

Charlotte Argue: Archaeology, Shipwrecks and Commercial Salvage

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As my degree is coming to an end, I have had time to reflect on the three years spent in York. Studying archaeology has been extremely interesting, and being able to do this in a historical city such as York has been great. It is also wonderful to study at Kings Manor, which has its own history and is right in the middle of the city. A highlight of mine has been research on my dissertation on commercial salvage and UK legislation on shipwrecks. Being able to choose my own topic meant that I could study something I was truly passionate about. As a scuba diver I have been fortunate enough to dive on these wrecks and seen the amazing artefacts that lie within them. My dissertation examined how historical wrecks are commercially exploited and whether archaeology is being carried out on these. It also examined UK legislation to establish if this protects underwater cultural heritage from the threats it faces. Wrecks hold a wealth of information which I feel are undervalued in the field. Many disagree with the exploitation and selling of artefacts as it devalues archaeology. These artefacts once lifted may be sold separately meaning that their value as a collection goes and future study of them is not possible. It also means that they can end up in the hands of private collections, as opposed to in museums where the public can learn from them.

Beyond my degree, my time at university has been fantastic. Being able to be part of such a wonderful team at *The Post Hole* has been amazing and seeing the work that has been produced has been incredible. Although I will not be a part of the *The Post Hole* next year, I know the next team will be just as hard working as we are and will continue to produce interesting articles and issues.

Although my future remains uncertain in terms of what I will be doing after university, I hope to take part in an archaeological project in Zanzibar in the near future. This is in stark contrast to my first archaeological dig which I spent on top of a very windy hill in the North Yorkshire Moors! One of the appeals of an archaeological degree for me was the practical elements and throughout my time at York I have been on various research projects learning how to carry out archaeological research. I will be applying for graduate schemes next year for which archaeology has provided me with many transferable skills which I know will be useful, whatever career I end up going into. Although I probably will not be pursuing archaeology, I have loved every minute and definitely hope to be able to continue volunteering on archaeological projects.