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Pilgrim's

Progress



A fascinating look into the world of medieval pilgrim badges of Thomas Becket, from an MPhil student at the University of Cambridge



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Cover Image Design by Izzy Winder. Images of pilgrim badges from the Wikimedia commons

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1 Editorial

Mark Simpson (<mailto:ms788@york.ac.uk>)

It is with a bittersweet feeling that I write this editorial for Issue 23. The sweet part is easy to explain, as we have an issue full of fascinating articles to end the summer term of 2012. In fact there is so much in the coming pages that I do not have room here to cover it all, but I shall give you the highlights.

Starting with our cover story, this looks at medieval pilgrim badges of Thomas Becket, from an MPhil student at the University of Cambridge. Then we move on to a review of the student digs at Heslington East, a summary from field officer Dr Cath Neal, a look back by two Year 3 students of their experiences digging in Kenya, a review of a recent Early Farmers conference and a look at the importance of digital data in archaeology. All this and much more. . .

One thing we do not have is the previously postponed (from last issue) second part of the review of excavations at Gawthorpe. This will definite be published in the next issue.

Now to the bitter part. This is my final editorial for The Post Hole. The last year has certainly been a roller-coaster ride, and not everything has gone right or to plan during the twelve months gone by. However, Team 2012 have, in my view, had a huge impact on the journal and I am proud of each and every one of them, and thank them unreservedly for their enthusiasm, support and fantastic contributions. I would also like to thank Izzy Winder for her great cover images during our tenure, all our brilliant contributors (we literally could not have done it without you) and you, the readers, for continuing to be interested in what we publish.

One of the current team members, Year 2 student David Altoft, will be taking over the editor's chair from the end of June 2012. He has written a short piece at the back of this issue, outlining some of his ideas for the year ahead, so please take a look and I hope you, will continue to support David and his new team with the same commitment you have given to our outgoing one.

Take care
Mark

2 The Archaeology of Thomas Becket: Portable Antiquities Scheme Badges

Paul A. Brazinski (mailto:pb519@cam.ac.uk)

“How religious, how saintly a man you wish to appoint to such a holy see and above such a renowned and holy community of monks! I know most certainly that if by God’s arrangement it happened thus, very quickly you would turn your hear and favour away from me, which is now great between us, and replace it with the most savage hatred. I know indeed that you would demand much, and even now you presume a great deal in ecclesiastical matters, which I would not be able to tolerate with equanimity. And so the envious would take advantage of the opportunity, and as soon as favour is extinguished they would stir up endless hatred between us.”

(Staunton 2001, 60)

-Thomas Becket’s response to Henry II appointing him Chancellor and Archbishop, 1161-2.

Abstract/Aims

Archbishop Thomas Becket was murdered in Canterbury Cathedral on 27 December 1170 AD. Shortly thereafter in 1173 AD he was canonized into an already widely celebrated pilgrim cult site at Canterbury Cathedral, attracting both English and international pilgrims. Becket’s shrine produced several different pilgrimage souvenirs including ampullae and badges (Blick 2007, 12). This paper investigates the archaeology of Thomas Becket through the distribution of his pilgrim badges in medieval England and Wales using the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). Through an analysis of the county distributions of Becket badges, this paper will evaluate their greater implications in terms of patterns of ‘local’ pilgrimage in medieval England and Wales.

Introduction

The iconography of Thomas Becket can only be properly understood through the lens of his history, since Christian iconography at pilgrim cult sites frequently derived from the main events and symbols of a saint’s life. Becket was born as ‘Thomas of London’ into a merchant family of Norman decent (Dugan 2004, 8). When Thomas was quite young, long-time family friend and aristocrat Richer de Laigle taught him elite social skills such as dining etiquette, hunting with dogs, and so forth (Dugan 2004, 9). Thomas was formally educated at an Augustinian Priory in London before briefly studying in Paris for less than two years (Staunton 2001, 42). Whilst in Paris he likely met the famous theologian John of Salisbury, who was studying in Paris at the same time and became one of Becket’s strongest supporters later in life. At 21 years of age, Thomas left Paris and accepted a job as an assistant moneyer in London, where he met and gained the favour of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury (Dugan 2004, 12). Theobald sent Thomas to study law in Bologna for a year, after

which he made Thomas an archdeacon of Canterbury in 1154 AD. Thus at a young age Thomas Becket had become a well-learned man, having studied at the world's most prestigious theology schools in Paris, law school in Bologna, and gaining a business background in finance. It was only fitting that Theobald recommended Thomas Becket as Henry II's new Chancellor. Henry and Thomas quickly become friends (Dugan 2004, 17). Thomas travelled with Henry on official business in England and France. Henry must have respected Thomas's intellect, since in 1161 he gave his eldest son to Becket's court for education (Dugan 2004, 18).

When Archbishop Theobald died on 18 April 1161, the archbishopric of Canterbury became available. Deciding between Thomas Becket (Theobald's choice) and Gilbert Foliot, Henry chose Becket, his close friend, who donned both Chancellor and Archbishop positions hoping to use the opportunity to his advantage (Barlow 1986, 70). On 2 June 1162, Becket was ordained a priest and on the following day he was consecrated as bishop of Canterbury Cathedral (Barlow 1986, 72).

Yet Henry and Thomas's friendship took a turn for the worst in 1163. Wishing to hold corrupt and law-breaking clergy to a higher standard, the crown sought a greater emphasis on the 'ancient laws and customs' in the kingdom. Henry was consequently looking for Becket's support in the matter (Barlow 1986, 80). Several other disputes over Church and State arose and the two were at loggerheads for the majority of their relationship thereafter. In 1164 Thomas fled to France, where he would spend the next six years. In the midst of their disputes, Henry and Becket petitioned Pope Alexander III for advice and other Papal decrees. They both went on the offensive in 1166 when the former decreed numerous excommunications and interdicts on persons against him in England and the latter formulated the Assize of Clarendon 1166 (Staunton 2001, 145).

King Louis, Henry, and Thomas met several times during Thomas's exile and in July 1170 Thomas and Henry eventually came to terms (Barlow 1986, 210). Before returning to England in November, Thomas received Papal excommunications letters from Rome, which he had petitioned for in order to anathemize the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of London (Spencer 1998, 80-86). For the first event, Becket is usually depicted in a frontal view aboard a ship (Spencer 1998, fig. 34a) and for the latter event he is usually depicted riding majestically on horseback wearing his typical episcopal garb, including his famous pallium, mitre, and gloves (Spencer 1998, fig. 49b). The horse is portrayed in profile while Becket's torso and head are portrayed in a frontal view and his waist down in profile. Thomas had the excommunications delivered before his arrival, which further infuriated Henry, who later uttered the following famous words to his court: "*What miserable drones and traitors have I nourished and promoted in my household, who let their lord be treated with such a shameful contempt by a low-born clerk!*" (Barlow 1986, 235) In the false belief that they were following the King's direct orders, four mid-ranking baronial knights subsequently murdered Becket in his own cathedral, usually portrayed as Becket praying whilst four knights creep behind him, brandishing their swords (Spencer 1998, fig. 56a).

News of the assassination was quickly and widely disseminated; Knowles compares it to the Kennedy assassination in terms of its global shock (Knowles 1970, 150). The monks of the Abbey immediately collected Becket's blood and, despite the hectic atmosphere, prepared his body for a hasty funeral. Whilst

a few monks were cleaning the dead Archbishop, they realized that he wore an unusual hair net and breeches, the latter associated with penance. Therefore, some Becket badges depict parts of his wardrobe, such as his mitre and gloves (Mitchiner 1986, figures 117-120). The monks also collected the broken sword of Richard le Bret, one of the murderers, which was preserved as a trophy in the shrine; this is commonly depicted as a scabbard and buckler in Becket badges (Spencer 1990, fig. 18) (Barlow 1986, 249).

Shortly after Becket's death, several miracle stories were reported, believed to be associated with the dead Archbishop: a vision which led a man to an image of Emperor Diocletian, long hidden in a mill; an account of taming wild dogs, healing swollen legs, and healing fevers (Staunton 2001, 207). People from all across Europe came to sample the famous healing 'water of St Thomas', supposedly produced by a mixture of his blood and water (Barlow 1986, 267). In February 1173 Thomas Becket was canonized, securing his place of death as a flourishing pilgrim cult centre. Thus, Becket's shrine was a common badge, usually depicting him lying in his coffin (Spencer 1998, fig. 73). More generic Becket badges, such as a bust of Becket and figures of him standing in his full episcopal garb, are also common (Spencer 1998, figs. 114 & 26d).

The Portable Antiquities Scheme

The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) was founded in response to the Treasure Act of 1996, which stipulates that "*all gold, silver, and groups of coins in the same findspot, which are over 300 years old, must be recorded*" (Portable Antiquities Scheme, The British Museum). Since 2003, the Treasure Act also requires prehistoric metals be reported. The PAS covers England and Wales, although the scheme has contact information for Treasure Hunters in Scotland and North Ireland. As of 13 April 2012, the PAS has 496,322 records of 779,547 artefacts, which includes approximately 300,000 images (Portable Antiquities Scheme, The British Museum). There are over 2,125 different searchable object types in the PAS database, examples including, but not limited to, coins, ampullae, badges, amulets, beads, loomweights, rings, styli, tobacco pipes, and wicks. The Scheme is sustained by volunteer Mudlarks and Treasure Hunters reporting their finds to one of 39 regional PAS liaisons, who register these artefacts. Most of the finds are located using metal detectors. Every PAS record includes a unique artefact ID, chronological date and period, brief description, categorized object identity, dimensions and weight, materials and construction, spatial data, discovery dates, QR barcode, and often an artefact image to scale. There are currently 312 research projects that utilize the PAS, ranging from A-level archaeology projects to PhD dissertations and large-scale AHRC research.

The PAS and Thomas Becket Pilgrim Badges

The Portable Antiquities Scheme differentiates between pilgrim badges and secular badges, having labelled the first 'Pilgrim Badges' and the latter 'Badges'. Given variations in context and use, however, some artefacts that should be categorized as 'pilgrim badges' are mistakenly placed in the 'badges' category. Both categories were therefore used for this paper, and are referenced by the interchangeable terms 'pilgrim badges' or 'Becket badges'. Ampullae, an entirely different category in the PAS, were excluded from this analysis (Blick 2007, 12).

There are 241 badges and 271 pilgrim badges in the PAS (figures are as of 20 April 2012). The first step was to eliminate all pilgrim and secular badges after the medieval period; this removed 94 badges and 6 artefacts in the pilgrim badges category, leaving 411 artefacts in the data set. In 2007, 18 pilgrim badges were attributed to Thomas Becket; since then, however, the PAS has accumulated another 20 Becket badges (Egan *et al.* 2010, 209). To date, there are 40 identified Thomas Becket badges in the PAS, with an additional three badges that may be related.

CAM-3D1B83 (<http://tinyurl.com/79nvqsZ>), made of tin between 1400-1550 AD, depicts a pair of gloves; a common representation and badge sold of Thomas Becket at Canterbury. The iconography and shape are similar to Spencer 1998 figures 120, 120a, and 120b, the last artefact displaying the same dot-like ornamentation. The badge also resembles Mitchiner 1986 figures 119 and 120, as well as Spencer 1990 figure 38. The database only suggests a probable connection to Thomas Becket, although the iconography suggests a very strong connection.

LVPL-CDC3A5 (<http://tinyurl.com/8yJg57m>), a copper alloy pilgrim badge dating 1300-1500 AD, depicts a mitre the vestment worn by a bishop. This symbol is a well-established icon signifying Thomas Becket, as seen in Spencer 1998 figure 119b.

WILT-8B9B83 (<http://tinyurl.com/796988v>), a lead badge dating 1301-1400 AD, depicts a male portrait encircled by a connecting chain of circles. The portrait is unfortunately blurry. However, the badge's style is similar to Spencer 1998 figure 6 and the rim's ornamentation resembles the typical decoration for Becket's pallium, as seen in Spencer 1998 figures 119a, 51b, 52; Spencer 1990 figure 12; and Mitchiner 1986 figure 96, to name a select few.

Other badges that resemble typical Becket badges are LIN-EEB323 (<http://tinyurl.com/7ukqy6>), YORYM-7FC646 (<http://tinyurl.com/6myc8o5>), and LON-0AAE06 (<http://tinyurl.com/6mt1vt4>). Unfortunately, these badges are too fragmentary or deteriorated to identify with conviction. LIN-EEB323 depicts a robed torso from the waist down, similar to the robe trim decoration of Mitchiner 1986 figure 96 and Spencer 1990 figure 12, although the piece is simply too fragmentary to identify with certainty. LON-0AAE06 depicts a robed individual from the neck down. The individual's stance is that of a typical Becket badge; however, the individual is *not* wearing a pallium, which is almost conventional in terms of the frequency with which it was used to depict Becket. Mitchiner 1986 figures 97 and 98 are exceptions to this iconography, although there are too many examples against this atypical style to identify the decapitated badge. Therefore, only the first three badges in question (CAM-3D1B83, LVPL-CDC3A5, and WILT-8B9B83) were added to the data set.

Discussion

The data set distribution is laid out in Table 1 (below):

COUNTY	TOTAL NUMBER OF BECKET BADGES
Cambridgeshire	1
Cheshire	1
Dorset	2
Isle of Wight	1
Kent	2
Lincolnshire	8
London*	14
Norfolk	2
Northampton	1
Surrey	2
Swansea, Wales	1
Warwickshire	1
Yorkshire	3
Wiltshire	1
TOTAL	40

*The PAS distinguishes the Greater London Area as its own area.

Table 1 – England and Wales data set distribution. (Image Copyright – Paul A. Brazinski)

The 40 badges, approximately 10% of the total medieval pilgrim badges in the PAS, are represented in 13 of England's 27 counties and one of Wales' 13 counties. The general distribution seems to match those medieval areas with a strong religious affinity or cult as well as those bordering counties: London includes Westminster Abbey's cult for St Edward the Confessor and neighbouring county Surrey, Kent's Canterbury Cathedral's cult for St Thomas Becket, Norfolk's Walsingham and Bornholm's cults and neighbouring Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire. Other counties, such as Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, had massive cathedrals and smaller shrines (Yorkshire had one shrine and the seat of an archbishop, whereas Lincolnshire had two shrines) (Spencer 1998, 22-23). Yorkshire borders Cheshire in the data set and Lincoln, Northamptonshire. The distribution also features three badges in southern England in Dorset, Wiltshire, and the Isle of Wight.

The lacunae for distribution in England's southwest coast (including the Cornwall, Devon, and Somerset areas) is a curious aberration, as is the dearth of badges found in most of the English counties bordering Wales, such as Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Shropshire not to mention the entirety of Wales excluding Swansea, and counties north of Yorkshire (Westmorland, Durham, Cumberland, and Northumberland). These oddities can be explained in several ways. First, the PAS has limitations. In a perfect world, one would assume that all counties are equally represented with medal detector users or avid history detectives who seek artefacts for the same amount of time per year, although such assumptions are false. It is also unlikely, given human nature, that all artefacts are reported to the PAS, although one cannot make this claim with certainty.

Another PAS limitation is that it fails to record museum or excavation artefacts found both before and after the PAS's establishment. These figures include the Museum of London's extensive collection, of which two Becket badges are on permanent display, as well as the British Museum's collection of approximately 73 Becket badges. Furthermore, the PAS does not account for any finds prior to 1996, which is a factor in any interpretation based on its data sets.

Nevertheless, the PAS is still a valuable resource for several reasons. First, it provides an open access database with a consistent register of artefacts discovered since 1996. Its database therefore consists of relatively 'new' finds, necessitating a new discussion of analyses based on similar finds in prior decades. However, given the numerous Becket badges found *before* the PAS was founded, a distribution map of this data set would not be a wholly accurate representation of national, let alone global, distribution of Becket badges. Second, the PAS succeeds as a relatively representative data set for a given area, in a similar vein to test-pit excavations, wherein artefacts are located from a 'random' search of a selected area. A researcher can assume that the results do not encompass the entire area, and thus use with confidence the resultant 'random' sampling as an acceptable representation. The PAS therefore provides a manageable, recent, and relatively accurate, representative data set for investigation.

If one accepts that the PAS data set for Becket badges is a reasonable 'random' representation of medieval material culture, inferences about historical pilgrimages to St Thomas Becket's shrine can be made. The general tendency toward higher badge counts in religiously affiliated counties suggests one of two things. First, clerics from eastern England likely travelled to Canterbury, the house of the Archbishop, and purchased Becket badges. This implies that pilgrim badges were marketed and sold to clerics, an idea that is beyond the limitations of this paper. Second, the tendency could suggest that St Thomas Becket's shrine, although the most popular in medieval England, attracted more 'local' visitors from neighbouring counties, or pilgrims from the South East, London, East-Midlands, East Anglia, and Yorkshire and Humberside regions, who were on their way to Santiago de Compostela. The distribution suggests that western pilgrims from the Southwest, West Midlands, Northwest, and Northeast regions generally did not travel to Canterbury to start the pilgrim trail in Continental Europe. A tendency for local travel is moreover supported by the four major cult sites in medieval England (Canterbury Cathedral, Walsingham, Westminster Abbey, and Bornholm), all of which are located in Eastern England and also appear in the data set.

Could this data set suggest an affinity for local cult sites *within* eastern England, and a similarly geographically-specific pattern in western counties? Although the latter sites are beyond the scope of this paper, the suggestion is plausible given the spatial distribution of badges within this data set. Perhaps pilgrims from western England and Wales were more likely to travel overseas because they were geographically closer to Santiago de Compostela, the most famous medieval pilgrim site, than inhabitants of eastern England.

To conclude, this paper set forth a brief catalogue (see Appendix) and county distribution of Becket badges in the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). Secondly, it evaluated the greater implications of this distribution, suggesting that those who travelled to Canterbury tended to reside in eastern counties, thus implying a possible tendency toward 'local' pilgrimage in medieval England. Perhaps the greatest implication of this analysis is the advantage of using the PAS, which provides a 'new' data set for artefacts found in the last 16 years. The PAS database, if understood from the perspective of test-pit methodology and its concomitant assumptions, provides a relatively accurate 'random' sample of materials in the form of a manageable data that may suggest new avenues for historical investigation. Had this paper included all globally known Becket badges, it would have been beyond the time limitations and accessible resources

available to complete this review an investigation that must be relegated to future analysis, no doubt enriched by additions to the PAS in years to come.

Appendix

Becket Badges

Cambridgeshire

- CAM-3D1B83

Cheshire

- LVPL-CDC3A5

Dorset

- SOMDOR-29F941

Isle of Wight

- SWYOR-B6B054

Kent

- KENT-F04B93
- KENT345

Lincolnshire

- NLM667
- NLM-BE7AB7
- NCL-AE4D13
- NLM-D4A333
- LIN-1BC286
- LIN-D80A35
- NLM-BE7AB7
- LIN-4C4706

London

- LON-974287
- LON-A9F210
- LON-400806
- LON-CD2C70
- LON-CF5770
- LON-B92301

- LON-8D8E17
- LON-DCBEE1
- LON-C17D54
- LON-C638E2
- LON-0C5BE6
- LON-C98694
- LON-B80577
- LON-A9F210

Norfolk

- NMS-D0D287
- NMS-C541A1

Northampton

- NARC1754

Surrey

- SUR-E49EE8
- SUR-E42C11

Swansea (Wales)

- PUBLIC-A5C6B7

Warwickshire

- WAW-632026

Wiltshire

- WILT-8B9B83

Yorkshire

- SWYOR-C9A808
- YORYM347
- YORYM-7FC646

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Images Referenced in Text

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- Spencer 1990.
- Spencer 1998.
- The Portable Antiquity Scheme, The British Museum.

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3 Heslington East Archaeology Project: A Summary

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Dr Cath Neal is an archaeology fieldwork officer at the University of York, and has worked on all the seasons at Heslington East.

For the last four years many of us in the department (students, volunteers and staff) have been working on the 116 hectare greenfield site of university expansion at Heslington East. Well, I hear you all ask, what did we find? Currently we are in the middle of writing the Assessment Report for the site (and still awaiting some specialist reports and further analysis). Here, at this interim stage, I have outlined some of our archaeological findings but wanted to also highlight some of the wider benefits of the work. It would be a cliché, but however still true, to say that whilst we found out quite a lot about the archaeology of the site we also found out quite a bit about ourselves; working to a common aim through the sunshine, showers and hail (and not forgetting, of course, the torrential rain of 2010).



Figure 1 – Ryan ‘Intrepid’ Wilson, 2011. (Image Copyright – Cath Neal/University of York Archaeology Department)

This rural site offers a unique opportunity to understand multi-period settlement, and its landscape setting, in the Vale of York. Fieldwork was carried out here jointly by York Archaeological Trust (YAT), On Site Archaeology (OSA) and the Department of Archaeology (University of York) between 2007 and 2011 and is currently in the analysis phase. When this is complete it will add substantially to the corpus of data about York’s hinterland, from prehistory

until the end of the Roman period. It will also add detail to a range of period and thematic research questions, and lead to popular and academic publications.

Introduction to the archaeological evidence

There are currently several active spring heads on the hillside and geoaerchaeological work undertaken on the site where YAT were working has identified a series of early palaeochannels running down the slope north-south, which probably created an area of standing water to the south beginning in the early post-glacial period (Carey 2009, 168). This may have been a wetland mosaic which contained a variety of vegetation and attracted wild fowl. Some of the archaeological definition on the site was complicated by a series of hillwash sands and silts that sealed and masked archaeological deposits, which effectively cut from different levels. These colluvial deposits vary in depth with the morphology of the hill-slope but also vary significantly in their lateral extent and depth. Students excavating on the site will remember only too well the difficulties of defining some of these elusive and masked features, and trying to distinguish the subtly different sands!

The earliest evidence for human activity at Heslington East was the discovery of a number of stone implements which date from the early Mesolithic period, and include a serrated saw, though the majority of the flint and worked stone found dates to the Neolithic and Bronze Age (Makey 2009). The flint assemblage is described as significant for the Vale of York and will be subject to full analysis in due course. Landscape scale features, including some curvilinear ditches and deposits around watering holes, also date to the Bronze Age (Antoni *et al.* 2009). Hollowed out alder logs have been used on the springline to form probable well linings and at least one of these dates to c.3750BP (Bruce pers.comm.).

A second Bronze Age collared urn was recovered during the Department of Archaeology undergraduate field school 2011. The collared urn appears to represent Longworths 'Primary Series' with repetitive, incised herringbone external and internal decoration, it is likely that this was created with a single tool (Manby pers.comm; Longworth 1984). At the time the urn was discovered, a further cremation (without vessel) was identified to the immediate north. An initial assessment of the cremated bone is suggestive of at least an infant burial within the cremation vessel (Holst pers.comm.). Approximately forty metres from the cremations, in a sub-circular pit, half a polished Bronze Age battleaxe was recovered. This implement had an expanded butt and on initial inspection appears to be representative of a 'Stage V' Loosehowe type (Manby pers.comm; Roe 1966, 209).

Iron Age settlement evidence at Heslington East is more apparent with the discovery of the remains of several roundhouses across the site, some situated within elaborate ditched enclosures and evidence for their rebuilding on successive occasions. The primary division of the agricultural landscape also occurs at this time and a series of ring ditches are evident too (Antoni *et al.* 2009). Several areas around the springheads across the site are increasingly managed at this time with evidence including wattle-work fencing, revetment and deliberate cobbling. Within a substantial springhead deposit an Iron Age skull was recovered and has been subject to rigorous scientific analysis due to the preservation of human brain tissue (O'Connor *et al.* 2011).

Despite limited evidence for occupation at Heslington East from documentary, remote sensing and reconnaissance techniques in advance of development, there is significant Roman settlement in the form of domestic masonry and timber buildings, the use of landscape features (including large ditches, cobbled trackways and terracing) and some specialised craft activities. Other substantial structures on the site include a 3 metre deep stone lined well which was backfilled deliberately when it went out of use with a range of cattle skulls, animal bones, and ceramics including some whole pots. Also found was a probable tower mausoleum cobbled foundation, and the blocks from the site most likely associated with this utilise Roman technology usually seen in civic building within the military zone.

We have recovered a number of Roman burials and see, in one case, the line of an earlier boundary ditch reinforced by the insertion of two late third century inhumations. There are hints of early Roman settlement (either Romano-British or second-century activity) but the majority of the ceramic and radiocarbon dating evidence suggests a third- to fourth-century date for most of the Roman features. Evidence for immediate post-Roman activity is ephemeral, presumably largely truncated by deep ploughing, but assemblages of Anglian material are suggestive of a cemetery in the vicinity and across the site there is widespread evidence for medieval ridge and furrow which frequently cuts earlier features.



Figure 2 – Burial and Cremation at Heslington East – Left: Roman Burial 2009 – Right: Osteologist Malin Holst Excavating the Collared Urn 2011 (Image Copyright – University of York (Left)/Cath Neal/University of York Archaeology Department (Right))

Part of the research value of the site at Heslington East is derived from its rural nature and the lack of subsequent settlement; this has led to the exceptional preservation of some classes of evidence, for example, the Roman brick and tile

(McComish 2011, 38). The proportion of inbrices related to tegulae fragments and their relatively smaller size compared with the norm (for York and for Britain as a whole) merits further analysis. It is also noted that there is the frequent use of a fabric type seen rarely in York (*ibid*). These issues bring into sharp relief the mechanisms of supply and trade at the site and also the significance of chronological variation within the assemblage.



Figure 3 – Becky Kelly Excavating the Base of the Well (Image Copyright – Cath Neal/University of York Archaeology Department)

The wider context

The University of York has taken an innovative approach to the archaeology at Heslington East and this has largely been achieved by the division of funding to allow selected areas of the site to be evaluated more rapidly by commercial organisations (YAT and OSA), whilst other areas were evaluated over longer periods of time by students from the Department of Archaeology and by community archaeology volunteers. Although varied approaches and methods have been applied, to a lesser or greater extent, by different organisations who are responding to differing situations, the overarching aim of the project is to bring the analysis together in a single publication for the site as a whole.

The range of people who have worked on the site have been varied; paid staff (commercial and teaching staff), unpaid volunteers (students and local volunteers), homeless people from the Arclight Hostel, school children from Lord Deramore's Primary School, Badger Hill Primary School and Archbishop Holgate's School and personnel from other departments at the university. Working to a common end these groups have experienced most stages of the fieldwork process and have contributed to the overall success of the project.

In 2010 we received a 'Your Heritage' grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to increase knowledge about the site by providing practical sessions for school children, a website, heritage information boards and popular publications at the end of the fieldwork. This has enabled us to increase the scope of community involvement and will allow us to produce, in 2013 some lasting and tangible outputs.

From the outset we aimed to make the project as accessible and inclusive as possible within the confines of a development site. We held open days for the public and for university staff, we invited schools, commuters from the local 'Park and Ride' and a range of societies and groups participated in site tours. Over the course of four field seasons work (42 months) we welcomed around 520 individuals (mainly our students) to excavate with us on the Department of Archaeology part of the site, and we had an additional c.350 visitors to look around the excavations. We have given 17 local society talks about the archaeology at Heslington East and have participated in several academic conferences in the UK, and also in Europe. In June 2012 the project will be presented, by invitation, to the Archaeology in Contemporary Europe conference 'Integrating Archaeology' in Frankfurt.

We have also welcomed scholars from other departments at York (chemistry and physics), other institutions (Durham University, Stanford University, the Council for British Archaeology) and other disciplines (British Geological Survey) to the site, aiming to increase understanding through sharing information, sharing skills and developing research ideas together.

In 2010 we welcomed 100 local children to the site as part of their transition programme from primary to secondary school, funded by the HLF; they undertook a range of activities including geophysical survey, excavation and recording but the most popular activity was the construction of a Roman kiln and the production of some 'Roman' pots. The children used classroom skills in practice and met new people. They enjoyed being outside and thinking about what their neighbourhood used to be like. A head teacher from one of the schools said, 'The school has benefited greatly from the expertise, creativity and opportunities the Department has shared with our learning community'. The

effect of participating was also apparent in the way that experiential learning promotes enquiry, with the children asking questions such as ‘how do we know?’ and ‘what is the evidence?’ and then producing a film about Roman culture.

Two workshops were undertaken, with community participants, to seek feedback about the most significant part of their experience working on the site. In addition to gaining archaeological knowledge and skills, and enjoying working on specific archaeological features, a number of transferable skills were described, including problem solving and team work. Lying above this, however, were several higher order concepts to do with a sense of belonging, concerns over ownership and ideas about memory and landscape.

Conclusions

Cited as an example of good practice in community archaeology (English Heritage 2009) we have aimed to engage volunteers with all stages of the fieldwork process, encouraging them to have an impact on the final outputs and interpretations. The site at Heslington East, its archaeology, the collaborative approach taken and the levels of participation from various sectors of the community is an important example of the way that archaeological fieldwork is changing in the 21st century. We anticipate that the benefit of this more diffuse approach to evaluation will be felt not only in our understanding of the archaeological features themselves but also in the breadth of our understanding about ‘what archaeology does’ for local communities and the impact that it can have on a local level.



Figure 4 – Happy Students at Heslington East. (Image Copyright – Cath Neal/University of York Archaeology Department)

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4 The ADS: What Is It All About?

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Everyone in York knows about the Archaeology Data Service (ADS, <http://tinyurl.com/78p4d6f>). We are the nice people in the offices near the entrance to the King's Manor. Hold on a minute though, what exactly is the ADS? What do we do? To start to answer these questions it is necessary to take a little step back and ask ourselves a very important question. What is the purpose of archaeology?

Clearly there is neither a simple, correct, nor even single answer to this question, but there are lots of good and interesting answers that range from the very philosophical to the very practical. Many (not all) of these answers do have one element in common though. This is the notion that archaeologists create as well as interpret information and the information that archaeologists create, the data they gather, should be made available to others for reuse in the future. This can be said to apply to many disciplines, but it is especially important for archaeology because, as we know, some archaeological processes, such as the process of excavating a site, are destructive and unrepeatable acts. What remains after the site is excavated are the memories of the experience, the impressions of those affected by the site and the ideas about the past that those involved in the work – and those watching it happen – have created through direct contact with and through consideration of the material that has been uncovered. Once the project is complete the main connection back to the site apart from memories and selected physical remains are the records that are generated throughout the archaeological process, the primary data, and the ideas about people in the past that these records have helped to inform, the interpretation.

There is much focus on the publication of a site or project, and rightly so for two reasons. Firstly, it is important that archaeologists share their ideas with colleagues and the public, and secondly, academics are often judged on their publication record. For aspiring academics it is crucial to their career that they publish. However, what becomes of the bulk of the material on which their publications are actually based, the material that they often destroyed a site to create? Clearly it is important for archaeologists that these records are kept safe for the long term. This is often an explicitly stated aim of archaeological projects under planning legislation and also as a fundamental part of professional good practice. All the carefully constructed records, the geophysics plots, the context sheets, the photographs, are intended to be kept safe for the long term so that others can revisit them in the light of new discoveries, or developments in technology or theory, in order to challenge the original interpretation and to generate new ones. It is also important to understand that this is not a simple bureaucratic or administrative task. Our entire understanding of the way perceptions of the past have evolved from the earliest antiquarians to the modern discipline are contingent on both the published material and the unpublished archival material that can complement, or contradict it. Understanding how the archive is created, the selection and retention processes involved, which are themselves an act of interpretation, are an intrinsic part of being an archaeologist.

So how do archaeologists fulfill their responsibility to keep their records safe for the future? At first glance, this might seem like a straightforward problem, but it is a surprisingly complex one and has become more so in the last 25 years. This is because almost all archaeological information is now created in digital form and includes an ever expanding range of data generation and recording techniques; databases, text documents, images, videos, sound recording, aerial photographs, satellite images, laser scanning, digital mapping, bathymetry, three-dimensional models, etc. It is often very surprising to people, even experienced archaeologists, to discover that with all this new technology, and sometimes because of it, the data created is really very fragile and requires a significant amount of management to keep safe. It really is counter-intuitive that digital data requires more direct intervention and management to keep safe and usable over time than a traditional paper record. Having said that, we have all experienced hardware formats going out of date and becoming virtually extinct. Remember floppy discs, the minidisk and the audio cassette? We have also had experience of corrupt files, software changing such that old documents or data files are no longer read by the latest software, or software and file formats being restricted to particular devices; just think of the iPhone.

These are trivial examples, but they represent exactly the kinds of issues that face all kinds of digital data. Very often, without intervention, important data, created say just ten years ago, is simply not accessible or usable. Already we at the ADS know of significant amounts of important and irreplaceable archaeological data that has simply vanished due to corruption, hardware, software or metadata issues (i.e. we have the data, but we do not know what it relates to or how to make sense of it!). Obviously there are approaches to managing this data to keep it safe over long periods of time; the most frequently cited is the Open Archival Information System (OAIS, <http://tinyurl.com/7vmwu7d>). This comprises hundreds of pages of guidance and good practice, but is only a reference model. Actual digital preservation practice based on OAIS can be enormously complex and expensive – remember in archaeology it has to deal with literally hundreds of file types, from hundreds of types of devices, software and practice. It is simply not possible for an individual or even an individual project to manage the whole process of digital preservation without assistance. This of course is where the ADS come in. The ADS is a digital archive with two main objectives: firstly to provide a safe place for those interested in keeping the results of their archaeological work available to others in the long term; and secondly, but just as importantly, to explore new ways of making all these exciting results available, findable and usable to anyone and everyone over the internet.

Sharing of information and particularly engagement with broader non-academic audiences, community groups and the public is increasingly becoming a stated aim of archaeological projects. There are lots of reasons for this, some based on a genuine belief in the importance of engagement and a desire to democratise the discipline. Others are a reaction to the demands of the REF and the expectation that academic research can demonstrate ‘impact’ outside the confines of academia. Irrespective of the motivation, having your research outputs openly available online, via a digital archive is a demonstrably efficient route to both reaching wider audiences and creating opportunities to enhance the impact of your research. It is very easy for a single project web site to get lost in the billions pages that comprise the web. It can be a time

consuming and difficult task to keep it on line and keep its contents usable. This is a further advantage of depositing material with a digital archive such as the ADS, once it is deposited its management, exposure and usability all become our responsibility. The issue of exposure is an important one, because isolated datasets represent a problem both for the creator and for potential users. Breaking down barriers between isolated archaeological datasets remains a constant challenge for the ADS, and great efforts have been made by us via a number of major European research and infrastructure projects to find ways of meaningfully aggregating datasets, drawing them together in a way that makes it easier for the researcher to find what they are looking for and have confidence in the results of their queries and searches. The most obvious benefit to archaeology has been that digital sources, such as national and local monument inventories and digital repositories containing significant resources need no longer be hermetic entities relating to specific geographical, period or subject boundaries, but can make their content available as part of a larger aggregated dataset. Thus researchers and cultural heritage managers are enabled to retrieve data on their area of interest from a single point of access without being constrained by arbitrary, technical, political or regional boundaries.



Figure 1 – Who Remembers Floppy Discs? (Image Copyright – Archaeology Data Service)

What is the result of all this work at the ADS? For the data creator, peace of mind and the benefits of having their data publicly exposed and integrated in to broad data discovery and research infrastructure. For the user, the ADS offers access to over 1.1 million archaeological records and around 450 individual archives, some of these, such as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link archive containing data from hundreds of individual excavations and interventions. One of these

archives, the Grey Literature Library now holds nearly 17,000 geo-referenced reports on archaeological events covering every region, time period and type of archaeology. Only a few years ago none of this unpublished grey literature was easily available to researchers and as such a vast potential research resource lay untapped. The ADS's work within this area has been recognised recently with a short listing for the BAA Innovation award, we will hear the results of this in July. All of the ADS records and holdings are carefully managed, categorised and made discoverable via sophisticated search mechanisms such as ArchSearch. This tool utilises both the latest online mapping technology and an advanced faceted classification browsing system. Large portions of this data are also shared with other portals, such as Europeana (<http://www.europeana.eu/>), to ensure maximum exposure to the resources we hold. We know this exposure pays off as we keep careful track of our user base and usage statistics. We have hundreds of thousands of users per year from all over the world, downloading around a million pages and more than ten gigabytes of data every month. Given that latest figures put the size of the academic, student and commercial archaeological sector in the UK at around six thousand people, this level of usage represents a major success. Keep your eyes peeled also for a new JISC funded report due in 2013 on the economic value of the ADS to the whole archaeology sector (<http://tinyurl.com/8y8txma>).

We have looked above at the basic responsibility that all archaeologists have to ensure their important work is archived. We have looked at the difficulties this entails, from the fragility of the data to the complexity of the technical solutions in digital preservation. Finally we covered the advantages in terms of academic profile, long term community and public outreach, impact and engagement as well as the significance of the archive for theorising both the profession and the past. I hope you will agree that not only is the ADS an important organisation in that it addresses these issues on behalf of the profession in the UK, but that it is great to have it in York where its work is important for the reputation of the whole department.

So, finally returning to the question posed in the first paragraph, what is the purpose of archaeology? Whatever answer you might settle on, whatever answer satisfies you intellectually, it is likely that sharing your passion for the subject with others is a part of that answer. Think of digital archiving and the ADS as a service there to help you share your passion, your data, your thoughts and your ideas, not just for today, but for a long time to come.

If you would like to keep up to date on the latest from the ADS you can follow @ADS_Update and also our ADS Facebook page, or keep an eye on our blog: <http://tinyurl.com/848tw6n>

5 Kenya Memories

Jacqui Mellows (<mailto:submissions@theposthole.org>), Khadija McBain (<mailto:secretary@theposthole.org>)

In the summer of 2010, a group of University of York Year 1 students (Tom Delany, Hannah Leighton, Khadija McBain, Rachelle Martin, Jacqui Mellows and Matthew Thomas, along with a handful of York support staff) went out to Kenya for a month digging, as part of an opportunity offered by Doctor Paul Lane. Here two of those students, Post Hole staff Khadija and Jacqui, recall their African adventure in conversation with each other.

Site Introduction by Dr. Paul Lane

The rock shelter was mostly Pastoral Neolithic – date range in Kenya about 4500-1200 years ago; this site perhaps in the 4000-3000 time frame to judge from the pottery and stone tools (quite a bit of obsidian – volcanic glass – as I recall, which must have been traded from c. 150km away in the Rift Valley). BUT what were herders doing in a rockshelter? Perhaps these were former hunter-gatherers in the process of adopting the trappings of a pastoralist way of life – not sure how much domestic fauna as opposed to wild fauna there was in the assemblage.



Figure 1 – Mila Sita: The Site (Top Left). The Ranch (Top Right). Digging at Mila Sita (Bottom Left). Lions on Site! (Bottom Right). (Image copyright – Khadija McBain: Top Left & Right/Jacqui Mellows: Bottom Left & Right)

The open site – Mili Sita (Six Mile in English) is much later in date, probably occupied around 1700-1750 AD; large open air settlement, with rubbish dumps, fauna dominated by domestic animals – sheep, goat, cattle – but also some wild; different type of pottery, ‘Kisima Ware’ may be obtained from neighbouring hunter-gatherers living in the hills some 30km to north; iron making and using. Pastoral Iron Age begins c. 1200 years ago – later societies such as this merge into descendants of modern day pastoralists such as the Maasai – one group of Maasai were moved from this area of land in 1912-14, by the British settler government in Kenya and area set aside for White settlement and farms. Kenya is still living with the legacy of that land move today.

Kenya Memories

Khadija McBain – How did you end up on an excavation in Kenya?

Jacqui Mellows – I absolutely loved the summer term’s excavation in first year and decided that I wanted to spend my summer holidays excavating elsewhere. A couple of friends mentioned the Kenya dig to me and I got in touch with Paul to find out more. Having an opportunity as a first year to dig in such an archaeologically renowned location was just too good to pass up. Kenyan archaeology is known for its impact on the study of human evolution, and although we would not be digging on a site quite so ancient, the idea of being so close to where it all began was quite exciting.

KMc – How did you find camping on a Kenyan ‘ranch’?

JM – Well, as this was my first time camping ever, I had no idea what to expect. To be honest, initially it was a bit terrifying having absolutely no protection from the Kenyan wildlife, especially as we could hear the lions every night. But by the end, sleeping with the sound of the bugs and the frogs at night was extremely peaceful. Going back to Nairobi and the sounds of traffic made it impossible to sleep!

JM – Did the ‘ranch’ have many archaeological hot spots that you did not get to excavate?

KMc – Yeah, it had quite a few that we did not get to excavate Paul showed us a few places near to where we were camping that had archaeology and also an iron smelting area where we found bits of iron slag.

JM – Did you do any geophysical surveying? What was this like in Kenya?

KMc – I got to do topographical surveying which required us to set up our tripod and survey Mili Sita while hoping we did not run into any animals in the process or that they did not knock over the tripod. I really enjoyed the surveying and we got to see our results later that night when Ben (Gourley, York research student) entered the data onto his laptop. It was good to see the whole area and the parts that we were excavating.

JM – What kinds of features did you find in your trenches?

KMc – Features, I love that word! In the trench I was excavating, we thought we found a wall as there was a cluster of stones that looked deliberate, but after a while Paul did not think it was, but we planned it and continued with the rest of our trench.



Figure 2 – Surveying: Tom and Hannah (Left) and Rachelle (Right). (Image Copyright – Khadija McBain: Left & Right)

KMc – Were there many surface finds?

JM – There were finds literally all over the place! Just walking through camp you would see bits of pottery and obsidian lying around. I did some field walking on Mili Sita and everywhere you stepped there was surface archaeology. On one particular day, I sat on the side of the road to excavate a broken pot. It was just on the road, left there for hundreds of years. It was completely different to the site at Heslington East.

JM – What were your thoughts when you first arrived on site?

KMc – “*Oh my god I am going to be camping in the open*”, and likewise, I had never camped before so it was an eye opener. But what made the camping ‘experience’ was not only hearing the lions roaring every night, but waking up in the morning and leaving the tent and the first thing we would see in the horizon was a herd of giraffes or elephants made a first time camper very happy!

KMc – Do you remember your first day of work?

JM – On our first day, and for most of the first week, we drove an hour away from camp up to a rock shelter with the most fantastic views. Getting down to it was a bit scary, especially on the first day when we had no idea where we were going. The cave was so much colder and darker than out on the main site. We were taught how to excavate a trench in spits of 5-10cm with the roof of the cave only a metre above. This called for some serious back breaking work and being very conscious of the proximity of your head to the ceiling! Definitely an experience! The first trench was near the front of the cave mouth and was already under way by the time I started working. Once we had dug for a couple of days, the trenches were deep enough to sit in without banging your head on the ceiling. A second trench was started further back and to see what we were doing we had to hook up some lamps to a generator as it was so dark! The soil was also much looser deeper in, making excavation much easier. We found an array of animal bone, small sherds of pottery and tiny obsidian flakes from

tool making. I also did some surveying around the cave to plot the surrounding features onto GPS. This required us to climb around the edges of the cave on the cliff face and also on top which literally felt like the top of the world!



Figure 3 – Finds: Lithics from the Rock Shelter (Top Left & Right). Pot by Side of Road (Bottom Left). Excavating Pot (Bottom Right). (Image copyright – Khadija McBain: Top Left & Right, Bottom Left/Jacqui Mellows: Bottom Right)

JM – Was the archaeology anything like what you were expecting?

KMc – No not really, because we had only experienced Heslington East and that was a different time period so it was really nice and surprising to excavate an African Neolithic rock shelter and find obsidian lithics. Excavating in a rock shelter with a massive drop where sieving was taking place is not for the faint hearted, and also, like you said, our entry into the cave where we had to climb down into a grassy bank and enter from the front of the cliff was exciting (is that the right word?!) especially when it rained and the ledge was a bit slippery. One false move and we would have been at the bottom.

JM – How different was it digging on Mili Sita compared to Heslington East and the rock shelter?

KMc – Compared to the rock shelter very different, because we did not have to watch out step in case we fell off the edge of the cliff, but compared to Heslington East not too different as it was an open air trench, but rather than a group working in the trench it was two people. The archaeology was different as we were not finding much pottery but instead finding lots of animal bone, especially zebra, and the soil was much harder from the sun and made digging quite tough. But again, the view while we were digging on Mili Sita was completely different to anything as we would see zebra, elephants, giraffes, baboons, impalas – so many. I say it so casually but people pay to go on safari to see these animals and they were part of our everyday life whilst on excavation.



Figure 4 – Rock Shelter: View from the Rock Shelter (Top Left). View of the Rock Shelter (Top Right). Excavating in the Rock Shelter (Bottom Left). Sieving in Rock Shelter Entrance (Bottom Right). (Image Copyright – Jacqui Mellows: Top Left & Right, Bottom Left/Khadija McBain: Bottom Right)

KMc – What did you find in what was dubbed “the bone trench”?

JM – The bone trench was just down the road from the main focus of trenches, but the soil was much, much looser and very easy to dig. Again, we dug in spits of 5-10cm and each layer produced hundreds of pieces of bone, from small fragments to, in one instance, a partial goat or sheep’s skull! There were also a number of large charcoal areas in most layers. This trench was much deeper than the others on Mili Sita and took a number of us working until dark on the last day to get to the bottom, where the stratigraphy and section drawings were very interesting.

KMc – How would you describe the day buffalos decided to visit us while we were excavating?

JM – Absolutely terrifying!! Before I went to Kenya, I had never realised how scary buffalo are. I had always figured lions or elephants would be the ones to watch out for. I remember most of us were happily digging away like any other working day, when Tom, Paul and Ben shouted down from the opposite hill that there were buffalo in the dip just next to us. Sure enough there was a herd of nearly 100 buffalo extremely close to where we were working. Paul told us to literally drop everything and pile into the only vehicle we had. This meant that Matthew, Rachelle and I were clinging to the spare wheel on the back to prevent us falling off as we speedily drove away. I remember the car stopping briefly not far from the herd of buffalo so people could take pictures from inside the vehicle; however the three of us out in the open were more than a little scared as we got a bit closer for a photo opportunity. We did then get

an extra hour off work while the buffalo invaded our site, which was nice. They had completely gone by the time we returned. Talk about close encounters!

JM – How did you enjoy our days off?

KMc – I loved days off, especially when we went into the nearest town, Nanyuki and just chilled. There was a really, really, really lovely patisserie place that did the nicest milkshakes in the world. I still think about them now. I remember when Hannah and I first had one and all we thought about while excavating was going back to the patisserie and buying another one. But we did enjoy our days off especially seeing the town and people.



Figure 5 – Kenya Memories: Buffalo on Site! (Top Left). Visiting Nanyuki (Top Right). The Camp (Bottom Left). Sweetwaters Nature Reserve, and some of the ‘gang’ hold a Rhino skull. (Image Copyright – Khadija McBain: Top Left & Right/Jacqui Mellows: Bottom Left & Right)

JM – What was the day out at Sweetwaters nature reserve like and how was it different from ‘our’ ranch?

KMc – I enjoyed Sweetwaters nature reserve, and the fact that Paul had the time to take us out to the reserve during our day off. The landscape was completely different to where we had been staying and digging, and was much grassier like you would have expected the Kenyan savannah to be. The best bit of the whole trip was spotting the lioness and her cubs – when we were driving along and having to reverse to get a better look. Some of us (aka Tom Delany) got a better look by poking his head out the window trying to entice the cubs closer to the van. We also visited both white and black rhinoceroses that were being protected from poachers and were also able to stroke and feed one blind black rhino, which was particularly incredible. I will be honest though as I went to approach it I did have a vision of it biting my whole arm off! The visit to

the mini museum was fun as we got to 'play' with artefacts such as gazelle horn cores, rhino skulls and leopard skins.

KMc – How did you find camp life?

JM – Camp life had a real buzz. All the tents surrounded the main camp fire and social area, with the kitchen tent in the middle. At the end of a day's work we would sit around the fire and get to know each other, especially those who were not from York. Dinner was served around 8pm every night once the weather got a bit cooler and despite the conditions, the food was really tasty. Obviously there was a limit to the amount of fresh food that could be kept in the heat, but Francis the cook did an excellent job. Afterwards, we took it in turns to wash up. Personal washing was a whole other issue! Hot water had to be heated in a washing up bowl over the fire which usually meant it got far too hot. The "shower" was a watering can behind a very precarious bamboo sheet just outside of camp which never felt like it hid any modesty. But we were all in the same boat so we could laugh about it.

KMc – Do you think we had a good group dynamic overall in camp?

JM – I think we all got on really well. The Kenyan and Tanzanians that we worked with had so much more experience with this type of archaeology and environment and it was amazing to learn new things from them. Additionally, I do not think I have ever or will ever meet a group of such eccentric people in my life!

KMc – Especially when some of the Kenyan students asked the most awkward questions in the world!

KMc – How did the safari drives looking for the lions at night compare with seeing the lion during our drive to work?

JM – The safari drives were always so exciting. A few times we went out at night after hearing the lions roaring hoping to find them close to camp. However, we never saw them at night despite how close they sounded. But we were never disappointed, catching glimpses of hyena, bush babies, zebra and elephants most nights. So when we finally spotted a lioness and cubs at Sweetwaters I can safely say we were all very excited. We watched the cubs playing in the bushes and trying to build up courage to get closer to the vehicle for ages! However, the following morning on the drive between camp and site we saw two young male lions about 300 metres from the camp site! Seeing lions in the nature reserve was one thing, but also seeing the wild lions where we had been living for three weeks was incredible! I do not even think I was scared or worried about their proximity!

JM – From the archaeology and the animals overall, what was your all-time favourite moment in Kenya?

KMc – Using different excavation methods and working on two different time periods of sites, and also excavating with the Kenyan and Tanzanian students and talking about our different perspectives while excavating was so interesting and exciting. But who can forget the morning we saw the lions on the way to work, and then working in the same proximity asking the valid question to the Kenyan students: "what do we do if the lions come back"?!

JM – For me, excavating in Kenya was the most amazing experience, not just because of the camping and all the wildlife we saw, but because the archaeology was so different from anything in the UK. Being involved in a dig in Africa, finding so many artefacts lying in the road, and excavating a rock shelter are things that not every archaeological student will be able to say they have done.

I think it is safe to say that all of us from York thoroughly appreciated and enjoyed this opportunity, and it will be one of the most memorable things we have ever done.

6 Early Farmers: The View from Archaeology and Science

David Altoft (mailto:david.altoft@theposthole.org)



*Figure 1 – Conflict: Perhaps still an accurate analogy of archaeology and science?
(Image Copyright – Marc Renshaw)*

For three days from Monday 14th May to Wednesday 16th May, the Department of Archaeology and Conservation at Cardiff University was home to the ‘Early Farmers: The View from Archaeology and Science’ conference. As explained in the welcome speech by Dr. Penny Bickle, one of the organisers of the event, its intended purpose was to bring together researchers in scientific and interpretative archaeology in an attempt for both sides to recognise that their interests in the early agricultural populations, societies and environments of Neolithic Europe are in fact shared and should be enhanced by greater collaboration in research.

The following review will be the reflections of perhaps the youngest person who attended the conference (a second year bioarchaeology undergraduate student at the University of York). Whether you think the opinions below are

naive or refreshingly different, your comments and own opinions will be very gratefully received by *The Post Hole*.

Name	Institution	Title
Dr. John Robb	Cambridge	<i>The Future Neolithic: Science and the Humanities</i> (Keynote)
Prof. Jean-Pierre Bocquet-Appel	CNRS, Paris	<i>Multi-agent similarities of the trajectory of the LBK Neolithic</i>
Guido Brandt	Johannes-Gutenberg, Mainz	<i>Archaeogenetic evidence for the maternal gene flow in Neolithic cultures of Central Germany</i>
Prof. Lynn Meskell; Dr. Jessica Pearson	Stanford; Liverpool	<i>Isotopes, images and investment: fleshing out bodies at Çatalhöyük</i>
Dr. Mary Anne Tafuri	Cambridge	<i>Isotopic evidence of diet and social practices in the Neolithic Tavoliere (Apulia, Southern Italy)</i>
Dr. Alison Sheridan	NMS, Edinburgh	<i>The multi-strand Neolithisation of Britain and Ireland: the view from archaeology</i>
Prof. Richard Evershed	Bristol	<i>Milk, milk, everywhere, Nor any drop to drink</i>
Dr. Marie Balasse	Museum National d'Histoire Naturelle	<i>Stable isotopes enlighten herding practices in the Neolithic of Southern Romania (6th-5th mil BC)</i>
Dr. Corina Knipper	Johannes-Gutenberg, Mainz	<i>Mobility and animal husbandry in the LBK: examples from South and Southwest Germany</i>
Dr. Amy Bogaard	Oxford	<i>Framing farming: A multi-stranded approach to early agricultural practice in Europe</i>
Dr. Oliver Craig	York	<i>Molecular investigations into food values and cuisine across the transition to agriculture in the Western Baltic</i>
Dr. Jacqui Mulville	Cardiff	<i>Mind the gap? Integrating Animal Archaeologies</i>
Prof. Keith Dobney	Aberdeen	<i>The long and winding road: new insights into the origin and spread of stock-keeping</i>
Prof. Paul Halstead	Sheffield	Discussion of Day 1
Prof. Clark Spencer Larsen	Ohio State	<i>Health and lifestyle in early farmers: the same, yet different</i>
Dr. Rick Schulting; Dr. Linda Fibiger	Oxford; Edinburgh	<i>Violence in the Neolithic: a population perspective</i>
Prof. Christopher Knüsel; Dr. Sébastien Villotte	Exeter; Bradford	<i>Sexual division of labour during the LBK: an example from Stuttgart-Mühlhausen highlighting the use of skeletal activity-related morphologies</i>
Prof. Robert Hedges; Julie Hamilton	Oxford	<i>What we have learnt from collagen isotopes over the large geographical scale</i>
Prof. Alexander R. Bentley	Bristol	<i>Social identity in the early Linearbandkeramik: evidence from isotopes, skeletons and burial contexts</i>
Dr. John Chapman	Durham	<i>Doing science in the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Copper Age – an insider's perspective</i>
Prof. Alisdair Whittle; Dr. Penny Bickle	Cardiff	<i>Diversity in lifeways: conclusions from the LBK lifeways project</i>
Dr. Jessica Smyth	Bristol	<i>What's in a sherd? Contents and context in the Irish Neolithic</i>
Dr. Oliver Harris	Leicester	<i>Revealing our vibrant past: science, materiality and the Neolithic</i>
Prof. Gabriel Cooney	UCD	Discussion of Day 2

Table 1 – Complete list of speakers (keynote lecture on Monday 14th May, rest on Tuesday 15th and Wednesday 16th). (Image Copyright – David Alfto)

A packed schedule comprising of a wide range of speaking archaeologists and archaeological scientists ensured that the aim of bringing together the broad spectrum of fields studying the Neolithic was achieved. Above is full list of all the participants. Unfortunately there is only enough space to discuss seven of the presentations, which are highlighted in the list.

Prof. Alisdair Whittle and Dr. Penny Bickle – Diversity in lifeways: conclusions from the LBK lifeways project

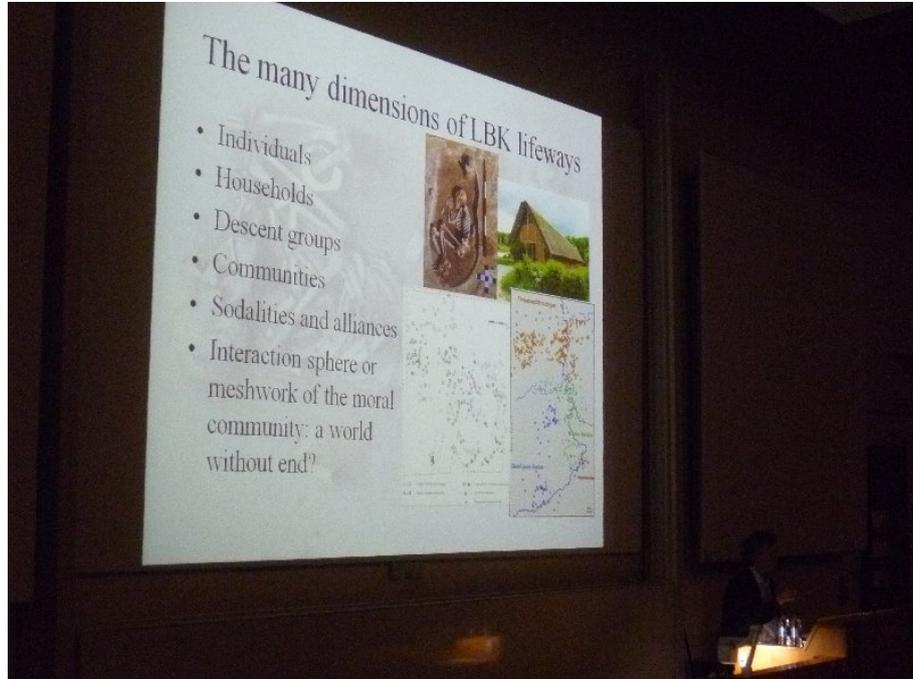


Figure 2 – Prof. Alisdair Whittle presenting his and Dr. Penny Bickle’s paper on differing scales of LBK lifeways (Image Copyright: D. Altoft; kind permission of A. Whittle)

Perhaps the most optimistic presentation was the one given by the hosts of the conference Prof. Alisdair Whittle and Dr. Penny Bickle. Outlining their recent work on the Cardiff-Oxford-Durham research project, ‘The first farmers of Central Europe: diversity in LBK lifeways’, Bickle and Whittle demonstrated the apparent ease of a collaborative project between archaeology and science to reveal aspects of diet and mobility in LBK societies. Their consideration of the differences in these relationships with varying scales of analysis, from the individual through stable isotope and mortuary analysis of human remains to wider society through the comparison of different settlements and cemeteries in regional and wider settings was rather unsettling. How was this so easy?

The answer seems to be the close collaboration and mutual respect of different practical and theoretical approaches to interpreting the Neolithic, rather than using the period (as so often before) as a battleground for science and archaeology. The project has been a success because it has stepped beyond the carnage of the battlefield and looked meaningfully at the subject of archaeology discerning the scale at which the *past individual* viewed the world, in which he or she lived and died (Whittle & Bickle, 2012).

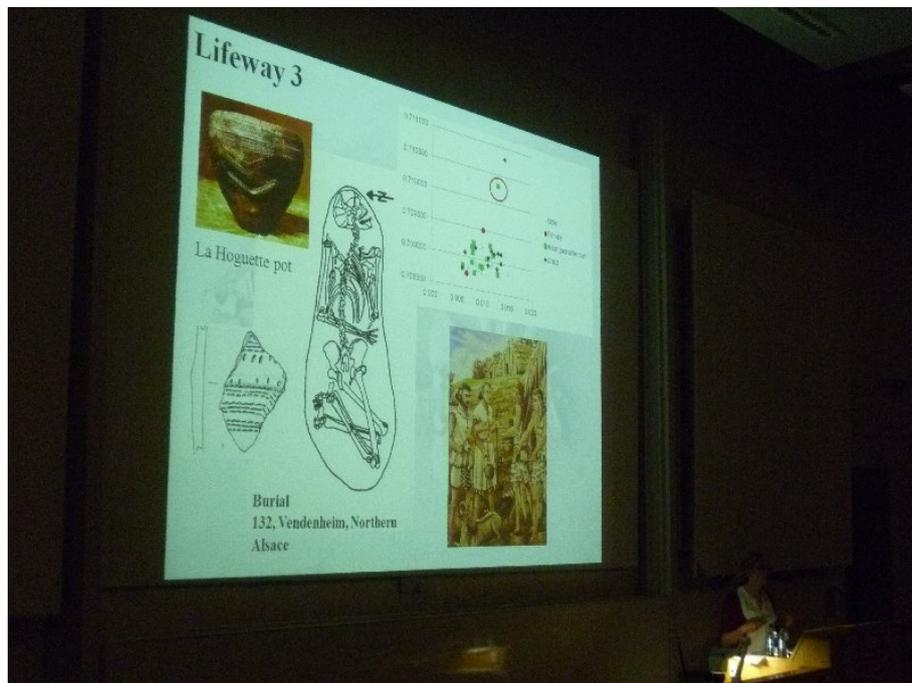


Figure 3 – Dr. Penny Bickle (Cardiff) presenting her and Prof. Alisdair Whittle’s paper on differing scales of LBK lifeways (Image Copyright: D. Altoft; kind permission of P. Bickle)

Prof. Christopher Knüsel and Dr. Sébastien Villotte – Sexual division of labour during the LBK: an example from Stuttgart-Mühlhausen highlighting the use of skeletal activity-related morphologies

Prof. Christopher Knüsel (Exeter) and Dr. Sébastien Villotte’s (Bradford) paper showed similar promise in directly addressing a rarely studied aspect of Neolithic life; in this case, the sexual division of labour in early farming communities. They convincingly demonstrated that by analysing the lesions of upper limb tendons, a very clear picture of differential motor actions between males and females from Stuttgart-Mühlhausen can be elucidated, and more importantly, the use of a very specialised line of enquiry can in some cases be of equal benefit to broader discussions of life in the Neolithic as studies incorporating many fields of study, so long as the broader implications of research are properly considered.

Knüsel and Villotte’s research offers exciting prospects for understanding the stratification of labour within populations, and should be used more widely in the studies of other communities and alternative divisions, such as inferred age and mortuary prestige of individuals to open up further questions about lifestyle across different sectors of society (Knüsel & Villotte, 2012).

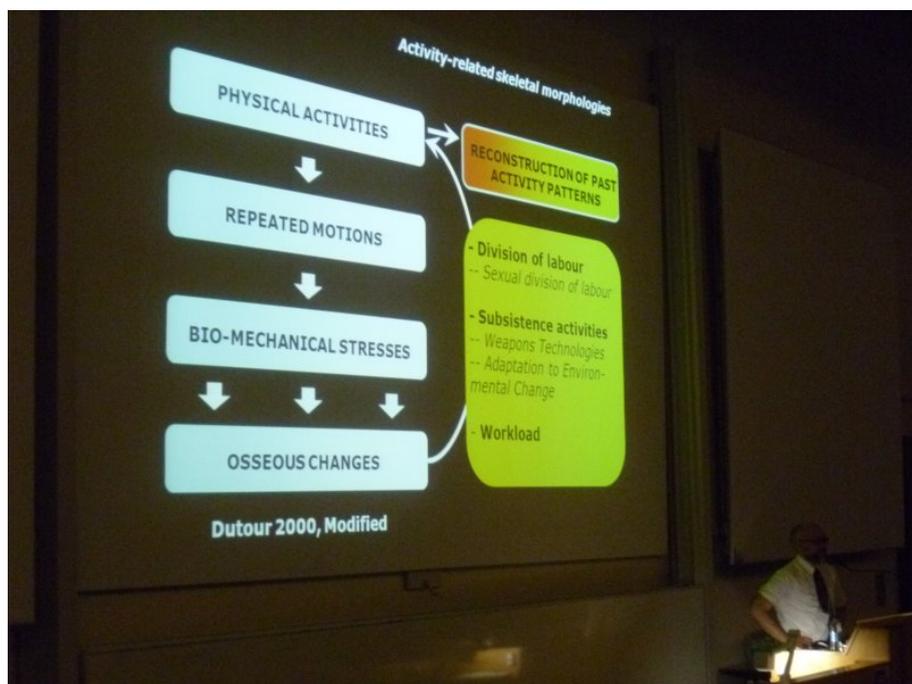


Figure 4 – Prof. Christopher Knüsel presenting his and Dr. Sébastien Villotte’s paper on direct osteological evidence for gender division of labour in the LBK (Image Copyright: D. Altoft; kind permission of S. Knüsel)

Dr. Oliver Craig – Molecular investigations into food values and cuisine across the transition to agriculture in the Western Baltic

As one may expect, the Early Farmers conference was mostly focused on diet and subsistence in the Neolithic. Dr. Oliver Craig’s (York) paper on organic residue analysis of Ertebølle pottery from northern Germany offered a unique opportunity to focus more specifically on cuisine. The social, cultural and sensual processes behind what people eat and how they eat is something that is sadly overlooked in archaeology. Although, as acknowledged by some of the audience, organic residue analysis of pottery cannot inform understanding of broad diet and subsistence of individuals as discerned from direct stable isotope analysis of bones or of whole populations, due to the obvious reasons that pots are not involved in all preparation and consumption of food by all people, it can equally be argued that other analyses of diet and subsistence do not normally include cultural and personal agencies influencing people’s interaction with food, or that not all food was treated as food (for example, oils from fish used as illuminants in vessels).

The nuanced changes in the uses of pots across the Mesolithic-Neolithic divide determined by organic residue analysis can offer unique suggestions of the influences on and results of changing economies and transition to agriculture within cultures (Craig, 2012).

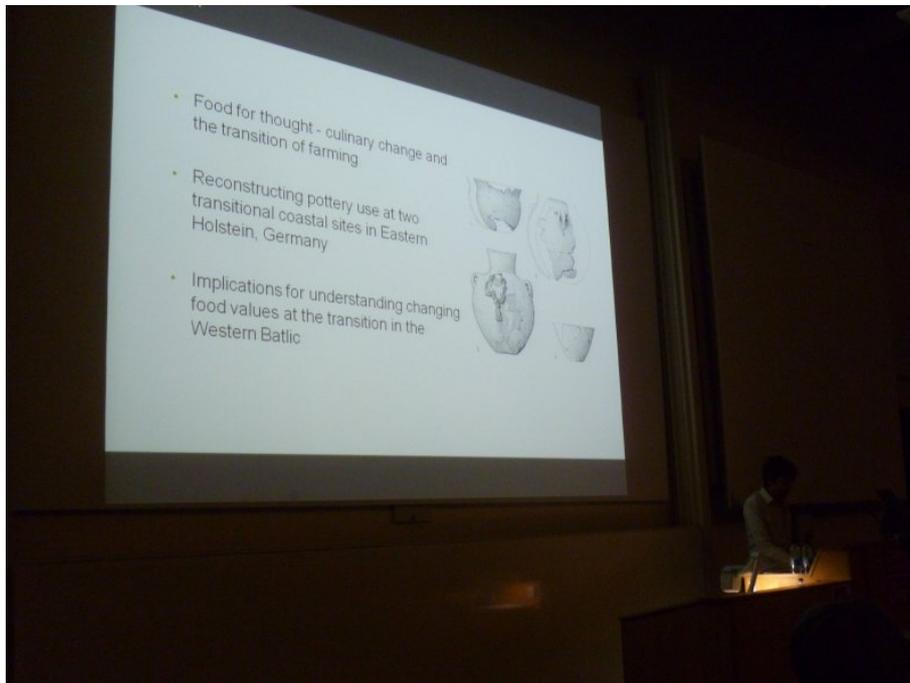


Figure 5 – Dr. Oliver Craig (York) presenting his paper on organic residue analysis of Ertebølle pottery during the Mesolithic-Neolithic transition (Image Copyright: D. Altoft; kind permission of O. Craig)

Dr. Jacqui Mulville – Mind the gap? Integrating Animal Archaeologies

Whilst the value of using specific lines of inquiry to address specific, often overlooked questions about the past is undoubtedly beneficial to archaeology, combining these should be viewed similarly, particularly if it helps address complex interactions between different aspects and influences of lifestyle and society. This is excellently illustrated in Dr. Jacqui Mulville's presentation (see photograph below).

Like Prof. Whittle's observation that different scales of analysis can produce different focuses in results, Dr. Mulville (Cardiff) identified that overlapping methodologies did the same thing. This, it could be argued, is a positive phenomenon that can be utilised to provide more comprehensive perspectives of the past. It was enlightening to see Mulville's demonstration of the extent zooarchaeological and stable isotope evidence can sometimes sharply contrast. Looking at the Atlantic island sites that were studied in her and Prof. Richard Evershed's Diversity and Sustainability in Marine Resources project, she demonstrated that provided there is sufficient relevantly overlapping data in this case, zooarchaeological, stable isotope and organic residue they should be combined to provide broader perspectives on agricultural practices (Mulville, 2012).

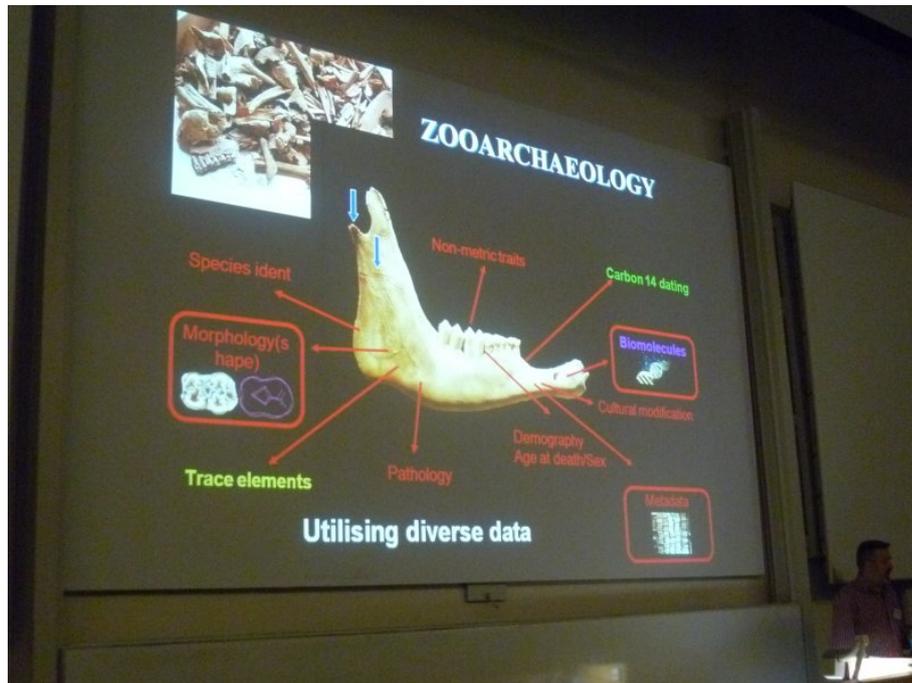


Figure 7 – Prof. Keith Dobney presenting his paper on the westward and eastward spread of domesticated pigs across Eurasia (Image Copyright: D. Altoft; kind permission of K. Dobney)

Dr. Alison Sheridan – The multi-strand Neolithisation of Britain and Ireland: the view from archaeology

It was clear that the views of one speaker members of the audience either appreciated or (a little unfairly) scorned. Dr. Alison Sheridan (NMS, Edinburgh) very admirably used her presentation to call on archaeology and science to work more collaboratively in order to approach the past more holistically. While this message should be encouraged by the academic community, the apparent negative reception the presentation received from some people was not associated with this call to arms all of the speakers made clear their interest in multidisciplinary research but because (arguably) Dr. Sheridan did not clearly demonstrate how the many strands of her research were connected.

This is not to say that her study of the adoption, spread and consequences of jade axe material culture on societies is not of worth or potential to archaeology; rather, the work of Project JADE should be better demonstrated as being cohesive towards addressing the many aspects of the material culture, its geographic spread and cultural impact in Europe. One example of this was the use of the jade axe deposited beside the Sweet Tract in Somerset, a static entity, in the rhetoric of other non-static entities of jade axe adoption in mainland Europe. Archaeological data is finite and so such uses of static entities in the interpretation of non-static changes, as above, should be accepted, so long as they are rigorously justified through alternative information, or explicitly noted consideration of the analytical implications neither of which were fully achieved by Sheridan in her presentation (Sheridan, 2012).

One positive consequence of this was the discussion amongst the audience of whether the main obstacle to studying the past is a general lack of data in archaeology or the reticence of some researchers to accept that lack of data and make the most of it. This question will be returned to at the end of the review.

Prof. Lynn Meskell and Dr. Jessica Pearson – Isotopes, images and investment: fleshing out bodies at Çatalhöyük

Prof. Lynn Meskell (Stanford) and Dr. Jessica Pearson's (Liverpool) research on combining two very different forms of evidence to build credible alternative interpretations of deeply psychological and socio-cultural views of bodily image in the past is perhaps one of the most exciting current achievements in archaeology. Rarely does research simultaneously incorporate multiple methodologies in this case stable isotope analysis of human remains and typological study of mortuary figurines and succeed in delivering a succinct, comprehensive narrative of the less discernible levels of social and psychological reasoning of individuals behind the material culture they choose, or are chosen by others, to be associated with.



Figure 8 – Prof. Lynn Meskell presenting her and Dr. Jessica Pearson's paper on the alternative interpretations of figurines from Çatalhöyük, based on isotope analysis of humans (Image Copyright: D. Alft; kind permission of L. Meskell)

In what was a fascinating presentation that challenged the traditional singular approaches of archaeology and science towards the study of mortuary treatment and human biographies, Meskell and Pearson demonstrated that their combination of techniques with a broader consideration of the built environment of Çatalhöyük, particularly of the numerous wall murals around the site, suggests that the figurines always associated with the Mother Venus and fertility, due to stereotypical associations with their bodily form, may have actually served as

symbols of prosperity through the plentiful availability of food. They observe that the figurines are more indicative of obesity and flesh, and that this theme occurs throughout the city in the storage areas used to contain excess food, the abundance of hunted animals represented in wall murals, the post-mortuary treatment of flesh of the deceased, and the stable isotope data of skeletal remains.

The apparent similarity between the analyses of these very different indicators makes Meskell and Pearson's suggestion of flesh and obesity serving as a symbol of an individual or a group's prosperity all the more compelling. Furthermore, this presentation was beneficial in highlighting that different kinds of data can indeed be combined to offer tentative suggestions of lifestyle in the Neolithic. Perhaps this was made possible by the considerable amount of archaeology that is preserved at Çatalhöyük, and in other cases, such an overlap of different lines of inquiry would not be possible; but it is certainly advisable that this is tested in all manner of other archaeological contexts, as it may prove highly valuable to looking at the past. (Meskell & Pearson, 2012).

As demonstrated through these seven presentations, the analogy of science and archaeology first suggested in this review should be reconsidered. The conference was a huge success for encouraging a vast array of researchers to share and discuss their studies of Neolithic Europe. It is encouraging to see many of the projects presented making use of linking multiple specialisms and that archaeologists and scientists however they identify themselves are starting to recognise that working together is essential if more holistic perspectives of the past are to be formed.

So the conference was a success, different methodologies are starting to be combined, but archaeology still has a long way to go! The remaining, and perhaps highest hurdle between archaeology and science is the way data that these methodologies produce is interpreted. The sooner we all stop forever whining that "we need more data" and arguing over interpretative paradigms for the sake of arguing, but instead recognise that we are all people with an interest in the past, the sooner we will be able to make the most of the data we have and work effectively together to acquire more.

Thanks should go to Dr. Penny Bickle and Prof. Alisdair Whittle for organising a superb conference, and to the speakers in the photographs for agreeing to them being included in this review. Thank you also to Marc Renshaw for producing the illustration at the start of this review.

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7 Hilary Paterson Interview

Khadija McBain (<mailto:secretary@theposthole.org>)

Hilary Paterson is a PhD student at the University of York, specialising in artefacts and early medieval clothing accessories, who also works at the Yorkshire Museum. Post Hole Secretary Khadija McBain conducted this e-mail interview with her in May 2012.

Khadija McBain – Among the students at King’s Manor, you are known as the ‘artefacts girl’, how did this come about?

Hilary Paterson – I did not know that! The main focus of my research is certainly artefacts based, but I suppose it is because I am usually raving about how much we can learn from studying artefacts. I have tried really hard to make artefacts the central focus of my teaching in the last few years, as there are comparatively few artefacts specialists in universities these days, and I would like my students to be enthused by the potential for material-based studies. I think that much of the attraction of artefacts, for archaeologists, is in the (very personal) tactile experience of handling them, which you will never get from pictures or reports. In putting artefacts back into classroom teaching, I think it allows students to appreciate the intrigue and exhilaration of getting up close to the things that were made, used and cherished by the people that we study. I really, really love artefacts!

KM – Can you tell us about your current PhD research? What do you enjoy most about it?

HP – For my PhD thesis I have been looking at dress and identity in early medieval Scotland and Ireland, and the ways in which the personal adornment items that make up the archaeological record of dress in these areas might have been used in sartorial communication and social discourse. My main aim was to think about the ways that they were used to symbolise status identities, and the impact that they (as material agents) might thus have had on the nature of hierarchical relationships in the past on both an individual and wider societal level. In attempting to do this I have been using a range of multidisciplinary sources, including the artefactual evidence of the dress items themselves, as well as historical documents and contemporary heroic literature. I really loved getting to grips with the Irish Cycle tales, which date from the 8th to 12th centuries in their written form, but might have been passed down through oral recitations for centuries before that. The characters of these tales are all really selfish and headstrong, and I doubt I would have liked any of them in real life, but I have really enjoyed reading about their adventures and costumes, and trying to relate these to the material record of early medieval Scotland and Ireland. In order to evaluate the role of dress and sartorial communication in the construction and maintenance of status identities, I also had to apply ideas from dress theory, used in anthropological studies of status relations in the workplace, amongst other things, and to try to reconcile these ideas with particular paradigms from archaeological theory, which I also loved, naturally. But the most enjoyable part of my research was definitely the opportunity to handle and examine some of the artefacts that I was studying.

KM – Why early medieval in northern Britain and Ireland?

HP – The pattern of deposition of dress items in northern Britain and Ireland makes the study of dress particularly difficult. Even before the adoption

of Christianity, people in these areas did not bury their dead fully clothed or with grave-goods. This means that personal adornment items are never found within the context of dress assemblages, and that we cannot confidently ascribe particular types, styles or materials to different social groups in the early medieval period, as has been done with great success for Anglo-Saxon England. As a result, studies of dress accessories from northern Britain and Ireland have tended to focus on classification and discussions of the techniques used in their manufacture, rather than on identity or human relationships. I wanted to find a way of reassessing the wealth of evidence that we do have from these areas, to see if these issues could be overcome by way of a more holistic study and a different theoretical application, so that we could start thinking about the way that people used and understood dress in this period.

KM – What about the southerners?

HP – The social character of southern Scotland, England and Wales was very different to that of northern Scotland and Ireland, mostly as a result of the successive invasions of the Romans, Angles, Saxons and Jutes (and later Vikings and Normans). They differed not only in their hierarchical structure, urbanism and architecture, but also in their styles and use of dress items and their preference for burying with grave goods. As a result of this, and of a much more complete historical record, we know a lot more about dress and identity in these areas in the early medieval period, so that the necessity to re-evaluate the material evidence is not as strong. Importantly, though, these fundamental differences make England, in particular, unsuitable as a comparative area of study and would lead to difficulties in interpretation. But you are not missing out, by any means!

KM – Was dress and personal adornment as important in the medieval period as it is now?

HP – Yes, certainly, and perhaps even more so! My research deals with the use of dress to communicate aspects of personal and social identity to the people around you, which is based largely on modern anthropological studies. But in the early medieval period the statements made through the choice of dress items would have had much wider implications than simply demonstrating your knowledge of current trends. The colours and styles that people chose to wear would have allowed their peers, and strangers, to have identified and differentiated them in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, profession, status and lineage, which would have impacted upon their ability to gain access to certain regions, places, people and events. Making the right choices in personal appearance might have affected their potential to enter into marriage, friendship and certain professions. It would have determined their level of access to materials and craftsmen, and would ultimately have had some bearing on their potential for social mobility. In addition to this, the literary sources suggest that dress was the main way of differentiating friend from foe, and that this was hugely important in times of battle and conflict; uniform does not always seem to have been applicable to early medieval war-bands, and you certainly would not have wanted to be mistaken for the enemy!

KM – Was it only women involved in dressing to make a statement?

HP – Not at all. Most of the dress items that we find in early medieval Scotland and Ireland would have been worn by both males and females, and the literature certainly suggests that male vanity was a particularly sought after quality.

We do not see the same gendered differentiation in Celtic brooch types, for example, that have been identified in Anglo-Saxon graves, though we do believe that they would have been worn slightly differently by men and women. The statements that men and women made through their sartorial choices might have been very different, though; Jane Kershaw's work on Anglo-Scandinavian metalwork, for example, suggests that the dress accessories worn by women in the Danelaw were responsible for communicating information on ethnicity and cultural heritage in a way that men's accoutrements were not. There is certainly a lot of potential for us to reassess gender roles and identities in terms of the material agency of dress, and it is a topic that interests me greatly.

KM – What made you decide to do a PhD? Do you have any advice for students thinking about pursuing a PhD and how to go about the process? What options are next after completion of a PhD?

HP – A PhD is a massive undertaking, and a huge responsibility, both mentally and financially, so you have to really love the topic that you choose to research. I would advise any student interested in pursuing a PhD to speak to their supervisor about possible topics and funding options. There are a lot of funding bodies out there, tailored to suit a number of different groups, but there is also a lot of competition, so your research proposal is key. Some groups, such as the AHRC, will 'ring-fence' certain research areas (i.e. put money aside for projects set to answer specific questions), so you should see if you fit any of these criteria. Other, primarily private, institutes might seek to 'employ' a PhD researcher to study their history or collections, while a number of universities will offer funding for particular areas of research. I made the decision to fund my PhD independently, but it is very, very hard to fit your research around full time employment! Nonetheless, there are a number of options open to postdoctoral students, from teaching to site management and postdoctoral research. What you do next will depend entirely on what you choose to study, and where your particular strengths lie. I chose to pursue my PhD because I had questions that I wanted answered with regards to my field; but also because I wanted to teach at university level, and a PhD is a necessary qualification for academic positions in the UK. I also know a number of people who have gone on to work in museums, archaeological fieldwork positions, country houses and DNA laboratories, so there are plenty of opportunities out there.

KM – If you had to choose: Yorkshire Museum or the Castle Museum?

HP – I work for the Yorkshire Museum, so I would have to choose that one. Also, I really love their collections, particularly the Coppergate helmet and the Vale of York hoard (currently on tour). In fact, anything early medieval gets my vote!

KM – Artefacts or Artifacts what is the correct spelling?

HP – It depends where in the world you are, of course, but it should definitely be 'artefacts' when writing for a British university or publisher.

KM – What is the postgrad study room like? All the undergrads students are very intrigued by it...

HP – I think it goes without saying that the first rule of G65 is...

KM – Are you teaching at the moment? Does this give you a different dimension to your research?

HP – I have actually just finished my teaching for this academic year, so I am focusing on publishing at the moment. I have been teaching for the last five years, though, and it does really change the way that you look at your

own work. When you specialise in any area, you tend to assume that everyone will have some knowledge of the things you see as basic facts or ideas. But I remember running a session for a local community group a few years ago which really made me stop and think. I was, as usual, waxing lyrical about a beautiful Pictish brooch, and pointing out all of its loveliness, when one audience member stopped me to ask how it would have been worn! The idea that these brooches bore no relation to the things we wear today had completely escaped me! Teaching undergraduates and MA students at York has also really changed the way that I think about archaeology in general, as it has made me realise that our understanding and interpretations are heavily based on our own backgrounds and experiences. Almost every student that I have taught over the years has seen the world, and the ideas and evidence that they encounter, in very different ways, and it has made me very aware of the need to be both critical and reflexive in my approach to the subject. I also think that I have learned as much from my students about archaeology, and archaeological theory, as they have learned from me, and that is something that I hope will always be a feature of my teaching, wherever I end up in the future.

KM – What are you plans after you complete your PhD?

HP – Well, I handed my thesis in at the end of last year and passed my Viva, so I am all set to graduate in July, which is exciting. At the moment I am trying to get some of my research published so that I can argue with people about it in the future, and I am applying for a few jobs. Obviously, there's a lot of competition for academic posts out there, but I hope to have found the one for me within the next couple of years.

8 Beyond the Sea: Being an International Student at York

Christina Cartaciano (mailto:christina.cartaciano@gmail.com) , Pia K.

Lindholt, Alex Jasinski (mailto:aj580@york.ac.uk)

What is it like being an international student at the University of York? Here, three students with experience of this give their views on the university, archaeology and the city itself.

Archaeology Abroad – Being an International Student in York by Pia K. Lindholt

In the autumn of 2009 I spent three months studying at the Department of Archaeology at the University of York. I am currently completing my MA in Medieval and Renaissance Archaeology at Aarhus University in Denmark, but at that time I was beginning the third year of my BA. According to the study programme of my home institution a BA-student has to spend the last year of studying in another department so I chose to go abroad and study in York. The planning took almost a year due to administration, but by the beginning of October 2009 I was ready to move to a new and exciting country for three months.

I was met at Manchester Airport by other international students from York and we arrived at campus to be sorted into colleges. I got a room in Halifax College, one of the furthest areas away from the main campus. The University held an International Students' week before the first week of the term. This meant that the first two weeks of my stay in York were filled with introductions to studying in another country and a bit of partying. By the end of this, I was looking forward to going to lectures. Term was only eight weeks of actual studying and one week of exams, compared to at home where the term is twice that, from September to December with exams in January.

Lectures were very similar to lectures in Aarhus but the seminar group work was just amazing. Even though it could sometimes be quite hard to follow the British students' chain of thoughts, it was so nice to be divided into smaller groups to discuss a period or specific topic. I did Medieval Settlement and Economy. Two of the things that were very different from home were writing essays during the term and having to pick and chose for yourself what to read from the curriculum. To do this I would go to the library get out a few books and try to figure out just what to read on a certain topic. The Danish curriculum is very strictly structured and all the students have to read the same texts for the exams.

What struck me at the library and elsewhere on campus was the dedication of my fellow students. In Denmark studying at the university is free and therefore some people do not put as much effort into their studying as they could (or should). At York, however, everyone showed quite a commitment to their chosen subject.

Getting to know the city, of course, took a few weeks. I had to figure out the bus system, where to shop for food and the British way of life in general. Everyone was really nice to help me find my way around and my time in York

went by so fast. I enjoyed my stay very much and the experience of living abroad is something I highly value today. I highly recommend spending a term or more at a foreign university.

BA-degree in Medieval and Renaissance Archaeology, Aarhus University:

<http://tinyurl.com/cu2h8mj>

Study guide for Aarhus University:

<http://studieguide.au.dk/en/>

Being an International Student at York by Alex Jasinski

When I first stepped off the train into the sunlit streets of York I had no exact idea of what to expect. I suppose I did have some vague expectations that involved excavations, skeletons and being taught by gentlemen in tweed, but nothing overly specific. Now, looking back, it is easier to track the highlights and the low points of this academic adventure than the overall flow. In the first year, one such highlight definitely came as an end of the year reward with excavation at Heslington East and post-excavation work at King's Manor. Yes, I felt back then that it was exhausting at times and that certain aspects – getting to the place for example – could have been easily improved but the sense of camaraderie and being directly involved in research exceeded any downsides.

I separate year one from year two and three for one good reason – part-time job. I had mixed academia and employment before but never on such a scale for such a length of time. So I cannot stress enough that a part-time job that you have to attend to everyday will affect you. This is not to make an excuse for any underperformance or plain old simple laziness, but you do have to get used to the work schedule and juggle it with academia. Another thing comes into focus when looking for a job is that as an international student you will compete against the English students and most likely you will be at the losing end of that specific competition. So in the end you might settle on an offer which is far, very far from being what you wanted to do or what you might enjoy. That at least was my case.

Second year effectively concluded with an archaeological practice in Greece and I am very thankful to Geoff Bailey and Nena Galanidou for making that possible. This, alongside other opportunities offered by the department (I can name at least three from memory – a recent one in Peru, one in Denmark for a field survey and one in France with Kevin Walsh), shows its active involvement. It is difficult to say without having a direct comparison with other departments, but I feel that all the members of staff care about the student-staff relationship and try to do their best to make your time here worthwhile. The fact that I was not English did not change anything in this regard.

Last but not least, let me address the issue of friendships and societies. I have no qualms in saying that the most enduring relationships I formed over my university years stem from my active participation in poetry society. Again and again I would meet people who seem interesting but with whom it might be difficult to find a common ground. You have to bear in mind the upbringing, language and cultural frame of references which inevitably will get in the way. There is nothing to be done about this – you can neither change these aspects nor forget them. The few friendships I have established were all based on shared love of literature which makes me biased against other forms of human interaction and inventiveness, with sports and student libations being the most

practiced counter-examples. So in the end it all boils down to this: find not as much your niche as something that you feel passionate about. It too shall pass but before it does, it will make everything else worth your while.

Dear Post Hole Readers,

I have to admit a little dirty secret – I chose to apply to the University of York because the Archaeology Department’s website was easy to navigate. Now this seems like a silly, utterly arbitrary reason to pick any university, but let me take you back to Guam, during the beginning of my senior year at high school. . .

At seventeen, I absolutely knew I wanted to be an archaeologist and furthermore, I wanted to study in England (as I could not have been bothered with the general education requirements of most U.S. schools, nor particularly desired to first read a degree in anthropology). After going through the usual motions of soliciting advice from teachers, requesting prospectuses from universities, and searching for information from their websites, I discovered that most English university websites were vastly unorganized for international students! How was I supposed to find out what classes I would need, or if my diploma would be transferrable? What about all those expensive Advanced Placement classes and exams for which my mom paid?

Clearly, as a teenager, this was daunting. I was applying to universities half way around the world, investing a great amount of my parent’s money into their tuition, and I could not for the life of me find what these universities wanted from me! The relief I found in York’s website was tremendous. It was straightforward, detailing how many AP exams and what grades and SAT scores were key to consideration and acceptance.

Fast forward ten months later: I found myself dragging my suitcases and mother across campus in a determined manner. I was not going to feel terrified at the fact that I knew absolutely nothing about York or the university I was traversing. However, my poor mother realised that I had not really thought this big move through, berating me for not knowing where I was going or where I would be living that year. . . The snail mail with my accommodation letter had not reached Guam when I left in October. Oh, it brings a smile to my face to remember that day!

I remember realising very early on in my undergraduate degree that I was very fortunate of three things: the first being that York is a beautiful, medium-sized city with easy connections to the countryside and bigger cities; while the second was the fact that the university’s Archaeology Department was the best in the country (that is not just boasting; we were top of the league tables that year); and finally, the weather was not the stereotypical grey skies and non-stop rain I had been lead to believe it was. There were quite a few Americans around the department, along with various other nationalities, and the majority of people on my course were friendly and always up for the pub. As my last article attests to, I fell in love with the department and city, and have stayed on for an extra year to do my MSc.

My experience as an international student is probably the result of auspicious events, with a few happy accidents along the way. I was fortunate to receive an offer from a department that regularly dealt with international students, and a university with a large international community. Their experience led to me

having a fairly pleasant time as an undergraduate, and a desire to continue my higher education. Thank God for that website!

Best of luck,

Christina Cartaciano

9 An Etiquette Guide to... Post Ex.

Khadija McBain (mailto:secretary@theposthole.org)

The joy of post ex. A guide to what happens after excavation...

- 1) As with excavation, enjoy not having lectures or seminars again – it really does feel nice saying this is *actually* part of your course.
- 2) Post excavation is a nice way to reminisce about fieldwork and how much you loved it/hated it and how much you miss it (or not).
- 3) Do not forget while cleaning artefacts such as pottery and/or bone that this is actually part of your group and not a mothers group to sit around and chat, so make sure you pay attention while your cleaning as you do not want to break or damage any of the stuff.



Figure 1 – The Joy of Post Ex – Top Left: Flotation (not as nice as it sounds) – Top Right: “Dem (Fish) Bones, Dem (Fish) Bones...” – Bottom Left: Restored Pot at YAT Conservation Labs – Bottom Right: Hard at Work on Excavation Records (All Images Copyright – Mark Simpson)

- 4) While chatting away you will sometimes forget to change the dirty water for cleaning finds, this is a bit of a hassle especially as it is a long walk over to the sink, but you cannot really wash finds properly otherwise.
- 5) Harris matrix! You either get it the first time or not. But do not be embarrassed if it takes you a long time to understand, just say so to the post excavation leaders, they will completely understand.
- 6) Remember post excavation is a group effort – do not let your group down by not turning up or pulling a sickie!

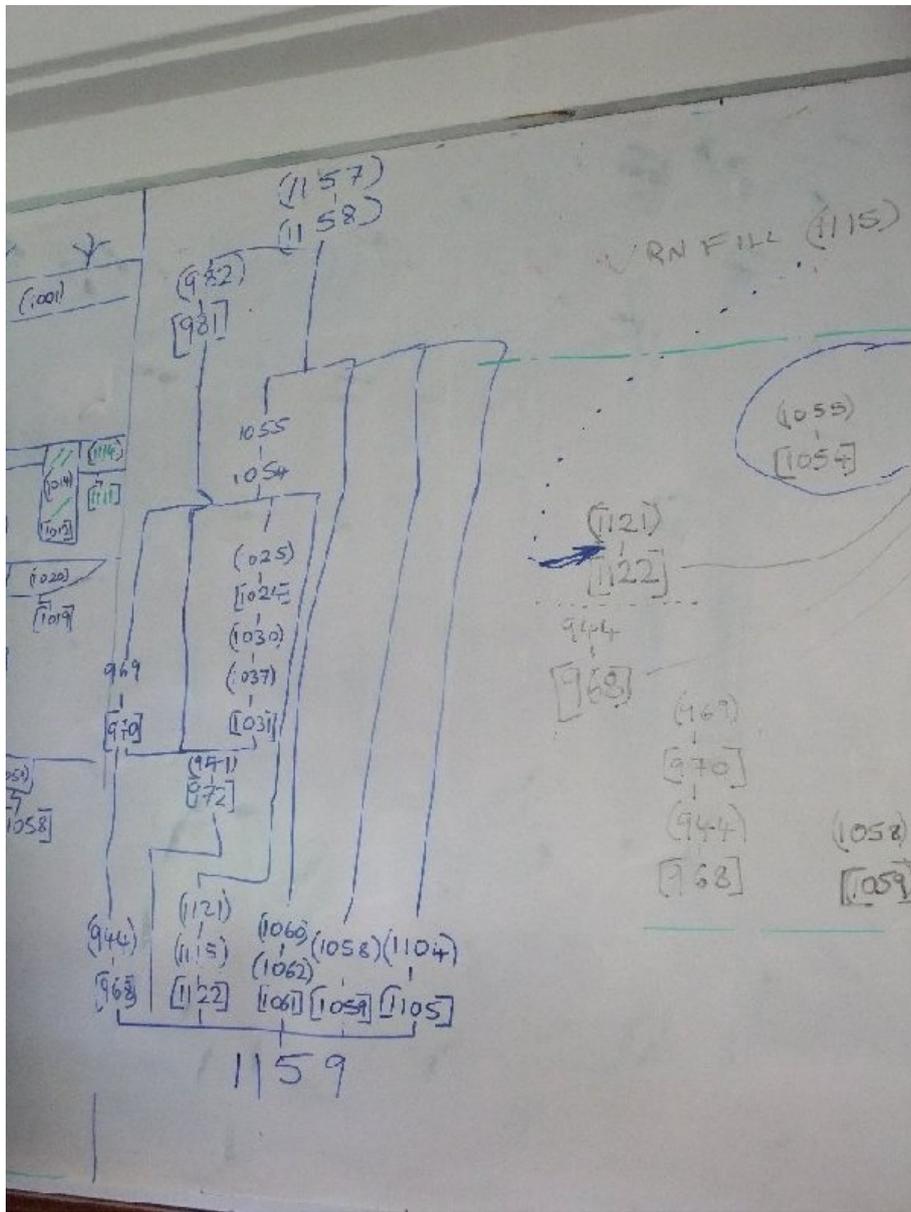


Figure 2 – No, not the Harris Matrix! (Image Copyright – Mark Simpson)

7) Floatation might sound like some kind of therapy session, but trust me it is not! Plunging your hands into cold water on an already cool British summer day is not fun. But it also does not last too long.

8) You will get to play with the sieves and tweezers during Finds Processing, which is quite fun. Less fun maybe when you have just pulled out your 73rd tiny fish bone, but it is all worth it in the end. No, really!

9) Enjoy the exhibition it may seem a bit weird at first but it is a nice way to get to know the department and your fellow students – I would not really advise drinking until after, because...

10) After the exhibition when the free wine starts flowing do not get too excited and drink until you are drunk. Remember you are still in front of members of staff so you do not want to look stupid.

11) This heralds the end of your first year, so enjoy the company, the sun (if there is any) and the free wine (in moderation) on Exhibition day, because you will miss it all over the long summer break.



Figure 3 – Top Left and Right: Finds Washing, in the Sun and Shade – Bottom Left: Fancy Tile – Bottom Right: Exhibition! (Image Copyright – Mark Simpson (Top Right and Bottom Right)/Khadija McBain (Top Left and Bottom Left))

10 Looking Forward to the Year Ahead

David Altoft (<mailto:david.altoft@theposthole.org>)

It has been a brilliant year for The Post Hole. There have been reports of excavations in and around York, reviews of talks and conferences across the country, interviews with all manner of people in archaeology, information about archaeological sites, and the opinions of students on archaeological theory and practice.

After four years The Post Hole continues to grow in size and scope, and is beginning to be recognised as the only archaeology journal in the UK run by undergraduate students. We hope that the renewed use of social media to connect with our audience will ensure that The Post Hole continues to deliver interesting and relevant content to all its readers.

Although The Post Hole is run by students, it is a journal for everyone: young or old, experienced or simply interested. This is essentially what archaeology is about – a field that unites everyone with an interest in the past.

With this in mind, I would like to ask readers the following questions:

- Are there any current issues in archaeology that you would like to see The Post Hole discuss?
- How could your experience of reading The Post Hole be improved?
- Would you like The Post Hole to offer more ways of engaging with its readers, their opinions, and of people in the wider archaeological community?

It is important for us to hear the views of our readers so that we can deliver articles that you as our audience find engaging and interesting to read. I would therefore be very grateful to hear your thoughts emailed to david.altoft@theposthole.org (<http://www.theposthole.org/david.altoft@theposthole.org>)

I wish to thank Jenny Borrett, Mark Simpson, Jacqui Mellows, Philip Morris and Khadija McBain for all their hard work over the last year. It has been a pleasure to work with such committed and enthusiastic people. I hope that over the coming year, the new team and I can continue the progress that they have made.

During my tenure as editor, The Post Hole will be published monthly in order to allow greater coverage of the wonderfully diverse world of archaeology and the people in it. I would like to invite anyone who is interested in sharing their experiences of that world to email me at the above address. The next issue is out on **Monday 2nd July** and will be themed on **the Archaeology of Yorkshire**. I look forward to sharing it with you.

Best wishes,
David Altoft
Deputy-Editor

About The Post Hole

The Post Hole is a student-run archaeology journal that promotes discussion and the flow of ideas about anything archaeological for students, academics and the broader public.

If you would like to get involved with the editorial process, writing articles or photography and illustration, please email editor@theposthole.org.

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