



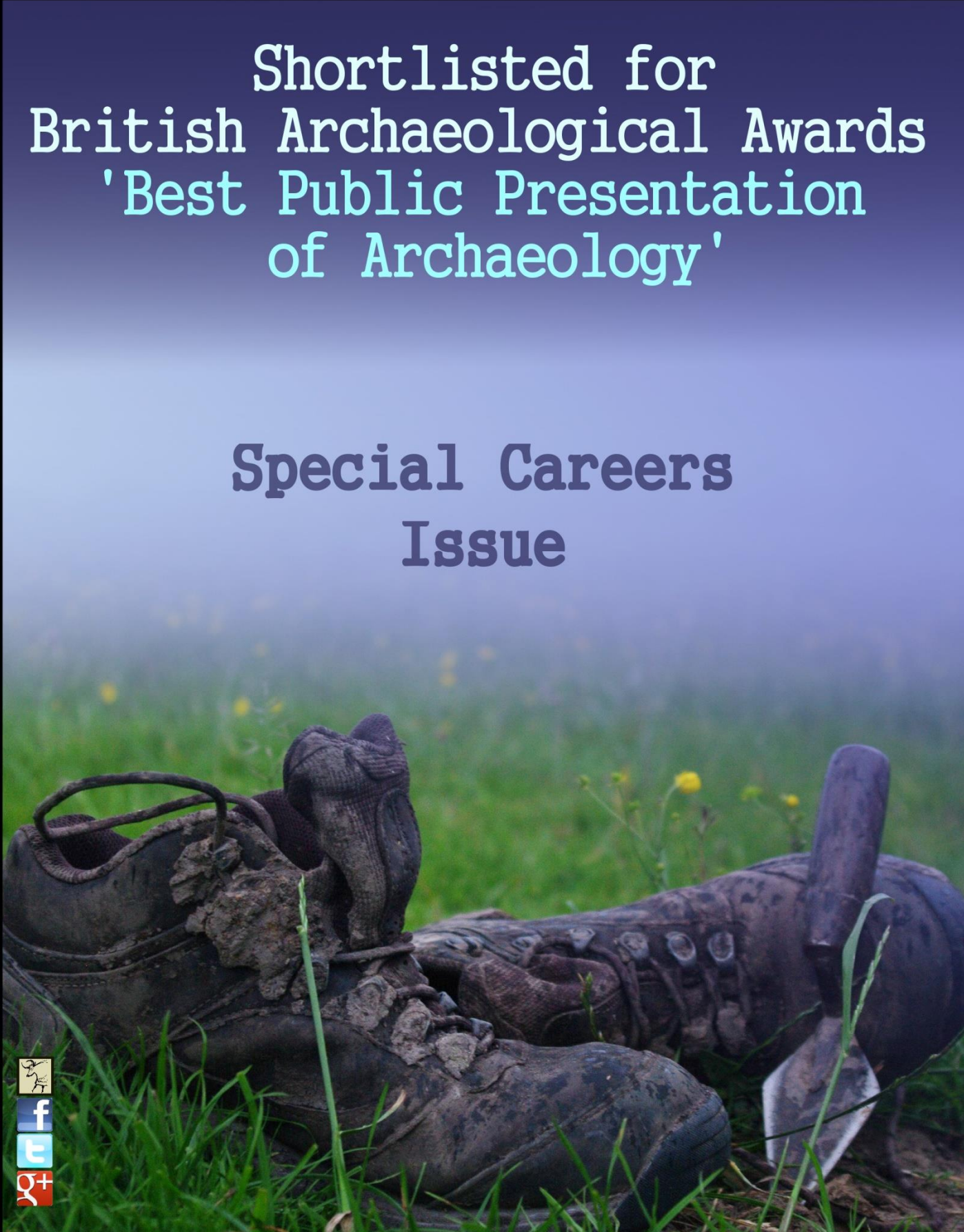
# The Post Hole

The student-run archaeology journal

Shortlisted for  
British Archaeological Awards  
'Best Public Presentation  
of Archaeology'

Special Careers  
Issue

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Finally, *The Post Hole* wishes to thank University of York students Kerrie Hoffman and Phoebe Haigh for their superb design of this front cover.

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# Editorial: The British Archaeological Awards 2014

As you may have heard, *The Post Hole* has been selected within the top three for the Best Public Presentation of Archaeology for 2014 in The British Archaeological Awards. Other entries shortlisted alongside *The Post Hole* are the inspiring Wemyss Caves 4D (Save the Wemyss Ancient Caves Society, The SCAPE Trust and The York Archaeological Trust) and the incredible Channel 4 programme focusing upon the *New Secrets of the Terracotta Warriors* (Lion Television and MediaLab). The British Archaeological Awards (BAA) is a huge step for *The Post Hole*, and the winner is announced on 14<sup>th</sup> July at the British Museum in London (more information can be found at [www.archaeologicalawards.org.uk](http://www.archaeologicalawards.org.uk)). I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, our readers, for your continuous support throughout the years and also all those involved in the production of the journal from 2008 onwards. Since 2008, *The Post Hole* has grown from strength to strength, each year developing and expanding readership across not only the UK, but the world! Our largest readership is situated within the UK, followed closely by the United States, Australia and Canada. With over 1,662 website users, 1,173 followers on **Twitter** and 753 likes on **Facebook**, awareness of *The Post Hole* is broadening. With the immediate team based within York, aside from readership and contribution, the journal has obtained members from a number of other high profile universities across the UK; Cambridge, Durham, Southampton, Reading and UCL. If you are interested in joining the team behind *The Post Hole*, we are still looking for new members and are always eager to share archaeological interest. Please email [editor@theposthole.org](mailto:editor@theposthole.org) with your details.

To celebrate this exciting news surrounding the BAA 2014 Awards, issue 38 is a special careers feature issue. As you may be aware, each month *The Post Hole* releases a 'Digging through the Profession' interview (to view previous interviews follow <http://www.theposthole.org/read/interviews>). In celebration, this issue contains some interesting interviews combined within two articles discussing the multidisciplinary aspect of archaeology. Aside from this, Kerrie Hoffman, our Design Editor, created a new Facebook and Twitter banner, and we are planning to release a special feature piece combining interviews with previous team members throughout the summer to celebrate *The Post Hole's* successful journey from creation to present day.

Within this issue, there are three interesting interviewees conducted by **Alex Cameron**. Cameron, combined with Henriette Rødland, conduct our 'Digging through the Profession' interviews. A big thank you must go to the Managing Editor, Rianca Vogels, for organising the construction of this popular feature and to the girls for managing to produce an interview for every month. If you would like to be part of this feature, please email [editor@theposthole.org](mailto:editor@theposthole.org). Within this issue, Cameron explores professions within archaeology, working as a Finds Liaison Officer for South and West Yorkshire with Amy Downes,

interviewing David Roberts who has an interest in current archaeology and landscape surveying, and Jeffrey Fleisher, an African archaeologist and anthropologist.

**Taryn Bell**, our Submissions Editor, follows on from her thought-provoking article in issue 35, 'Comment: archaeology needs to be more multidisciplinary' (at <http://www.theposthole.org/read/article/254>) with 'Public perceptions: why do so few students study archaeology?' Another stimulating and attention-grabbing article, it works well within the special feature careers issue, probing avenues to why so few students study archaeology. As an individual who studied AS and A Level archaeology, I am a key advocator of exploring archaeology at college and university, despite talks of dropping it from the curriculum due to low attendance numbers. It would be interesting to hear some of your thoughts on this; perhaps you could formulate them into a short article for us and send it to [submissions@theposthole.org](mailto:submissions@theposthole.org).

An exceptional article is written by the 2012-2013 Editor-in-Chief, **David Altoft**, exploring 'Integrated Archaeology and the student conference experience'. The article ties nicely in with Bell's article earlier within the issue, discussing similar themes and using the ASA Conference as an example of how the discipline must expand into different demographics to create further integrated archaeology. For more details on the ASA Conference please follow [www.asaconference.org.uk](http://www.asaconference.org.uk).

As the academic year draws to a close, there is the realisation that this is the penultimate issue before June's final Issue 39. As always, we rely on your submissions so please keep sending them in to [submissions@theposthole.org](mailto:submissions@theposthole.org). Don't forget to regularly check our social media pages as well as the main website for any new updates or individual releases. We hope you enjoy this special feature issue and are as excited as the team to find out the BAA results in July. Keep your fingers crossed for us!

Best wishes,

Emily Taylor

(Editor-in-Chief of *The Post Hole* - [editor@theposthole.org](mailto:editor@theposthole.org))



# Exploring African archaeology and anthropology - an interview with Jeffrey Fleisher

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*Jeffrey Fleisher works in the Anthropology department at Rice University, Texas. His main area of interest is African archaeology and, alongside Stephanie Wynne-Jones of the University of York, he has directed three field seasons at Songo Mnara, Tanzania. He focuses on the archaeology of public and open spaces and non-elite people.*

## **What area of archaeology do you work in?**

I'm an African archaeologist, and have worked in eastern Africa for many years. Other than that, I don't consider myself a part of a particular archaeological silo, but I suppose you could consider my work part of the archaeology of complex societies and/or urbanism.

## **What is your specialism?**

I specialize in the archaeology of the Swahili, with a long-standing emphasis on the lives of rural and non-elite people. Recently, I have shifted my focus somewhat onto the archaeology of public and open space, but I see this as a part of my previous research with its emphasis on the more ephemeral parts of Swahili society. In terms of material culture, I have a great interest in ceramics, especially locally-made earthenwares.

## **How did you get involved in your current role?**

My path to tenure-track position in the US was a bit lengthy, as I spent a number of years either teaching part-time or working in administrative positions. I worked for 5 years at Lehigh University, teaching in Anthropology and Africana Studies, but also working for the Provost's Office. In those years, between the time when I finished my dissertation and when I took up my job at Rice, I continued to do field research and publish. I came to Rice in 2007, taking up my first tenure-track position.

## **What qualifications do you have and where did you study?**

I completed all my degrees (BA, MA, PhD) at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, Virginia, USA. While a graduate student there, I worked closely with Prof. Adria LaViolette, on her projects on Pemba Island, which is where I did my dissertation research. Dr LaViolette and I then co-directed a project together on Pemba, from 2002-06. Prior to working in eastern Africa, I worked extensively in the United States, in Virginia, New Mexico, and California on both research and contract projects.

**Your area of interest is African archaeology. How did you become interested in this area?**

Until 1993, I considered myself a historical archaeologist and planned to continue working in the US on colonial period sites. This changed when I, by chance, met Adria LaViolette and she invited me to work on one of her projects in 1993 on Pemba. That season was transformative for me, and I became intrigued by the Swahili coast, a place of cultural contact and rapid social transformation, and the global linkages evident in what were considered remote places. I returned to graduate school in 1995 in Virginia, focusing on rural-urban relationships on first and second millennium Pemba Island, Tanzania.



**Figure 1.** *Songo Mnara* (Image Copyright: Songo Mnara Urban Landscape Project).

**One of your current projects is at Songo Mnara in Tanzania along with Stephanie Wynne-Jones of the University of York. Could you tell us about this project and what your research aims are?**

Dr Stephanie Wynne-Jones and I first considered work at Songo Mnara, a medieval Swahili site on the southern Tanzanian coast, while she and I worked on a ceramics project together in eastern Africa in 2008. We secured some seed funding from Rice, I organized a field school, and we ran a preliminary season there in 2009. This season was so incredibly productive, partially because the site is so amazing, but also because we were able to recruit an amazing team of archaeologists including Dr Kate Welham (geophysics, Bournemouth), Dr Federica Sulas (geoarchaeology) and Dr Sarah Walshaw (archaeobotany, Simon Fraser University) (to access Dr Sarah Walshaw's interview follow <http://www.theposthole.org/read/article/269>). That season convinced us that the site had much to offer to address questions we had about the nature of public and private space in the Swahili world. We then applied for a joint AHRC/National Science Foundation grant and were lucky to be awarded it in 2011. We have now completed two seasons of that three-season project. We have been addressing our research



questions through test and large-scale excavations in houses and in open spaces; this data is allowing us to begin thinking about how people were using public and private space, and how activities were structured within the town itself. We have been extremely fortunate that many houses contain significant floor deposits, and that the combination of geophysics, geoarchaeology, and archaeology, has allowed us to reconstruct activities across the open areas of the site.

**When working with British colleagues, have you noticed a difference in the way American and British archaeologists work?**

Not as many as you might expect. When Stephanie and I began working together, we talked extensively about how we would organize our project and, to be honest, there wasn't much difference between our approaches. One major difference is the recording systems that we each used prior to the Songo Mnara project. We ultimately settled on a British one (MoLAS), a single context recording system. After the first season, I realized that although the systems may look different, they actually end up capturing the same data. I did have to learn about 'cuts', however! Besides this, the only major sticking points are the (unwarranted) disdain for Marshalltown trowels, and deep confusion over wearing khaki pants.



**Figure 2.** *Stephanie Wynne-Jones and Jeffrey Fleisher at Songo Mnara* (Image Copyright: Songo Mnara Urban Landscape Project).

**Working in Tanzania and the Swahili Coast, you must spend a lot of time travelling. How do you balance this with your daily life?**

This is true. When I was younger, I would never turn up a chance to work abroad, and clocked many months of field work in sub-Saharan Africa. However, once you have a family and obligations with a

university position, it becomes more challenging to balance fieldwork and home life. In general, I think it's ultimately difficult to strike a balance, but you try your best. I generally try to stagger my longer field seasons now to every other year, which helps in some ways.

**What is your favourite part of working on an excavation project?**

There are so many great aspects of running a field project. The most exciting, for me, is to see how the extensive planning and preparation takes shape as the fieldwork unfolds. This is something that I think may be lost on students who work on field projects. But for the directors of a project, the field work is the culmination of an extremely long process of thinking, writing, and planning. And, with archaeology, there are always surprises to be had through field work. At Songo Mnara, the great joy has been the amazing integrity of the deposits and the way we have been able to reveal 15<sup>th</sup>-century contexts with such clarity. I also feel fortunate to work with so many other great archaeologists who make the field work really enjoyable.

**Have you got any future projects lined up that you could tell us about?**

I am currently in the preliminary stages of a new project in Zambia, south central Africa. This is a project that grows out of some writing I've done with Dr Kathryn de Luna, a Georgetown University historian, who uses historical linguistics to write about south central Africa's precolonial past. We have had many discussions over the years about how to work collaboratively between archaeology and historical linguistics and we are attempting to put some of the ideas we've had into practice in Zambia. The project uses archaeological, linguistic and bioarchaeological data to investigate the social dimensions of mobility, including subsistence factors, political dynamics, and trade. This is a collaborative project that also includes Prof. Susan McIntosh and Dr Matthew Pawlowicz (to access Dr Matthew Pawlowicz's follow <http://www.theposthole.org/read/article/259>).

**Any tips for students reading this interview wanting to work in the same kind of role?**

Get involved, get field and laboratory experience, and take every opportunity you can to get to practice the craft of archaeology. The other important thing is to find a region and topic that you love – this may mean branching out from the offerings in your undergraduate department, but it will be worth it. And be nice to people.

*For further information on Jeffrey visit <https://anthropology.rice.edu/Content.aspx?id=88> and to view some of his work follow <http://rice.academia.edu/JeffreyFleisher>*

# Public perceptions: why do so few students study archaeology?

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As a third-year archaeology student at the University of York, and one with plans to study archaeology at a Masters level, I am extremely enthusiastic about the discipline. As my poor housemates and family will attest, I love to talk about anything archaeological, and never cease to be amazed at what archaeology as a field has to offer.

However, I fell into archaeology almost by accident. I have always been fascinated by the past, and as a teenager, I took summer school courses in archaeology – in York, in fact! However, due to a general lack of archaeological opportunities at school and a lack of knowledge about any local archaeological opportunities, history became the subject I studied as I moved onto my GCSEs and A-levels. By the time I started applying to universities at the age of 17, history was the subject I had chosen to move into higher education with (and theology, but that is another story entirely). I applied to study history at the University of York, but was instead sent an email offering me the chance to study archaeology instead. With my prior experience with archaeology at York, this seemed too good an opportunity to pass up. After going to an open day at the university, where the passion of the lecturers and students only served to enthuse me more, I accepted the offer and returned to York's Department of Archaeology once again.

I had actually briefly considered studying archaeology at university before beginning my UCAS application, but had always considered it as too scientific for someone like myself, who hated science at school. Funnily enough, the Masters degree I am applying for is an MSc – something I never would have considered three years ago. My misconception of archaeology it seems, almost led me away from it.

Now though, as I have already said, I love archaeology, which is why it frustrates me to hear the continued ignorance, or downright dismissal, of archaeology by my peers. Most say it jokingly and not at all seriously, which I would be foolish to be offended by. Nevertheless, I am willing to bet that almost every archaeology student has had to defend their choice of degree on more than one occasion from people who see it as, in Noël Hume's famous words, the 'handmaiden to history' (Noël Hume 1964, 215).

Speak to any archaeologist or archaeology student and they will attest to the outdated nature of this statement. Archaeology is a thriving, multidisciplinary field with so much to offer – so why is the public perception of the study of archaeology so negative?

Archaeology is no doubt a popular subject amongst the public – just think of Indiana Jones, Time Team and the TV series *Bonekickers*, as well as the wide variety of archaeological attractions across the country.

Archaeology evidently sells – so why do so few students choose to study it in comparison to history, which is one of the most popular degree choices in the country (The Telegraph n.d.)?

I believe that the problem lies within our national educational system. Children are just not taught about archaeology at a primary school level, and very few students study archaeology at A-level – one A-level teacher I have worked with told me that there are probably only about 500 students studying AS and A2 Archaeology. This presents a major stumbling block for archaeology departments in universities – how can they attract students who have never thought about archaeology? I, for one, do not remember learning anything about archaeology at school.

The primary school curriculum is flexible to the extent that it is possible to include archaeology as a part of other subjects, but this is entirely dependent upon each individual teacher, as well as the resources available to them. Archaeology should be encouraged where possible, because I know from personal experience that children react well to it. About a year ago, I spent a couple of months helping at a local primary school, in a class of year 3 students. These 7 and 8 year olds happened to be learning about 1600's London at the time, and the teacher asked me if I could plan a lesson based around archaeology, in order to teach them what it was. I managed to procure some broken pottery and pipe stems from one of my lecturers, and taught the class what archaeology was, as well as showing them the artefacts. These nondescript, fairly unimportant objects did not look like much, but they fascinated the children, particularly when I told them that the items they were holding had been made and used over 300 years before. The teacher and I later found them trying to dig up the school field!

The power of archaeology is wondrous, and it is a source of great interest to both children and adults alike – attractions like Jorvik would not be as popular if archaeology was not interesting to the public! Archaeologists do not seem to have much of a problem engaging with the public at sites and museums, but the field does seem to have a problem in attracting people to study it formally. This is just as necessary for the continued involvement of the field, and the continued popularity of the subject for the public. If we do not have people studying archaeology, the problems are twofold: the field will begin to stagnate, and there will be less people to disseminate information to the public.

So, to take us back to the question at hand, why is it that so few students study archaeology? At a schooling level, I have already noted that archaeology is not a popular A-level subject, simply because most schools do not offer it. None of the schools and colleges surrounding me offered archaeology. This is likely due to a number of factors: lack of archaeology teachers, perceived lack of interest, and lack of funding. This lack of archaeological education at a secondary educational level means that it suffers at a tertiary level: at universities. However, as I noted earlier, there is another reason that archaeology is not a popular degree choice: misconceptions about the subject as a whole.

Over the past three years, I have gotten some idea of what the public thinks of archaeology, and whether their opinion is positive or negative. Many hold a very singular view of archaeology. It is viewed as a field in which you learn to dig and deal with artefacts. For many, this is fascinating; others, however, find the idea of digging dull. Now, obviously archaeology does involve digging, and a lot of artefacts – it is how we form our conclusions and theories. However, it is *so much more* than that. Archaeology is theoretical, archaeology is philosophical, archaeology is multidisciplinary, archaeology is a humanities field, archaeology is a scientific field...the list goes on. The short-sighted view of archaeology as simply digging up artefacts without any theory or thought behind it is dangerous for us. For every archaeologist I know who enjoys digging, there is another proclaiming their lack of interest in doing so.

We need to change the public perception of archaeology. And this should begin in schools, where archaeology needs to have a bigger role alongside history in teaching children about the past. Archaeology also has links to geography, to citizenship, to religious studies, to IT, to maths, to English...it could easily become a steady part of the national curriculum. By teaching children about archaeology, they will begin to understand *how* we know about the past, not just *what* we know about the past, which will hopefully encourage them to visit local sites and care about their heritage.

However, it is also down to university departments to make a widespread effort to reach out to more people. While many do an admirable job of this, it is imperative that more universities connect to schools to teach them about archaeology. Universities also have the potential to network with groups outside of school, encouraging adults to consider archaeological study as well. Children are not the only ones who can learn something new! I know that, in York at least, there are many educational and lecture groups for adults, who often appreciate more the utility and meaning of archaeology. While this article has focused mainly on the re-education of children, encouraging the education of adults as well ensures a balanced approach to the public.

By doing all of this, we secure the future of our field. And perhaps a few years down the line, more students will study archaeology and gain as much from it as I do.

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# Working as a Finds Liaison Officer for South and West Yorkshire - an interview with Amy Downes

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*Amy works as a small finds specialist working for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). She specialises in metal artefacts. It is her role to liaise with the public, especially metal detectorists, identify their finds, and record them onto the online PAS database (available at [www.finds.org.uk](http://www.finds.org.uk)). The database will soon have 1 million objects recorded!*

## **How did you get involved in your current role?**

I studied archaeology at the University of York, and at the same time, I worked as a demonstrating archaeologist at ARC (now Jorvik DIG) and at St Leonards Archaeology Live excavations as a Finds Assistant for York Archaeological Trust, and as front of house at York Museums Trust. This gave me a good background in explaining archaeology to the public. It also allowed me to apply as an internal candidate for a job at the Yorkshire Museum, digitising the Jim Halliday Archive, a huge collection of record sheets and digital images of metal-detected finds, so they could be integrated with the PAS database. This experience led to me being the only paid member of staff at Malton Museum for 6 months, where I recorded the actual finds from the Jim Halliday Archive. I also volunteered for the PAS in York, and with the Young Archaeologist's Club. Now, with a good grounding in metal-detected finds, and experience of the PAS, I was able to apply for the Finds Liaison Officer job in South and West Yorkshire, and I was successful.

## **Working as a Finds Liaison Officer for the Portable Antiquities Scheme, could you explain what this scheme aims to do?**

The PAS is a department of the British Museum. It aims to record the archaeological finds discovered by chance, by members of the public. We identify, describe and record the finds onto the PAS database.

## **What does this involve?**

Most of the finds we record are discovered by metal detectorists, so we liaise closely with the local metal detecting clubs and provide out reach in museums to meet the independent detectorists. This involves a lot of evening work. There are nine clubs that I visit regularly. I also cover nine council districts in South and West Yorkshire, so I visit a lot of museums and run 'Finds Afternoons'. These are drop-in sessions when people can bring in finds for me to examine. This is also the way I meet non-detectorist finders – people who might have spotted an artefact in a mole hill or in their garden, for example. Another part of

the FLO role is helping with the statutory declaration of 'Treasure' objects under the 1996 Treasure Acts. We advise finders and help complete the declaration forms for the coroner, as well as identifying and writing reports on the finds. I occasionally have to give evidence in Treasure inquests, or organise an excavation of a particularly special discovery.



**Figure 1.** *An emergency excavation* (Image Copyright: Portable Antiquities Scheme).

### **How does the PAS work to create links with the local community?**

We try to outreach to groups in addition to metal detectorists, but after 15 years of increasing numbers of finds being recorded, we are now working at absolute capacity, and recording finds has to take priority over giving talks and manning stalls at local history fairs. That is a shame, as part of our role is to encourage greater public connection with archaeology, but we have only limited funding and no spare capacity at all.

### **What is the most exciting artefact you've found?**

Not being a field archaeologist, I have never found any artefacts myself, except for spotting pottery lying on the surface of a field at a Deserted Medieval Village. (As it was a Scheduled Ancient Monument, I left it there untouched!). However, one great perk of my job is that I get to handle thousands of archaeological finds. Last week I recorded a Bronze Age socketed knife (database number [SWYOR-CAF110](#)), and this week a copper alloy beaded torc has been handed in. The most famous find I dealt with was probably the Vale of York Hoard ([SWYOR-AECB53](#)), which became known as the "most exciting Viking hoard discovered in the last 150 years". It was my responsibility to deliver it safely to the British Museum, all £1,000,000

worth of it! However, the most exciting artefact was probably the Roman erotic knife handle ([SWYOR-374234](#)) which is very rare, and is particularly difficult to research on the internet!



Figure 2. SWYOR-374234 (Image Copyright: Portable Antiquities Scheme).

**As part of your role, you must have come into contact with some metal detector enthusiasts. What is your experience of them, and their affect on archaeology?**

Metal detectorists get bad press, but the vast majority of the ones I meet are enthusiastic about archaeology, and responsible about the way they pursue their hobby. It's worth remembering that most of their finds are from the topsoil, where objects are very much at risk of damage from farming. The finds are usually already out of context, and detectorists rescue them from further damage or destruction. The data being produced from recording detected finds does have the potential to change our understanding of archaeology. For example, the Roman coin data we are generating is amazing (our Finds Advisor Philippa Walton has recently published her PhD on this subject).



Figure 3. SWYOR-AECB53 (Image Copyright: Portable Antiquities Scheme).

**You have been involved with the ‘Castleford Youth Inclusion Project’, which provided after school sessions for children at risk from being excluded. How important do you think it is for children to engage with archaeology from a young age?**

Children love archaeology and it is very good for them. It is a wonderful way to engage children who are not particularly interested in traditional subjects, and it provides a great way in to an amazing number of skills and topics. The abundance of transferable skills is one of the reasons I chose to study archaeology, and I wasn't really expecting to get a job in the sector!



**Figure 4.** *Examining finds* (Image Copyright: West Yorkshire Archaeology Advisory Service).

**What qualifications do you have and where did you study?**

I was home educated until I was 17, and then I went to sixth form college with just 2 GCSEs. I have A-levels in English Language, Psychology and Dance, and an AS in Archaeology. I then got my BA at York, and was lucky enough to find employment in archaeology straight away. Perhaps the most important qualification I gained early on, was passing my driving test – it's a vital skill for a lot of archaeology jobs.

**As a graduate of the University of York, what do you think was the most important skill you gained from your undergraduate degree that has helped in your career?**

The degree gave me a good grounding in British Archaeology, as well as in techniques and theory, which has enabled me to develop my knowledge into my chosen specialism. However, I learnt a lot of the artefact-related skills I use in my work through my volunteering and paid work.

**What projects are you currently working on?**

My work is not project-based – it is a constant stream of artefacts to record, ‘Treasure’ cases to administer, enquiries to answer, and ‘Finds Afternoons’ or meetings to attend. I am currently training a new volunteer, and whenever I have time, there is data-cleansing work to be done on old database records.

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**Any tips for those interested in archaeology reading this interview who want to work in the same kind of role?**

Practical experience is vital. We get hundreds of applicants for every paid role with PAS, no matter how short term it is, so if you do not already have experience working with finds and with the PAS database, you do not stand a good chance of being successful. It is also a role that only suits certain kinds of people. Although we work with lovely finds, we do not usually have time to do research – if you want to study artefacts, stay in academia. If you like record keeping, databasing, and being really organised, then PAS might be your natural home. Do as much volunteering as you can, and learn to drive!

*For further information on Amy, visit: <http://finds.org.uk/contacts/staff/profile/id/68>*

*To access the PAS, follow: <http://finds.org.uk/>*



# Integrated Archaeology and the student conference experience

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The 29<sup>th</sup> May is an unusual day, beginning with Assessed Lectures from 09:30 for my fellow University of York Bioarchaeology and Zooarchaeology Masters students and I. One of the most positive points about York's Masters programmes is that students are assessed in a wide range of ways. Between September and March, our learnt knowledge had been tested with essays and practical exams, and less formally with weekly seminar presentations. With such a well-rounded development of skills in expression of knowledge and original thought, giving a thirty minute lecture on a Masters dissertation proposal was far from daunting.

However, from giving my own lecture and listening to eleven other eclectic, yet equally fascinating presentations of student research and ideas, it was only too obvious to me that the discipline of archaeology is greatly missing out on these fresh visions. The following day, the 2014 EUROPA conference was held in dedication to the long and hugely influential work of Professor Alasdair Whittle. Many students will recognise his name from his seminal 2011 publication, *Gathering Time*; however, his contributions to the discipline span almost forty years. Looking around the room at the other conference delegates, I am disappointed to see how few young people there are, not because I don't appreciate the presence of older generations (quite the opposite), but because such an observation is ominous that the institution of archaeology is failing to connect with younger generations of researchers.

Perhaps it's just me, but the evolution of archaeological theory seems to have slowed down in the last couple of decades. Half a century ago there were new paradigms of theory and novel research questions emerging every decade, from the accession of processualism and the study of systems, to the arrival of post-processualism and an arguable resurged interest in subjective interpretation of human agency, and the development of new approaches to the past such as phenomenology (Johnson 2010).

These paradigm shifts always attract furore and inordinately expose a minority of academics' egos (perhaps because in academia, criticism of one's views is felt by some as disparagement of their whole careers), though at the same time they drive the discipline forward. Perhaps because they don't have personal allegiances and rivalries, or careers of the same length that can be attacked, whether you now like them or not, the greatest contributors to those paradigm shifts arguably came from students and recent graduates (including Lewis Binford, David Clarke and Colin Renfrew, and then Henrietta Moore, Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley).

This article does not suggest the discipline requires another paradigm shift in theory; rather, it insists that established practitioners of archaeology need to change their practical and ideological approach to the discipline. Whilst a hierarchy in academic archaeology can indeed help structure the discipline to suit today's increasing bureaucratisation of academic policy and funding, it needs to allow greater permeability in the engagement and expression of ideas from individuals in all levels and sectors of our collective enquiry into the past.

The 2014 EUROPA conference was a fascinating, relevant and well-organised event, so why did it attract so few students and early career researchers? The first barrier that should come to mind is cost. This particular conference cannot be criticised because it offered a reasonable student rate for registration (£15 for the first day, £20 for the second day or £30 for both days), though factor in the exorbitant cost of train travel and accommodation, and perhaps you may understand why sadly I could only attend the first day of this conference. It is clear that in most cases, travel and accommodation vastly exceed the cost of conference registration, though it is only politicians and the providers of those expensive yet necessary services that can intervene, so the unfair reality is that organisers of conferences will have the financial responsibility of helping widen the demographic of their audience, at least in the foreseeable future.

Another significant barrier in the attendance of conferences by students is the time of year they take place. The Theoretical Archaeological Group (TAG) conferences take place each year around mid-December, coinciding with the start of the university Christmas vacation, however, undergraduate students in many universities take exams immediately following this vacation and bow to the pressure of squeezing revision around festivities during this time. I, and many other students in this situation, did not attend their first TAG conference until they were at least Masters students when the nature or timing of assessments changed. Those students who do not have exams after Christmas may have them in May, which might partly explain the low attendance of students to EUROPA 2014.

For bioarchaeology undergraduates, a similar challenge from looming dissertation deadlines may prevent attendance to the UK Archaeological Science conference that takes place every other year during the Easter vacation (this again affected me in my undergraduate third year, and as such, I eagerly anticipate my first UKAS conference next year). The summer vacation is just as problematic as many students take on summer jobs to supplement their tuition fees, and as such are likely to miss the many smaller, more specialist conferences that take place during the summer, as well as another major forum, the British Association for Biological Anthropology and Osteoarchaeology (BABAO) annual conferences in mid-September, just before the start of the academic year for most universities.

Finally, and perhaps most addressable, the institution of archaeology needs to evaluate how it engages with each different demographic involved in the discipline. This includes not only students and younger generations more generally, but also practitioners in the non-academic sectors of the discipline, and the enthusiasts and general public 'outside' the discipline, though essential to its non-self-seeking existence. As I have previously argued, incidentally with a paper at my first TAG conference last December (Altoft 2013), we are all in need of a more 'integrated archaeology'.

This article is not providing answers on how we can achieve a more 'integrated archaeology'; instead it is highlighting the example of a lack of student participation in conferences and general exchange of knowledge that occurs without this much-needed state of the discipline. I will close this article with a case study of my work with the Annual Student Archaeology conference, as well as reflections on the first day of the 2014 EUROPA conference, in order to hopefully persuade all members of the field of archaeology, from the most uninitiated to the most esteemed, to together develop further new approaches that can achieve a more integrated understanding and appreciation of the past.

In December 2012 Navid Tomlinson, then, like me, a third year undergraduate at York, had the opportunity to attend TAG. There he met Alistair Galt, also a third year undergraduate at the University of Durham. In discussion, they agreed that there was a lack of opportunity for students to present their research orally beyond the written means that *The Post Hole* was already providing. At the time, I was Editor-in-Chief and Taryk Welburn, another third year undergraduate at York, was Managing Editor of *The Post Hole*. Navid shared with us his idea for a student conference at York in June 2013, and together the three of us made all the arrangements for it to take place. Although Navid was to leave archaeology following his degree and Taryk was to cross over to Cultural Heritage Management in his subsequent Masters at York, I envisaged that the conference could have a long and influential history ahead of it and be universally representative of students on (at least) a national level if branded as the Annual Student Archaeology (ASA) conference and organised by a committee of students at a different university each year.

After only five months of preparation (less if accounting for the dissertations and other assessments that also took up our time), the first Annual Student Archaeology conference took place on 19-20 June and attracted 80 delegates from across the UK, as far afield as Aberdeen and Southampton (Figures 1 and 2). ASA1 featured 24 papers and 6 posters on a diverse range of innovative research, from the depiction of stereotypes in popular representations of archaeology, such as the *Horrible Histories* books, by Rachael Sycamore (second year Durham undergraduate) to the zooarchaeological analysis of spurs used in cock-fighting in Roman Britain by Sean Doherty (third year Nottingham undergraduate).





**Figures 1 and 2.** *Some of the delegates of ASA1* (Image Copyright: B. Wajdner).

One of the highlights of ASA1 for me was that it featured genuinely exciting research by students of all levels from first year undergraduate to PhD. As part of chairing the session on identity, I had the pleasure of introducing a fantastic paper by York first year undergraduate, Victoria Gladwin, on the identification of non-binary gender representations and intersex people in the archaeological record. Victoria's paper alone plainly demonstrated the untapped contributions students can make to the progression of the discipline, and how every effort made for all opportunities of academic discourse should be open to not just lecturers and post-doctoral researchers, not even just doctoral students as well, but all members.

Following the first Annual Student Archaeology conference, I established a national committee that could steer the direction that the conference series would take in future years; including the selection of applicant hosts of the next ASA conference, this year the University of Reading for ASA2, and discussion at each conference AGM of ways in which ASA can enable more students to easily participate in the discipline. One of the main issues facing students is their ability to attend ASA and all other conferences because of the reasons outlined above. During the second Annual Student Archaeology conference at the University of Reading on 17-18 June, this and other matters were discussed, and questionnaires were given to delegates to widen the national committee's understanding of the current impact of ASA on widening participation in archaeology and how that can be furthered in the future (Figure 3).

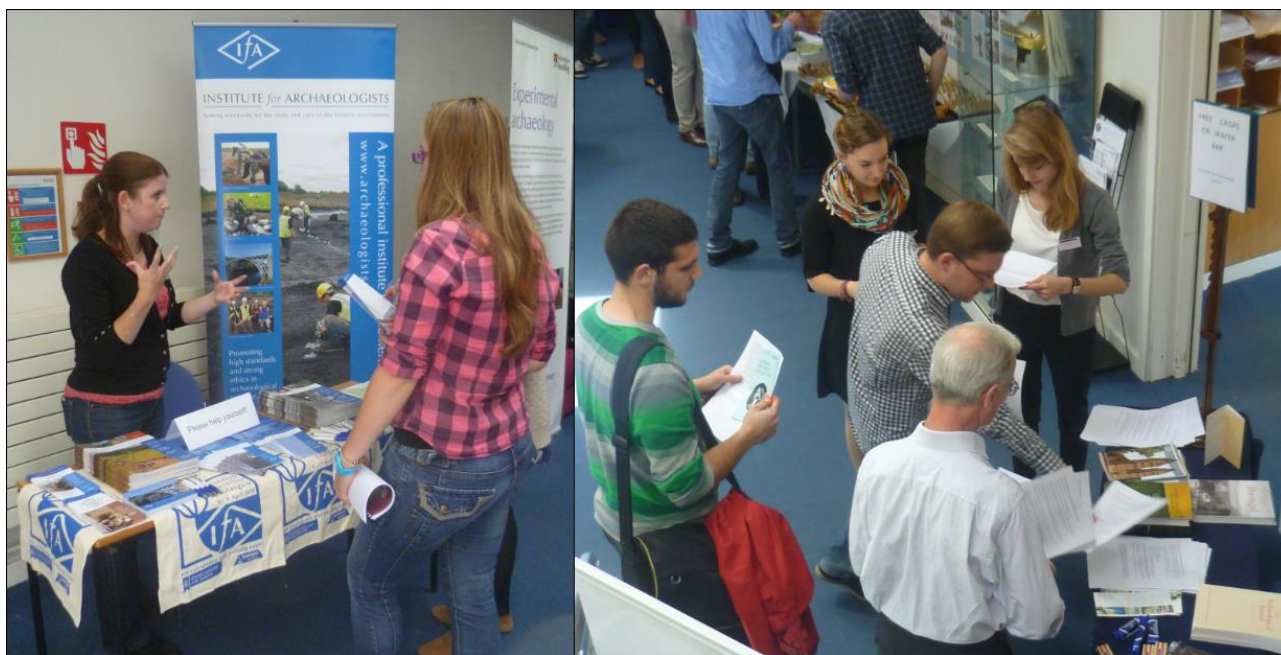


**Figure 3.** *Alistair Galt, University of Southampton, handing out questionnaires* (Image Copyright: D. Alftoft).



Unfortunately, this year the organising committee were unable to secure a deal with any accommodation providers in Reading to make that cost inclusive in the registration fee, though this will be focused on for future ASA conferences. However, the engagement of ASA continues to grow, as reflected by this year's 33 accepted paper abstracts and 12 accepted poster abstracts from students not just across the UK, but also from six other countries: Brazil, India, Nigeria, Poland, South Africa and the United States.

Not only is ASA reaching to people across borders, it hopefully will encourage attendance from people across demographics. Presenting at an ASA conference is a valuable experience for students, though it is even more impactful if it is attended by an integrated audience. Both the organising committee and the national committee are establishing new forms of promotion to academics, non-academic practitioners, enthusiasts and the public. The Institute for Archaeologists and the Royal Archaeological Institute held stalls at ASA2 allowing delegates to network with these two organisations (Figures 4 and 5); and kind sponsorship from the RAI and the University of Reading Annual Fund allowed attendance to an even larger programme for ASA2 to cost only £25 (Figure 6).



**Figures 4 and 5.** Stalls for the IfA and the RAI at ASA2 (Image Copyright: D. Altoft).

It is an exciting time to be involved in ASA and I am delighted so many people attended ASA2 to have the opportunity to witness more important student research and hopefully consider either joining the national committee or applying to host ASA3. If you missed ASA2, you can still pursue these two fantastic opportunities. Details on how to join the national committee for 2014-15 or apply to host ASA3 in 2015 will be released on the ASA conference website, [www.asaconference.org.uk](http://www.asaconference.org.uk), and announced on the ASA Facebook and Twitter pages on 1 July.



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**Figure 6.** Poster for registration and programme of ASA2 (Image Copyright: Annual Student Archaeology conference).

Returning finally to EUROPA; I wish to congratulate Alasdair on his long and hugely important career in archaeology. I am sure there is much important work still ahead for Alasdair. Being a conference in dedication to Alasdair, it was perhaps not too surprising that the overriding theme of the first day of EUROPA 2014 was “just what exactly *is* the Neolithic?”. In his paper, ‘The earlier Neolithic body in southern England and its continental background’, Dr Oliver Harris (University of Leicester) asked whether it is necessary for terming of ‘the Neolithic’, that there is a full package of farming, pottery and polished stone tools, as he quoted John Robb (2013) as suggesting: “‘The Neolithic’ is a heterogeneous set of human-material relationships which people participated in variably”. Such an understanding of the Neolithic seems confused and will continue to be, as Harris (2014) highlights, if we continue questioning whether or not a particularist approach to culture change in this period is suitable or not in our awareness

that real-world existence is multi-scalar in space and time, and is assessed archaeologically through isolated characteristics (bodily, materially, environmentally and economically).

Despite being period-specific, this is an example of where a more integrated participation in archaeology would likely offer fresh perspectives on old questions that have been recurring over the last couple of decades. In her paper, 'Evidence for the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in northern England and Wales', it was cringe-worthy, though nonetheless true of Dr Seren Griffiths (Manchester Metropolitan University) to analogise our necessary understanding of the 'Neolithic transition' with Robin Thicke's song, 'Blurred Lines' (Griffiths 2014). I responded in a similar manner (without the analogy) to a question following my Assessed Lecture the previous morning. My proposed Masters dissertation research is to contextualise an element of Neolithisation of western Russia with organic residue analysis of early pottery from the Pontic Steppe and boreal forest zone. The owners of the pottery in the Pontic Steppe were farmers, though the owners of the pottery in the boreal forest further north maintained a hunter-gathering subsistence. In my lecture I referred to the former as Neolithic and the latter as Mesolithic, despite both possessing pottery. A little bit of organisation, whether it be the use of the term 'Neolithic', or the academic hierarchy of archaeology, is helpful, though we need to be more prepared for some 'Blurred Lines' if our understanding, and our younger researchers, of archaeology are to develop over future 'gathering time'.

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# Landscape surveying and current archaeology – an interview with David Roberts

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*David Roberts studied a BA in Archaeology and an MA in Landscape Archaeology at York University. Having dug in both France and the UK, David Roberts main interests lie within landscape survey and excavation.*

## **What area of archaeology do you work in?**

My day job for English Heritage involves managing archaeological projects. Working within the National Heritage Protection Plan framework, which sets our strategic priorities, I design, undertake and disseminate the results of excavations. This involves managing complex project logistics and writing project designs to enable us to undertake work to standards that (hopefully) set an example to the rest of the sector.

Many of these interventions coincide with my own research interests, which focus on understanding human-landscape interactions in later Prehistory and the Roman period in Britain and France. I enjoy managing projects because it gives me a chance to work with lots of really interesting experts from across the sector and learn from them, and to make a meaningful contribution to research and heritage protection.

## **What sparked your interest in archaeology, and why did you choose to do a degree in this area?**

I got into archaeology through the back door – I had applied for history at university, but didn't get offers from my top choices, so had a look at the courses available through clearing. York was somewhere I'd always liked visiting, and with my strong interest in the past I was really interested when I saw places on the BA Archaeology course were available. Looking back, this was a really lucky break – my love of the outdoors and working with big teams is a much more natural fit to archaeological rather than historical study, and I feel very lucky to have fallen into such an amazing discipline.

## **What was your PhD project about?**

My PhD (still in the process of being finished!) is on human-landscape interactions in south-west Wiltshire and Provence in the Roman period. It essentially involves taking quite a new theoretical approach to studying Roman society, focusing on everyday activities in the landscape, and trying to understand what

the evidence for these can tell us about how people understood the world around them, and how society changed over time.

**Why did you choose to specialise in this area?**

I've always found that I'm good at thinking about the big picture, and synthesising information, and not as good at really detailed specialist analysis. The idea of telling the really big stories of the past strongly appeals to me, and I think that much current archaeology can get over-focused on really fine-grained analysis, thinking less about the wider context. Obviously, we need to do both, so I like contributing to teams by bringing a wider perspective, and working with expert colleagues who can provide detailed scientific understanding.

**Could you explain your work at Teffont, and how the project began?**

Again, luck! I was staying with friends following a mountaineering expedition in Snowdonia, and got talking to a friend's parent who owned land in Wiltshire, at Teffont. They invited me down to have a look at the area, because they'd always had an interest in the Roman period. That summer, a group of my undergrad friends and I did some initial recon, and found strong indications of Roman settlement. Since then, our team has developed the project into a major field school entirely under our own steam, with logistical support from the department and financed by low digging fees for students and small grants from institutions such as the Royal Archaeological Institute, Roman Research Trust and the Association for Roman Archaeology. We've uncovered a really well preserved and complex landscape of settlement and ritual, and are beginning to be able to tell a really exciting story about Teffont's Roman past. Perhaps the best part of the project for me is the community we've built up over the years, with the core team and local contacts keeping in touch and becoming really close friends, returning every year for more research and fun.

**What other excavations/projects are you involved in and currently working on?**

So many! I've two major projects for English Heritage, involving four separate excavations this summer. I'm working on a brilliant site at Whitby for EH this April, there's a Teffont Easter recon week, Teffont's fortnight long summer season, a hillfort which I'm coordinating landscape survey for, the Common Ground project, where I've directed excavations for a landscape project run by Al Oswald, Helen Goodchild and myself, and the past landscapes of south-west Wiltshire project, for which I've just received a large grant from the Society of Antiquaries. I'm also advising on a wide range of other research projects, and above all, trying to finish my PhD! I'm still trying to finish articles with colleagues on spatial theory, animal agency, PAS data, environmental consilience, Teffont's field report for 2010-2011 and several other papers of my own. I believe in keeping busy!

**What is your experience of finding a job within the archaeology sector?**

I got very, very lucky – a good job came up when I'd run out of PhD funding, and in my specialist area of Roman Wiltshire. This almost never happens. I applied, making sure to get friends with more experience than me to comment on my application, and really enjoyed the interview. A couple of weeks later it turned out I'd got the job, much to my surprise!

**Have you found that having a PhD is useful or necessary in your current job?**

Yes, I've found that it's been both useful and necessary to have done PhD research ... but I haven't actually got a PhD yet, as I haven't finished my thesis!

**What do you hope to achieve in the future?**

Finish my PhD! Hopefully to continue working with interesting people on worthwhile projects, and to push on in my career. Above all, to make sure that what I'm doing stays fun.

**Any tips for those interested in archaeology reading this interview wanting to work in the same kind of role?**

Make sure you take responsibility, and make sure to take whatever opportunities you get to advance your career in the direction you want. Think big, both in terms of big picture archaeology, and what you'd like to do with your own projects. Above all, talk to people! You won't get anywhere in archaeology without your friends, and without making contacts. Whenever you get the chance go to conferences, pub nights, seminars and events, start chatting to people. Almost everyone in archaeology is genuinely a nice person, and most are happy to chat, and help you out. Finally, don't get down if you don't succeed in getting a job for a while after your degree – archaeology is something lots of people want to do, and you've got to stick at it to get through. Good luck!

*For more information on David Roberts, and relevant work, please follow:*

<http://www.york.ac.uk/archaeology/research/research-students/david-roberts/#tab-2>

<https://york.academia.edu/DavidRoberts>

*For more information on the Teffont project, follow: <http://www.teffont.org.uk/about/>*



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