

The Trowel

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Staff News

Howard Williams gave a paper on Victorian perceptions of Anglo-Saxons at a conference at the University of Durham in March. He has also been visiting Sweden conducting research on Iron Age gravefields, Viking runestones and medieval churchyards. At the University of Uppsala, he presented a paper on Viking boat graves. Back in Britain, Howard has been conducting research visits to the cathedrals at York and Durham as part of his ongoing research into mortuary commemoration.

James Pardoe will be attending a private viewing at the British Museum of ancient Tunisian artefacts, hosted by the Tunisian Ambassador, in June. His research into heritage and literary tourism continues and this summer will take him to London to examine the refurbishment of the Keats House. James will also be returning to old favourite, Newstead Abbey, to research the visitor books from the early 19th century.

Meggen Gondek recently led students in association with Dan Garner of Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) Council to conduct a geophysical survey on part of the Iron Age hillfort at Kelsborrow Castle, near Chester. Students were trained to use a single fluxgate gradiometer to detect archaeology underneath the soil. Results include at least two roundhouses within the fort. This summer, Meggen will be continuing her research into the Carbon Footprint of Archaeological Research (C-FAR) and her work with the SERF project based in Forteviot, Perthshire, run by the University of Glasgow.

Students in the park

The Department's training excavation for our 2nd year students took place from May 11th – June 5th. Students have been working with CWAC Historic Environment Team to excavate remains associated with the Civil War, Medieval and Roman periods in Chester's Grosvenor Park. The dig is directed by Simon Ward, Senior Archaeologist, and other colleagues from the Historic Environment Team who are visiting lecturers in the Department.

This year, we held a public Open Day on May 29th. Students and staff offered tours and there were a

number of activities on offer. The day was a great success. An Open Day gives the public a chance to see archaeologists at work, but it is also important for our students who gain valuable experience in public outreach and communication skills.



Open day visitors (left) wash finds with students (right, front to back) Jessica Murray, Rebecca Lawrence and Jasmine Hopkins (Photo: Univ. Chester, M. English)

New Honorary Appointments

Stewart Ainsworth has been appointed a Visiting Research Fellow. Stewart is Senior Investigator in the Archaeological Survey division of English Heritage. He is also well known for his role in the popular Channel 4 programme *Time Team*. He has an extensive publication record and is currently leading one of the biggest landscape investigation projects in England in the North Pennines. His work on Chester's Amphitheatre will soon be published in a monograph outlining the significance of this internationally important site. Stewart's experience and interests are a wonderful addition to our team and he's keen to work with and get to know our students, which he's already proven by running a 'Survey Masterclass' in early May.

Dan Garner has been appointed a Visiting Research Associate. He has almost 20 years of professional experience in the archaeology of Chester, Cheshire and the Northwest and has authored or co-authored several monographs and articles related to his fieldwork and research activity. Dan has recently joined CWAC Council as Project Officer for the Habitats and Hillforts Archaeological Project and is responsible for a number of new initiatives in the research and

investigation of hillforts in Cheshire. This project, in particular, offers opportunities for staff and students alike to participate in and develop research activity within Cheshire.



Stewart Ainsworth, right, shows first year students Hayley Bates and Nick Window the basics of surveying with a plane table.

Congratulations!

Rob Parkinson, 3rd year Single Honours Archaeology, is the 2009 winner of the Blue Coat Archaeology and Heritage Prize. **Tom Crowther**, 3rd year Single Honours Archaeology, is the 2009 winner of the newly established Rhys Williams Prize for Study in Archaeology. Well done!

Spotlight on teaching and learning outside the classroom

In May, Howard presented a paper at the 7th Annual staff conference at the University on 'Archaeology and pedagogy in the field'. We strongly believe archaeology is best learned by a combination of 'inside' and 'outside' activities. Spring is a busy time with the better weather luring us out of the classroom to go on fieldtrips and fieldwork. However, the winter weather doesn't stop us either – as Howard's trip to Maen Achwyfan shows!



Medieval archaeology students enjoy the weather at Maen Achwyfan Cross, N. Wales.
Howard's classes have visited medieval sites in the

area, including the Pillar of Eliseg, the Sandbach Crosses, churches and castles at Shotwick, Holt and Aldford and Valle Crucis Abbey. He has led first years on walking tours of Chester and also taken a group to Manchester Museum. Commemoration and mortuary archaeology have been explored at the National Memorial Arboretum, Wrexham cemetery and crematorium and in the graveyard survey fieldwork by 3rd years at Overleigh Cemetery in Chester.

James has been running heritage fieldtrips to Oswestry Hillfort, Whittington Castle, Norton Priory, the Merseyside Maritime Museum, Wenlock Priory, Conwy Castle, Caernarfon Castle and organized a trip to Brodsworth Hall in Yorkshire. At Brodsworth our students worked with Maddy Hawkins, English Heritage visitor services manager and Chester graduate, looking at issues of conservation and interpretation at this important heritage site.

Meggen kickstarted the new year with a residential fieldtrip to Ireland in February. Students visited key sites such as Newgrange, the Hill of Tara and Monasterboice church as well as several of Dublin's pubs! Prehistory students spent a day on Anglesey examining megalithic architecture and rock-art. A trip to the Wirral involved looking at the impressive Viking period sculpture close to Chester. The first year students were out on Halkyn Mountain in North Wales again this year completing survey fieldwork for the **Halkyn Landscape Project**.



Visiting Newgrange, Co. Meath, Ireland.
Photo courtesy of P. Aherne



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