SHATTERING PERCEPTIONS

The women of archaeology

Introduction

2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the first women gaining the right to vote. This exhibition celebrates this momentous occasion by showcasing the amazing achievements women have made, and continue to make, in the field of archaeology.



Gertrude Bell on horseback, at Qubbet ed Duris © Gertrude Bell Archive, Newcastle University. A_340.

Archaeology is an all-inclusive discipline that involves not just excavation, but a whole variety of different tasks. These include laboratory analysis, recreating past objects, conservation, illustration, and research. Anyone from any background can get involved in archaeology. In this exhibition the contributions of women in these different areas of the field will be explored.



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Breaking the Mould

Throughout the history of archaeology, the successes of women have often gone unnoticed or have been taken for granted. However, women have been making outstanding contributions to archaeology for over a century and were essential to the development of the field. Today women are conducting groundbreaking research, founding institutions, and continuing to ensure that the history of the world is well recorded.



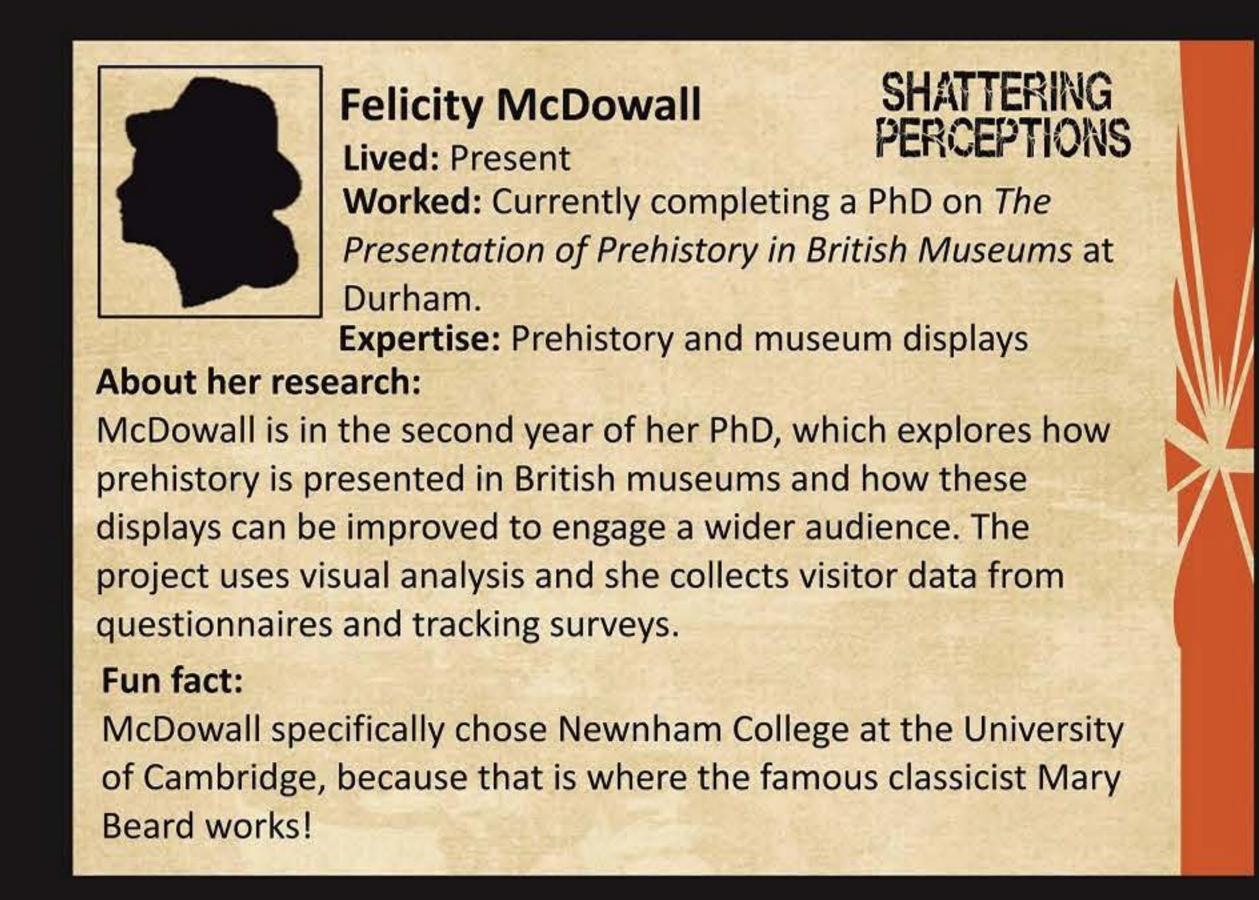
This exhibition highlights different elements of archaeology and women who have worked within each field. Check out some of the ways you can get involved in archaeology:

- Community archaeology
- Conservation and preservation
- Research and publication
- Illustration

- Experimental archaeology
- Bioarchaeology
- Archaeological excavation
- Metal detecting

Who knew there were so many different ways to get involved in archaeology?

Look out for these fact files to learn about the women behind the archaeology! These will tell you about their work and achievements during their archaeological careers. This idea was suggested by Felicity McDowall, a PhD student at Durham University.





© Image courtesy of Felicity McDowall

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Why Were Women Excavating in the Middle East?

In the 1800s and early 1900s, numerous British women chose to work at archaeological sites in the Middle East. While in Britain women were not expected to have a career, British imperial presence in the Middle East gave them the opportunity to travel there and work freely.

Many of these women, including
Kathleen Kenyon and Gertrude Bell,
had something else in common that let
them travel easily - they were born to
wealthy, socially connected families. By
using these connections and working
in the Middle East, British women were
able to exercise a freedom that was
not readily accessible in Britain.



Gertrude Bell during her travels
© Gertrude Bell Archive, Newcastle
University. PERS_A_008.



Dame Kathleen Kenyon at Jerusalem © UCL Institute of Archaeology

Even with some freedoms, women were still restricted to the dress code of heavy, ankle length skirts.

Kathleen Kenyon secretly split her skirts to make it easier to work!

Nobody could tell that they were sewn together in the middle.

Did you know?

Gertrude Bell was employed by British Intelligence and was the only female political officer during World War One!

