

The Trowel

Newsletter of the Archaeology Section, University of Chester
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Issue 16



Introducing the McLay Laboratory for Archaeological Science!



Level 6 students preparing soil samples in the McLay Lab as part of our new Paleocology & Environmental Archaeology module

We are proud to announce the addition of the new purpose-built McLay Laboratory for Archaeological Science in the Beswick Annexe, formally launched on 11 December 2014. This includes facilities for low and high power microscopy, analysis of lake sediments, peat, and plant remains, as well as teaching and demonstration space. Students taking modules including the Archaeology of Human Remains, Paleocology & Environmental Archaeology and many more will be able to take advantage of this new facility. The laboratory is named after our former Head of Department, Keith McLay, who helped make this all possible.

Introducing Dr Caroline Pudney

We are also thrilled to welcome our newest addition to the archaeology team, **Dr Caroline Pudney!** Formerly Community Archaeologist for Cadw, Caroline is now our first Roman archaeology expert, currently involved in the Lost City of the Legion Project (in collaboration with Cardiff University) investigating the remains of the Roman legionary fortress of *Isca* (Caerleon). This year she is leading our popular Debates in World Archaeology and Greeks, Etruscans, Romans and Celts modules at level four, among many others!



Caroline at Llanmelin Wood Iron Age hillfort

Staff News

Dr Amy Gray Jones has stepped up to become Deputy Head of Department this year, which has been a lot of work but it ensures our department runs smoothly. She has still been able to run the very popular Archaeology of Human Remains module (in the shiny new McLay Lab – see above!) and contribute to her other modules in the meantime. Hard work but it's worth it!

Dr Barry Taylor Has had his hands full putting together the scientific equipment for the new McLay Lab and digging at Star Carr and Flixton Island this summer (see Jenny Osborne's story below). Barry is also proud to be heading up three brand-new modules this year: The Archaeology of the Sea and Seafaring (sea shanties!), Landscape Archaeology of the British Isles (humps and bumps!) and Paleocology & Environmental Archaeology (peat!). This last module had the students retrieve their own cores to analyse in the McLay Lab (see photo above). Science!

Professor Howard Williams has been busy on his research leave travelling and researching for the Past in its Place project, exploring the intersections of archaeology and literature in the study of memory in the past and present, delivering papers and chairing sessions at York, Turkey and Manchester. In October 2014, he organised a

display at Chester Cathedral of results and perspectives on death and memory in cathedrals resulting from the Leverhulme Trust funded 'Speaking with the Dead' project. Three new publications have appeared since the last newsletter; for which follow him on Academia.edu at <https://chester.academia.edu/HowardWilliams>. Howard also invites you to dip into his world of archaeology, mortality and material culture by visiting his blog Archaeodeath, at <https://howardwilliamsblog.wordpress.com/>.

Dr James Pardoe has been traveling the world for his research, delivering a paper at the 2nd Biennial Interdisciplinary Conference on Themes Surrounding the Home, University of South Africa, Pretoria in September, and is now a member of the University of South Africa (Pretoria) International Projects Collaboration Team. His most recent publication co-authored with C. Stone is now published in *Heritage 2014 – Proceedings of the 4th International Conference on Heritage and Sustainable Development* (2014).

Dr Adrián Maldonado has had the privilege of stepping in to cover the teaching of **Dr Meggen Gondok** while she is away on maternity leave. Amongst other things this meant developing the new level 5 module The Archaeology of Cult and Belief. He was able to spend the summer travelling the country for public lectures, including the prestigious Annual Academic Lecture at the Groam House Museum, Rosemarkie, as mentioned in the previous newsletter, and an evening lecture for the Cambrian Archaeological Association in Dumfries.

PhD candidate and Visiting Lecturer Rachel Swallow Since receiving her award in June, amongst other things, Rachel has been selected as Summer Meetings Reports Compiler for the Royal Archaeological Institute; has published articles in *Archaeological Journal* and *Cheshire History Journal*; and has presented five papers on her doctoral research. She is currently working towards the submission of her doctoral thesis in 2015.

Undergraduate News

Excavating in the Vale of Pickering by Jenny Osborne

Being highly interested in the archaeology of the Mesolithic and Palaeolithic, it was an amazing opportunity for me to be able to excavate at Star Carr and Flixton Island last summer. I spent seven weeks working with a number of talented archaeologists. I gained experience in excavating in wetland and dryland areas and also learnt new skills such as augering. The excitement of discovering your first find on a site such as Star Carr is a fantastic experience. After a week of

excavating, I discovered the calcaneus of a deer which is something I'll never forget! However, the main highlight was being able to excavate the remains of the wooden platform discovered at Star Carr. Wood is so rarely preserved within these contexts that it was an amazing experience to be able to excavate a portion of this myself.

Pernosano, Italy Field School by Sam Munsch



Level 5 student Sam Munsch attending an osteology lab in Pernosano, Italy.

Studying human remains is a passion of mine, and this summer I was able to participate in a field school on the subject. Hosted by the Apolline Project, this osteology lab focused on the study of the victims of the plague which swept through southern Italy during the late 17th century. This meant that there were skeletal remains of all elements of society that we were able to study, including the young and old, healthy and unhealthy, vastly increasing the range of experience we gained with skeletal remains. Additionally, there were vast numbers of skeletons that had not even been cleaned, let alone studied, so we were able to participate in all stages of osteological analysis, which was incredible! Going hand-in-hand with this practical, hands-on experience was a series of lectures that covered all the main aspects of osteology, and the opportunity for students to give presentations on their findings.

For fieldwork updates year round, follow us on Twitter! (<https://twitter.com/histarchchester>)



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