

Faye Morrissey: BA Historical Archaeology at the University of York

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University has definitely been an amazing experience. The city, the course, the people – everything has been what I expected and more. Having applied to study a joint honours degree in History and Archaeology at every other university apart from York, I now cannot imagine having done anything other than my Historical Archaeology BA. The modules and topics have been intellectually stimulating, providing me with invaluable new skills that I do not think I would have had the opportunity to gain at other universities.

When I first arrived at York, I had already been on an open day so had got to know the basic layout and feel for the place, but it still did not prevent me from having some nerves and anxiety about meeting new people and living in an entirely different area. However, I soon realised that everyone was in the same boat, and I should make the most of it. One of the best aspects to the archaeology courses is that you all do exactly the same modules in the first year. This means you get to interact with the whole student year, and with this only being around 100 students or so, it becomes a very friendly, tight-knit group. I have especially enjoyed working with new people on presentations, reports and excavations because you develop communication skills as well as making friends.

All three years at York have been amazing, and I cannot quite believe it is all coming to an end. I know though, that the friends I have made in Archaeology will be friends for life. Third year does come with more pressure, but I have found that if you plan and prepare well, there is nothing holding you back from still partaking in the social side of university. Completing a dissertation seemed like quite an unnerving task to begin with, but actually, I found I had been so well prepared during my second year, that it was not as hard as originally perceived. My investigations looked into Carolingian metalwork distribution in England, and what modes of exchange could have brought it here. I chose this topic because I wanted to bring my passion for artefact analysis and the early medieval period together. It is also a very current line of interest, looking at the continental contact England had in the 9th-10th centuries, other than that with Scandinavia.

Coming to the end of my undergraduate degree, it was time to start deciding what I wanted to do next. As much as I might miss academic life, I have found that I now want to pursue my career outside of this. I may return to university in the future, but at the moment, I am more than ready to face the world of work. Through my volunteering positions, within museums, the National Trust,

Portable Antiquities, and of course *The Post Hole* work, I feel my skill set has been broadened, therefore can be used within a heritage sector post. Excitingly, I have recently been offered a position to work as a heritage assistant to help co-ordinate a year long project. I am very much looking forward to starting this new stage in my life (which will be sometime after graduation), and getting stuck into a new challenge.

Archaeology, and university as a whole, has taught me so much. The skills I have gained are invaluable, and I am so pleased that I have spent my three undergraduate years in York. If I have any piece of advice for other students, it is to do what you enjoy! Regardless of whether you are going into employment or further education, as long as you are doing what you want and love, I think there is not much more you could ask for.