



UNIVERSITY OF
LEICESTER



The Mosaic: *April 2024*

[In This Issue](#)

Welcome to the first issue of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History's newsletter '**The Mosaic**'!

We will be issuing this electronic newsletter quarterly for staff, students, alumni and the public alike to engage with what news, events and updates from across the School of Archaeology and Ancient History (SAAH) community.



Navigate to the different sections below by clicking on the icon in the bottom right, or by scrolling down.

- **Research News**
- **Teaching**
- **Our Campus-based Learners**
- **Our Distance Learners**
- **Postgraduate Research**
- **Professional Services**
- **Our Community**



Next issue: August 2024

Research News

Research, Enterprise and Impact Committee Dates

- *May 29th*
-

Meet our new Research Associate

Dr Alex Wilson

Research Associate - 'Body-Politics' ERC project

body-politics.com

“Growing up in York, I was always aware of the ‘Vikings’, but I first discovered Old Norse literature when I was given an old collection of Norse mythology. I was around seven at the time, and remember being fascinated by the weirdness of these stories about gods who fought with giants, carved magical runes, shaped mountains out of corpses, and, more than anything, squabbled and bickered with one another. I rediscovered these myths while studying English Literature at Durham University, and soon found myself engrossed by the Icelandic sagas, the narratives that the medieval Icelanders wrote about their Viking ancestors and the country’s early settlers. The stories felt strange and relatable all at once: intensely violent and obsessed with honour, but with such deftly drawn characters and surprising psychological insights that I wanted to immerse myself in this literature. And I’ve been lucky enough to do just that for the last decade, having been working in medieval literature in the UK and for several years in Germany. My research focuses on law and legality, especially as expressed in saga literature, as a means of understanding how people in the past thought about themselves and each other: what obligations they felt, what expectations they had, and how they envisaged their society. On the ‘Body-Politics’ project here in Leicester, I’m exploring how medieval Scandinavian law codes shaped (and were shaped by) bodies, and how people embodied legal concepts in their day-to-day lives.”



Click through below stack to discover what 'Body-Politics' project principal investigator, Dr Marianne Hem Eriksen has been discussing in recent media appearances ...



15/03/2024

Appearance on the History Hit podcast 'Betwixt the sheets', discussing Viking sexuality.

[Listen here \(link\)](#)

20/03/2024

Broadcast of the BBC Radio 3 The Essay: 'Weird Viking Bodies'. A 15 minute segment in which Marianne shared the results and stories from the ERC project 'Body-Politics'.

[Listen here \(link\)](#)

26/03/2024

Panel debate on the BBC Radio 3 programme 'Free Thinking' where the 'Body-Politics' was further discussed around the theme 'Approaches to Death'.

[Listen here \(link\)](#)

[Good Fences, Good Neighbours](#)

In March, the Research Centre for Material Worlds Past & Present visited The Prehistoric Workshop, a new community archaeology venture in Whetstone outside Leicester. They cut coppice with replica bronze axes (courtesy of SAAH PhD student Hamish Darrah of the Leverhulme Trust project 'A New History of Bronze'), split timbers with satisfying ease, and experimented with different techniques for weaving a wattle fence. The event was supported by an Economic and Social Research Council 'Relationship Builder' grant, 'Good Fences, Good Neighbours' [ES/X004732/1], through which the School is building a research and outreach partnership with The Prehistoric Workshop.

Read more about The Prehistoric Workshop: <https://theprehistoricworkshop.co.uk/>















Teaching News

School Education Committee Dates

- *April 17th*

- *May 15th*
 - *June 12th*
-

Meet our new lecturers

Dr Kathryn Tempest

Lecturer in Roman History

"I first fell in love with the ancient world while on a primary school visit to the British Museum at the age of seven. I was thereafter determined to become an archaeologist – a feeling that only increased as I grew older and watched such films as *Romancing the Stone*, *The Jewel of the Nile*, and the Indiana Jones movies. A visit to Rome in my teens confirmed my commitment to the subject and I went on to study Classics at Royal Holloway, University of London. By this time, I had realised I wasn't cut out for the dirty work of archaeology. My encounters with the ancient world were through the written word which I could enjoy in the library or the comfort of my home, ideally with a dog or two by my side. And that is what I work on today – the texts of ancient Greece and Rome that reveal their unique political, social, and intellectual cultures. In particular I am a people person, and so I have written books on major personalities like Cicero and Brutus, the contemporaries of Julius Caesar. They belong to the period we call the Roman Republic, in the age before Rome's Emperors, and we have a huge amount of contemporary evidence in the form of legal and political speeches, letters, and treatises. Because this was an era of great civil conflict and mighty wars (not to mention the political assassination of Caesar), it has also been richly documented for us by later ancient historians. None of this evidence is straightforward to use and scholars are often divided on how best to interpret it. But I am grateful for their arguments: it keeps me in a job I love, and there is nothing better than sharing that passion with students and other enthusiasts of ancient history."



Dr Philippa Walton

Lecturer in Roman Archaeology

Like Kathryn, my love of archaeology was nurtured from an early age by the British Museum, although this time from afar. Throughout my childhood, I lived in New Zealand and looked forward to receiving packages of BM activity books through the post. I loved them all, but can still remember being captivated by one which focused on aspects of life in the Roman world. As a teenager, I returned to the UK and following encouragement from an inspirational Latin teacher, studied Classics at Cambridge. While I really enjoyed the course and was desperate to pursue a career in archaeology after I graduated, I was heavily pressured to get what my parents called a 'proper job'. As a result, I briefly joined the Civil Service and even more briefly the Metropolitan Police before breaking free and landing a trainee role in commercial archaeology. I've never looked back and have spent the past twenty years working as a Roman finds specialist in museums, universities and with the Portable Antiquities Scheme. My research now focuses on the stories that assemblages of Roman objects can tell us about everyday life and I'm currently working on a research project which explores how and why people threw things in rivers in Roman Britain and Germany. It's amazing to think how much influence a children's activity book can have on your life, particularly as I've just found out that it was written by Leicester's very own Prof. Simon James whose office I now occupy!



Dr Carmen Ting

Lecturer in Archaeological Science (materials)

Carmen is an archaeologist, specialising in materials analysis and ancient technologies. She obtained her PhD at the UCL Institute of Archaeology, using the changes and continuities in pottery production technologies so as to understand the nature of the so-called Classic Maya Collapse. She has since researched on the impact of European colonisation on indigenous technologies in the Caribbean to the rise of iron metallurgy in ancient Sudan. Her current research focuses on understanding the emergence of glazed tableware as a global commodity, using this as a proxy to delve into the broader debates on the origins and definition of globalisation. When she is not doing research, she likes to run, do yoga, cook and travel.



Leicester meets the Gold standard in TEF

University of Leicester is delighted to receive an [overall Gold in the Teaching Excellence Framework \(TEF\) 2023](#), which means the experience students have and the outcomes it leads to are typically outstanding. Well done to all our dedicated and hard-working teaching staff!



Our Campus-based learners

Student-Staff Committee Dates

- *May 8th (hybrid)*
-

3rd year undergraduate student, Caroline Cichock, shares her experience at the British School at Athens...

"This past year, I was able to have one of the best experiences of my life.

I had heard about the British School at Athens and its undergraduate course several times, but it was only after talking with Dr. Shipley and Dr. Stewart and receiving their encouragement, that I took the step and applied for the course. The entire time from acceptance to landing in Athens was spent eagerly anticipating the trip. Initially, I was a little worried that I would feel out of place among my fellow course-mates but was quickly proved wrong. The people who I attended with were, for the most part, just as excited and nervous as I was, and we were able to bond over the course of the trip.



1 - BSA Undergraduate class of 2023 at Sounion

During my time on this course, I was able to experience the rich historical and cultural heritage of Greece in a way that would not have been possible if I were to travel on my own. Almost every day was packed with things to see (Athens alone was almost half of the trip!) and we were led around these fantastic sites by tutors at the BSA who were extremely knowledgeable about the locations and subject matter. In addition to the tutors, we also had the opportunity to learn from archaeologists who were in the field and were even able to talk to people who were restoring parts of the Parthenon and see first-hand how they hand carved the marble. I was able to learn about topics that I had previously had no experience with such as Byzantine, Venetian, Ottoman, and modern-day Greece, as well as learning more about things I had already established an interest in during my time at Leicester, such as sanctuaries and how the surrounding topography can affect our understanding of them. Not only did this course give me valuable insights into a period of time and space that I love, but it really encouraged me to pursue Ancient History as a career, and for that, I am extremely grateful. I would absolutely recommend this to anyone who is wanting to expand their own horizons."



2 - The landscape of Brauron

Our Distance Learners

MA Classical Mediterranean student, Elizabeth Howell, shares her story...

"My eyes have been on the stars since 1995, when as a teenager I first watched the movie Apollo 13 on VHS. I am lucky enough today (some 30 years on) to be a full-time space journalist. I love history, too. Sometimes life has a funny way of bringing your passions together, such as when I recently wrote about declassified spy satellite images showing [400 newfound Roman forts](#) in the Middle East.

I joined the MA Classical Mediterranean program in October 2022 to follow my long-standing hobby learning Romano-British history, and to bring out the voices of the (often) unvoiced. I am really interested in those people who were at boundary zones during Roman times. In an undergraduate history degree I finished at Canada's Athabasca University, for example, I looked at the roles of women at Romano-British forts such as Vindolanda. Careful examinations of the archaeology is giving us new insights; brooches and spindle whorls show us where women were in the forts, while preserved wooden tablets bring to light their roles.

The picture we're seeing is of more female participation and freedom than we imagined even a decade or two ago, at least by some scholars' views.

I am very much encouraged so far by my time at Leicester, even at a distance from Ottawa, Canada. The library is incredibly fast with my requests. My personal tutor, Jan Haywood, has been unfailingly responsive and encouraging. And the materials at hand in my courses already show me such an emphasis on gender, diversity and lived experience. One of my most humbling moments in life was visiting the British Museum in 2022, alongside Romano-British forts like Vindolanda, to learn more about the women living there. I feel lucky to be where I am in my life, given what they encountered. As such, I do look forward to continuing my studies about the ancient "unvoiced" in my MA, and I can't wait to learn more."

More information - British Museum, Writing Tablet ([link](#))

Vindolanda, Writing Tablets ([link](#))



3 - A portion of the archaeology at Vindolanda Roman Fort in Hexham, Northumberland in June 2022. The fort has been extensively excavated. It is known for the discovery of wooden writing tablets uncovering evidence of daily individuals' lives.
Photo credit: Elizabeth Howell



4 - Elizabeth Howell at London's British Museum in June 2022 beside a Romano-British word writing tablet. The tablet was found at Vindolanda Roman Fort in Hexham, Northumberland. with a party invitation from Claudia Severa to Lepidina. The tablet has two individuals' handwriting on it and is widely interpreted as bearing the signature of Claudia Severa.

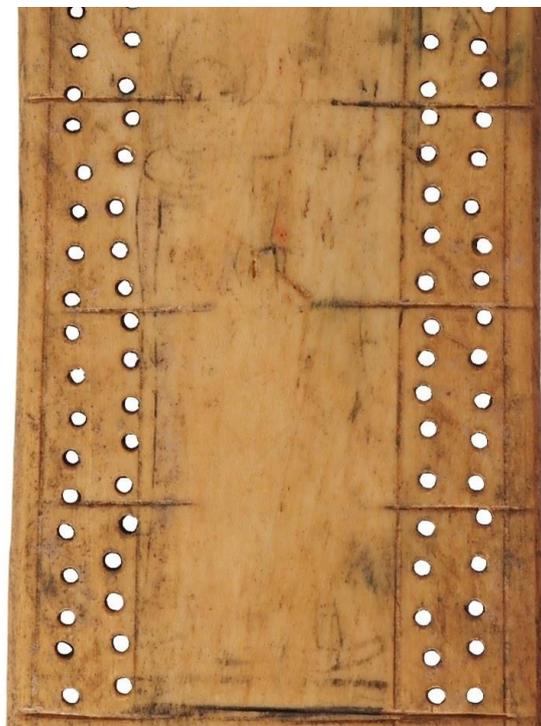
Photo credit: Elizabeth Howell

MA Archaeology and Heritage student, Harvey Doolan, reports on two artefacts recovered at Elizabeth Castle in Jersey...

"Throughout the summer of 2023, I was conducting an archaeological watching brief at the 18th-century Officers' Quarters at Elizabeth Castle, Jersey, as part of a renovation project to convert the structure into hostel style accommodation for local schools and community groups. Most of the artefacts encountered consisted of typical occupation debris, notably fragments of bottle glass, clay pipes, and goat or sheep bones. However, two of the objects recovered are worthy of note.

This first, is a suspected scrimshaw 18th-century cribbage board. The board was hand-carved from a piece of cattle rib and includes a lightly carved portrait of a woman in late 18th-century style clothing, replete with a bonnet, on the face of the board. This board

would have been used to keep the score for two players whilst playing the card game known as cribbage. There are few other excavated examples of these boards, with one of the few parallels being an earlier ivory board recovered during excavations at Jamestown (Virginia, USA), which had been discarded in a refuse pit between 1607-25 CE



Use the slider on the right to compare the Cribbage board close up

This watching brief has presented an opportunity to gain valuable insights into the daily lives of the castle's garrison and the full results will be publicly accessible via the Jersey Historic Environment Record.

The second artefact is a small, hand-made bone disc with a central perforation, which would have served as the 'skeleton' for a cloth or thread button. These discs are frequently found in sizeable quantities at other late 18th-century British military sites across the globe due to the great need for buttons of various sizes for the uniforms of this period. It appears that the garrison at Elizabeth Castle were resourceful at provisioning themselves in the face of inconsistent deliveries of supplies from army contractors, a common experience of soldiery at this time."



Postgraduate Student News

"Digging Deeper": The SAAH 2024 PGR Conference

After months of planning, the day of the annual Postgraduate Researcher showcase, "Digging Deeper", was held. Hosted in the Innovation Hub on 27 March 2024, sixteen of the School of Archaeology and Ancient History's own postgraduate researchers presented talks, videos and workshops. Topics ranged from human and non-human animal interactions to anglophone bias in academia to pirates in the first century BCE, and so much more, including a poetry workshop. This was truly a showcase highlighting the talented work and innovative research of the SAAH postgraduate community. If you missed it, do not worry – the entire conference was recorded and will be available to view soon!



5 - Final year PhD student Abigail Ford presents her research on magic and everyday items in the medieval period.

Photo credit: Jonny Graham



6 - Final year PhD student Abigail Ford presents her research on magic and everyday items in the medieval period.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



7 - Final year PhD student Abigail Ford discusses the role of the spindle whorl in everyday rituals in the medieval period.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson



8 - First year PhD student Alvaro Ortega Gonzalez presents on isotopic evidence of diet in medieval Portugal.

Photo credit: Brodhi Molloy



9 - First year PhD student Alvaro Ortega Gonzalez discusses a plot describing the isotopic evidence of diet in medieval Portugal.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson



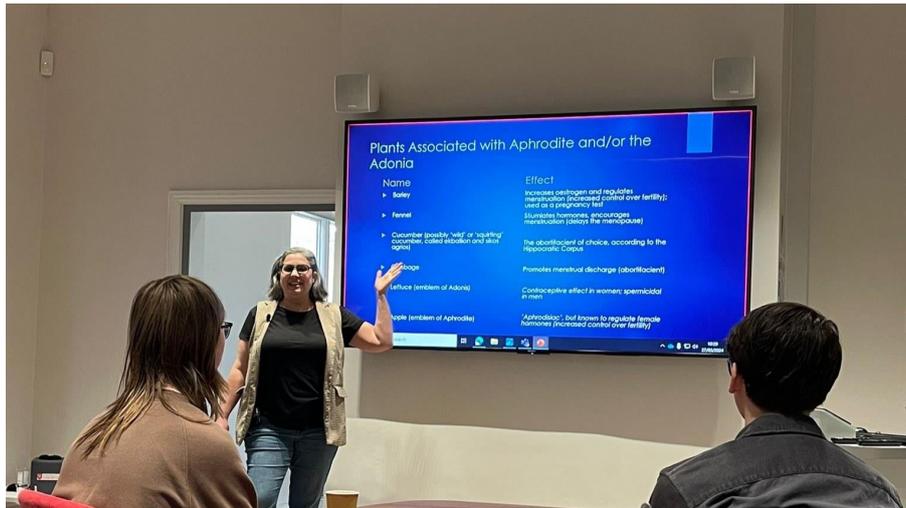
10 - First year PhD student Alvaro Ortega Gonzalez discusses a plot describing the isotopic evidence of diet in medieval Portugal.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson



11 - Second year PhD student Amy Arden presents on evidence of knowledge networks and women-centered festivals in Ancient Greece.

Photo credit: Brodhi Molloy



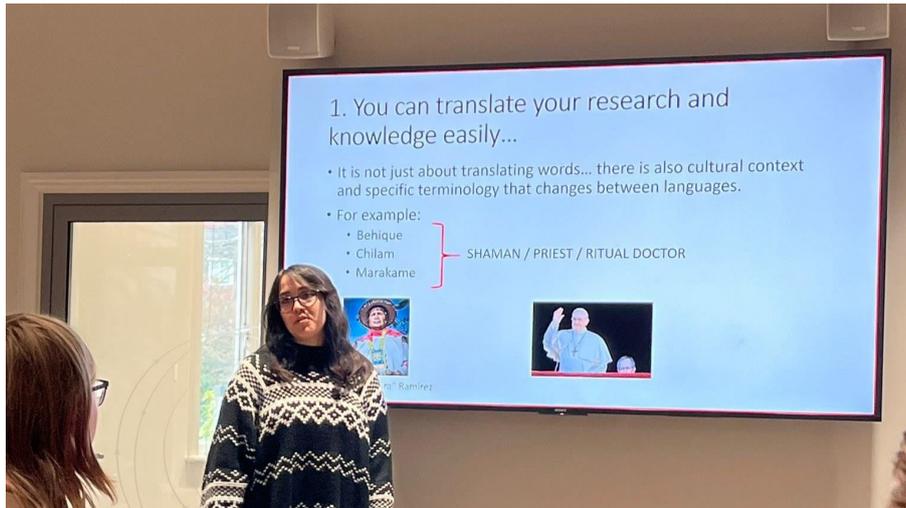
12 - Second year PhD student Amy Arden presents on evidence of knowledge networks and women-centered festivals in Ancient Greece.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



13 - Audience watches a screening of PhD student Amy Arden's video on "The Mystery of Aquarius: Finding the Apotheosis of Hyakinthos in the Heavens."

Photo credit: Jonny Graham



14 - Second year PhD student Judith Lopez presents on anglophone bias in academia, specifically in archaeology.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



15 - Final year PhD student Andy Rogers on the "Liquid Gender" exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



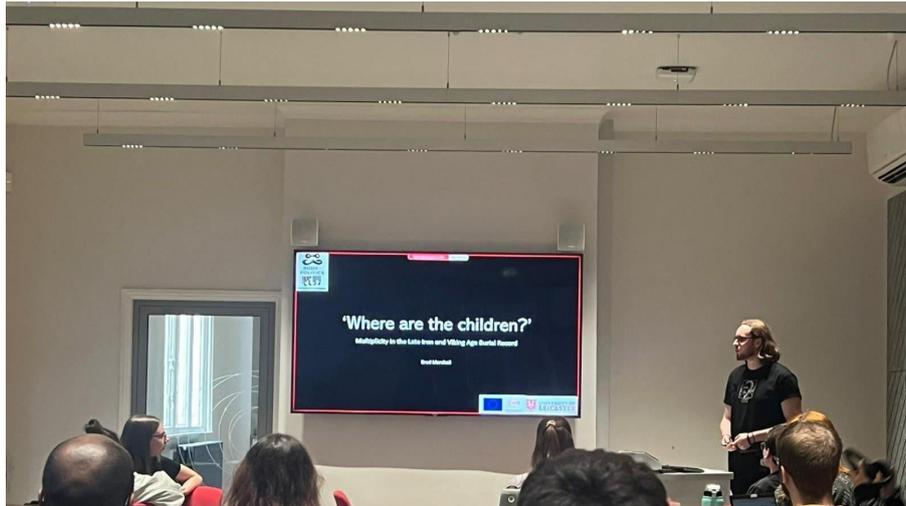
16 - Final year PhD student Andy Rogers on the "Liquid Gender" exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre.

Photo credit: Jonny Graham



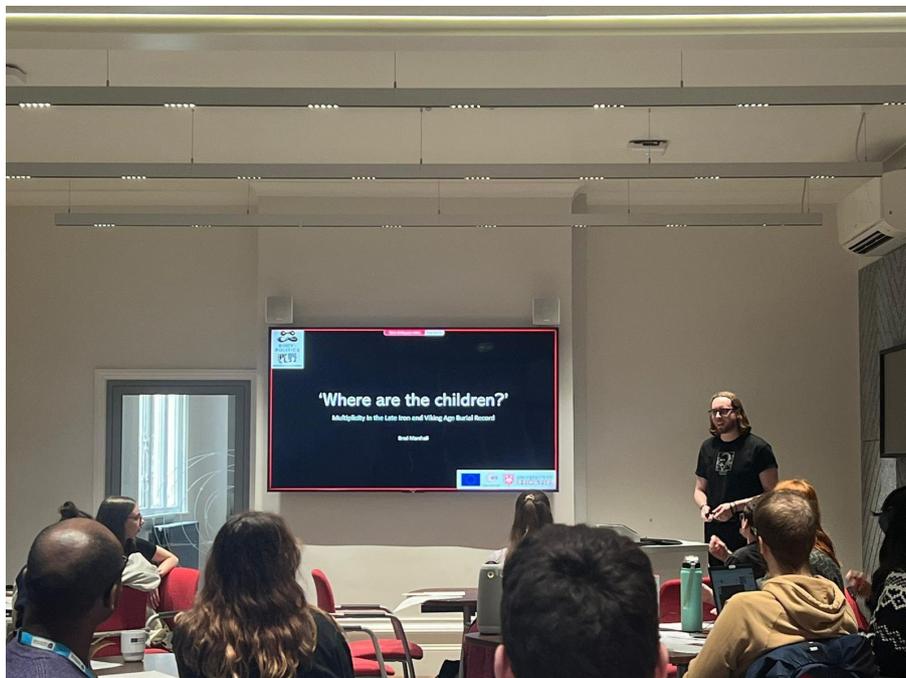
17 - Final year PhD student Andy Rogers on the "Liquid Gender" exhibition at the Sainsbury Centre.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson



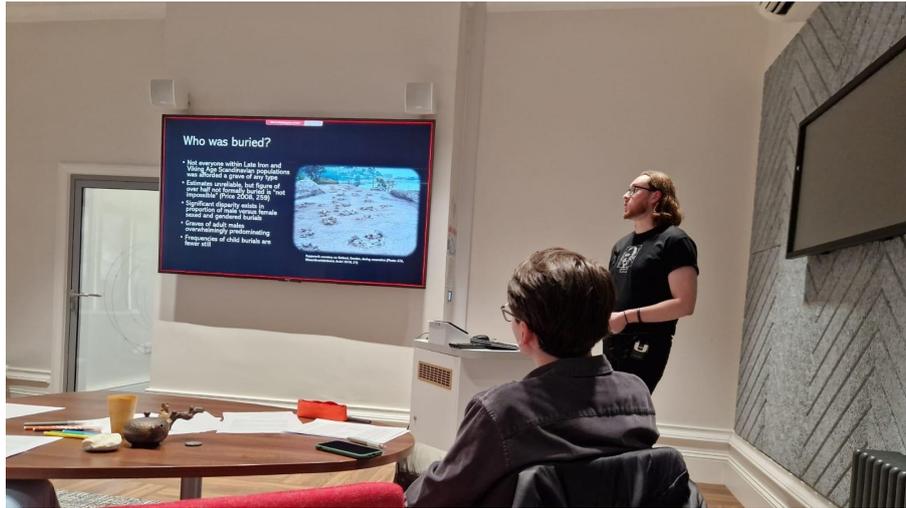
18 - Second year PhD student Brad Marshall presents his research into child burials in Viking Age Scandinavia.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



19 - Second year PhD student Brad Marshall presents his research into child burials in Viking Age Scandinavia.

Photo credit: Jonny Graham



20 - Second year PhD student Brad Marshall presents his research into child burials in Viking Age Scandinavia.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson



21 - Second year PhD student Elliot Elliott presents on the skeletal pathologies of the British red squirrel.

Photo credit: Brodhi Molloy



22 - PhD student Kai Francis presents his research on piracy in the first century BCE.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson



23 - PhD student Kai Francis presents his research on piracy in the first century BCE.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



24 - First year PhD student Kate Evetts presents on evidence for and the study of medieval urban gardens.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



25 - First year PhD student Kate Evetts presents on evidence for and the study of medieval urban gardens.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



26 - Final year PhD student Jonny Graham presents on constructing a narrative of the Neolithic using the Geordie dialect.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



27 - Second year PhD student Brodhie Molloy hosts a workshop on the role of heritage in the current housing crisis.

Photo credit: Brodhie Molloy



28 - Students engage in a poetry exercise hosted by first year PhD student Emma Thompson.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson



29 - Second year PhD student Renate Larssen discusses the relationship between humans and non-human animals through the lens of archaeoethology.

Photo credit: Emma Thompson

Professional Services Updates

School Meeting (all staff) Dates

- *June 19th*
-

Finance Committee Dates

- *May 14th*
 - *July 5th*
-

[Michael Atiyah Opening](#)

On the 7th of February the School of Archaeology and Ancient History officially opened new research laboratories in the Michael Atiyah building. These new laboratories and the equipment they house represent a step-change in the capabilities we can offer researchers and practitioners in heritage and archaeological sciences in the Midlands and beyond.

Equipment includes scanning electron microscopy (SEM), micro XRF, Raman spectroscopy, advanced light microscopy suite, a new biomolecular laboratory, and included equipment for high-resolution 3D scanning (high-resolution at a small scale for artefacts as well as large-scale outdoor mapping) and 3D printing. These facilities provide SAAH a firm base from which Leicester can emerge as a regional centre for world-leading research in Heritage Sciences, serve local and regional partners, as well as finding new ways of engaging communities in citizen science via the Heritage Hub.

Watch the videos of our staff below explain how the equipment is helping to champion our research-inspired education at the University.



30 - Dr Rachel Crellin - Introduces the hoard!



31 - Prof Ollie Harris - 3D scanning



32 - Dr Dawid Sych - A New History of Bronze project

Health & Safety

Staff who are looking for health and safety advice and information are reminded that Dr Andy Tams and Dr Rachel Armitage are our Departmental Safety Officers. Staff and postgraduate researchers can access all health and safety information via the [Health and Safety SharePoint pages](#).

Space Updates

Across the University space is now at a premium and we are working to think of creative and appropriate solutions to these challenges.

- Room 0.01 in the Archaeology and Ancient History building has now been turned into office space. The old use-wear room 1.08 is being adapted into a bookable meeting room. Staff and postgraduate researchers who require a private meeting space or a place to hot-desk for short periods should contact saah@le.ac.uk for bookings.

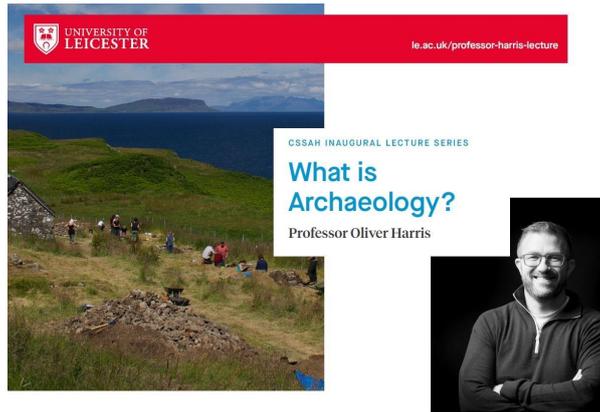
Administrative Professional of the Year Nomination

Congratulations to Ingrid Dyson, School Administrator, for being nominated for the Administrator of the Year Award at the East Midlands PA Awards. Thank you to everyone who provided testimonials for the application! You can read more about the nomination criteria and event here <https://pa-forum.co.uk/pa-awards-east-midlands/>

Our Community

Prof Oliver Harris' inaugural lecture

Professor Ollie Harris delivered his inaugural lecture *What is Archaeology?*. This was well-attended and Dr Rachel Crellin gave a lovely introduction and created the very entertaining inaugural bingo to play alongside the lecture!



Events and Important Dates

- Careers Drop In for students - every Tuesday, 11.00-11.50 in the Social Learning Hub in the Archaeology and Ancient History building (0.16)
- April 30th - June 16th: Graduation registration. Students who are due to graduate this summer must register by the closing date.
- May 26th - 27th, Rural Life at Lampton Hall. Recently departed Technician, Ian Reeds, will be a stallholder for his [Watermead Leather \(link\)](#) products.
- June 7th: Semester 2 ends
- July 16th, 14:00, School of Archaeology and Ancient History graduation ceremony. More information can be found on the [graduation webpages \(link\)](#).
- **Open Days:** [Book Now via this link](#)
 - Saturday, 13 July
 - Saturday, 14th September
 - Saturday, 5th October
 - Saturday, 9th November
- **Offer Holder Days**
 - Saturday, 20th April
- **Bank holidays**
 - Monday, 6th May
 - Monday, 27th May
 - Monday, 26th August



RURAL LIFE AT *Lampport Hall*

ATKINSON ACTION HORSES
DANCING SHEEP & FALCONRY



TRADITIONAL FAIRGROUND
VINTAGE TRACTORS
ANIMALS
ARCHERY
CLIMBING WALL
FOOD WALK & BEER TENT
SHOPPING



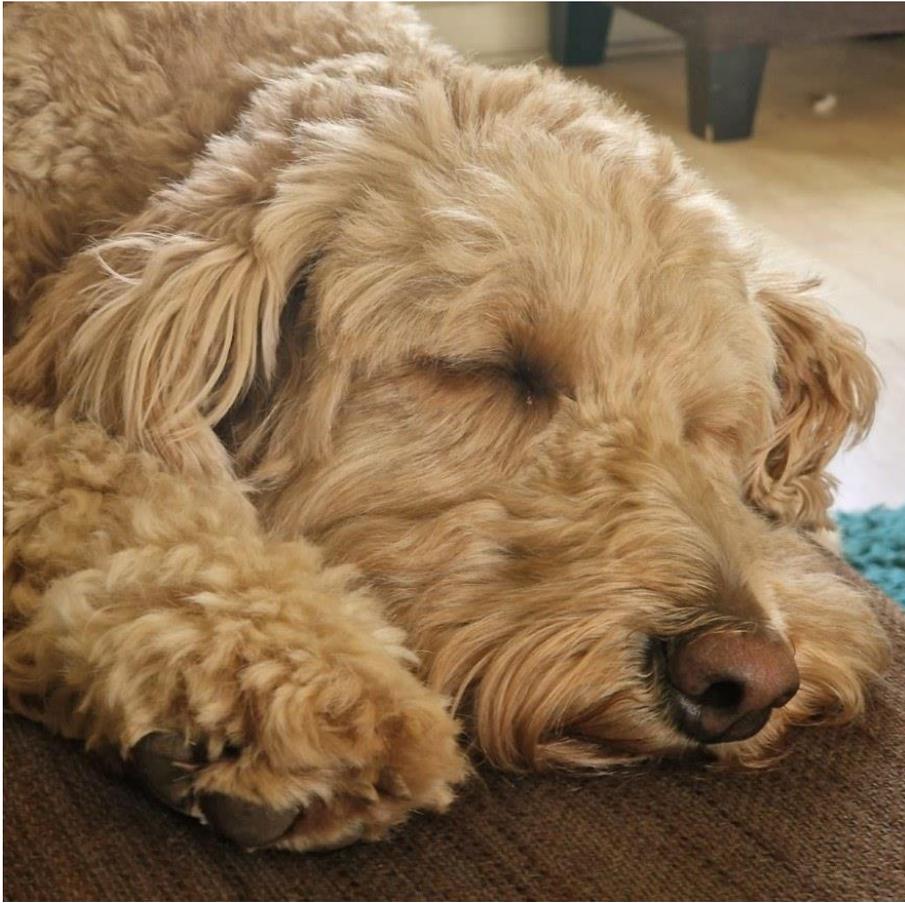
SUNDAY 26TH & MONDAY 27TH MAY
Lampport Hall, Northampton, NN6 9HD

WWW.LAMPORTHALL.CO.UK
01604 686272



- May 26th - 27th, Rural Life at Lampport Hall. Recently departed Technician, Ian Reeds, will be a stallholder for his [Watermead Leather \(link\)](#) products.

Our Community Photos



33 - A picture of my best girl, Pebble! She likes to sleep on me or next to me while I read! She is also well known to some students due to her background appearance in various DL recorded lectures! – Dr. Rachel Crellin



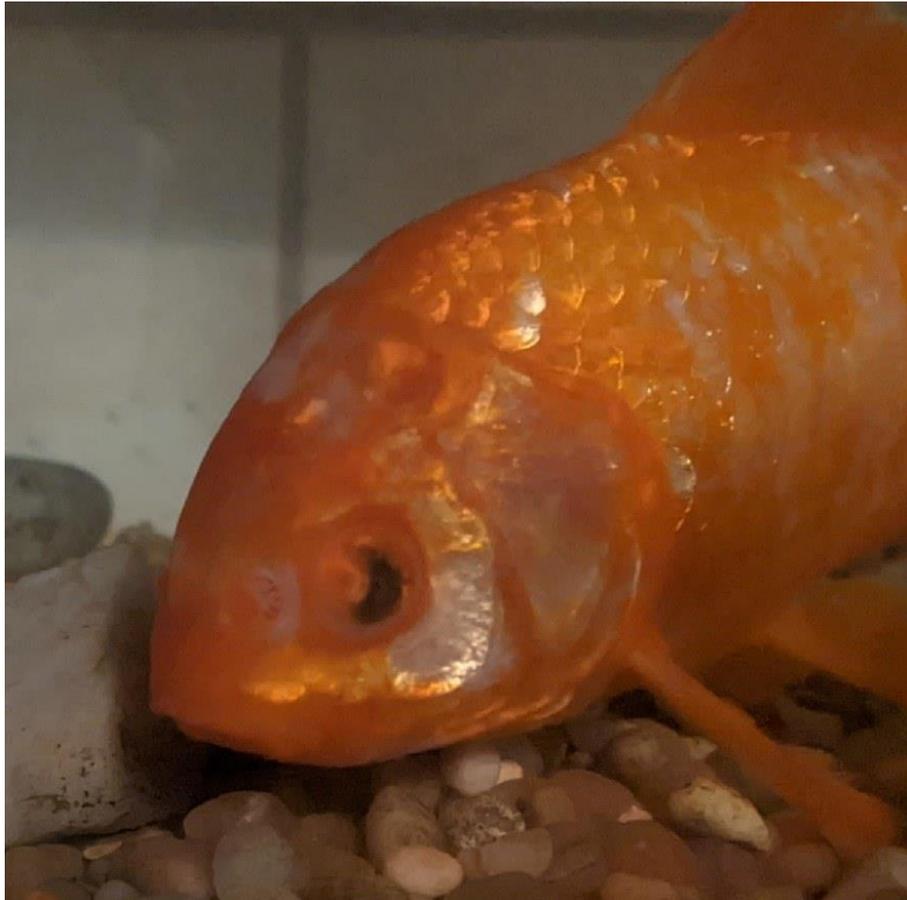
34 - A picture of Puss looking regal as is her right - Charlotte Higgins



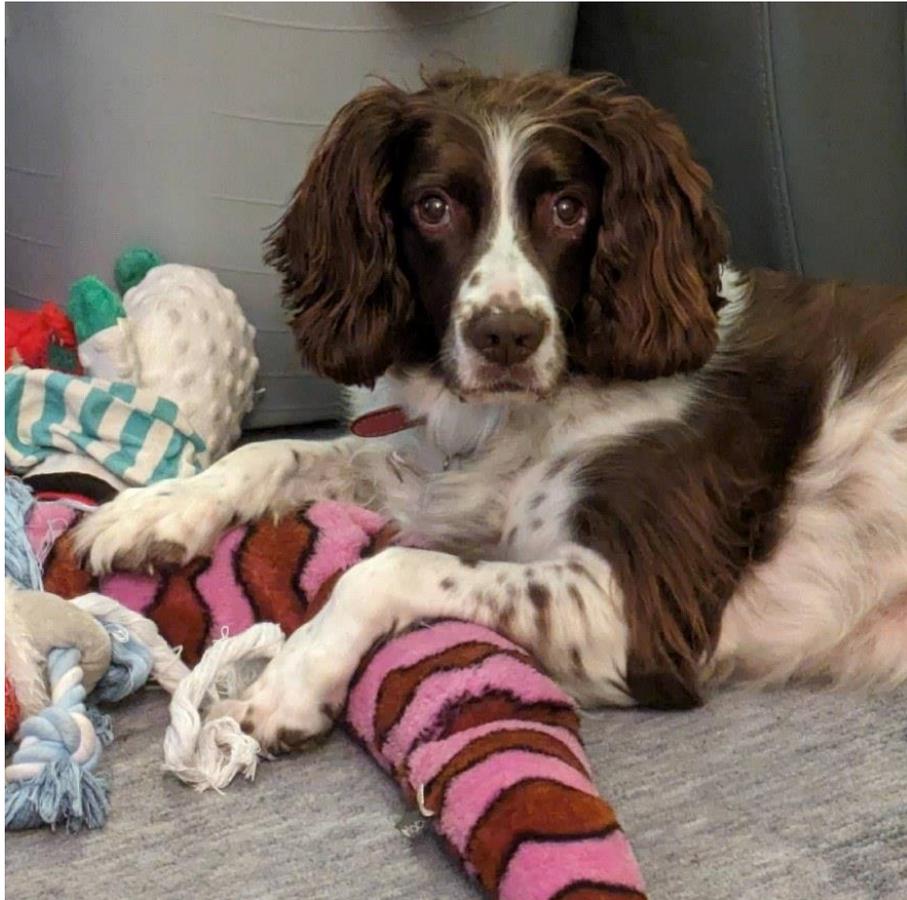
35 - My office windowsill with my pileas (Chinese moneyplants) and an eccentric succulent. – Dr. Alice Samson



36 - Rabbits Pickle (floppy ears) and Lando (white and ginger) - Charlotte Higgins



37 - The fish is known simply as Cynthia. Her origins are lost to the mists of time but she is rumoured to have been bred at a KGB black site near Tomsk in Siberia. For the last 20 years she has been living a secret life as a common goldfish with Ollie, and refuses to speak of her dark past in the cold war. – Prof. Ollie Harris



38 - My springer spaniel, Izzie. She's the dumbest, cleverest dog I've met. She learns tricks so easily but is so terrified of mobile phone and tries to eat fire and fireworks.

– Molly Mather



39 - Sir Teddington Edward Antetokounmpo Rowley-Conwy, known to friends, fans and family as Teddy Edward. His hobbies include sleeping, eating and running from the top of the bottom of the house to keep fit. – Prof. Ollie Harris



40 - A few models I painted recently, still learning but enjoying the process! – Natalie Hayward