

NEANDERTHALS IN LIMBO

July 29, 2011 Becky Wragg Sykes Day of Archaeology 2011, Education, Finds, Prehistory Anthropology, Archaeology, Britain, Digging for Britain, Jersey Museum, job applications, Neanderthal, Neanderthal researcher, Neanderthals, Postdoc

So, you've got a PhD in archaeology, what next? I'm a Neanderthal researcher at that strange point which a few lucky people manage to miss in their career path: post-PhD, but not yet officially a 'Postdoc', with a paid position on a research project. I submitted my PhD in 2009, and after a long and nervous wait, passed my viva in February 2010, transforming into a Doctor of Archaeology. So far, so good, right?

Things are not as straightforward as PhD = job. The next stage in forging an academic career involves trying to do two conflicting things: publish a ton of papers from your PhD in "high-impact" journals and books, and at the same time, write kick-ass funding and job applications, the success of which depends to a large part on your publication record. Oh, and earn some money to live on too...

My posts today will be about the reality of this process: what kinds of things a normal aspiring Postdoc does to try and get a foot on the ladder in a research career in archaeology. I'll start by talking about my research in Neanderthals, and how this has led to where I am now: working on several very exciting projects (including one which will soon be featured on the new Digging for Britain television series!). Then I'll get onto the funding/publishing merry-go-round: what I am juggling today, 29th July 2011, in terms of applications, writing, and planning for future collaborations. So, not a lot of digging, but certainly a lot of hard work and hopefully an insight into what goes on behind the scenes of cutting-edge research into the funkiest hominin species of all time!



Recording Neanderthal artefacts at Jersey Museum in July