UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER

The Bulletin

School of Archaeology and Ancient History June 2017, Issue 40

Ancient Akrotiri Project, Cyprus, 2017

Between 6th and 24th April a team from the School of staff, students and ULAS, directed by Professor Simon James, conducted further archaeological excavations on erosion-threatened remains of the ancient port at Dreamers Bay, inside RAF Akrotiri airbase, Cyprus. This third season of work, conducted with the agreement of the UK Sovereign Base Areas Administration and the Republic's Department of Antiquities, has produced much valuable new information about the shoreline port buildings of the Roman and early Byzantine periods (probably about AD 300-600). It now appears that the buildings — apparently warehouses and workshops — were struck by an earthquake, probably the same one that devastated the ancient city of Kourion, about 13km North of Dreamers Bay, in the AD 360s. One of the buildings excavated this year contained a number of complete or near-complete amphorae (wine or oil jars) and smaller pots, most of which had been smashed when, it seems, the walls fell on them—although remarkably, a couple of vessels remained intact, and could be lifted in one piece.

The port building in Area 2 which was apparently flattened by an earthquake, sealing many whole pots inside

Cyprus in April is a riot of spring flowers, but at that time of year we had to cope with mosquitoes and keep a wary eye out for snakes. We mostly ate in the RAF airbase diner, which provided very good food, although a number of huge Greek dinners were also consumed. Working inside the airbase was a different world, with jets and helicopters thundering overhead as we worked. The team lived off-base in nearby Episkopi village. Being in the village during Easter, the biggest festival of the Greek Orthodox year, was also a great experience.

While seeking to produce new scholarly information about the history and heritage of Cyprus, an equally important part of the project's purpose has been to engage with as wide an audience as possible about both the results of the project, and how they are achieved. Professor Simon James says:

"In order to help people to understand and value the traces of the past which surround us in great historic landscapes like that of Cyprus, it is critically important for archaeologists to explain to the wider public what we are doing, and why it matters. Many people are also very curious to know how archaeology works. While we were excavating inside a high-security military base with strongly restricted public access, the beaches and shallow waters at Dreamers Bay nevertheless constitute a valued recreation area for the resident UK Service community, so in local terms we were digging in a very public place. As this year we were also excavation during the Easter school holidays, we decided to organise an Open Day for the UK base community.

This provided a good opportunity for us to show Service personnel and their families what we are doing, and also to offer archaeological and educational activities for children. These activities were designed by Dr Mireya Gonzalez Rodriguez, assisted by Dr Anna Walas. Everyone made a very good job of the Open Day, which was attended by 150 people, from toddlers to an RAF Wing Commander!"

Issue 40 includes:

The Bulletin is edited by Adam Rogers (acr16@le.ac.uk)

Welcome to The Bulletin Issue 40

Professor David Mattingly, Head of School

As the 2016-17 Academic year draws to a close, there is much to reflect on and much to celebrate within the School. We have once again returned a very strong set of scores in the National Student Survey – across the last four years we have consistently been among the best in our subject nationally and in the top six at Leicester (2nd in College). This endorsement of our teaching and support for our students is also reflected in the latest Guardian League Table (the one that is most weighted to teaching and learning issues), where we are 5th nationally (the highest ranking achieved by any subject at the University this year).

Two colleagues achieved well-merited promotions this year, with Jo Appleby moving up to Associate Professor and Neil Christie to full Professor. Professor Pim Allison delivered her Inaugural Lecture on 13th June and two of our PhD students, Dr Ian Marshman and Dr Becky Gordon, won the competition in the College to present Doctoral Inaugural lectures. This is an appropriate space to formally record our congratulations to all of them.

A major piece of work this year, involving many staff (both academic and those in support roles), has been Curriculum Transformation, where we have combined necessary recalibration of our credit weighting with a thorough review and overhaul of all our campus-based degrees. Special thanks go to Mark Gillings and his Academic Committee. We hope students will appreciate the refinements as the new course structure is rolled out in the coming years.

This bumper issue of our Bulletin captures the spirit and enterprise of the School across a wide range of activity – from fieldwork (including an exciting project on Cyprus and the spectacular ULAS excavation at the Stibbe Works site in Leicester), to key publications of academic staff and our dynamic postgraduate community, to fieldtrips, to conferences organised or in preparation, to our amazing outreach programme. There is even space for one of Neil Christie's special odes to a four legged denizen of the ULAS post-ex rooms…

Classical Association Conference 2018

UNIVERSITY OF LEICESTER, FRIDAY 6 – MONDAY 9 APRIL

The Classical Association Conference takes place each year at a UK university. In 2018, it returns to Leicester and will be hosted by the **School of Archaeology & Ancient History.**

The nine Greek and Roman historians in the School, and several Mediterranean archaeologists, are organising the event with the help of colleagues from other CSAAH departments and our outstanding cohort of Ph.D. and MA students. We aim to provide a platform for the very best of Classical research worldwide, and to showcase the work of the School and University, particularly in Ancient History and Classical Archaeology. In the spirit of welcoming all aspects of Classics, we have highlighted a large number of possible themes for papers and panels:

- Anatolia
- Classics in the contemporary world
- Classics in virtual worlds
- commemoration
- dress, textiles, & the clothed body
- elites, leaders, & rulers
- families & households
- fragments
- gender & sexuality
- geographies
- historiography
- how wars end*
- imperialism & colonialism
- intellectual contexts from ancient Greece to the early modern world
- Late Antiquity
- marginal groups
- money
- North Africa
- periodization
- populism & politics
- rhetoric & education
- Roman Britain
- space & the cosmos
- sport in antiquity
- teaching the ancient world

** This theme commemorates the centenary of the Armistice, as well as the first moves to found a university college in Leicester as a memorial to the fallen of the first world war*

For more information please see:

https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/archaeology/news-and-events/conferences/ca2018

MA Students on the School's Historical Archaeology Tour of England

Alice Samson reports

As remarked by the great landscape historian William Hoskins, "Everybody's geography is weakest when it comes to the Midlands: rivers and towns are widely misplaced, the counties are hard to remember by name and even more difficult to sort out clearly from each other." (Hoskins, *Midland England*, 1949)

Hoskins' "everybody" does not include the participants on this year's Historical Archaeology Tour of England who criss-crossed 400 miles in the School Land Rover, and 30 miles on foot to immerse themselves in Midlands cities, farmland, and villages. The module gives MA students a critical understanding of the development of English rural and urban landscapes from the Middle Ages to the 19th century, through a week-long exploration of parks and estates, field sites and castles, ecclesiastical and institutional buildings, and pottery, lots of pottery. This year we were fortunate to have students spanning the United States from east to west, who brought their transatlantic perspectives to bear on the global reach of the Staffordshire potteries, the colonial roots of country estates, and the diasporic consequences of the Reformation. As well as this serious stuff, highlights included being invited into Jean's back garden in Hoby to peer down an extremely deep well, petting lambs, listening to David's dulcet bass reciting a masque by Ben Jonson in the setting for which it was written –- Bolsover's Little Castle— and witnessing the swift dexterity of the industry's last china flower-makers in the Gladstone Museum.

Left: exploring field features in Kirby Bellars. Note the post-medieval viewing platform under the stand of trees. Centre: Some of the last pot banks in the Five Towns, Gladstone Museum. Right: the view from Bolsover castle.

The week is best summed up in some of the words of the students themselves:

"Having learned about different architectural time periods that can be seen in structures, actually seeing Southwell Minster was amazing. I will never forget going into the chapter house and seeing all of the damaged figures and the hidden creatures. This is somewhere that I would love to go back to again." Courtney *Potter*

"It is one thing to read about something; it is considerably better to see and touch the past while having it explained by an expert. I only wish the program had been longer." *David Gordon*

"As archaeologists we strive to translate how the people of the past experience, interacted with, and conceived of themselves and the landscape within which they lived. This program added both to my technical and historical knowledge, while also enhancing my toolkit for interpreting that lived experience." *Chris Pasch*

"I believe that the field school has been the most important part of my historical archaeology education thus far. Up to that point there was a lot of reading and research. All fascinating but nothing compared to the impact of setting foot upon mottes, hollow ways, work houses, castles, and kilns. Now when I sit in my quiet desk at home reading and researching, the words seem to jump off the page as I can make a visual connection for much of it." *Aramanda Cartwright*

Thank you to all colleagues who helped teach and run this module, and to all our students who made it so enjoyable!

ULAS News: An Urban Special

Mathew Morris (ULAS Project Officer) reports

Mosaics are like buses, it would seem - we haven't found one in Leicester for over a decade (a mosaic, that is), then they start turning up all at once. Over the past nine months, teams of archaeologists from University of Leicester Archaeological Services (ULAS) have been busy excavating two large urban sites within Leicester's walled historic core, both close to the Highcross Shopping Centre on opposing corners of Highcross Street and Vaughan Way. These pieces of land have been derelict for a long time, one formerly occupied by the All Saints Brewery (next to All Saints' Church and the John Lewis car park), and the other by the old Stibbe factory (opposite the former Great Central Street station), and both have produced exciting new evidence for Leicester's Roman past, including streets, town houses, commercial and public buildings, and one of the largest fragments of mosaic floor found in Leicester in the last 150 years.

A high-quality mosaic is excavated at the Stibbe site

Part of a hypocaust is excavated at Highcross Street

At Highcross Street (soon to be turned into apartments) the project has employed a strip, plan and sample excavation strategy in order to mitigate the impact of the new building's piling plan. The excavation area of some 2,500 sq m, covers nearly two-thirds of a Roman *insula* (no. X in the plan of the Roman town). Today, Highcross Street still follows the line of the main road leading from the Roman forum (beneath Jubilee Square) to the north gate, at the junction with Sanvey Gate. On this side of the site a large Roman building has been uncovered. Ranges of rooms flanked by a corridor or portico appear to surround a courtyard. At least one room had a hypocaust (underfloor heating), and it is likely that this is a large townhouse, reminiscent of the Vine Street courtyard house excavated nearby, beneath the John Lewis car park, in 2006. The building was set back from the street edge behind a row of timber buildings, presumed to be commercial properties, and was probably accessed from a side street to the south.

To the north of the building, running east to west across the northern edge of the site, close to All Saints' Church, was a cambered gravel street. Activity along its edge appears to quiet in the Roman period. Roadside ditches and boundary walls have been identified, but no substantial buildings are present. Instead, activity seems to be more ephemeral in nature, gardens and yards, probably with some timber structures. Copper working has been identified in the area, perhaps suggesting commercial or industrial activity taking place along the street.

Further east, close to the John Lewis car park, is a second Roman house. Here, there is evidence for mosaic floors in at least three rooms, including one fragments (about a quarter of the original design), which still measured some 2m by 3m. This was successfully lifted and is currently being conserved.

Preparing the Highcross Street mosaic for lifting

Stylistically and stratigraphically, this mosaic is thought to be early fourth century in date. It would have originally been in a square room in the house. It has a thick border of red tiles surrounding a central square of grey tiles. Picked out in red in the grey square are several decorations, including a geometric border, foliage and a central hexafoil cross. The intricate geometric border follows a pattern known as 'swastika-meander'.

More curious, however, is a third small Roman building found in the centre of the site. It has a large sunken room or cellar, and it possibly has a small apse attached to one side. Currently, the building has no obvious purpose, but sunken rooms are relatively unusual in Roman Britain. The room is not a hypocaust and is unlikely to be a water tank. It seems to be tucked away in yards and gardens in the middle of the *insula*, giving it privacy away from the surrounding streets; and the possible apse is only really big enough to house something like a statue, which makes us wonder if the building is something special, perhaps a shrine or *nymphaeum*.

Finds from Highcross Street, a lion-headed spout from a Samian ware Mortaria (left) and three intact medieval jugs, found in a stone-lined storage pit (right)

Over the road, at the Stibbe site, soon to be a hotel, full excavation of the 4,500 sq m site is now well under way. This excavation lies over parts of three Roman *insulae* (nos. IXa, IXb and XVI) to the north of the town's forum, *macellum* (now beneath the Travelodge), and public baths (the Jewry Wall site). Since work began in September 2016, the team has uncovered two Roman streets – one east-west and the other north-south, as well as two large high-status Roman houses with evidence for a number of rooms, some of which contain mosaics of varying patterns and designs, as well as a series of roadside structures, and early timber buildings.

Part of the high-quality mosaic found at the Stibbe site

Discovered in a room in one of the townhouses, is the largest and finest-quality mosaic uncovered in over 150 years in Leicester. The room also has underfloor heating (hypocaust), and is probably the principal reception room of a major Roman townhouse on one of the main streets through the town. Its design is composed of complex geometric patterns extending for a length of 10 metres. These include borders composed of four intertwined strands, known a *guilloche*, together with shield (*peltae*) and Greek key (meander) patterns. Expert opinion is that this floor is similar in quality and workmanship to the Blackfriars and Peacock pavements found in the 19th century (currently on display in the Jewry Wall Museum).

Vast quantities of pottery, coins, brooches, beads, hair pins, gaming pieces and manicure sets have been found as well as an exceptionally fine decorated knife handle cast in copper alloy, which seemingly depicts a scene showing victims thrown to the lions in the amphitheatre.

Elsewhere on site, a series of smaller roadside Roman structures have been discovered – presumably shops or small houses. One building was rectangular with an apse at one end and contained a grey tessellated pavement with red border. An attached well was constructed of stone, vast quantities of over-fired tile (including a fused stack of roof tile) and broken pieces of quern stone. The function of the apse building is uncertain, but the team speculate that it could be a temple, or Late Roman church?

Archaeologists excavate a late Roman stone building with apse (top of image) and well (to right) at the Stibbe site

Investigation has now begun on the well-preserved north-south Roman street which extends over 50 metres across the site. Here, evidence has been found for possible Anglo-Saxon timber structures built close to a Roman building and overlying the street surface.

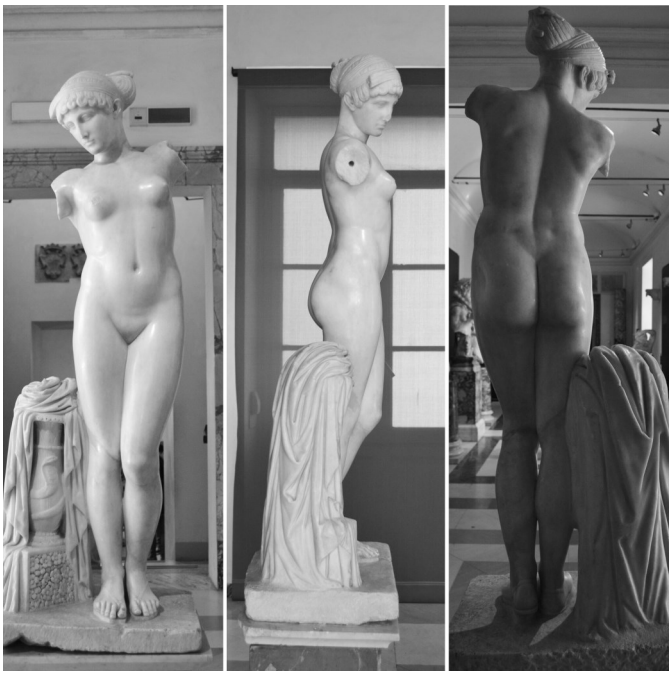
Back at Highcross Street, no clear evidence of Anglo-Saxon activity was found but a number of narrow medieval burgage plots have been recorded along Highcross Street (medieval Leicester's High Street), whilst a group of stone footings are thought to be the remains of St John's Hospital, Leicester's first medieval hospital which occupied part of the site, in various guises from the mid-12th century through to the mid-20th century.

A Roman knife or key handle depicting a lion attacking a bearded barbarian standing on the heads of four captives. The bearded barbarian figure, wearing trousers and belt, with sandaled feet seems to be under attack from a male lion whose body clings around his waist. He stands on the heads of four naked male captives

MA Rome Study Tour 2017

Anna-Sophie Bulder (MA Classical Mediterranean) reflects on what it meant for her:

During our MA Rome Study Tour in April, we visited the Capitoline Museum, which in my opinion houses some of the most incredible examples of sculpture from antiquity. My main interests are in classical art and reception theory and thus viewing these sculptures in person was an enriching experience, allowing to more fully appreciate them and apply what I have learned during my Classical Art module with Dr Sarah Scott. During this module, I wrote an essay on *Learning to Appreciate the Disabled Female Body through the Appropriation of the Classical Bodily Ideal in Fragmented Sculpture.* In this, I had used the *Esquiline Venus* of the Capitoline Museum to show that the ideal female body in sculpture was praised for its geometric precision, proportion and harmony. The art historian Kenneth Clark described this Venus to be "solidly desirable, compact, proportionate; and, in fact, her proportions have been calculated on a simple mathematical scale. The unit of measurement is her head. She is even seven heads tall; these is the length of one head between her breasts, one from breast to navel, and one from the navel to the division of the legs…". It is these characteristics that are often perceived to be lacking in 'physically disabled' bodies, making them obtain, instead, labels that are negative opposites of ideal female bodies. Like many of the Venus sculptures in the museum, the *Esquiline* is fragmented, which highlights the irony that most of the surviving Venuses that have set the precedent for conceptualising the ideal female body are not complete either. Being able to see this sculpture and other Venuses in person was thus important to me, not only because I finally saw those that I had written about, but also because it really made me realise that it is necessary to change our perception of what is beautiful and the binary oppositions associated with ability and disability. This could allow us to appreciate diversity and disability in real bodies, just like we do in classical sculptures.



Cultural and Scientific Perceptions of Human-Chicken Interactions Conference

Alison Foster (PhD student) reports

The three year AHRC-funded Cultural and Scientific Perceptions of Human-Chicken Interactions Project has now come to an end and, to mark the occasion, archaeologists, geneticists and anthropologists from the Universities of Leicester, Bournemouth, Nottingham, Oxford, Roehampton and York hosted a very successful conference at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. The team presented the results of their recent investigations into this fascinating, but until recently under-researched, bird incorporating a wide range of themes to highlight their latest findings. Sessions encompassed the domestication and worldwide spread of chickens, genetics and breed-development, palaeopathology, ritual and religion, gender studies and cock-fighting, together with the associated consequences for human culture, diet and health.

Chicken sculpture, Museum of Natural History, Oxford

Dr Tyr Fothergill gave an account of the results of her study on the archaeological evidence for human-aided movement of avian leucosis viruses. Using veterinary and medical evidence as well as archaeological data, this work involved investigation of the incidence and geographic distribution of avian osteopetrosis lesions from the first century BC to the post-medieval period. Tyr's engaging discussion of the nature of these pathogens, criteria for differential diagnosis and fresh perspective on the human-aided movement of animal disease in the past inspired one delegate to tweet "I have rarely seen such enthusiasm over diseased chicken bones!" Dr Richard Thomas introduced "Chicken Breeds: a cocktail of possibilities": a session which featured the incredible variety of chicken types which have developed from the small, ancestral Junglefowl. Themes included the genetics underpinning the hundreds of characteristics seen in chickens, both today and in the past, Dr Thomas's own investigations into the metrical evidence for the changing size and shape of medieval and post-medieval chickens and an explanation from Alison Foster of the principles of geometric morphometrics and how this method can be used to identify and analyse the different bone shapes of modern chicken breeds. Data analysis from Alison's study is helping interpret subtler changes in archaeological chicken bones and will deepen understanding of the selection processes which drive breed development.

Exploring the Eastern Hellenistic *gymnasion*

Dorethea Stavrou writes about her recently completed PhD research

Gymnasion of Delos

I have recently completed my DL PhD thesis on the Hellenistic *gymnasion* of the Eastern Mediterranean and especially on the network of contacts that developed through it. The DL way of study was the only option for me because I have two children and I work full-time in Greece. Despite these commitments I managed to complete my studies in a field that really interests me with the support of the department and especially of my supervisor (Professor Graham Shipley) and of my family.

My research has presented a new insight of the Hellenistic Eastern *gymnasion.* This was one of the most prominent institutions of the ancient Greek civilisation and a significant component of the Greek way of life in the newly conquered areas of the Hellenistic East. In the *gymnasion* free young men and mature men received athletic and military training. They participated in athletic, religious and intellectual activities and festivals. As a distinctive institution of Greek culture the *gymnasion* not only existed within the Greek *poleis* but also became an indispensable element of the athletic-military training of soldiers and settlers throughout the Hellenistic kingdoms.

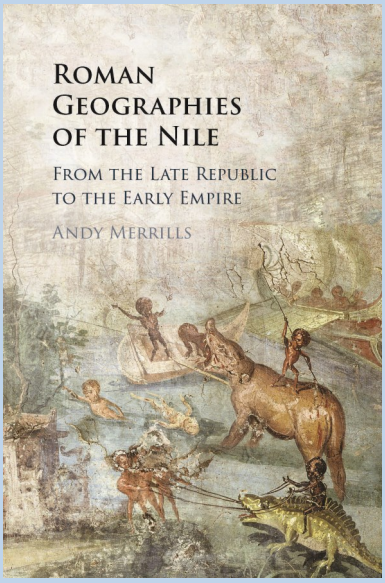
Ephebeion of Delos where men would receive training on aspects of Greek culture

In being replicated all across the East, the Hellenistic *gymnasion* was established according to the peculiarities of each community (city, village, and settlement). Because of the multi-ethnic environment of the Hellenistic kingdoms and the different conditions that existed in the eastern *gymnasia* diachronically, I decided to study this institution as a socio-cultural entity.

Motivated by the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic environments of the Hellenistic East I focused on the *gymnasia* of the Seleukid and Ptolemaic kingdoms. I was able to reveal their development, the factors and the motives that underpinned their adoption, the divergences, the network of contacts that were constructed and the impact on the 'opening' of this institution to non-Greeks in these kingdoms.

After a brief account of the types of cities and settlements that fostered the institution of *gymnasion* in the Hellenistic East and the military, educational and cultural roles of the *gymnasia,* my thesis explored the network of interpersonal relations that were created among the rulers, the officials, and the participants. The diffusion of the *gymnasion* in the East became a pole of attraction for a part of the indigenous population. According to our evidence (from inscriptions, papyri, and literary sources), some members of the native elites adopted Greek ways and participated in Greek *gymnasion*. I have proposed a different approach of the participation of non-Greeks in *gymnasion*: I viewed it as a continuation of pre-existing concepts of education of native elites. I argued overall that the cultural borrowings and the common educational elements among ancient civilizations of the Mediterranean laid the foundation for a cultural bridge between Greeks and non-Greeks (especially those of the high strata) in the *gymnasion.*

Book News

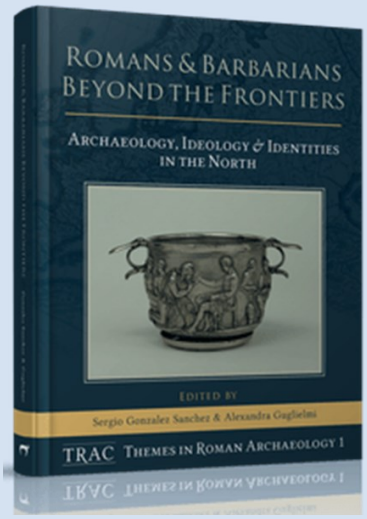


Roman Nile-ism: Andy Merrills writes...

I'm delighted to announce that my new book *Roman Geographies of the Nile: From the Late Republic to the Early Empire* was published in January 2017 by Cambridge University Press. This book is my attempt to make sense of how the Romans thought about the world during the difficult period of transition during the first century BCE and the first century CE – the time when the old structures of the republic were collapsing, and Rome became the dominant power in the Mediterranean. This was also the period which witnessed the production of many of the Romans' most important literary, scientific and artistic works, and the time in which the Campanian city of Pompeii flourished and died. Throughout this period, the Nile remained a frequent point of reference for Roman writers, thinkers, travellers and citizens: they wondered at its wealth, contemplated its unknown origins (and unique floods) or used its waters to worship the spreading cults of Isis and Osiris. And the river was inextricably linked to Cleopatra – "the serpent of Old Nile" in the words of a later poet.

The Romans thought about geography in a manner radically different to us. When we ponder the world around us, or want to find out a specific fact, we turn to an Atlas or to GoogleEarth; no such reassurances were available at the beginning of the first millennium. The Romans had maps (or at least we assume they did, no large-scale maps survive from the Roman world, and the few textual descriptions we have don't tell us much), but before the advent of printing and the possibilities of mass-reproduction, maps were a poor medium for the depiction of the lands of the new empire. The maps that they did have are likely to have been few, and to have based their authority on their striking visual impact, rather than on the accuracy of their cartography. Where the citizens of the British Empire could look fondly on a world coloured pink in their atlases, schoolrooms and churches, the Romans could not. Instead, the citizens of the Roman world made sense of it through a staggering variety of other media – trophies and personifications of conquered regions borne in military triumphs; textual descriptions of the world in verse or prose; natural philosophical speculation and cosmology; landscapes painted on the walls of domestic interiors; itinerary accounts of stopping places on far-flung journeys. My book considers how all of these different media informed one another by thinking about the different ways in which the Nile appeared. Represented variously as a naked bearded man; a painted landscape stuffed with exotic animals; a list of towns on its bank; a metaphor for poetry; the five letters of its Latin name (*Nilus*); the waters in the sacred pools of Egyptian temples; or a reminder of the cosmic origins of the universe (and its inevitable demise), the Nile provides a unique perspective on the ways in which the Romans of the new empire thought about the world, and about themselves.

TRAC Themes in Roman Archaeology: Matthew Mandich, Thomas Derrick and Sergio Gonzalez Sanchez introduce a new book series



TRAC Themes in Roman Archaeology is a new publication series of monographs and thematic edited volumes published by Oxbow Books and curated by the TRAC Standing Committee. The series is designed to be a venue in which new ideas and theoretical developments within Roman Archaeology can be presented and debated, and offers an attractive opportunity for both early career researchers and established scholars to publish theoretically informed research on problems, themes, and emergent issues within the archaeology of the Roman world. All contributions undergo rigorous peer review by members of TRAC's Advisory Panel as well as by other recognised subject specialists.

The first volume is entitled *'Romans' and 'Barbarians' Beyond the Frontiers: Archaeology, Ideology & Identities in the North.* Edited by Sergio Gonzalez Sanchez and Alexandra Guglielmi, this volume brings together a group of renowned international experts to discuss different aspects of interactions between 'Romans' and 'barbarians' in the north-western regions of Europe. The content of the volume was derived from two sessions held at TRAC 2013 (London) and TRAC 2014 (Reading) on the overarching topic of 'Roman'-'barbarian' interaction beyond the northern frontiers of the Roman Empire. The volume contains papers from both TRAC sessions as well as solicited papers from other relevant scholars within the field. Through a comparative approach, this volume aspires to produce a coherent and long-lasting work of reference on this rapidly growing field of study within Roman Archaeology, not by presenting a single unitary state of the question of trans-frontier interactions, but by reflecting on the variety of theoretical approaches and the methodological complexities present in different regions of north-western Europe. The aim is to bridge the gap between distinct academic communities and their interpretative frameworks, which are often dictated by the singularity of their cultural backgrounds and inherited archaeological discourses.

A Brief History of Buddhism in Kansai, Japan

Raminder Kaur (PhD student) visited Japan to study its rich heritage. Here she writes about Buddhism

Indigenous Shintoism, centred on worship of *kami* deities, competed and assimilated with Buddhism, arriving in the 6th century CE from South Asia via China and Korea. During the Meiji Restoration of 1868 the two religions were officially separated, leading to violence against Buddhism.

Daibutsuden, Nara (18th century reconstruction): Vairocana (right, repaired between 8th to 17th centuries using donations and taxes) with Akashagarbha Bodhisattva (Kokuzo-bosatsu, left, 18th century)

The Indian Buddhist monk Bodhisena travelled from China to Japan and helped establish the Kegon school (Chinese: Huayan, 'Flower Garland') of the 'Great Vehicle' (Sanskrit: Mahayana) of Buddhism, of which Nara remains the headquarters. In the 8th century, under the monk Roben, Bodhisena 'opened the eyes' of the world's largest bronze statue of Vairocana Buddha (Japanese: Birushana-butsu) housed in the world's largest wooden building, the Todai-ji temple Daibutsuden hall.

Lacquer, wood, copper and bronze statues at Nara from the 7th/8th to 15th centuries depict deities who originated in pre-Buddhist South Asia, including the king of the gods Sakra-Indra (Japanese: Taishakuten) and the highest god Brahma (Japanese: Bonten). An interesting statue dating from 734 is the three-headed, six-armed *asura*, likened to Shiva Nataraja, created using a Chinese hollow-core dry-lacquer technique, *dakkatsu kanshitsu*. Portable and hidden statues survived when wooden architecture suffered damage during conflicts and natural disasters.

Roben founded the Ishiyama-dera temple near Lake Biwa, belonging to the Shingon sect of the esoteric 'Diamond/ Thunderbolt Vehicle' (Sanskrit: Vajrayana), where Murasaki allegedly began writing the *Genji Monogatari* in 1004. The final chapters of the story were set in Uji, renowned for its tea and the oldest Shinto shrine, Ujigami, built in 1060. The Byodo-in temple museum showcases delicate wooden bodhisattvas riding clouds; the Phoenix Hall was built for Amitabha Buddha in 1053.

After a schism in the Mahayana Tendai sect, established by the monk Saicho in the 9th century, the Buddhist centre of Enryaku-ji on Mount Hiei and its rival Miidera created standing armies. The warlord Oda Nobunaga attacked several temples in the 16th century to end Buddhist militancy. However, Nobunaga and imperial families provided patronage to the Shinto-Buddhist shrine-temple (*jingu-ji*) Iwashimizu-Hachimangu, famous for its connection to Thomas Edison. The monk Kukai, after praying to Kokuzo, travelled to China at the same time as Saicho, learnt Sanskrit and brought back Buddhist teachings. He became the administrative head of Todai-ji, settled the mountain area of Koyasan and supposedly devised the *kana* syllabic script. Kukai completed the construction of the Manno Reservoir and the five-storey pagoda of Toji, the tallest wooden tower, in Heian (Kyoto) after the capital shifted there.

The eight peaks of Koyasan represent a lotus, a *mandala* or the directional guardians with its heart at Konpon-Daito *stupa*, rebuilt in 1937, housing a statue of Vairocana. Kongobu-ji, 'the Vajra Peak temple', originally built in the 16th century by Toyotomi Hideyoshi is the Shingon headquarters. It acquired this name after Kukai supposedly threw a *vajra*, a weapon predominantly associated with the god Indra, which landed at Koyasan. Other monuments are the dazzling 17th century Tokugawa Mausoleums, and Kukai's mausoleum in the surreal Okinawa cemetery, where he is believed to be in eternal meditation until the arrival of Maitreya, the future Buddha.

Iwashimizu-Hachimangu, Mount Otokoyama: Reconstructed under the Tokugawas in the 17th century and presided over by Hachiman, the Shinto god of warriors, divine protector of Japan and a bodhisattva. The wall to the left was dedicated by Nobunaga in 1580

Bronze Age Discovery from the Isle of Man

Rachel Crellin (Post-doctoral Research Fellow)

In September 2016 Chris Fowler (Newcastle University) and I began a new fieldwork project on the Isle of Man exploring prehistoric burial practices on the island. To kick the project off we secured funding for desk-based analyses and geophysics from Manx National Heritage and Culture Vannin (£25,000). Included in this first stage of analysis was the first modern osteological analysis of the Neolithic and Bronze Age human remains held at the Manx Museum and it was this bit of the project that has allowed us to make some exciting new discoveries without having to lift a trowel!

Bone pommel

Contained within a box of cremated bones excavated in 1947, project osteologist Dr Michelle Gamble discovered a collection of small bone objects that had not been noticed by the excavators. The bones date to the Bronze Age and are from the site of Staarvey Farm. The site was excavated by Basil Megaw (1913-2002) who was director of the Manx Museum from 1945-1957. Mr Megaw had been contacted by the farmer who had hit a large stone during ploughing. Excavations revealed a stone-built cist containing fragments of burnt bone, two flints, and two inverted Collared Urns.

Michelle's analysis has shown that four individuals were buried within the cist - 2 adults (one of whom was a male), an adolescent, and an infant. During the early stages of the osteological analysis Michelle notice a number of burnt bone object mixed in with the human remains that the excavators had not noticed.

Bone pin

The bone objects included a rare bone pommel from a bronze knife. There are only about 40 surviving knife and dagger pommels from the British Bronze Age and none have ever been found on the Isle of Man before. The pommel is small and its shape suggests it was attached to a 'knife-dagger'. Knife-daggers are found buried with both men and women. This particular pommel shows evidence of a break that suggests it was snapped off from the blade itself – this is quite common and was perhaps a grave-side practice.

Worked bone strips

As well as the pommel there is a burnt bone pin that may have been used to secure clothes or hair, a number of bone beads, a bone toggle, and four enigmatic worked-bone strips that we have been unable to parallel – if you have any ideas what these might be for (serious and wacky ideas both equally welcome) then get in touch!

The burial itself is fairly unusual in that it contains cremated remains associated with *both* Collared Urns and a cist – it is more typical to find them associated with one or the other. There are about 50 similar burials known across the British Isles with a particular concentration of similar burials in Wales.

This summer we are hoping to return to the Isle of Man to excavate a prehistoric burial mound. For more information about the project check out: https://roundmounds.wordpress.com/

Tom Derrick (PhD student) brings news of a publication:

The volume *Senses of the Empire: Multisensory Approaches to Roman Culture* was released by Routledge on 6th March 2017. As well as his own paper, it contains another by recent Leicester PhD graduate Dr Ian Marshman, and our former Teaching Fellow Dr Emma-Jayne Graham.

https://www.routledge.com/Senses-of-the-Empire-Multisensory-Approaches-to-Roman-Culture/Betts/p/book/9781472446299

A Case of Accidental Outreach

Meredith Laing (PhD student)

Research can often take you down unexpected paths, some academic, some otherwise. For example, you might start out on a PhD researching an aspect of British prehistory, and find yourself teaching code breaking at Bletchley Park during World War II to a bunch of 9-year-olds, vaguely wondering why.

This unexpected turn was part of my — somewhat unanticipated — series of outreach activities which seem to have become a necessary part of data gathering for my project.

I am researching fingerprints left on later prehistoric pottery as part of my PhD, but in order to interpret those fingerprints and find out who made them (it's all about the width of the epidermal ridges), I have had to create my own reference collection of modern prints. Some of you have kindly donated a set of inky fingerprints to this effort!

Getting fingerprints from children has entailed delicate negotiations with local primary schools who have extracted various archaeological workshops from me in exchange for taking prints from the children. But the workshops have had to fit in with whatever the children were covering in their curriculum.

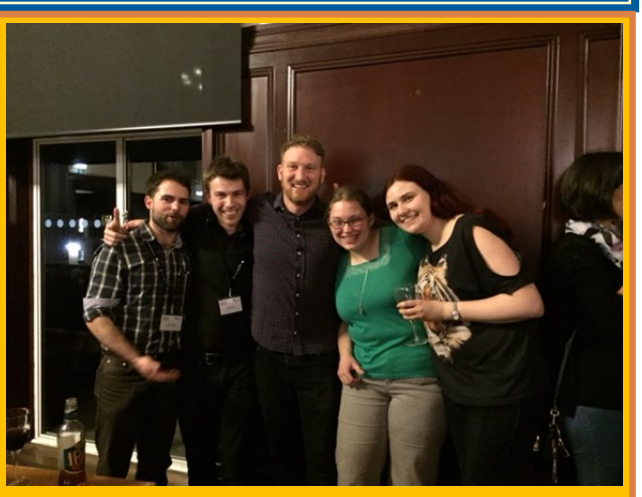
So I have found myself teaching basic pottery to 4- and 5-year -olds ("*Miss, why does clay look like poo?*"), making Palaeolithic cave art with Year 2 ("*Miss, my mammoth looks like an alien*"), getting Iron Age people dressed ("*Miss, Miss, did they have pants in the Iron Age*?"), constructing Saxon swords and brooches with year 4 (dusting off my trusty Blue Peter crafting skills), and covering several million years of human evolution in a morning with a group of year 6 pupils ("*so, Miss, if eating meat gave humans bigger brains and made us clever, why do they tell us to eat lots of vegetables now, won't that make us stupid?*").

The local senior school wanted a lunchtime talk on forensic archaeology: so that was trauma and injury over a ham sandwich with a group of teenagers. Nice.

In the context of some broadly archaeologically themed workshops, the request for code breaking was a bit flummoxing! Off I duly went to Bletchley Park to learn about codes and ciphers and the work of Alan Turing and co during World War II, and I have now run a couple of workshops on the Enigma machine, encryption and decipherment, and realised that, given a free rein on writing encrypted messages, 9 year old boys send messages to each other about toilets and what goes in them.

Much to the relief of my long-suffering supervisors, Colin and Jo, my fingerprint related outreach activities are drawing to a close, but they have been an interesting, if unexpected, aspect to my project. (And if anyone needs a presentation on code breaking, just ask….!)

TRAC in Durham, March 2017 - *Matthew Mandich*



As many staff, alumni, and post-graduates from the School have been, and continue to be, prominently involved with the Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conferences (TRAC), a large Leicester contingent made the trip to Durham for a week of excellent papers, excursions and, of course, the TRAC Party. Following the pre-conference excursions to Binchester and Vindolanda, the opening proceedings featured a timely keynote by Dr Hella Eckardt (University of Reading): 'Roman Objects, Migrants and Identities in the Age of Brexit and Trump'.

The next day kicked off with stimulating sessions on topics such as multi-vocality in Roman archaeology, dialectics of religion in the Roman Empire, and the archaeology of values in the Roman world - a session co-organised and chaired by University of Leicester alumnus and TRAC Standing Committee Treasurer Dr Sergio Gonzalez Sanchez. In the afternoon, a session on social boundaries in the Roman world also featured a paper by current Leicester PhD student (DL) Daan van Helden. The following day delegates attended tours of sites along Hadrian's Wall and at Corbridge.

The final day of the conference featured another set of solid sessions with an array of papers from University of Leicester PGRs and alumni. The morning sessions on globalised visual culture and society and technology saw current PhD candidates Amy Wale and Thomas Derrick (Secretary of the TRAC Standing Committee) present on aspects of their research, while recent Leicester graduate Dr Meghann Mahoney presented in a session on the theorisation of Roman wells and their contents. All in all, the TRAC Standing Committee, which boasts three University of Leicester affiliates (Matthew Mandich, Thomas Derrick, and Sergio Gonzalez Sanchez), was very pleased with the impressive turnout of over 200 delegates, engaging sessions, and the informative talks and excursions.

'In the Footsteps of Caesar' Conference - a success! Andrew Fitzpatrick and Colin Haselgrove

Early in April leading experts from France, Germany, Spain, Switzerland, The Netherlands, UK and USA gathered in Oxford for a weekend conference organised by Andrew Fitzpatrick and Colin Haselgrove and hosted at Rewley House by the Oxford University Department of Continuing Education.

The meeting presented the first ever Europe-wide overview of work on Julius Caesar's Battle for Gaul and the feedback from the delegates was unanimous in its praise for the content and quality of the programme. The programme focussed on recent archaeological work on the Gallic War and its immediate background, but included papers on linked topics ranging from how Julius Caesar redefined the geography of northern Europe to how the discovery of the site of the Battle of Alesia in 1861 helped shape the development of the archaeology of the Iron Age in France and beyond. The speakers all said that they very much enjoyed the meeting and the opportunity to hear about the work of colleagues from across Europe. Oxbow have agreed to publish a volume of papers arising from the conference.

Textiles, Dress and Gender in the Ancient World: A two day workshop 24-25 April, 2017

Mary Harlow writes...

This workshop was part of the University of Leicester's contribution to the international research group: Ancient Textiles from the Orient to the Mediterranean (ATOM), in collaboration with CNRS, Paris, and CTR (Centre for Textile Research, Copenhagen).

Dress and gender are intimately linked in the visual and textual records of antiquity; it is common practice in both art and literature to use particular garments to characterise one sex or the other, and to undermine literary characterisations by suggesting that they display features usually associated with the opposite gender. Cross dressing was, indeed, often used for comic purpose in drama and for character assassination in forensic court speeches. The clear message, across the cultures of antiquity, was that men should dress like men, and women like women.

Less consideration has been given to the notion that certain textiles and colours were considered more suitable to either men or women. Discussions of textile type and quality tend to focus on role of luxury and social status (or the assumption/usurpation of status) rather than gender, although gender is often implicit in any discussion.

Textile production in antiquity has often been considered to follow a linear trajectory from a domestic (female) activity to more 'commercial' or 'industrial' male-centred mode of production. In reality, many modes of production probably existed side-by-side and the making of textiles not so easily grafted on the labour of one sex of another. At times and in some places weaving was women's work, but in other times and places it was the prerogative of men.

Papers were given by scholars from Leicester and across Europe, covering the third millennium BC to the nineteenth century AD. Maria Giovanna Biga (Rome) (in the person of Edoardo Zanetti who had just arrived in the UK and never given a paper before in Italian or English – and was very impressive) and Barbara Couturand (Liège) spoke about third millennium BC Syria; Agata Ulanowska (Warsaw) on evidence for male weavers in Minoan Crete; Giovanni Fanfani (Munich) on the textile imagery visible in the rhythms and patterns of ancient Greek poetry; Magdalena Ohrman (Lampeter and Copenhagen) presented her current research on the relationship between the sound of the warp-weighted loom in action and the rhythms and sounds of Roman poetry. The home team was represented by Amy Wale and Nikki Rollason: Amy gave a paper on her thesis research on the literary tropes that are typical in describing female dress in Late Antiquity, while Nikki presented her new work on the significance of belts in Late Antiquity. Cécile Michel (CNRS, Paris and Director of ATOM) and I gave a report on another ATOM venture, a panel at the Melammu Symposium on East Meets West, organised by the Finnish Institute in Beirut at the American University there (3-6th April).

On Monday afternoon Professor Marilyn Palmer gave a lecture on Framework Knitting in the East Midlands – a big leap forward in time but a talk really enjoyed by the workshop. We followed this up with a visit to the Framework Knitter's Museum in Wigston on Tuesday and had a great two hours there visiting the house and workshop and finally understanding how it all worked (well, almost) and having a go on the sock machines (Griswold's, as I now knowledgably call them).

The workshop was a great success; it was delightful to welcome my collaborators to the School. For those who might be interested in following up the work of ATOM there is a website: http://www.mae.u-paris10.fr/gdri-atom/ where you can also find a short video on Dyes and Spices in Antiquity.

Archaeology and Art, Part II - Marijke van der Veen

I reported last November on an outreach programme that I am running with Folville Junior School. After a visit to the excavations at Bradgate Park last summer and working in our laboratories learning about archaeology last September, the children (10-11 years old) have been making sculptures inspired by what they learned, under the supervision of myself and my sculpture friend Rae Scott.

This project aims to:

- generate an appreciation of how our lives differ from those in the past, using the results of the Bradgate Park excavations (Stone Age/Ice Age and Tudor Period settlements) as examples
- raise awareness of the role of archaeology in understanding changes over time, cultural diversity, the importance of local heritage and a sense of place
- develop a process of enquiry
- facilitate aspirations to future careers
- develop creativity

We asked the children to consider life in Bradgate Park during the last Ice Age and during the time of Lady Jane Grey, and compare these with their own lives in Leicester today. We used food as the central theme. The end product was a display of three tables, each with a meal typical for the period.
As you can see from the photos, some amazing work has been produced. During the Christmas fair in December the children had the opportunity to display their work, and explain what they had learned, to family, friends, and to the director of Bradgate Park Trust, Mr Peter Tyldesley and his wife. At the end they were asked: "Would you like to come to the university to study archaeology or art or some other subject?" Answer: "Yes, definitely!"

Let there be light: RTI coming to the School

Thanks to a successful bid to the University's Teaching Development Fund by Dr Jane Masséglia, the School will shortly have its very own portable 'highlight' kit for conducting Reflective Transformation Imaging (RTI). This photographic technique uses multiple photographs and a moveable camera flash to map the surface of objects, allowing researchers to detect even faint scratches that are invisible to the naked eye. The technique is especially helpful in reading the text of badly worn inscriptions, but can also be used in the study manufacturing processes and even cut-marks on bone. Janie, who was part of the team who conducted an RTI study of the great Philae Obelisk at Kingston Lacy, hopes the equipment and accompanying training workshops to be in place in June.

A worn stone inscription under RTI (left) and natural light (right). (Courtesy of the Ashmolean Latin Inscriptions Project)

Debbie Miles-Williams Reports on Activities as Outreach Officer

Where can Maths and English Take Me? ..... With Art and Design

On Wednesday 26th April, the REACH Partnership teamed up with local HEI's Institutions to deliver a Year 8 'Where Can English and Maths Take Me?' Higher Education taster day at De Montfort University, Leicester. The aim of the day was to inspire and excite students about the possibilities of using these key subjects in Art and Design based degrees.

A group of student ambassadors who are currently studying university -level courses, were on hand to answer questions and share their experiences as positive role models. The event consisted of input from De Montfort University, Loughborough University and University of Leicester, and gave students a varied insight into Higher Education and the range of opportunities that exist locally.

One of the sessions delivered was **Archaeological Illustration** in which Debbie Miles-Williams and Dr Mike Hawkes led a session to explore archaeological illustration by letting the participants get up close and handle real artefacts. The students were tasked to use their skills with Art, English and Maths to draw, measure and write about the artefacts. The groups of students then presented their work to others to guess what artefact they had worked with.

There was great feedback from the students:

"I enjoyed the cooperative nature and I made some new friends"

"It has helped me to realise that Maths and English skills are needed no matter what my university choices

"I have learnt how far people get with Art and Design"

"It was fun and educational but it helped me decide what I want to do (with Uni and College, etc.)"

Primary University Experience Day (Children in Care), 30th March 2017: Discovering the King Richard III Archaeology Interactive Activity

Members of the Archaeology Outreach Team (Debbie Miles-Williams, Mike Hawkes and Debbie Frearson) ran *Discovering the King Richard III Archaeology Interactive Activity* at the Primary University Experience Day here at Leicester for 33 children in care in Years 5/6. The aim of their visit to the university is to raise aspirations in relation to HE, allow young people to improve their understanding of HE by familiarising themselves with a university campus, demystify the experience of getting into and succeeding in HE and break down the stereotype of those who go to university. It also allows them to work with positive undergraduate role models (Ambassadors) and increase their self-confidence and motivation. Our activity began with a short presentation to introduce "What is Archaeology and the Discovery of King Richard III'' followed by two interactive activities showing the armour and weapons used in battle, the diet Richard III had and the injuries he received at the Battle of Bosworth. Of the event, Debbie Miles-Williams says: "The university's Widening Participation Team invited us back to deliver our activity this year as last year's delivery (and our first attendance) resulted in student evaluation showing that **96% enjoyed the Richard III activity and 32% said it was their favourite part of the day - high praise indeed!**"

More outreach news...

- One of our former Leicester Young Archaeologists Club (YAC) members, Naomi Cooper, has applied to undertake her work experience with us in ACC (Archaeology & Classics in the Community); and ULAS (Debbie Miles-Williams/Mat Morris) will act as mentors. She is one of the first students to be taking a placement as part of her BSc degree in Archaeological Practice with Professional Placement at the University of Winchester.
- We hope to have another of our former YAC members, Josh Catermole, joining us in the autumn as an undergraduate.
- The 'Awesome Archaeology Summer School Residential' that we have run for a few years — now in collaboration with Lucy Croucher in the Widening Participation Team, Marketing and Student Recruitment — resulted in recruiting a student, Lewis Batchelor, who is now ending his second year with the School and will be a volunteer for the Bradgate Park Outreach Programme this year.
- And, finally, a previous work placement pupil with Debbie Miles-Williams and Nick Cooper, Chloe Bolsover, is now in her final degree year here in the School!

Life at the Cross-roads: How street intersections shaped Roman socio-spatial experience

Matt Selheimer (PhD student)

The 4-way crossroads intersection at the via delle Terme and via di Mercurio in Pompeii (Matt Selheimer, 2015)

Street intersections and the spaces surrounding them greatly influence experience and behaviour in urban environments. Modern urban planning and design theory shows the key roles intersections play in subdividing space, facilitating movement, shaping pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow, focusing the attention of passersby, providing a place for public engagement and display, facilitating commercial transactions, influencing criminal activity, and more.

Despite these great influences, and an expanded interest in street networks and traffic flows in Roman scholarship, a focused analysis of the spatial environment surrounding Roman urban street intersections has not been undertaken in classical scholarship. By analysing intersections through relevant Latin vocabulary and textual references, through their material remains, and by applying both archaeological theory and modern urban planning and design theory, this research project seeks to expand our understanding of socio-spatial usage within the Roman urban fabric and to develop predictive models that can be applied to guide future excavation and survey work. In so doing, the research project will extend beyond current approaches using space syntax theory, research on specific usage types at intersections (e.g. Ellis 2004 on Pompeian bars), and prior limited statistical analysis approaches.

Building upon field research experience for my MA Dissertation (University of Leicester 2016), Pompeii forms the foundational case study with plans to expand the dataset to Ostia and Roman urban environments outside of Italy. Thematic elements explored include commercial, domestic, religious, administrative, recreational, and hybrid/combined uses. My principal research questions are:

- How were intersections conceptualised by the Romans?
- How did the Romans use the environment around intersections and how did this differ based on location, street hierarchy, and over time?
- How might analysis of intersection environments enable new understanding of partially or non-excavated sites and areas?

Stibbe Roman Mosaic: Site Tour and Hands-on Activities, May 2017

Late May saw Debbie Miles-Williams, as Outreach Officer, working with site archaeologists at the ULAS Stibbe Excavations (see ULAS article pp 4-5) where local schools, and beyond (we had a school from Grimsby visit!), were invited to view the amazing Roman mosaics on the site, take part in finds washing and hear talks about Roman pottery. Two children were so excited the night before their visit that they made Roman shields and brought them with them! Here is some feedback:

"I really liked seeing the mosaics and the layout of the Roman house, it was really clear and you could see where the walls had been. I also loved doing the pottery cleaning, it was fun to do something with our hands."

"I liked the trip to the archaeological dig. My favourite part was the mounds of mud (I love mud) and the archaeologists (they were very nice) and they were digging up a Roman house."

"I am very glad that we went on the trip because of how interesting it all was. I particularly enjoyed learning about the pottery and how much information you can find out from so little and all the connections you can make. I hope we get the chance to go somewhere similar again."

Many thanks to site archaeologists Helen, Esther 1 and Esther 2, Joe and Huw for their fantastic tours and talks. Also thanks to Site Director Dr Gavin Speed, to ULAS and to the developers for allowing this great opportunity for 506 pupils and teachers to learn about the heritage on their doorstep! https://www.facebook.com/SAAHOutreach/

Nick Cooper writes about Max

"If you've been at the School for longer than a few years then you will be sad to hear that my long-time canine companion, Max, has recently been put to sleep at the ripe old age of 14 (100 in dog years). Max was a popular member of staff for over 10 years, helping me teach in the ceramics lab, attending ULAS board meetings and generally making a nuisance of himself whenever there was food in the foyer. He was mystery guest switching on the Christmas lights one year and more people in the School signed his 10th birthday card than did my 50th (I took it well). Thanks for all the love/tolerance you heaped upon him; I like to think he lifted staff morale higher than he lowered the academic tone of the place!"

'Max' by Neil Christie

A lovely pup and faithful friend
Such a special hound was he
Renowned and loved by all who met
This clever, wise doggy

Companion, spur and confidant
A presence warm and near
A loyal little listener
Devoted, patient, dear.

Max was pretty nearly human
He was worldly-wise for sure
Such a happy chirpy chappy
A pup you'd not ignore

From his ULAS under-desk location
he ruled the Underpass
he knew lots of nooks and crannies
Neo lithics, Roman glass

He held back from gnawing skull bone
But could help on cattle bone
Which he'd quietly slow-nibble
When the master was on phone

Max could take in learned meetings
he would sigh at Nick's long calls
He was good at missing emails
He could rub up any walls

He appreciated ULAS parties
Even Cooper's DJ grooves
He could moon dance with the best of them
But would howl at Nick's dance moves

Max was more than faithful hound though
He was treasure totally
Bright-eyed and waggy-tailed
Dearest Max, we'll miss you, R.I.P.

Woodland Management at Kedleston Hall

Adam Thuraisingham *explores what's on offer on a National Trust Working Holiday*

In February I went on a working holiday with the National Trust, where I mucked in with other volunteers and a ranger team to help maintain the woodland at Kedleston Hall.

We stayed at a working farmhouse in the grounds of Calke Abbey, "the un-stately home". Home Farm was made up of renovated 18th century farm buildings, with lots of original features - unpainted woodwork, meat hanging hooks, and a well pump with slate trough. Despite being in cloudy Derbyshire it didn't feel bleak at all, and I took some great photos of lingering sunsets and frosty daybreaks (all replete with sheep). There was a gorgeous farm dog who spent most of the time running at break-neck speeds ahead of the farmer's landy, but she was kind enough to stop (very briefly) for a photo too. Evenings at the farm were much more relaxing than any beach holiday I've ever been on.

We travelled daily to the work site at Kedleston, an 18th-century country house with Robert Adam interiors and pleasure grounds, built for entertaining the aristocracy. The work mostly took place in the woodland areas, where we learned practical conservation skills such as tree-felling, scrub clearing, and building rudimentary habitats. Chopping trees down was wonderfully therapeutic, good exercise, and a great way to keep warm in the crisp winter air. At the end of the day when we climbed back up the hill towards the Hall, we could look down on the grounds and easily observe the fruits of our labour. I learned much from the rangers about the science of the ecosystems, the hard graft that goes into maintaining such vast spaces, and the politics of conservation in a consumer-driven organisation.

All in all I found it a very interesting and rewarding experience, and I would highly recommend National Trust working holidays to anyone. It certainly helped to have green fingers and a strong back, but it's something that people of all ages and abilities could get involved in.