

The Trowel

Newsletter of the Archaeology Section, University of Chester
Summer 2015

Issue 17



Academic Prizes

The winners of 2015's academic prizes are:

David Lavery – University Prize for Archaeology and Heritage

Laura Mackay and Bethany Johnston – The Rhys Williams Prize for Study in Archaeology

Nathaniel Welsby – The David and Betty Evans Memorial Prize

Congratulations to these winners and to all our final-year students for their hard work and success.



Three of our valedictory prize-winners:
David Lavery (left), Laura Mackay (centre) and Nathaniel Welsby (right)

Undergrad News

As well as fieldwork on Halkyn Mountain, Flintshire (first-year students) and excavations in Grosvenor Park, Chester (second-year students, see their blog at: <http://www.univchester-parkdig.blogspot.co.uk/>), the final-year Death and Burial students surveyed 19th-century gravestones as part of their course in Overleigh Cemetery in Handbridge.

Students have been busy in lectures, seminars, workshops and lab classes, but also out in the landscape on various fieldtrips. The first-years visited Old Oswestry hillfort and Whittington Castle this spring and introduced to the challenges of conserving, managing and presenting these sites to the public.



Students surveying memorials at Overleigh cemetery



First-year students at Old Oswestry hillfort, Shropshire



In the stocks at Whittington Castle

Going nuts! New evidence for prehistoric plant foods

A collaboration between an undergraduate student and members of staff has led to new evidence for the use of plant foods in early prehistory. For his undergraduate dissertation, Nathaniel Welsby analysed carbonised plant material from an early Mesolithic site in North Yorkshire, excavated by Drs Amy Gray Jones and Barry

Taylor. Under the supervision of Dr Taylor, Nathaniel discovered evidence for roasting hazelnuts, and the consumption of crab apples and cherries that dates back over 10,000 years. When brought together with the other materials from the site, this work will provide important new information about the diets of people living in Britain in the centuries after the last ice age.

Postgrad News

The department's two Masters students were busy this spring with courses and through the summer writing dissertations. The MA Archaeology of Death and Memory got to explore some fabulous sites and monuments, including Plas Newydd, Castell Dinas Brân and the Pillar of Eliseg, all in the Vale of Llangollen.



Masters students Cheryl and Aurea visit to Castell Dinas Brân

In May, our first-ever archaeology postgraduate research student — Joanne Kirton — successfully defended her doctoral thesis: *The Contextualisation of Cheshire's Early Medieval Sculptural Corpus*. Congratulations Joanne and we wish you well in the future with your work. Joanne works as Project Manager for Big Heritage and she is also a Director of the Bamburgh Research Project.



Joanne Kirton – the department's first archaeology PhD!

Doctoral researcher **Rachel Swallow** co-organised a successful conference held at the University of Chester: *Contest and Collaboration: Chester Conference on the March of Wales* (10th–11th April) with Dr Sara Elin Roberts. The conference involved a public lecture by Professor Howard Williams followed by a day of presentations by internationally recognised speakers. The conference explored the history, archaeology and place-names of the borderlands of England and Wales from the Early Middle Ages to the modern era.

Chester Experimental Archaeology Group

This year saw the start of the Chester Experimental Archaeology Group made up of staff and students and aims to undertake experimental studies in prehistoric technologies. After a couple of lessons with ancient technology experts Peter Groom and James Watson from native Awareness the group has begun by making cord from plant fibres. These will be used to make nets and baskets and to provide some of the materials for larger, composite, tools.

In the coming months we will start doing bone and antler working and flint knapping. Plans for future projects include archery, fish traps, a house, and maybe a skin boat!



Dr Adrián Maldonado pointing towards his future!

Farewell Dr Adrián Maldonado

Appointed to cover Howard's teaching in 2013/14 and Meggen's for 2014/15, Dr Adrián Maldonado has been a great friend and colleague to all of us staff in the Department of History and Archaeology, and a great teacher for all the students he encountered.

This summer, we are sad to say goodbye to Adrián, who has moved on to the University of Glasgow where he is taking up a new position as Research Associate. We wish you well for the future Adrián!

Contact us:

Dept. of History and Archaeology, University of Chester,
Parkgate Road, Chester, CH1 4BJ

01244 511000 archaeology@chester.ac.uk

<http://www.chester.ac.uk/historyandarchaeology/index.html>