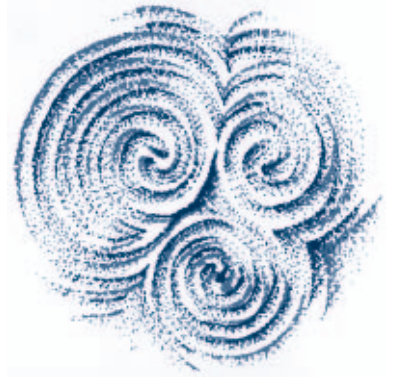


PAST



NUMBER 52 APRIL 2006

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PREHISTORIC SOCIETY

Registered Office University College London, Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1H 0PY
<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/prehistoric/>

A NEW AVENUE AT DURRINGTON WALLS

Excavations by the Stonehenge Riverside Project in 2005 discovered a monumental avenue linking Durrington Walls henge to the river. This is, as far as we know, the earliest roadway in Europe, composed of three successive surfaces of rammed flint, flanked by a 1m-wide gully and a 5m-wide external bank. It was originally about 100m long and its estimated width is over 20m. A large post pit within the road surface may have been part of a monumental structure set within it. Carbonised barley, animal bone, Grooved Ware pottery and lithics were recovered from within the road surface and within the buried soil on top of it, mostly along its edges where trampling had been less severe. In contrast to the midwinter sunrise orientation of the Southern Circle which it approaches, the avenue's solstitial alignment is in the opposite direction, within 1.5° of the midsummer sunset.



Excavating house 547.

On the north outside the east entrance, we found two preserved Late Neolithic house floors within a large midden. A third preserved house floor was found on the bank of the avenue. These were small rectangular structures with hearths, the largest being 4m x 4m with walls of stakes, wattle and chalk plaster. Fragments of a carved chalk plaque were found in midden layers close to this house. One of the Grooved Ware pits later than this house is dated to 2500-2400 BC, a date indistinguishable from that for the sarsen circle at Stonehenge. The midden was over 20m across and contained large quantities of lithics, animal bones and pottery. In contrast to the finds from the road, no cereals have yet been identified among the midden's carbonised plant remains but many of the one hundred arrowheads found in 2005 came from here.

Excavations into the henge bank either side of the east entrance uncovered middens pre-dating henge construction, suggesting that this locale had been a gathering place for some time before the bank and ditch were dug. South of the east entrance, a cache of four antler picks was placed on the midden surface immediately as the first chalk for the bank was deposited. In the trench into the bank on the north side, a shallow and unfilled E-W ditch is interpreted as a division between separate gang sections. Further evidence of digging technology and organisation comes from the marks of picks and other tools in the quarried chalk.

Our excavations on the Southern Circle, originally discovered in 1967, uncovered the largest post hole yet found within this timber circle, presumably acting as a sightline on the midwinter sunrise axis. As suspected, the post holes had been dug into once the posts had rotted, with re-cutting pits into which

The copy date for PAST 53 is 1 June 2006. Contributions to Joanna Brück, School of Archaeology, Newman Building, University College Dublin, Belfield, Dublin 4, Ireland. Email: joanna.bruck@ucd.ie Contributions on disc or as e-mail attachments are preferred (either word 6 or rtf files) but hardcopy is also accepted. Illustrations can be sent as drawings, slides, prints, tif or jpeg files. The book reviews editor is Dr Mike Allen, Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wilts, SP4 6EB. Email: m.allen@wessexarch.co.uk. Queries over subscriptions and membership should go to the Society administrator Tessa Machling at the London address above.



Plan of Trench 1: yellow - extraction pits; blue - artefact-rich Grooved Ware pits; red - postholes; green - house floors; purple and mauve - stone-surfaced avenue with gully and external bank.

structured deposits were placed. A date from an antler pick in one of these is also contemporary with the erection of Stonehenge's sarsen circle.

Across the River Avon from Durrington, we discovered the stone hole for a former standing stone at Bulford. A multiple Food Vessel burial near its base contained 32 grave goods including a rock crystal and a limestone 'minilith'. This former standing stone may have been part of a line of stones running from the base of Beacon Hill towards Durrington Walls.

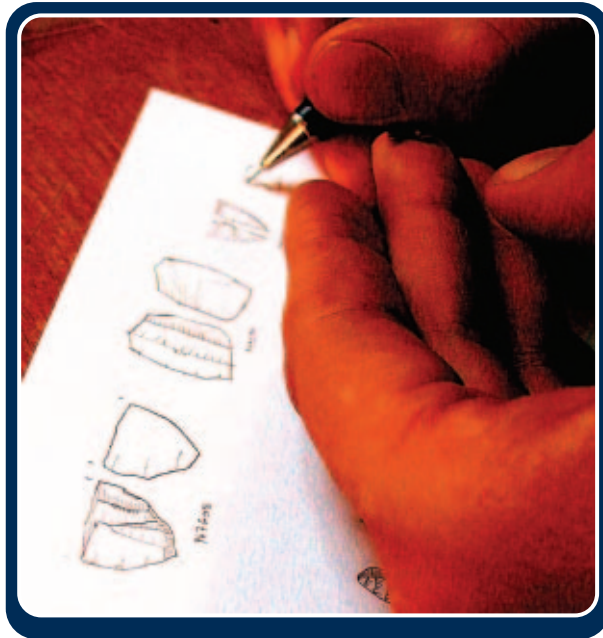
Mike Parker Pearson, Josh Pollard, Colin Richards, Julian Thomas, Chris Tilley and Kate Welham

PEOPLE AND WETLANDS IN THE OPEN KARST OF ISTRIA, CROATIA

Sir Richard F. Burton was the first to study the prehistory of Istria in the nineteenth century. Since then, and up to recent years, most prehistoric research projects developed in the region have concentrated on the frequentation and use of cave sites. In 2003, I carried out a systematic survey with the aim of addressing issues relating to the settling of this region in prehistoric times, through the identification and characterisation of as many open-air sites as possible. The flint assemblage analysed in Pula during the first three weeks of December 2005 comes from the open-air sites found surveying the margins of Polje Čepić, in eastern Istria. *Polje* is a

Slavonic word that in Croatian means field. In karstic geomorphology, though, this word indicates wide depressions with a flat floor. Some of these landscape features, as in the case of Polje Čepić, form along a tectonic fault, are drained by swallow holes (*ponors*) rather than through surface outlets, and can be filled more or less consistently with fresh water. In our case, and back to the sixteenth century, most historical maps of Polje Čepić show the presence here of a shallow lake. What was the only natural lake in Istria was drained in 1932, when its rich sediments were reclaimed for new arable land.

The survey and the study of the sites it generated are part of a twofold study. On one hand, I wanted to know if and for how long before historic times Polje Čepić had been covered with freshwater. I also wondered whether or not, when, and possibly why and how, the open landscapes of this part of Istria were populated. As for the first set of questions, the analyses so far carried out on the *polje* sediments point to the continuous existence of a wet landscape here for at least the last 7000 years. The analysis of this sediment sequence had to stop at a depth of about 17.5m, where the coring equipment met a massive layer of gravel. As for the archaeological survey, 183 fields (670826 m²) were surveyed in 2004 and 2005, and 37 of them (119573 m²) had prehistoric archaeological remains. The fields which produced archaeological evidence were grouped into 16 areas, and named after the closest local name as it appears on the 1:5000 topographical map. Test excavations were also carried out in three of the 16 areas.



Some of the stone tools being drawn by D. Komšo.

The study of the collected assemblage was essential to the understanding of the newly discovered archaeological areas. In December 2005, I went to Pula, where all material had been safely stored in the Roman amphitheatre under the authority of the Archaeological Museum of Istria. In collaboration with Curator Darko Komšo, all finds (707 in total) were studied, classified and entered in the Museum's database. Out of these, 144 were classified as tools, cores, and core fragments. The most significant finds were photographed and drawn. Following Croatian law, the cataloguing and drawing of all archaeological finds is a compulsory step towards acquiring a licence for exporting and studying them abroad. The lithic collection is now ready to be submitted to further studies and publication.

The sites recently discovered around Polje Čepić are rapidly improving our understanding of the means and impact of human population in the region, particularly regarding previously unexplored environments. In a situation where the recovery of absolute-datable materials is rare, a detailed typological analysis of all available lithic evidence is a must. This research was therefore able to refine our understanding of these new discoveries, and relate them to the archaeological knowledge accumulated by other scholars in the last few decades.

Among the sites found around Polje Čepić, two are of particular interest. One of them is the large Mesolithic site named Kostadini. Mesolithic open-air sites are not common in the wider region. This find, together with another four Mesolithic scatters discovered during the survey, will greatly improve our knowledge of this period in the eastern Adriatic. The other significant site is that of Ivšiče, where a

small lithic assemblage presents strong affinities with the Aurignacian levels dug in the 1960s at Šandalja cave, near Pula. The few recovered stone tools, as well as the raw material employed to produce them, are very similar to those previously found at Šandalja. An excavation planned for summer 2006 will test this hypothesis. If confirmed, this would become only the second site of the period to be found in the region since the beginning of research into the prehistory of the area. On the last day of my stay in Pula, I was able to visit what remains of Šandalja cave, some 4km outside Pula. The site was discovered through limestone quarrying within the confines of a state prison still in use today. Šandalja is so far the only discovery testifying to the arrival of *Homo sapiens* in Istria.

Andrea L. Balbo, McBurney Geoarchaeology Laboratory, Department of Archaeology, University of Cambridge.

Email: alb55@cam.ac.uk

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Prehistoric Society for supporting this study through a John and Bryony Coles Bursary. I also wish to thank Dr. Preston Miracle, University of Cambridge, and Dr. Kristina Mihovilić, Director of the Archaeological Museum of Istria, for their full support of this study. Special acknowledgment goes to Darko Komšo, without whom the revision of this lithic collection would never have succeeded.

AN ENGRAVED NEOLITHIC PLAQUE AND ASSOCIATED FINDS FROM KING'S STANLEY, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

Excavations at King's Stanley, Gloucestershire, in 2004 and 2005 revealed two Neolithic pits. The site is c. 16km south of Gloucester and lies near the foot of the Cotswold scarp face on a gravel terrace between two tributaries of the River Frome (NGR SO 809041).

The pits, dug into the natural gravel, were undisturbed. The larger one was 3.8m long at the lip and 3.2m at the base. It was of irregular shape but was about 1.8m wide at the lip, 0.3m wide at the base and had a depth of 0.8m. The fill was of a reddish-brown clay containing many small pieces of limestone. This pit produced sherds, flint, animal bone, a small incised limestone plaque and a pierced fragment of sandstone. The smaller pit, of similar form, was 1.8m long, 0.6–0.9m wide and had a maximum depth of 0.3m. It contained some flint and animal bone.



The plaque and associated finds

The limestone object is small, measuring only 39 x 23 x 7mm, weighs 7g, and is finely incised on one side with numerous straight lines which are arranged more or less radially and are about 1mm or less apart. The limestone is light coloured and is not in fresh condition but appears to be oolitic with some fossil shell fragments. The source is likely to be the local Jurassic limestone (Fiona Roe, pers. comm.) The lines continue over the edges except for one corner showing the stone to be almost complete.



Fiona Roe adds:

Interpretation of the enigmatic small object from King's Stanley must remain uncertain for the meanwhile. Such small items are easily missed in the archaeological record, so that close parallels for this find are barely to be expected, though it is hoped that some in time will be forthcoming.

The exact position of the plaque in the pit is not known. Because of the object's small size, the incised decoration was not identified until the clay fill of the pit (which was wet and included many hundreds of small pieces of limestone) was re-examined on the surface. This showed it to have originated from close to the pit centre in the bottom 30cm of the fill.

The sandstone fragment measures 60 x 30 x 5mm and weighs 27g. It has smooth surfaces and the unbroken edges are rounded. The drilled hole has a

diameter of 3mm, 4mm at the surfaces. It was found resting on the pit side 50cm from the base.

The ceramics comprise sherds from up to two Mortlake Ware vessels and from up to five Grooved Ware vessels of which those decorated suggest the Durrington Walls substyle. Decoration on the belly of one Mortlake vessel (shown here) is difficult to parallel. Although more Grooved Ware than Mortlake vessels are represented, 83% by weight of sherds recovered represent the Mortlake style. There were also 639 flints (including debitage) and 107 fragments of animal bone found.

Radiocarbon analysis was carried out on hazelnut fragments, producing the following date: OxA-15346, 3856 ± 33 bp: 2470-2200 cal BC.

Discussion

Other examples of incised stone from Neolithic contexts associated with Grooved Ware include those from Amesbury, Butterfield Down, Graig Lwyd and Rothley, although all of these are larger artefacts.

The lack of silt or gravel slip in the bottom of the pits and lack of stratigraphy in the fill suggest rapid refilling after opening. It is possible that they were dug solely for the formal deposition of domestic refuse, principally pottery, flint and animal bone. In this case, however, there was no apparent organisation in the arrangement of material. The sherds of Grooved Ware were scattered and mostly in the bottom 35cm of the larger pit with a concentration towards each end, while the Mortlake sherds were more closely associated around the centre but above the Grooved Ware at c. 50–60cm from the pit base. The hazelnut was found below the Mortlake sherds, while the flint and bone were randomly scattered throughout.

The dating evidence suggests deposition towards the end of the Grooved Ware tradition and is paralleled by material from Marden henge, Woodhenge, Roughground Farm and Radley. However, the radiocarbon date is considerably later than that for the Mortlake tradition. Perhaps the pit contents came from a midden for formal disposal and the Mortlake vessel was a valued special item of considerable age before it was deposited as a final act before pit closure.

*David C. Evans, Camrose House, Camrose, Haverfordwest, Pembrokeshire SA62 6JB
Email: land.sker@virgin.net Tel. 01437 710874*

Acknowledgements

I am grateful to the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society for a £500 grant from the Research Fund in the name of Miss Irene Bridgeman. My thanks also to Adam Tinsley for drawing the

pottery and to the owners of the land, Margaret Federick and later Averil Cawthera-Purdey and Sean Gwynne.

A303 STONEHENGE IMPROVEMENT

At the public inquiry in 2004, the Prehistoric Society's Council opposed the Highways Agency's proposal for a 2.1km-long bored tunnel, on the grounds of unacceptable impact on the archaeological landscape of the World Heritage Site. Although the tunnel proposal was recommended by the inspector, rising costs have caused government ministers to ask for a review of options. Part of the review includes a public consultation, in the form of a questionnaire.

Together with the CBA and the Wiltshire Archaeological & Natural History Society, the Prehistoric Society Council continues to oppose the bored tunnel proposal (now known as 'the published scheme') because of the inadequate length of the tunnel. We recommend that none of the options are adopted; even the least damaging 'Partial Solution' will cut off further options in the future and could strengthen the case for turning the current single carriageway through the WHS into a dual carriageway.

We consider that the bored tunnel is an inadequate half-measure for several reasons:

Irreversibility – the scheme would create the largest earthwork within the WHS, with wide and deep cuttings into King Barrow Ridge and the land west of Stonehenge. The tunnel is only 2.1km long, whereas the above-ground disturbance affects 3km of the WHS. Once in place, this massive earthwork and too-short tunnel will not be reversible.

Context – the scheme has serious impacts on the contexts of standing and buried monuments within the WHS: one long barrow lying perched above the tunnel's western portal, the barrow cemetery at Longbarrow Crossroads sitting adjacent to the dual carriageway, and the Stonehenge Avenue forever sundered. In the latter case, new research in the WHS indicates that Stonehenge's purpose may be best understood through its link along the Avenue to the river; this link should be mended and not forever severed by an enlarged dual carriageway cutting.

Preservation by record – the archaeological mitigation for destruction of all deposits within the 3km road corridor includes only small areas selected for full-scale excavation. Most of the 3km road line is to be recorded only by 'strip and map' methods which we consider are inadequate for proper identification and recording of often ephemeral prehistoric features.

Geophysical survey and excavation elsewhere within the WHS since the inquiry have also highlighted the inadequacy of the route's prior evaluation which relied on a single geophysical technique and a low density of excavation trenches.

Make your views known! Fill in a questionnaire and send it to the Highways Agency before 24th April 2006. If you have not received a leaflet and questionnaire, request one now from:

neil.chapman@highways.gsi.gov.uk

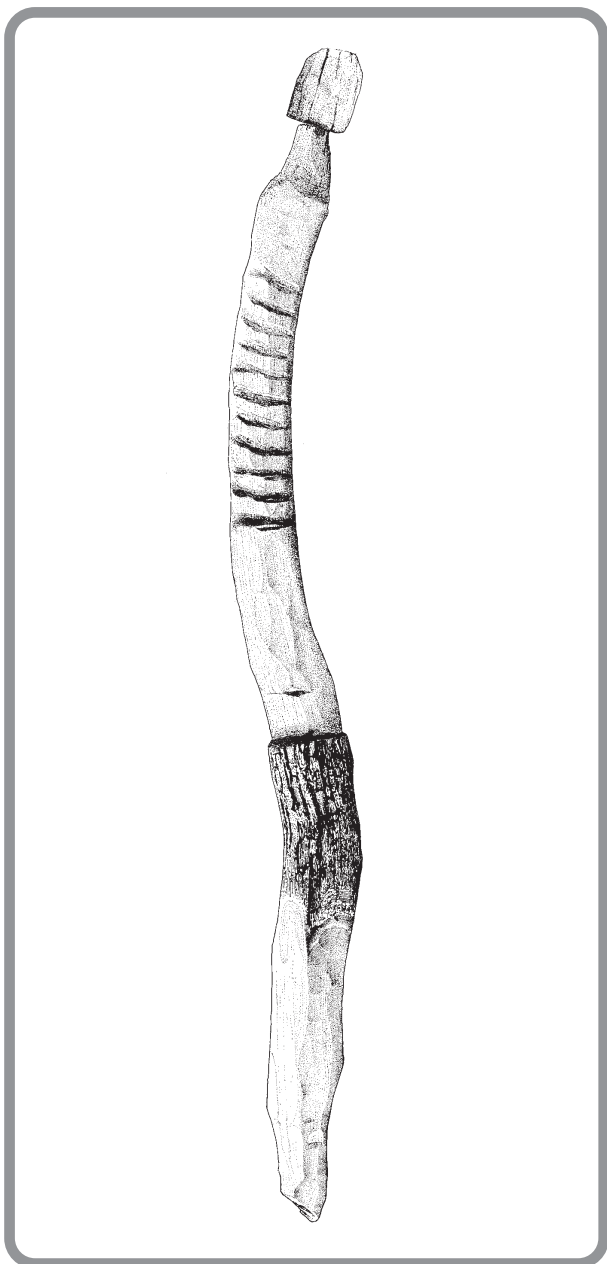
The Stonehenge Project
Highways Agency Zone 2/26 – H
Temple Quay House
2 The Square, Temple Quay
Bristol BS1 6HA

Prof. Mike Parker Pearson, Conservation Officer for the Prehistoric Society

THE 'RED MAN' OF KILBEG: AN EARLY BRONZE AGE IDOL FROM COUNTY OFFALY

Prior to 2001, only three anthropomorphic wooden figures were known from Ireland, all of which are prehistoric (Early Bronze Age-Iron Age). These came from Lagore, Co. Meath, Ralaghan, Co. Cavan, and Corlea, Co. Longford. In 2001, a fourth anthropomorphic artefact of possible Iron Age date was discovered at a Bord na Móna (BnM) bog at Broughal, Co. Offaly (Dr Eoin Grogan, pers. comm.). A further seven probable anthropomorphic artefacts were recovered from BnM bogs in east County Offaly between 2002 and 2003 (six from Ballykilleen townland, Cloncreen Bog; one from Kilbeg townland, Ballykean Bog). Five of these were discovered by the Irish Archaeological Wetland Unit (IAWU), of which the author is a former member (of these, three were recovered, while two were preserved *in situ*). A further two were discovered by BnM's archaeological consultants and were reported on by Eoin Corcoran in PAST 45. This article describes the Kilbeg figure recovered from Ballykean Bog in 2003. While the interpretation of such artefacts is problematic, these recent discoveries, if accepted as truly anthropomorphic in form, bring the total number of Irish figures to eleven.

The IAWU surveyed Ballykean Bog (located c. 7 km south-west of Cloncreen Bog) on behalf of the Irish Dept. of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government. During the course of the survey, an isolated wooden idol, of indeterminate sex, was identified on the bog surface. The figure consists of a roundwood (2.31m long, 16cm max. diameter),



which is heavily damaged on one side. It is worked to a point at one end, beyond which is an unworked portion retaining bark. One end of the bark section is cut perpendicular to the long axis as if to represent a waist. Approximately half the circumference of the remainder of the object has been surface dressed. The opposing side is unworked but has been stripped of bark. At the opposite end there is a well-defined neck. A bulbous head was originally attached to this, but has fractured from the body and is broken in two. Eleven crudely carved notches (ribs?) are located between the bark section and the neck. These have one edge cut perpendicular to the body, while the other edge is cut at a 60° angle. A centrally-placed, lozenge-shaped incision between the notches and the bark section has been interpreted as a navel.

The wood has been identified as alder and exhibits no indications of prolonged exposure. It may have been deliberately deposited soon after its creation or

may have been exposed in an upright position for a time as the pointed end is the least degraded portion. A sample from the figure has been radiocarbon-dated to 1740–1531 cal. BC, through funding provided by the Royal Irish Academy National Committee for Archaeology. This date establishes close links with two alder figures from Ballykilleen dated by associated material to 1745–1517 cal. BC and 1736–1448 cal. BC. Both were recovered by the IAWU and were initially described as notched roundwoods. They have only recently been reinterpreted on foot of the BnM-funded excavations.

The closest Continental parallel is a female figure from Rebild, Denmark, which has a neck and head strikingly similar to the Kilbeg figure. It also has five straight-edged notches; however, palynological analysis of the findspot suggests a c. AD 400 date. The closest Irish parallels are the Ballykilleen figures, particularly five examples with pointed ends, well-defined necks, bulbous heads and incised (V-shaped) notches. It is likely that all the Ballykilleen finds are alder and of Bronze Age date. Two have produced dates closely matching the Kilbeg figure. Furthermore, ten other sites in Ballykilleen have produced Bronze Age dates, seven dating to the first half of the 2nd millennium BC. The figures from Ballykilleen and Kilbeg may well represent a discrete regional group. The Ballykilleen figures were closely distributed (the furthest distance apart being c. 170m) and the Kilbeg figure was located only 7km from them. The seven figures also share similar settings, being located at narrow sections of the bog.

Anthropomorphic figures are generally interpreted as cult figures and examples found in association with trackways are documented (e.g. Corlea, Co. Longford, and Wittemoor, Germany). The new Irish figures probably also belong in this category. All but one of the Ballykilleen figures were associated with structures (trackways/platforms), and it is possible that the Kilbeg figure was originally associated with a structure. There is a case for interpreting some of the figures as protective markers imbued with symbolic meaning and perceived supernatural powers ensuring the safety of people traversing / accessing the bog on trackways and platforms. They may also have signified ownership of particular routeways/ territories, and given physical expression to a particular cultural identity. Nonetheless, most of the Ballykilleen figures (and perhaps the Kilbeg figure also) appear to have been deliberately deposited beneath structures – perhaps to confer supernatural protection upon those who used them. They may have been revered in other contexts prior to becoming offerings or maybe, given their unweathered condition, they were created specifically for the purpose.

An alternative interpretation is that some of these idols were ritually deposited as sacrificial human effigies in lieu of actual human sacrifices (similar

perhaps to the Late Bronze Age alder figure from Balluchulish, Scotland). The evidence provided by bog bodies indicates that some of these individuals were ritually slain, deposited in bogs and held in place by stakes. It may be significant that the Kilbeg figure was deposited in a prone position, similar to the Balluchulish figure. The choice of alderwood may also be important as cut alder is orange-red in colour, giving the impression of bleeding like a human. This characteristic has given alder much significance in folklore and 'the red man' is among its common folk names.

Michael Stanley, Assistant Archaeologist, National Roads Authority, Ireland

NOTICE OF THE 2006 ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM will be held at 4.30 p.m. on Wednesday 24 May 2006, in the rooms of the Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London.

Agenda

1. Minutes of the 2005 Annual General Meeting (papers available from the website or from the Hon Sec)
2. President's report
3. Secretary's report
4. Editor's report and R.M. Baguley Award
5. Treasurer's report
6. Report on meetings, study tours and research days
7. Awards
 1. John and Bryony Coles Award
 2. Research Grants (Bob Smith Award and Leslie Grinsell Award)
8. Election of Officers and Members of Council
Nominations by the Council
President Prof Miranda Aldhouse-Green
Vice-president Prof Mike Parker Pearson
Hon Sec Dr Alex Gibson
Hon Treasurer Mr Alastair Ainsworth
Hon Editor
PPS Dr Julie Gardiner
Editor PAST Dr Joanna Brück
Hon Meetings
Secretary Mr Dave McOmish
Conservation
Co-ordinator Prof Mike Parker Pearson
Council
Members Dr Chantal Conneller
 Dr Mike Hamilton
 Dr Kenny Brophy
 Dr Alistair Barclay
 Dr Paul Garwood
9. Approve changes to annual subscription levels as follows:

Ordinary member:
increase from £30 to £35
 Institutional member:
increase from £45 to £50
 Retired member with PPS:
increase from £20 to £25
 Student member:
increase from £15 to £17.50
 Retired member without PPS:
increase from £10 to £12.50
 Joint member on any of the above
 to remain at £5

The meeting will be followed at 5.00 p.m. by the 15th Europa Lecture. The lecture will be followed by a wine reception.

Registered Office:
 University College London,
 Institute of Archaeology,
 31-34 Gordon Square,
 London WC1H 0PY.

23rd February 2006

Notes:

1. A member entitled to vote at the meeting may appoint a proxy to attend and, on a poll, vote in his or her stead. A proxy must be a member, other than an institutional member.
2. To be valid, an instrument of proxy (together with any authority under which it is signed or a copy of the authority certified notarily or in some other way approved by Council) must be deposited with the Secretary, The Prehistoric Society, c/o Department of Archaeological Sciences, The University of Bradford, Bradford, BD7 1DP, by 4.30 p.m. on the 1st May 2006.
3. Forms of proxy may be obtained from the Secretary at the above address.

SUMMARY OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2005

	2005	2004
	£	£
Incoming resources		
Subscriptions and gift aid	54,613	47,272
Publications and merchandise	2,413	3,136
Conferences and study tours	12,050	13,995
Publication grants and copyright fees	6,891	4,714
Investment income	11,257	12,341
Other income	950	275
Total income	88,174	81,733
Resources expended		
Charitable expenditure:		
Grants and lectures	6,674	6,385

Publications and merchandise	62,557	46,307
Conferences and study tours	10,508	12,537
Management and administration	16,247	14,163
Total expenditure	95,986	79,392
Net (expenditure)/income	(7,812)	2,341
Total assets at 1 January	178,329	176,258
Net (expenditure)/income	(7,812)	2,341
Revaluation of investments	4,294	(270)
Total assets at 31 December	174,811	178,329

The Summary of Financial Activities is an extract from the full accounts of the Society. Copies of the full accounts for 2005 can be obtained from Tessa Machling at the registered office address and they will be available for members attending the Annual General Meeting. The 2005 annual accounts will be sent to the Registrar of Companies after the Annual General Meeting.

Report of the Treasurer

The Society had a deficit of £7,812 in 2005 compared to a surplus of £2,341 in 2004. Income in 2005 increased by £6,441 compared to 2004 mainly due to a significant increase in subscriptions. The subscription income of the Society varies from year to year because of fluctuations in the timing of receipts from overseas institutions that renew through UK agencies. The Society operates a prudent policy for income recognition and subscriptions are only included in the accounts when they have been either received or committed.

Expenditure in 2005 increased by £16,594 compared to 2004 mainly due to various factors relating to the cost of publications. PAST has been expanded to sixteen pages including colour sections. In 2005, the Society issued the index for PPS volumes 66-70 and also the index for PPS volumes 51-55 which had not been produced previously. Each index cost nearly £2,000 to produce. A late change to the composition of articles in PPS 71 increased the size, and therefore cost, of the volume above plan. The weight of the two indices, and the larger PPS, increased the mailing cost of the documents by more than £4,000 above budget.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

On 1st January 2007, the subscription rates will rise, subject to approval at the AGM. It is Society policy to maintain subscription rates for as long as possible, and since 2002, subscription rates have been kept at the same amounts. However, in 2007, it is envisaged that the rates will change as follows: £35 Ordinary Members, £25 Retired with PPS, £17.50 Student, £12.50 Retired without PPS and £50 for Institutional Members. Joint membership for any of the above (not including Institutional Membership) remains at an additional £5.

Membership of the Prehistoric Society is still well worth the subscription with the annual Proceedings (plus searchable contents pages), tri-annual newsletter and many free lectures and offers for members. And, in case you haven't already seen it, the Prehistoric Society website is at www.ucl.ac.uk/prehistoric. Membership forms, issues of PAST, abstracts of PPS, downloadable Research, Conference and Travel Grant forms, book reviews and much more are all available on line. Be sure to visit!

We greatly value our members and hope you will continue your subscription with us.

RESEARCH GRANTS

Supporting research into prehistory is one of the fundamental aims of the Prehistoric Society. As a small charitable organisation, we can be proud that we are in a position to make research grants and that awards from the Society are regarded highly – often seen as seals of approval – by other, larger grant-awarding bodies. We pride ourselves in that we give preference to new, often innovative, projects directed by both academics and local groups. Some projects that we have start-funded have grown into large, high-profile pieces of research and we have always encouraged applications by younger prehistorians, starting out on their careers, who, for reasons of their youth, do not always have the track record necessary to be successful in attracting grants from larger bodies.

Council are concerned, however, about the levels of grant we are currently able to make. The stock phrase ‘applications far outweighed the funds available’ is not just a simple platitude given to unsuccessful applicants. It is sadly a very true reflection of our current financial state. There is a positive side, of course, which is that we are such a high-profile organisation that we are attracting a large number of grant applicants and as a result, many of the applications are for prestigious, worthwhile and beneficial projects. We are attracting more applications from abroad and this year our grants contributed to projects in Britain, Romania, the Peruvian Andes and Cyprus. We were able to help students undertake research in the Czech Republic and China and we supported students presenting papers on their new research at conferences in Mexico and Puerto Rico. While in no way wishing to reduce our contribution to home projects, this does spread our message far and wide and leads to even greater recognition for the Society.

Well, that's the ‘spin’. There is, of course a negative side. The costs of research, particularly in the form of fieldwork and laboratory work, are steadily increasing. This means that the amount of grant we are able to give may be minimal in terms of overall project costs and we often end up grant-aiding to a

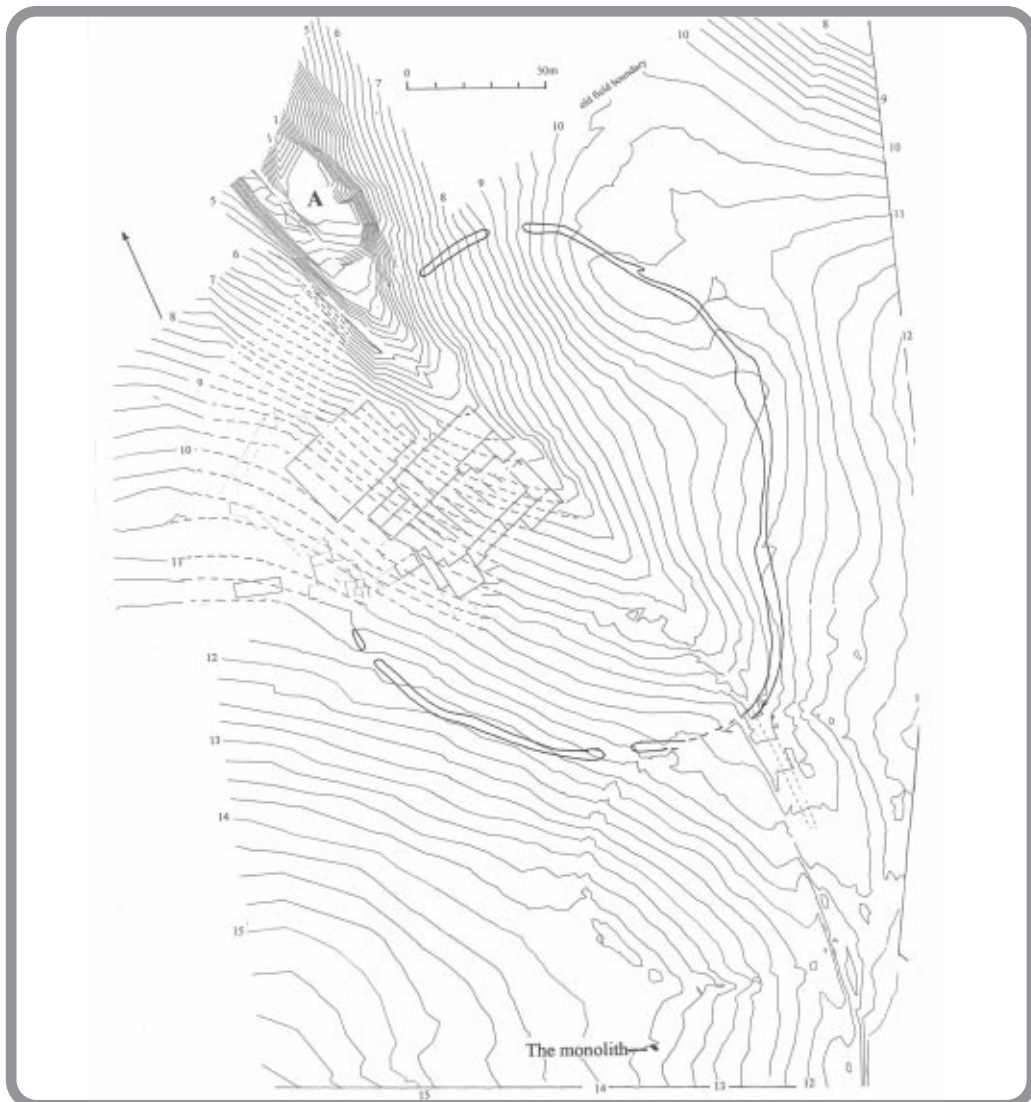
level well below the amount applied for. It is not uncommon for an application for £1000 to be awarded a few hundred and these days a grant of, say, £300 does not go very far. This year, applicants for our research grants were seeking over £21000 in total. However, the Society had just £3600 at its disposal (including dedicated travel awards). Grants for major research projects were limited to between £300 and £400.

Council would like to increase the amount of money available for prehistoric research and a small sub-committee will be looking at ways to increase our funds. The Society's major sources of income are our membership subscriptions and interest from investments. In addition, we try to gain some additional income through the sale of merchandise and publications. Currently, interest rates on our investments are low and meetings, conferences and study tours are budgeted to be self-financing. We will be looking at the possibility of membership subscription increases with a proportion of the

subscription being dedicated to the research fund, possibly asking members for donations, and also encouraging members to make bequests to the Society. But the first step has to be to consult the members that together constitute the Prehistoric Society. There are a lot of brains out there and if you can offer any advice or suggest ways of achieving this aim, may I encourage you to write to me with your suggestions. I can assure you that your ideas will be welcome and that all will be considered.

*Alex Gibson (Hon Sec, The Prehistoric Society),
Dept. of Archaeological Sciences, University of
Bradford, Bradford BD7 1DP
Email: a.m.gibson1@bradford.ac.uk*

RECENT TOPOGRAPHICAL SURVEY OF THE LONE MEG STONE CIRCLE, CUMBRIA



Form line survey of the ditched enclosure and stone circle but excluding the individual stones of the latter. The lines are 25cms apart. Note that the (position of) stone circle is visible as a bank.

The discovery of cropmarks including a 'ditched' enclosure contiguous with the Long Meg stone circle in Cumbria, north-west England, provides a new context for understanding the third largest stone circle in Britain. In particular, the cropmarks demonstrate that previously unrecorded types of Neolithic monument exist within north-west England and that the enclosure, stone circle and monolith of Long Meg might be elements of a single complex. Whilst such interpretations remain to be tested by excavation, recent topographical survey provides new details of this complex. Here, attention is drawn to three points of interest.

1. In 1988, it was noted that the ditched enclosure appeared to have been located near to a spring. What was not recorded then, and what geomorphological mapping now demonstrates, is the fact that the extant spring is located in - and has eroded an embayment in the side of - a narrow, steep sided valley (A on plan). This valley leads northwards to a basin which may have contained a small pool and then descends steeply to the river Eden. Southwards, it becomes a shallow valley which is up to 5m deep and which may also have contained a spring. This shallow valley is central to and 'embraced' by the ditched enclosure. In this, the monument is not unique and similar situations have been recorded - albeit with little comment - at a number of sites, for example Blackhouse Burn in southern Scotland and at West Kennet. Perhaps the most striking parallel, however, is Durrington Walls. Such comparisons are not intended to imply similarity of date or purpose per se but to argue that, in future, comparison of Neolithic enclosures must take into account topographical context. Furthermore, the enclosure of features such as hilltops or valleys requires explanation. At this site, for example, a conscious choice was obviously made to dig the ditch around the valley and not on the hilltop where the smaller stone circle reported by Stukeley stood.

2. Equally, the stone circle of Long Meg should no longer be seen as being built on a slope but as including the head of the valley. This explains why the perimeter of the stone circle coincides with breaks of slope and appears to exclude the high ground on the edge of which the monolith of Long Meg herself stands. It is also suggestive of some continuity between the ditched enclosure and stone circle. Indeed, it can be argued that the stone circle was laid out in a way that reflected and respected the ditched enclosure (assuming the latter to be earlier). In contrast, the monolith of Long Meg appears to stand beyond the valley on localized high ground and this sense of separateness is reinforced by it being of different geology to the other stones.

3. It is perhaps no coincidence that the nearest outcrop of red sandstone from which that monolith might derive is the point at which the small valley

noted above meets the river Eden. However, there is one other topographical feature which may explain the significance attached by prehistoric peoples to that valley and confluence. Firstly, the sandstone cliffs are part of the dramatic narrowing of the Eden valley and are located at a point where the broad floodplain of that river becomes a cataract. Secondly, this appears to have been a point - the only point in the Eden valley - where there were natural outcrops of gypsum. Unfortunately, the quarrying and subsequent mining of this mineral (since the eighteenth century at least) has destroyed the original character of the valley's sides and it is only a matter of conjecture - based on the fact the mineral was quarried - that the outcrops were visible. Nevertheless, given the importance attached to this rock at the Thornborough henges on the other side of the Pennines it is reasonable to infer that its presence here may have contributed to the importance of the Long Meg site. Indeed it is now necessary to consider the possibility that the putative banks of both the ditched enclosure and stone circle were originally covered in gypsum.

Tom Clare

Acknowledgements

This note results from an ongoing project recording the topographical context of stone circles and related monuments in north-west England. The writer wishes to express his thanks to Mr and Mrs Morton for permission to survey their farmland and to English Heritage for permission to undertake detailed survey of the monuments. The base map is that of the Ordnance Survey with the permission of The Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office, C. Crown Copyright Licence No ED244066.

CONFERENCE NEWS

**Bronze Age connections:
cultural contact in prehistoric Europe**
Dover, October 21-22, 2006

To mark the occasion of the Ringlemere gold cup being placed on display alongside the Dover Bronze Age boat in Dover Museum, a two-day conference will take place in Dover in October 2006, with the theme '*Bronze Age Connections: Cultural Contact in Prehistoric Europe*' in celebration of these two iconic symbols of Bronze Age life. The symposium will bring together a wide range of scholars from many different specialisms to explore the economic, social and symbolic nature of cultural contact along the north-west European seaboard in prehistory and the practical means by which cross-channel relations could be maintained. Sessions will include *Prehistoric navigation in north-west Europe; The production and distribution of bronze and other goods; The*

politics of power: the economic basis of a ruling elite; and The symbolism of travel and the voyage in Prehistory. More details can be found at <http://www.canterburytrust.co.uk/conference.htm> or contact Denise Ryeland, c/o Tours of the Realm, Hammond House, Limekiln Street, Dover CT17 9EE.

Networks, contacts and competition in the history of archaeology

Organised by The History of Archaeology Research Group, Durham University, and the AREA Project (Archives of European Archaeology)
St John's College, University of Durham, July 15, 2006

Speakers will include: Alain Schnapp (Landscapes of antiquarianism), Jarl Nordbladh (Networks between Scandinavian and European archaeology in the early modern period), Kristian Kristiansen (The formation of the European Association of Archaeologists), Peter Rowley-Conwy (The differential reception of the Three Age System in England, Scotland and Ireland), Richard Hingley (The Indian customs hedge and the Roman frontier: perceiving imperial frontiers in nineteenth and early twentieth century archaeology), Chris Miele (Victorian internationalism and the Victorian view of monument care on the Continent), Marc-Antoine Kaeser (The international network of Edouard Desor) and Mircea Babeş (Rival archaeological congresses in inter-war Europe). Further information can be found at http://www.dur.ac.uk/archaeology/research/groupings/history_of_archaeology/. Places are limited and pre-booking is essential. To register, email: history.of.archaeology@durham.ac.uk

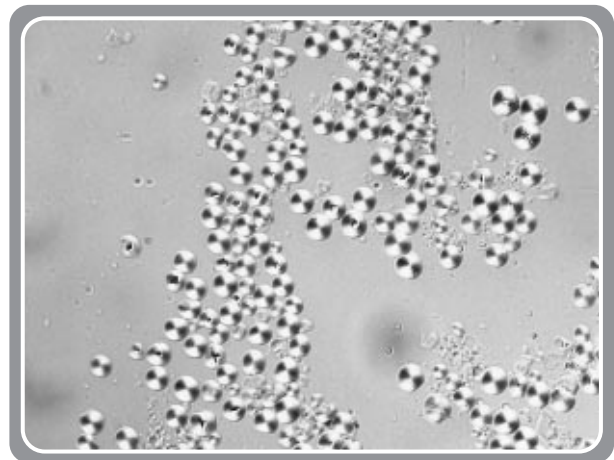
A former member in Cambridge is offering for sale a run of PPS from volume 31 (1965) to 58 (1992) inclusive. For further information, please contact (if possible before the end of June) Dr Nicholas Postgate, Trinity College, Cambridge CB2 1TQ; e-mail jnp10@cam.ac.uk.

PLANTS FOR FOOD, PLANTS AS RAW MATERIALS: PLANT USE IN THE PAST AND ONE WAY TO DETECT IT.

The control and management of plants for food is one of the most important discoveries ever made by humans and underpins life today. Plants are thought to have been a very important component of human life always, but since they are so poorly preserved, their contribution has often been ignored. Until fairly recently, the only way of identifying plant use in a prehistoric setting, except where macro remains survived, was by inference based on the study of use-wear traces, the damage done to a tool's edge while being used. This technique, when used alone, can

provide a good indication of the type of materials used at a site but it rarely provides detailed information on plant species.

It has long been recognised that plant residues survive adhered to the surface of ancient tools, not only stone but also bone and other materials such as shell. The detection and extraction of residual material on tools represents direct, empirical evidence for plant use. Residues are identified on a tool, extracted, then mounted on microscope slides for morphological identification. The most commonly identified microscopic plant structures are starch grains and phytoliths. However, up to now plant residue analysis of tools has been little used outside Oceania, Australia and Central America. Here, it has resulted in startling new evidence for the use of plants and for their cultivation in Papua New Guinea and Panama far earlier than previously thought. Claims have also been made for the survival of starch grains deep into the Pleistocene.



Starch granules commonly range in size from 5-50 microns, although some yam starch granules can be larger than 100 microns. Shown here are sweetcorn starch granules which commonly range in size from 4-14 microns (image under DIC, taken with a x63 objective, Zeiss™ Axioskop 2, AxioCam HRC™).

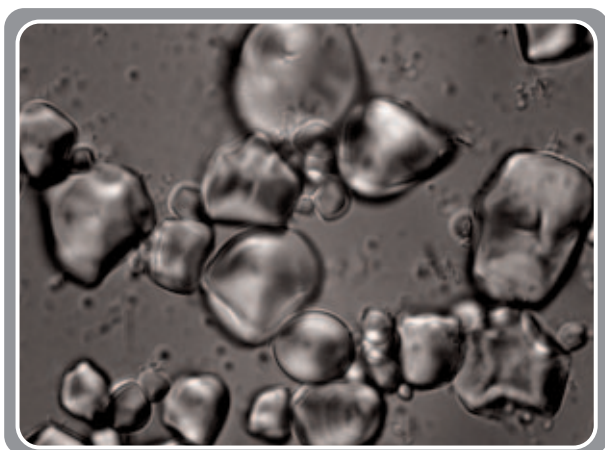
Starch is a vital component in the diet of the majority of people in the modern world and occurs in most food. For example, all green plants make starch, although it is largely concentrated within storage organs such as roots, tubers and seeds. Today, starch-based foods contribute approximately one-third of the total weight of our dietary intake, while globally, we obtain most of our carbohydrates from the starch in just six different plants; rice, maize, wheat, potato, yam and cassava. However, some tubers contain toxins or may be very fibrous requiring technological items, such as grinding stones, to make them suitable for human consumption; starch residues are deposited on these items during processing.

Research has shown that starch grains are relatively hardy under many depositional conditions and are sometimes abundant in the archaeological record. Starch grains have been found in contexts ranging

from dry caves or tombs to open sites in the humid tropics where organic preservation is generally poor. They have also been found within dessicated and/or charred tubers, preserved bread, as part of residues in ceramic vessels, adhering to the edges of stone tools, and in soils.

Phytoliths, another type of plant residue, occur particularly in the stems, leaves and inflorescences of plants. Silica is carried up from ground water and is deposited in cells of the growing plant that eventually form into bodies of opaline silica. In many plant taxa, distinctive forms retain cell shape after organic tissue decay. Distinctive phytoliths are particularly common and abundant in monocotyledons, notably grasses. As phytoliths are inorganic, they survive well in most environments. Phytoliths are particularly useful for identifying grasses and cereals, while starch grains are better suited to the identification of tuberous plants and roots.

Plant residue identification is a comparative technique; that is, it uses modern reference material for comparison with the samples found. Starch occurs as units known as grains or granules. They can be examined by optical microscopy, where they show a distinct cross that rotates with the polarizing filter under transmitted, cross-polarised light. Starch grains can also be examined using a scanning electron microscope (SEM). Features such as the size, shape, hilum, surface features, concentric growth rings, and the nature of the extinction cross can sometimes indicate plant taxa. The importance of a good reference collection cannot be overstated. Plants grow at different rates and this can affect the size of starch grains. Processing methods can also alter the morphology of the grain, for example grinding can break grains up which alters their appearance.



Sweet potato starch granules usually range from 4-34 microns (image under DIC, taken with a x63 objective, Zeiss™ Axioskop 2, AxioCam HRc™).

The trickiest aspect of plant residue analysis is insuring against modern contamination. Starch occurs in most food so traces of the lunchtime

sandwich on imperfectly cleaned fingers can mix with ancient residue through contamination. Artefacts that are going to be examined for residues should ideally never be handled at all. If they have to be touched, then this should be done with powder-free examination gloves; many of the gloves used in laboratory work are coated in starch so these must be avoided. If you have material that you think might be worth examining from the point of view of gaining information about past plant use, then the following guidelines are worth remembering: when excavating or extracting material from the soil, never touch the artefact and place it immediately into a finds bag along with a small sample of sediment. Take another small sample of sediment from the site for comparative work to examine relative amounts of starch inherent in the sedimentary background. Never attempt to wash an artefact; indeed, when artefacts are scrubbed clean, potentially crucial information regarding their past use may be destroyed.

Residues can be found in many places. The ideal place to locate food residues is adhering to artefacts used for preparing or storing food, such as on grinding stone surfaces or on tools used for scraping or cutting such as stone or shell tools for example. Many Aboriginal groups in Australia used nets as food sieves and so even unexpected items such as traces of woven material might be hiding useful information. Items of material culture made from plant-based materials will also contain starch grains and phytoliths. Residual material also occurs in dental calculus and human coprolites, and these may potentially also be sources of starch grains and other evidence .

We are potentially able to unlock the door of ancient plant use. Plant macrofossil analysis continuously provides exciting new information, but sadly so many sites exist where macrofossils just do not survive and it is here particularly where residue analysis could greatly increase our knowledge and information. To do so will enrich any site that is examined and will enhance any interpretation that is made. No one can survive without plants; even when the traditional diet was largely protein based, as for example in the Arctic, people dug for tubers and depended on plant materials for a wide range of material culture items. The incredibly detailed botanical knowledge of modern and recent hunting and gathering and non-technological agricultural communities across the world is testament to the central role that plants have played in human history from the outset.

Karen Hardy

*Karen is a European Union Marie Curie Outgoing International Fellow from York University, currently at the University of Sydney
Email: karhardy@gmail.com*

JOHN JAMES WYMER MA, DSc, FBA, FSA

Expert on Lower Palaeolithic archaeology

John Wymer, who died on 10 February 2006, was born in London in 1928. He will be remembered by many members of the Prehistoric Society for his lifelong passion for Palaeolithic archaeology. At the age of 27, he found part of the Swanscombe skull, a discovery that remains the oldest human cranium in Britain. Although he trained as a teacher, in 1956 he was appointed as an archaeologist at Reading Museum, his research leading to his first monograph, *Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain as represented by the Thames Valley* (1968). The volume was illustrated by many of John's distinctive drawings, the quality of which remained a hallmark of each of his copious reports.

In 1965, he was recruited by Ronald Singer (University of Chicago) to direct excavations in South Africa. The most challenging of these was Klasies River Mouth, where a stratigraphic sequence, more than 25m thick and spanning the local Middle and Late Stone Age, was examined. Importantly, the deposits contained several human specimens, one of which was at the time of its discovery the world's oldest specimen of *Homo sapiens*. John returned to England in 1968 and conducted a series of outstanding excavations at key Palaeolithic sites, including Clacton and Hoxne. Each was of the highest standard and was fully published. In 1979-80, he took up a brief appointment at the University of East Anglia, which resulted in a world perspective (*The Palaeolithic Age*, 1982) and another regional survey (*Palaeolithic Sites in East Anglia*, 1985). By the time these appeared, John had begun to dig sites of later periods in Essex and then Norfolk.

However, from 1991, he began an ambitious project to relate every Palaeolithic discovery in Britain to its relevant geological deposit, and on the basis of these relationships to interpret the early presence of people in Britain. The project was sponsored by English Heritage and organised through Wessex Archaeology. In only six years, John had personally visited almost every site and significant museum collection in the country. The output comprised a series of detailed regional reports which could be used by mineral operators and planning authorities to tell them of the potential importance for Palaeolithic archaeology of different Quaternary sediments. In 1998, this research was distilled into the two-volume work, *The Lower Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain*. It is doubtful that anyone will ever achieve such a feat again. Thereafter, John continued to be actively involved in fieldwork and its



publication and even recent issues of *Current Archaeology* and *British Archaeology* (Jan/Feb 2006) carry his drawings of the latest (and oldest) Palaeolithic finds from the country.

Throughout his career, John took many roles in local archaeological societies but he had also been President of the Quaternary Research Association, Chairman of the Lithic Studies Society, Vice-President (and briefly President) of the Prehistoric Society. He received numerous awards, including a doctorate from the University of Reading (1993), the Grahame Clark Medal and the Stopes Medal. His other great interests of blues and jazz, of ancient art, of gardening and real ale were shared with many. He leaves three daughters and two sons from his first marriage.

Andrew Lawson

AILEEN FOX 1907-2005

The Society records with sadness the death of Aileen Fox, who had been in frail health for some time, on 21 November 2005. With her we lose one of the last archaeologists who came to prominence before the Second World War. She had enormous energy and a propensity for sorting out problems, both of which were used to great effect in the core of her British career in Devon.

In 1945, Aileen arrived in Exeter to tackle excavations in the war-damaged city, and remained as lecturer, later senior lecturer, from 1947 until retirement in 1972. An established archaeologist, she had married Cyril Fox, Director of the National Museum of Wales, in 1933, worked widely in Wales and held a wartime lectureship at Cardiff. She greatly enjoyed teaching and is warmly remembered by her students.

Much of south-west Britain in the 1940s was unknown archaeological territory. Two excavation campaigns on Dartmoor, at Kes Tor and Dean Moor, produced extensive data on prehistoric moorland settlements. Fieldwork identified a distinctive regional group of hillforts with multiple enclosures. The nineteenth century finds from the Bronze Age cemetery at Farway were reworked, and lapsed pre-war excavations on Milber Down hillfort published. Later the discovery of the Holcombe mirror was the subject of a major paper with Sheila Pollard. Work on the Roman period also continued, both in Exeter and on rural military sites. All reports were promptly published, in a clear-cut style based on the culture-history school of her early years. *South West England* (1964 in the Ancient Peoples and Places series) ties together all the fruits of this extensive research in a synthesis which is still a local classic.



Aileen also became involved in all aspects of local archaeological organisation. She campaigned successfully for an increase in archaeological posts, including adult education, in the University of Exeter and in local museums and was instrumental in the establishment of the Exeter Archaeological Field Unit in 1971. She was very active in the Devon Archaeological Society, its President 1963-4. Everyone involved in archaeology in any way in Devon from the 1940s until the 1970s owes much to her forthright promotion of developments needed and, at a personal level, to her support and encouragement.

After formal retirement, Aileen developed a second career in New Zealand until 1983, with teaching at the University of Auckland and a series of major fieldwork projects. On her return to Exeter she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Exeter in 1985 and in 1998 Honorary Membership of the Prehistoric Society. Her autobiography (*Aileen – A Pioneering Archaeologist*, 2000, Gracewing), written after her return to Exeter, provides a highly readable account of her life and work. Those of us who worked with her or were taught by her remember all we owe her with pleasure and can meet again in her autobiography the Aileen whom we knew.

Henrietta Quinnell

ANDREW SHERRATT (1946-2006)

We have all been shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Andrew Sherratt, one of the most gifted of prehistorians. I had known Andrew since 1973 when I was doing my doctorate in Oxford and he arrived from Cambridge to join the Ashmolean Museum, acting as a great breath of fresh air and source of new ideas. He was the same then as he continued to be much later in life: enthusiastic, witty, at times sardonic, astonishingly well read and knowledgeable, and full of ideas. Those notions, mainly on European and Near Eastern prehistory, he would sketch out literally on the back of envelopes or beer mats over coffee in the Oxford Playhouse in Beaumont Street, opposite the Institute and Ashmolean. Under the portals of the Museum was another meeting place, when Andrew emerged for his mid-morning smoke and would instantly lead one off into learned but sparkling discussion of familiar and unfamiliar topics. He kept this spirit

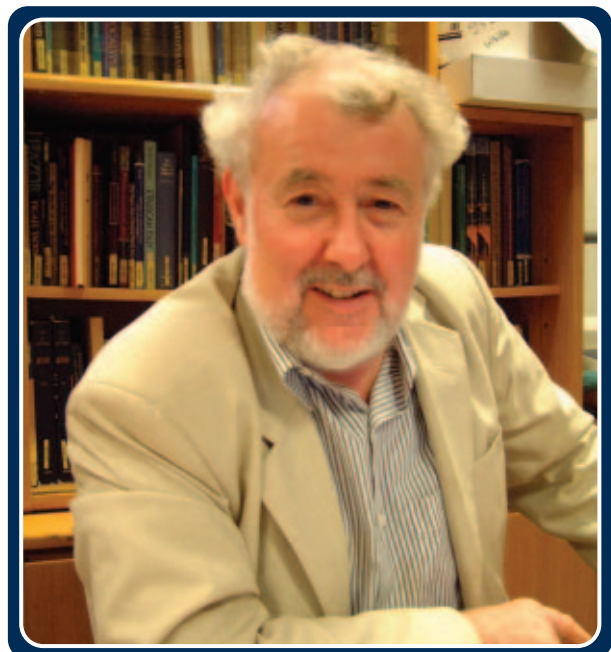


Photo courtesy of Dept. of Archaeology, University of Sheffield.

alive throughout his career, and it made his many international conference contributions both enjoyable and memorable, as we witnessed firsthand not so long ago at a Cardiff conference in 2003.

Andrew's academic range was extremely broad as his many papers testify, on subjects as diverse as exchange systems, secondary products, megaliths, world systems and early urbanism. He undertook little fieldwork and never wrote the big book that we all hoped he would, but there need be no single way to make an impact or leave an important legacy. He was committed to explaining and understanding the past, but was impatient with and critical of some kinds of theory and interpretation. He seemed most comfortable with the broad sweep, the grand narrative, but in his hands this was not abstract generalisation but carefully thought out models, worked through specific evidence which you could be sure he had looked at in detail himself. Surely his intended spell in Sheffield, to which he had moved at the start of this academic year, would have led to another burst of creative thought, which makes his loss now all the sadder. In an era of increasing specialisation and conformity to the RAE culture, I wonder if we will see his like again. We are the poorer for his passing and we shall greatly miss him.

Alasdair Whittle

ISOBEL SMITH (1912-2005)

Isobel Smith, who died last November, was a formative figure in the development of Neolithic studies in Britain. The discipline does not consist only of the figures who make a lot of noise, or write grand syntheses, or proclaim new theoretical stances and manifestos. It needs also those who devote themselves to detailed and patient work, from which good and lasting ideas can be generated. Isobel Smith fitted the latter category. Neither her character nor career were in the least bit flashy. After various earlier studies and employment, she worked on the publication of Alexander Keiller's Windmill Hill and Avebury excavations, and thereafter for the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments. Her PhD on Neolithic pottery (submitted in 1956) is still read: an astonishing tribute. Her greatest published legacy was the 1965 *Windmill Hill and Avebury: excavations by Alexander Keiller, 1925-1939* (Oxford, Clarendon Press): achieving what Keiller himself had not, soberly presented but full of still important detail, packed with insight, and accompanied elsewhere by other more discursive papers on changing interpretations of causewayed enclosures. Other reports, though shorter, have equally stood the test of time: among others, on the Whiteleaf barrow, on Avebury G55 and West Overton G6b, the Beckhampton long barrow, and –

with the late John Evans – on Cherhill. Her pottery reports also remain important, and her 1974 chapter on the *Neolithic in British prehistory: a new outline* (edited by Colin Renfrew) was for a long time the best summary of its kind. I believe that in a very genuine way her work inspired many of her successors, not just because of her links back to our archaeological forebears, including Gordon Childe under whom she studied, but because of its lasting quality and prescience.



Isobel Smith at work in Inner Ditch XVII, Windmill Hill; photograph by Gabrielle Keiller, courtesy of the Wiltshire Archaeological and Natural History Society.

I did not know Isobel well personally (for a fuller account see the obituary by her friend Don Brothwell, published in *The Independent* on December 14, 2005), but remember *inter alia* a fleeting visit by her to the West Kennet excavations in 1987, short encounters in the Avebury Museum, and presenting a copy to her of our own Windmill report, dedicated to her. She was shy and retiring but self-possessed and to be respected. She will be missed.

Alasdair Whittle

NEW LIGHT ON THE PALAEOLITHIC OF THE NEAR EAST (SYRIA)

In April 2005, a symposium on 'Humans, environment and culture in the Near East: the legacy of Frank Hole' was held at the annual conference of the Society of American Archaeologists in Salt Lake City. The symposium offered an international group of participants opportunities to integrate recent

research across a broad chronological range of prehistory (1 million to 3000 BC). With the support of a grant from the Prehistoric Society, I was able to attend and contribute to the session, presenting evidence for the most recent Palaeolithic discoveries from Syria.



Some of these discoveries contribute to re-framing models of this period. For example, pebble cultural industries are now known from the Syrian desert, marking the oldest cultural finds from that region. The desert areas reveal a continuous tradition with rich Acheulean industries and a *Homo erectus* skull fragment in association with other palaeontological data. At Umm Tlel, an open air fossil spring site of Middle Palaeolithic date, analysis of the stone tools recovered indicated that the function of the site changed through time, serving sometimes as a living camp with differentiated activities, while at other times the site was used specifically as a hunting, butchering or flint knapping location. Unusual for this period are discoveries of bitumen use, incised stones (possible examples of early art), and the non-random symbolic arrangement of artefacts. Other evidence for Neanderthal occupation comes from the cave site at Dederiyeh, north of Aleppo, where the skeletons of two children were discovered, one complete (shown here) and one fragmentary. New discoveries of the Upper Palaeolithic were also presented, including long stratified sequences with

reversals in the flake-blade trajectory. The geographic range and long continuity of the discoveries force us to revise existing models of the occupation and significance of Palaeolithic use of the (now) desert areas of the Near East and to recognise a broader range of adaptations than had previously been accepted.

Sultan Muhesen, Damascus University

THE FIFTEENTH EUROPA LECTURE

Images of transit: the Hispano-Celtic ways of death: Prof. Francisco Marco (University of Zaragoza, Spain)

5 p.m., Wednesday 24th May 2006, Society of Antiquaries of London, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London. The lecture will be followed by a free wine reception.

This year's Europa Lecture examines the iconography associated with Hispano-Celtic mortuary rites, with a particular emphasis on 'heroic' passages - aerial and watery - to the afterlife. Professor Marco is Professor of Ancient History at the University of Zaragoza. His research centres on the study of processes and problems of acculturation in the religious systems of the ancient world (especially in Romano-Celtic religions). He is also interested in the use of magic in the western part of the Roman Empire, and in the perception of alterity in the northwestern Mediterranean periphery by the classical writers. He has published some 160 books and articles on these and related subjects. He is involved in numerous national and international organisations and also directs major excavations at the Iberian-Roman town of El Palao (Alcañiz, Teruel).

