

# Obituary



Paul Courtney, 24 January 1955 – 22 May 2013

*Time*  
(written by Paul)

Sitting still, sadly watching  
Countless drops of morning dew  
Iridescently hanging  
Until the quiet wind blew,  
Then swiftly falling.

Unlike the tree standing  
Endlessly through the years  
Ever to its life grasping  
While sweet kisses or sad tears  
Have passed there forgotten.

But long after the tree  
Or sadly bitter crying  
Or quickly regretted passion  
Have faded, dying  
My thought is yet born.

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death from cancer of our member and friend Paul Courtney. Paul and I go back a long way, to my first excavation in fact, in 1974. That was at West Whelpington, one of the most barren sites I've ever worked on and one that suited very well the fatalistic outlook that characterised Paul from the moment I met him. After graduating, he a year ahead of me, we spent a lot of time digging together and formed a solid friendship that allowed me to see beyond Paul's eccentric and seemingly distant exterior. He was in fact a very easy

person to like once you got to know him but apart from that he was a brilliant student of the past. Paul was that rare thing, an archaeologist who truly understood history and historical sources and he brought all those skills to a wide range of subjects. Those included medieval and later pottery in Wales, post-medieval glass and the archaeology of small towns. At the time of his death, Paul was engaged in research on the potting industries of the Saintonge area and had in fact taught himself to read both medieval French and Gascon as he worked through the documentary evidence. It is a tragedy that his work will not be completed but more tragic still that we have lost a brilliant mind, a great character and for some of us, a true friend. Our sympathies and thoughts are with his widow, Yolanda. A memorial event of some kind is being planned and further details will appear in the newsletter in due course.

Duncan Brown