second Half of the First Millennium AD*. She has recently been digging in western Norway and is planning a new fieldwork project in this region.

**Faye Simpson** has been appointed Visiting Research Associate. Faye is an expert in public archaeology having worked for the Portable Antiquities Scheme and the Museum of London. She is also currently one of the archaeologists for Time Team and regularly appears on the famous Channel Four show. She is currently completing her doctoral studies at the University of Exeter on community archaeology. Faye and Howard have published a paper together in the journal *Public Archaeology*.



*First year students making note of a disused boundary stone on the 'lost village of Claverton' fieldtrip, November 2008.*



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