

# Archaeology News



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## Introduction

Dr Melanie Giles (UG Admissions & Recruitment Officer)

Dr Lindy Crewe (PG Director for MA & PhD Programmes)

Welcome to our Summer 2016 Newsletter! This magazine showcases the range of exciting activity in Archaeology at Manchester University. In our department, undergraduates and postgraduates play a key role in discovering new knowledge about the past. This issue takes you from their discoveries of some of the earliest art in the UK and the Channel Islands, to evidence for Bronze Age beer brewing in the Mediterranean (a subject close to many archaeologists' hearts)! The newsletter will introduce you to some of the staff who will teach you at Manchester, as well as the exciting fieldwork and employment opportunities that await our students. We hope you will gain a sense of the friendly and inspiring atmosphere in our department, its commitment to supporting academic excellence in your studies, and its marvelous resources. Come and join us: *learning from the past, for the future.*

Above: Kissonerga-Skalia, Cyprus. Right: Dorstone Hill, Herefordshire.





Above: the Mesolithic pendant from Star Carr.

Left: one of the three carved Palaeolithic plaques from Les Varines.

## Art from the past: Ice Age art from Jersey and Mesolithic art from Yorkshire – the research of Dr Chantal Conneller

Chantal specializes in the hunter-gatherers of NW Europe, particularly the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods. Whilst being an accomplished lithic (worked stone) specialist, she has authored major new texts on materialism, spanning the fields of archaeology and anthropology.

In the last year, Dr Chantal Conneller has had extraordinary success in discovering examples of art made by some of the earliest inhabitants of Britain and the Channel Islands. The first example is a piece of Palaeolithic art from the site of Les Varines, Jersey possibly dating back 14,000 years. Chantal has joined forces with a formidable team of co-experts – Dr Matt Pope (UCL), Dr Beccy Scott (British Museum), Dr Martin Bates (University of Wales Trinity St David), Dr Andy Shaw (University of Southampton), Dr Richard Bates (University of St Andrews) and Dr Ed Blinkhorn. Together with their students, they are exploring the occupation of Jersey during a period of great climate and environmental change.

For long periods during the Palaeolithic, Jersey would not have been cut off from the Continent, but formed part of the landmass of France. It was cut across by a deep river (now the centre of the modern channel) and the rest of the island formed an attractive elevated plain, dissected by other deep rivers and now-submerged uplands.

Hunter-gatherer groups would have homed in on Jersey as a great vantage point overlooking the Gulf of St Malo. The remains of that relict landscape can be glimpsed in clefts and fissures in the great sea cliffs of the modern island, as well as some of the fine silts and sands infilling inland valleys. Other evidence is now hidden under the sea, so the team are making use of the small windows of opportunity available to them. Dr Conneller says: “The ‘art’ we found last year is a slab of stone engraved with incised curved and straight lines: typical of non-representational ‘Magdalenian’ era art. I am delighted that the discoveries made by our students now form the centrepiece of a new exhibition ‘Ice Age Island’ at the Jersey Museum & Art Gallery”.

Meanwhile, the site of Star Carr dates to the Mesolithic period, when a lake dominated the landscape of the Vale of Pickering, bringing people and animals together at its shore. Evidence of hunting is represented in weaponry, alongside

craftwork: the tiny struck flakes and impressive blades diagnostic of this period. Remains of the earliest ‘house’ in Britain and a laid timber platform show the community’s long-term commitment to the site, over many seasons and generations. Unique antler ‘frontlets’ might be evidence of ritual activity.

The engraved shale pendant found last year has been analysed using cutting-edge RSI scanning techniques – winning the team (co-directed by Prof Nicky Milner of York University and Dr Barry Taylor of Chester University) a coveted British Archaeological Award for 2016!

Check out their latest discoveries at the project websites:

<http://www.jerseyheritage.org/ice-age-island>

<http://www.starcarr.com/>



## Postgraduate-led Lithics Workshop

We are very proud of our postgrads: our PhD students pioneer new research and represent the university in international and national conferences. Many of them will work as Graduate Teaching Assistants, Museum Volunteers, supervise our digs and help with our exhibitions. They go into local schools and create exciting workshops for the Museum's 'Big Saturday' family events. Find them in the labs and Common Room!



The 2016 'Immersed in Lithics Workshop' was organized by PhD students Julie Birchenall, Ellon Souter and John Pipriani, working with Dr Elizabeth Healey, to bring undergraduate and postgraduate students from the UK together to share ideas about working stone. This included a series of mini-lectures as well as a practical 'hands-on' knapping workshop – experimental archaeology forms a key part of investigating

the past at Manchester. The conference also took in a tour of the museum and introduced students to our two laboratories. Good use was made of our newly catalogued artefact collections.

Not content with one day of hard work, the team then helped out the following day at the Manchester Museum's Stone Age 'Big Saturday': knapping stone, painting, drawing artefacts and handling the museum's worked stone collections – a golden opportunity in advance of the newly opened 'Neanderthals' exhibition.

Above left: polished stone axes from Dorstone Hill, Herefordshire.



## Postgraduate student in focus: Weathering the Weather with Katie Mills

Katie Mills is an old hand at Manchester University, and a key member of our postgrad community. A graduate of the Archaeology & Anthropology BA (Hons) degree, she spent a couple of years working before returning for an MA in Archaeology, and now, a PhD funded in part by a Manchester University Humanities Bursary.

Katie's topic is the archaeology of weather: its impact upon vulnerable heritage from a scientific point of view, but more importantly, how the weathering of monuments and artefacts affects the value of the past.

"Consider the great rock art of the Peak District or Northumberland, or the ruined castles and churches of North Yorkshire – their status and meaning is partly derived from the affect that weather has had upon them. Erosion, decay, ruination – this helps create the rather romantic relationship we often have with such places" Katie notes, "and seeing them in different seasons - wind, rain and sun - also affects the experience we have at such sites. This is a neglected aspect of their heritage

management; we often think practically of the damage being done by weather, yet we are a nation fondly obsessed with it!"

Katie's research will take her to some wild places where she will use her anthropology skills to interview both specialists and members of the general public about their impressions of the weather and weathering at these sites. As a popular GTA for UGs, she also makes a valuable addition to our staff.

Left and Right: Katie joins Dr Melanie Giles and Dr Hannah Cobb on a fieldtrip to Gardom's Edge, Peak District, sharing expertise and gathering research evidence on the management of vulnerable local heritage





## Grave Goods: objects and death in later prehistoric Britain

Working with her colleagues Dr Duncan Garrow (University of Reading) and Dr Neil Wilkin (British Museum) Dr Melanie Giles has secured a three-year AHRC Major Research Grant, worth £842, 000 to investigate why people in prehistoric Britain buried objects with their dead. What did such artefacts mean?

The team will examine when and why people began burying objects with the dead, from the Neolithic through to the late Iron Age. Undertaking the first long-term, large-scale investigation into prehistoric grave goods they will explore the relationship between people and things, arguing that even in death 'objects matter'.

Using the results of cutting-edge osteological and material analysis, and drawing together recent and antiquarian discoveries, the teams will explore whether these were status symbols, personal possessions, gifts from the living, or equipment for the afterlife. Melanie Giles says "From flint blades to pots, baskets and jewellery, bronze daggers to iron swords, we are studying grave goods not just as markers of major technological and social change but fundamental shifts in ways of living in the world: negotiating relations between the living and the dead."

The Manchester Museum will host a major workshop during the project, bringing

experts from across north-western Europe to debate the topic, with talks at regional museums and a final public conference. A major legacy will be the re-display of grave goods within the British Museum's prehistoric gallery - reaching millions of international visitors each year.

The project will also target thousands of primary school children currently studying British prehistory: working with the internationally renowned

children's poet Michael Rosen, who writes: "The way we die, the way we talk about it and create ceremonies is a crucial part of how we see ourselves as people. I'm very excited by the idea of immersing myself in the way peoples of the past did this... Most poets write poems to start conversations that go on way beyond themselves. I hope that what I write for this project will start conversations on these important matters.'

Above and left: the burial and grave goods from Barnack, Cambridgeshire, courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum.





## Bronze Age settlement in Cyprus – brewing up with Dr Lindy Crewe

One of Manchester's most popular digs for UG students is Lindy's site in Cyprus. Guaranteed sunshine, the Mediterranean sea, good food and a cold beer – what more could you want from your archaeological fieldwork? Our students have discovered that out the Bronze Age farmers of Cyprus shared our taste for a refreshing beverage at the end of a hard day's work...



been re-organising itself at a time of societal change – collaborating to work together on projects of craftwork, agricultural processing and food production.

Amongst the courtyard, Lindy and her team found debris from cooking and heating, which complements evidence for the production of beer in the same area. It may well be that making food and alcohol together was a way in which individual families co-operated in commensal feasting events, binding people from different kin groups together in a tightly-knit, convivial sense of community – the first steps towards more urban ways of life.

Evidence for the production and serving of liquids and fishing activity, can be seen in the finds – delicate juglets and fine

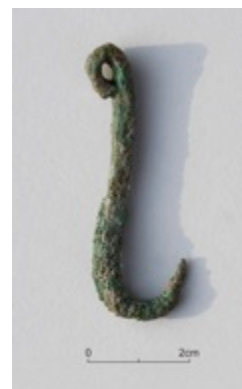
bronze fishing hooks. However, one of the outstanding discoveries of the last season was a deliberately broken 'bull' figurine: smashed and buried in the courtyard area.

Dr Lindy Crewe returns there this summer with our latest group of undergraduates. She says: "Working on the site together has produced a real sense of community amongst the students – we have our own rituals of breaking bread and sharing a beer at the end of day – moments when we feel very close the ancient Bronze Age inhabitants of this impressive site".

Above: the site under excavation. Below: the bull figurine, juglet and bronze fishing hook.

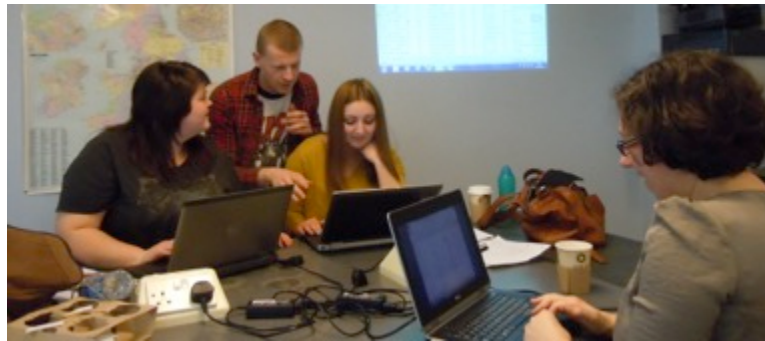
The site of Kissonerga-Skalia in Cyprus was founded in the early Bronze Age: a flourishing village settlement, used for 900 years. Dr Lindy Crewe has been excavating this site since 2007, with teams of students from the University of Manchester – training over 150 students in excavation and the analysis of prehistoric finds.

Their work has uncovered a time of fascinating change which radically altered this site during the transition into the late Bronze Age transition. Earlier houses were replaced by an open courtyard, monumental walls and large spaces for communal activities. The community seems to have



## Undergraduate students in focus

From acting as Peer Mentors, to running PASS sessions, volunteering in the Manchester Museum, or helping Dr Hannah Cobb out in the lab, our UG students don't just graduate with an edge over their competitors but make a real contribution to being a good Manchester citizen!



'The Visible Diggers' team: Steph, Matt and Liya work with Dr Hannah Cobb on their paper for the 2016 Chartered Institute for Archaeologists annual conference

This year has seen some notable achievements for Manchester UG students. Last year's cohort produced the best DHLE (Destination of Leaver's Data) ever – entering more PG programmes, gaining more graduate positions and achieving a higher annual salary than most of our NW competitors. Another strong set of graduation results promises the next set of leavers will go on to great things: 3 of our current UGs gained jobs in Field

Archaeology even before they graduated! The 'Visible Diggers' project – won 'Learning Through Research' funding to investigate the importance of reflective practice and structured mentoring on learning in archaeological fieldwork, giving a research paper at the ClfA 2016 conference: the major arena for the profession. See their website at:

<https://visiblediggersmcr.wordpress.com>

"I learnt from the best. And I got exactly where I wanted. Two years ago I finished a rewarding three years studying archaeology at the University of Manchester. Today, as part of my postgraduate studies, I have the privilege to spend six months at UNESCO headquarters, Paris. I became interested in how heritage can facilitate peace and reconciliation, so I decided to apply for an internship here at UNESCO.

I can say without hesitation that my archaeology degree provided precisely the knowledge and understanding that I need to complete this placement and my Master's degree at the Paris School of International Affairs. Much to my surprise not once have I felt at a disadvantage compared to my 'international relations' colleagues. On the contrary. Archaeology encourages the development of a strong questioning attitude, good theoretical reasoning, as well as practical know-how. This is why I often feel better equipped than most of the other students!



It goes without saying, lecturers and professors were key. They know their subject, they know how to teach it, they care about the success of their students, and their passion simply shows throughout. I always found this truly uplifting and motivating, and I think that ultimately it is what sets students up for success."

Above: Sarah during her UNESCO placement, leading to an MA at the Paris School of International Affairs, France.

## Where next? Alumni stories

Many of our UGs will have part-time jobs whilst they study, or they many become regular volunteers for the University or Museum, but few will know exactly what they want to do when they finish. Even PhD students need to find their feet in a highly competitive job market! In their final year, a Supervisor or Academic Advisor will help them create and tailor their CV, whilst our Careers Office will direct them to relevant jobs and provide mock interviews. We write references for many years after you graduate, and always love to hear from our Alumni to find out where life has taken them. Here, Sarah Tullo – graduate in Archaeology – explains what she did next.

## Craft mysteries in the Bronze Age Mediterranean

Dr Ina Berg specializes in the analysis of craftwork in the Mediterranean Bronze Age. Renowned for her work on ceramics, Ina has recently turned her attention to the craft of making metal, and the role of 'special places' in which to undertake some of the more secret aspects of the turning of stone in to metal.



Over the last two years, Ina Berg has completed a major new monograph on *'The Cyclades and other Greek islands in prehistory'*. From the first appearance of hominids in the Palaeolithic through to their widespread abandonment at the end of the Bronze Age, islands have played a key role in the emergence of civilization in this region.

One of the most exciting time periods is the Early Bronze Age, ca. 3000-2000 BC. During this era we see an explosion in the use of metallurgy. Gold and tin had to be imported from outside Greece (most likely Turkey or the Balkans) but copper, silver and lead deposits existed on several Cycladic islands.

What is so intriguing about metal-processing at this time is the fact that the extraction of ores, initial and secondary processing and the final creation of the actual metal artifacts took place in *different* locations, often involving long-distance journeys across the sea. A rather extreme example is Chrysokamino on Crete which received copper ore from Kythnos and Lavrion for secondary processing: a sea voyage of some 250 km and 460 km! But the metal's journey was not yet over. After it had been processed

at Chrysokamino it was transported elsewhere on Crete to be hammered or cast into the desired object.

Why? Making metal in prehistory was close to magic: turning stone into molten liquid which cooled once again to a solid. Looking at anthropological examples of copper, bronze and ironworking teaches us that these crafts are often shrouded in mystery: their lore is guarded carefully by a set of experts, and craftwork is often circumscribed by ritual. All of this means that the places where it happened were also significant – perhaps selected for their secretive, dramatic or hard-to-access location. Ina argues:

"From my research, I can show that each stage (extraction, processing, casting) was potentially performed by different individuals, at different locations and in different organisational contexts. Modern considerations around maximization of profit or rationalization of production were far from the islanders' minds. Instead, the origin of a metal object appears to have been intentionally obscured while its spatial, temporal and transformative journey seems to play a much more important role.

The early processing stages were rather

secretive and the work was undertaken at remote locations. The final casting and hammering of the object probably took place in the public arena and was a highly visible act. The metal workers ability to locate suitable sources, the secrecy of their craft, their mastery of fire, and the distance travelled most likely created a distinct exotic identity for metal workers and, in turn, for the objects themselves. Thus, metal objects were so much more than mere tools, weapons or personal items of adornment!"



Above: a clay mould fragment from casting bronze





A rare quartz crystal flake – possibly a grave gift, from Dorstone, Herefordshire

## Find out more about studying Archaeology at Manchester

### Undergraduate Programmes:

BA in Archaeology

BA in Archaeology and Anthropology

BA in Ancient History and Archaeology

**New for entry in 2017: Archaeology and History**

Email: [ug-archae@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ug-archae@manchester.ac.uk)

<http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/archaeology/undergraduate/>

### Postgraduate Programmes:

MA in Archaeology

MPhil in Archaeology

PhD in Archaeology

Email: [masalc@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:masalc@manchester.ac.uk)

<http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/archaeology/postgraduatetaught/>

Email: [PhDSALC@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:PhDSALC@manchester.ac.uk)

<http://www.alc.manchester.ac.uk/subjects/archaeology/postgraduateresearch/>

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Admissions Officer Dr Melanie Giles, with visiting Brazilian PhD student, Pedro Piexoto and Prof. Alice Roberts, filming 'Digging for Britain: the North' - exploring the Iron Age at the Yorkshire Museum