

# GENERAL ANTICS OF PUBLIC ARCHAEOLOGY STUDENT

July 31, 2011 Elizabeth Warry Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011, Education, Museum Archaeology Academia, Alan Melton, Andrew Richardson, Andrew Selkirk, Anthropology, Archaeological sub-disciplines, archaeologist, Archaeology, British Museum, cellular telephone, Community Archaeology, Cultural heritage, Institute of Archaeology, Mortimer Wheeler, Museology, Portable Antiquities Scheme, Public Archaeologist, recent media fury, Samsung, Samsung Digital Discovery Centre, Sutton Hoo, Time Team, Tony Robinson

As a student archaeologist, life is routine but fairly relaxed. I am currently finishing my Masters with only my dissertation left to do. I spend most of my time in the Institute of Archaeology library and talking to fellow Institute students in the park. I like the fact that we all do a range of subjects for our dissertations, from archaeology and art to conservation; it is surprising where archaeology plays a role. My dissertation is part of a project at the British Museum – I am helping to develop a new video-conferencing session, related to the [Portable Antiquities Scheme](#) and the work it does with treasure finds. The session is going to be structured around challenge-based learning – this involves a real life situation where students have to make their own decisions based upon the resources/evidence available to them. Its main elements consist of allowing students to work by themselves with minimal input from an adult, using teamwork and applying technology. Having fun is a key aspect of the activity. I am currently making Top Trump cards of treasure finds... this should make my next presentation more entertaining, will also help me to decide which artefacts should be used for the session.

I am a Public Archaeologist. Frankly, I admit that my knowledge of historical periods/civilisations is very superficial. However, I am comfortable with this as I am primarily interested in how the public perceive archaeology – through television, newspapers, museums and even politics. I work as a facilitator at the [British Museum](#), a job I love and enjoy; it is always good to see children getting really stuck into an activity (trying to get a balance between entertainment and education, of course) and I like hearing the questions they ask. Sometimes they approach objects with a completely different perspective, which is refreshing after reading so much academic literature. The activities I am involved in range from following museum trails, presenting arts and crafts to schools groups and making news reports. I actually spent most of my time in the Samsung Digital Discovery Centre, where we use technology and the museum's collections to create both family and school activities. One example is the Sutton Hoo Headline, where school children create a news report of the discovery using a video camera and a green screen – we get them to gather content by visiting the galleries using a video mobile phone.

On the 'Day of Archaeology' I attended the Mortimer debate, an organisation named after Mortimer Wheeler which focuses on archaeology and the future, using the tag line 'our past, our future, our

choice!'. There have been problems of late with the government trying to reduce the amount legislation that protects our environment and heritage. The debate had four panel members: Tony Robinson (Time Team), Cllr Alan Melton (who sparked recent media fury by calling archaeologists 'bunny huggers'), Andrew Selkirk and Andrew Richardson. Some interesting points were made about sustainability and the costs of commercial archaeology, ie who should pay. The debate got quite heated, especially between Tony Robinson and Alan Melton. Melton suggested that the public were not that interested in heritage, with Robinson arguing that it is human nature to be interested in the our heritage. Does the past have value to you?