

PAST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PREHISTORIC SOCIETY



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Secrets of the High Woods: Landscapes and Lasers

Introduction

The South Downs National Park Authority is hosting a Heritage Lottery funded community archaeology project. “Secrets of the High Woods” is exploring 305 km² of the South Downs using specially commissioned high resolution airborne Laser scanning data – with spectacular results.

The open pasture land of the South Downs has long been recognised as one of our richest archaeological landscapes, popular with casual visitors and academic researchers alike. However, the archaeology of the central area of the South Downs National Park, characterised by the ancient woodlands and forestry plantations of great private estates, is much less well known.

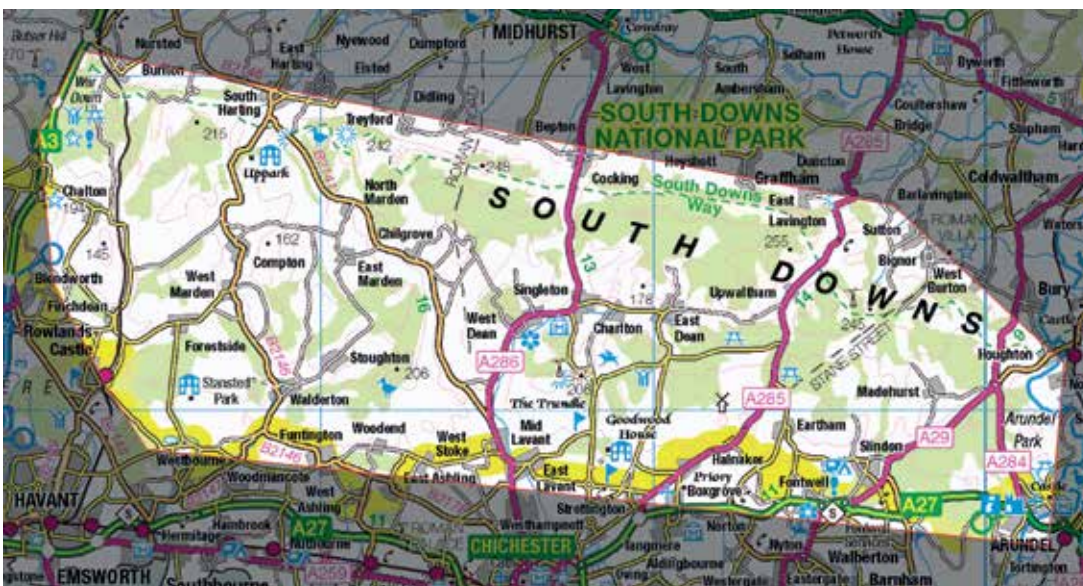
Historically, scholars working in this landscape have revealed fascinating traces of the past, often visible as monuments in areas of open pasture, or as ephemeral traces in arable

landscapes, or testified by historic cartography and ancient documents. However, many more sites have been suspected to have been concealed below woodland – and Lidar has provided the ideal tool to help explore the hidden landscapes below the trees.

Landscapes and lasers

Lidar captures three dimensional terrain data, and at 0.25 m resolution the data set is one of the largest and most detailed commissioned for archaeological research to date. Highly accurate models of the landscape are generated and researchers can digitally “strip away” tree cover, revealing the form of the ground surface below.

The models have revealed a complex, palimpsestual archaeological landscape. They contain so much detail that a National Mapping Programme has been essential to provide a baseline quantification and qualification of the resource.



Secrets of the High Woods Project area (© SDNPA).

Aerial mapping specialists from Historic England and Cornwall Archaeological Unit are mapping topographic features from Lidar alongside crop and soil marks from aerial photography.

The results are confirming the local archaeological communities' long held suspicions that, whilst much was known about individual monuments and sites, much more was waiting to be discovered.

Spectacular results

The results have proved to be stunning. The ground surface below the trees has been shown to be littered with traces of past activity, of people farming, living, and managing this landscape over millennia. Remarkably, much of this evidence survives in upstanding form, preserved from the damaging effects of agriculture beneath a woodland canopy.

Over 2000 sites have been mapped, ranging from the Neolithic through to the 20th century, greatly increasing the number of known sites in the area. New discoveries include funerary monuments, enclosures, field systems and settlements, and this has proved to be a wonderful opportunity to engage local people in exploring the traces of their past.

Just one example of the great research potential arising from the survey comes from evidence of prehistoric farming and settlement within the project area. Results show extensive networks of field systems with well-preserved lynchet profiles, often linked by tracks and axial routes, testifying to the movement of people and animals. Results would imply that during the later prehistoric and Romano British period, the landscape of the South Downs was extensively farmed and settled, with results rivalling the exceptional preservation of archaeological remains on the chalk downland landscape of Salisbury plain.

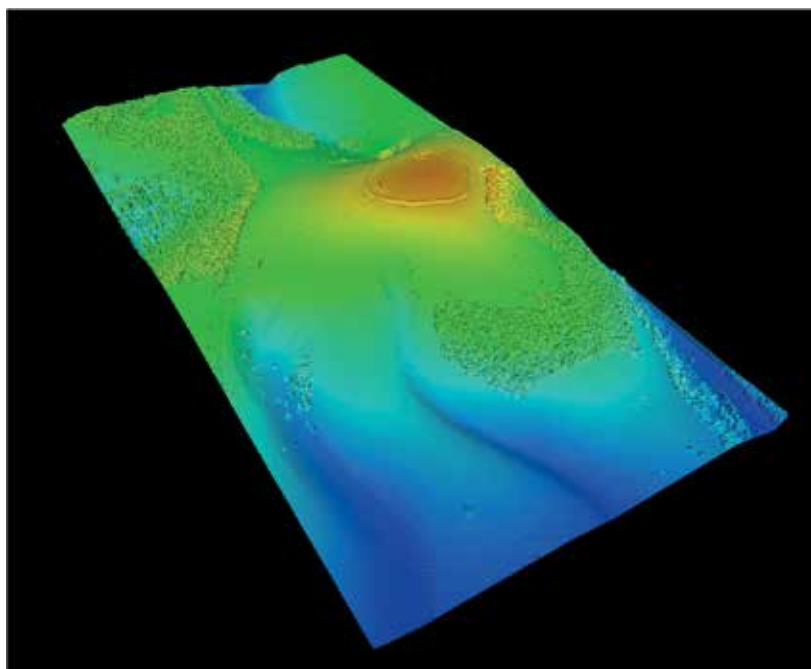
There is a great deal of variation in the nature of the field systems across the project area in terms of shape, size and form. Some networks appear to have a core coaxial form, often appearing draped across the terrain, with associated/integrated tracks following key axes of the underlying topography. Other examples include radial, agglomerated (often around a core of loosely coaxial forms) and linear systems.

The data set is also enabling re-evaluation of our understanding of many monuments within this landscape. At Whiteways, a linear feature, originally classified as a cross ridge dyke, has been conclusively shown to form part of a wider earthwork enclosure, as postulated by David McOmish of Historic England. Project volunteers will be helping to explore and investigate this fascinating enclosure, located on a hilltop above Arundel, during a community excavation this year.

There have been several examples recently in the national news of new discoveries of Roman roads identified using Lidar, as this technology has a superb capacity to detect long linear topographic forms. The High Woods area is no exception, and a route linking Chichester to Arundel has been identified, running from Stane Street at Westhampnett and passing eastwards through woodland to the west of Arundel. This route was proposed back in 1973 by Ivan Margary, and sections of *agger*, side ditches and quarries thought to be associated with the construction and maintenance of the road, have been mapped in detail.

Research resource

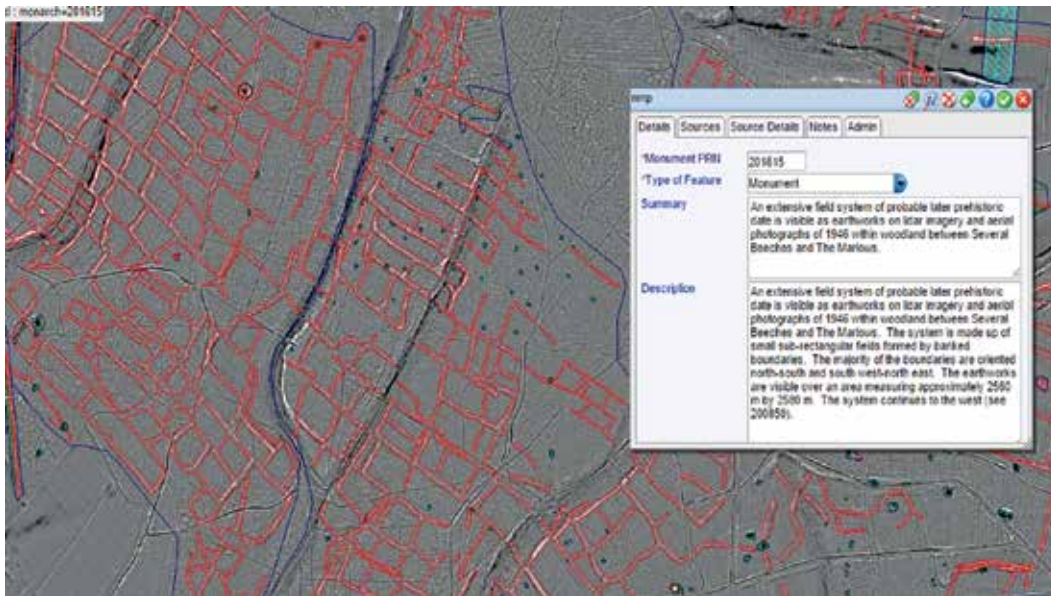
Secrets of the High Woods is fundamentally a community-based project and forms part of a long history of archaeological exploration and research on the South Downs. The project has aimed to engage local communities in learning about and exploring the archaeology and history of their area.



Digital surface model of the Trundle, West Sussex (© SDNPA).



Volunteer fieldwork, © SDNPA.



Extensive networks of field systems concealed below the woods at Westdean (© SDNPA).

Volunteers are helping to investigate the historic landscape by using a range of Lidar maps to identify and field verify features concealed beneath the trees. Archive and cartographic documentary records can then be utilised to research and interpret features of the historic period. Volunteers are also capturing oral histories in order to raise awareness and understanding of the historic landscape of the central downs.

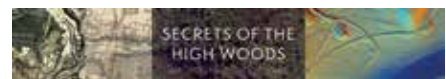
The project has generated a wealth of valuable data and information that requires management and maintenance in order to provide a lasting legacy for future researchers. The data set will be held at the SDNPA following the end of the project and will be housed with the area's Historic Environment Records. It is anticipated the data will provide an important research tool for local groups, students and researchers engaged in historic landscape analysis for years to come.

To find out more, please visit <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/discover/heritage/secrets-of-the-high-woods>

Acknowledgements

The Secrets of the High Woods project would like to thank many people who are helping to make this project a success. The advice and support of James Kenny, Chichester District Archaeologist, is gratefully acknowledged. We would also like to thank the professional teams who have undertaken the mapping and the independent researchers who are actively working with us to explore and interpret this data set. And lastly, but by no means least – the dedication and commitment of our project volunteers, who are out in the field in all weathers, tucked away in archives and out interviewing the people who manage and work within this wonderful archaeological landscape.

Alice Thorne, South Downs National Park



Footprints and solar symbolism in Scandinavian Bronze Age rock art

Scandinavian rock art research has undergone major changes in the last decades, both when it comes to understanding rock art chronology and the interpretation of the images. Much of this research has centred on the ship image. The focus has been to construct new and more reliable chronologies and to establish new interpretative models, stressing that a majority of the rock art in south Scandinavia was the outcome of a maritime tradition. Moreover, the ship also held a crucial position in Bronze Age iconography, being intimately related to solar symbolism. On the decorated

razors of the Late Bronze Age, the ship is one of the agents facilitating the movement of the sun, which travels through the sky by day and beneath the water at night.

However, the focus on the ship image has produced a bias in our understanding of the data, since other images such as footprints often occur at a distance from the sea and have been omitted from the discussion. This is the background to the project "Footprints and solar symbolism", which was set up in 2015 in order to investigate whether it was possible to



Left: Raked light at sunset reveals the feet and ship carvings at Järrestad. Image: Courtney Nimura.

Right: Footprints and foot soles walking down the slope at Boglösa (NB: the red paint is modern). Image: Courtney Nimura.

link our understanding of the footprints to general models concerning solar symbolism. It is a joint project involving Richard Bradley, University of Reading, Courtney Nimura, Oxford University, and Peter Skoglund and Anna Wessman, University of Gothenburg.

The fieldwork

The primary goal of the project was to establish an empirical foundation for further interpretations by creating a detailed dataset of individual footprints. This was completed during fieldwork conducted in May 2015. Two major sites with footprints in Sweden were visited: Järrestad outside Simrishamn in southernmost Sweden and Boglösa outside Enköping in central Sweden. On these two sites, all footprints were recorded individually according to orientation, size and other individual characteristics. The microtopography of the rocks, the surrounding landscape, and the character of the horizon were also considered.

Altogether, *c.* 280 footprints were recorded in the database. In addition, individual motifs were photographed and notes were taken on other specific details. These data provide an important base for further interpretations concerning footprints and their possible relation to solar symbolism. The project team is currently pursuing three key research avenues. The first compares similarities and differences between foot soles, which are representations of feet in shoes, and footprints, which are representations of bare feet and often have toes. The second focuses on the orientations of feet as recorded at the two sites at which fieldwork was conducted, and including published data of other sites with concentrations of feet. The third focuses on the occurrence of right and left feet and their respective orientations.

Footprints and the movement of the sun

By analysing left / right feet and orientation together it may be possible to show that the logic behind carving a left or a right foot may be the same as the logic behind carving a ship moving to the left or moving to the right. Flemming Kaul first demonstrated the importance of this left–right logic on the basis of decorated razors from the Late Bronze Age, where ships facing left are associated with night and ships facing right are associated with day. It is possible that the impetus for carving a left or a right foot may reference similar ideas concerning the movement of the sun.

The project results so far reveal a strikingly consistent alignment of feet (both foot soles and footprints) at Järrestad. At Boglösa there is greater variation in the orientations of feet, a variation which is especially noticeable between right and left feet. The images at these two sites are also sensitive to the shape of the rock outcrop on which they were carved: at both sites feet tend to move down the slope. At Boglösa, the rock shape is much more rounded than at Järrestad, so feet move in different directions in order to adhere to the pattern of movement downslope. There are other connections between feet and solar symbolism, where sun imagery (commonly referred to as wheel crosses) and paired feet are often difficult to distinguish. This visual punning will be explored in more detail in our final publication. Though data analysis is still incomplete, preliminary conclusions suggest a connection between footprints, the ship and solar symbolism that previous research has been unable to demonstrate.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the Prehistoric Society for supporting this research and the related fieldwork.

*Peter Skoglund (University of Gothenburg),
Richard Bradley (University of Reading)
and Courtney Nimura (Oxford University)*

New insights into the Neolithic chalk drums from Folkton (North Yorkshire) and Lavant (West Sussex)

Introduction

The enigmatic Neolithic carved objects known as the Folkton drums have been considered to be unique in the repertoire of British Neolithic decorative artefacts. A visit by Anne Teather to Chichester Museum in 2005, undertaken as part of her doctoral research, drew attention to a previously unstudied chalk drum excavated under the direction of James Kenny and known as the Lavant drum.

This unpublished find is a uniquely plain cylindrical chalk drum, and nationally it is the only currently comparable object to the Folkton drums (East Yorkshire), which reside in the British Museum.

The Lavant drum was excavated by Chichester and District Archaeology Unit (CDAU, run by Chichester District Council) in 1993 within a complex of Neolithic and later pits at Chalk Pit Lane, Lavant, West Sussex (NGR SU869094). Due to the subsequent insolvency of CDAU's successor, Southern Archaeology, following privatization, the post-excavation assessment, analysis and publication of the Lavant site have not been undertaken. The site archive including the drum resides largely as it came from the trenches within the local museum store (The Novium Museum). Additional excavations in the same locale conducted by Southern Archaeology in 1997 suggest that the site where the Lavant drum was found was not isolated, being closely adjacent to a large and complex Neolithic formative henge. Two unpublished radiocarbon dates were obtained on samples of antler from the henge ditch and suggest a construction date of *c.* 3000 cal BC. Both the henge and pit complex are located within 1.2 km of The Trundle, a large Neolithic causewayed enclosure and later Iron Age Hillfort. Together, this evidence suggests that Neolithic life in this area was articulated around an important ceremonial landscape. This report discusses similarities and potential connections between the Folkton and Lavant drums.

The Lavant drum

Interestingly, while the Folkton drums are highly decorated, the Lavant drum is largely plain. Evidence of potential prior decoration is currently only exhibited as scratches and some linear marks and crosses. Further, while some authors only tentatively associate the Lavant and Folkton finds, analysis of the dimensions of the drums provides evidence for the standardisation of the form of this class of Neolithic artefact. The Folkton drums have heights/diameters of 86/102 mm,



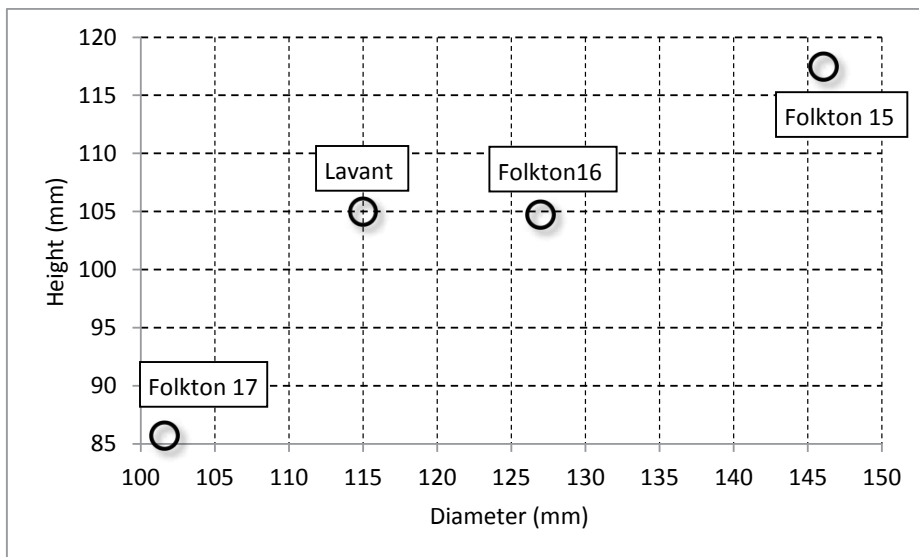
Map of Britain with location of sites.



Location of Lavant Henge and Chalk Pit Lane (© Google 2015).



The Lavant Drum (photograph: author; © The Novium [a service provided by Chichester District Council]. All rights reserved).



Sizes of the Folkton drums and Lavant drum. The Folkton drums are numbered by the British Museum as 1893, 1228:15, 1228:16 and 1228:17.

105/127 mm and 117/146 mm respectively (dimensions taken from original measurements to nearest $\frac{1}{8}$ inch given by the excavator, Canon Greenwell). The ratios of height to diameter of these artefacts are fairly constant (0.80 to 0.84), reflecting the close standardisation in shape of the three drums. The middle drum (Folkton 16) is 25% wider than the smallest drum, but the largest is only 15% wider than the middle one, raising the possibility of there having been a fourth drum of intermediate size between the smallest and the middle Folkton drum. The Lavant drum, with an estimated diameter of 115 mm, is almost an exact intermediate between the smallest and the middle Folkton drum, though it is about 10 mm taller than expected based on the shape of the Folkton drums. This may be because the Lavant drum appears to be unfinished: smoothing of the base and smoothing and/or decoration of the “lid” might have reduced the height of the finished object. Furthermore, these data represent maximum measurements of the heights and diameters and the Folkton drums have not been re-measured since their excavation (although this is in progress, Gillian Varndell, pers. comm). The consistency and regularity between the dimensions of all four drums strongly suggest that there was a standardisation of shape and perhaps size for the production of drums in the Neolithic. This agrees with findings recently published by Anne Teather in *Mining and materiality: Neolithic chalk artefacts and their depositional contexts in southern Britain*, where she argues that chalk artefacts form a cohesive repertoire of prehistoric artefacts with regular sizes and forms.

In terms of chronology, the date of the Lavant drum is likely to be contemporary with the Lavant henge at c. 3000 cal BC, as inferred from adjacent pits that include Mortlake ware (as originally identified by James Kenny). Although there is no pottery within the pit containing the Lavant drum, there is organic material, identified by the authors during archival work in 2013 and currently subject to dating by another project. Nevertheless, the archaeological context and dating of the two deposits of drums is distinctive, the Folkton

examples being associated with a probable Late Neolithic or Beaker burial and the Lavant object being found within a likely area of Middle Neolithic settlement.

Discussion

This analysis suggests that the Folkton drums are part of a wider set of standardised prehistoric carved materials that include the Lavant example. Despite a widespread view that the Folkton drums are unique and form a set of three nested artefacts, with the inclusion of the Lavant drum there is in fact a set of four. Furthermore, it is the ratio of height to width that is standardised, raising the possibility that smaller or larger examples of these artefacts may have existed. In his doctoral thesis, Neil Wilkin argued that the form of the Goodmanham 98 lidded food vessel has similarities with the Folkton drums in terms of form and decoration and may be referencing an organic vessel made from wood or basketry. One of the authors (AMT) is of the opinion that the chalk drums are likely to represent lidded wooden or ceramic vessels that had a particular purpose of containment within Neolithic society. The solid form of chalk drums may metaphorically reference this containment, or the materials that were contained.

Chalk artefacts, even highly decorated ones, should be viewed in the framework of similar material. The move to decorate chalk artefacts more lavishly is noted in other Late Neolithic contexts. For example, Early Neolithic chalk plaques such as that from the Horslip long barrow have evidence of prior smoothing and the scratching of *ad hoc* decoration, but the highly decorated Stonehenge plaques have a formalised and structured design. It is likely that the move to highly decorate chalk in the Late Neolithic is an expansion of the importance of symbolic behaviour; this may be prompted by an increase in contact with different groups – directly or indirectly through exchange systems –, mechanisms that became increasingly more important in the Bronze Age. In summary, the Folkton drums are not only unique and unusual, but rather are rare and highly decorated chalk artefact forms.

James Kenny (Chichester District Council)
and Anne M. Teather (Institute of Archaeology, UCL)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year ended 31 December 2015

	2015	2014
	£	£
<i>Income</i>		
Income from donations and legacies	32,585	31,790
Income from charitable activities:		
Publication grants	3,433	6,114
Copyright fees	2,435	2,485
Publications	18,953	16,368
Conferences	13,931	10,299
Other lectures and visits	698	-
Investment income	7,190	7,186
Total income	79,225	74,242
<i>Expenditure</i>		
Expenditure on raising funds	7,237	6,921
Expenditure on charitable activities:		
Grants	7,694	5,853
Lectures	1,392	433
Proceedings	23,187	19,930
PAST	5,300	5,176
Research Papers	-	-
Conferences	21,296	14,668
Expenditure on governance	7,140	6,818
Total expenditure	73,246	59,799
Net income	5,979	14,443
Total funds at 1 January	193,449	166,718
Net income	5,979	14,443
Unrealised investment gains/(losses)	-4,863	12,288
Total funds at 31 December	194,565	193,449

The Statement of Financial Activities is an extract from the full accounts of the Society. Copies of the full accounts for 2015 are available on the website or can be obtained from Tessa Machling at the registered office.

Report of the Treasurer

The Society's accounts remain in a healthy state. Costs have risen in a number of areas, for instance in producing *PPS*, including changes to postage and other costs. We continue to benefit from income from royalties from CUP in respect of institutional subscriptions and access to back copies online. We were less successful in obtaining publication grants for *PPS* in 2015, and this is an area which we will keep under review. We have done well to stay within budget for administrative and governance costs,

although room hire charges have again increased. Individual membership is also holding up well, which means voluntary income (subscriptions and donations) remains stable. Our investments, however, did not perform as well in 2015 as they had in the previous year, although this was not uniform across all of the funds. Nevertheless, the increase in cash income meant that the Society was again able to provide a greater level of grant assistance in 2015 than in previous years, as well as provide support for various conferences and events, including the Young Archaeologists Clubs and the CBA.

Programme of meetings 2016–2017

<i>Date</i>	<i>Venue</i>	<i>Details</i>
Sat 16 July 2016	Marden, Wiltshire	Prehistoric Society “Grand days out” This summer’s programme includes: Tour of excavations at Vale of Pewsey Led by Dr Jim Leary (University of Reading). Directions and details will be posted on the website. To book, please email prehistoric@ucl.ac.uk
August 2016	Durrington, Wiltshire	Tour of excavations at Durrington Walls Led by Prof Mike Parker Pearson (UCL). Directions and details will be posted on the website. To book, please email prehistoric@ucl.ac.uk
Sat 17 September 2016	Petersfield, Hampshire	Tour of the “People of the Heath” excavations Led by Dr Stuart Needham. Directions and details will be posted on the website. To book, please email prehistoric@ucl.ac.uk Further Grand Days Out ...are currently being finalized. Please do keep an eye out on our website and social media feeds.
Sat 8 October 2016, 2.30 pm	Lecture Castle Museum, Norwich	TBC Joint Norfolk Archaeology Society / Prehistoric Society annual lecture For updates on this event, please check our website.
Fri 21 – Sun 23 October 2016	Conference Tullie House Museum, Carlisle	The Neolithic of Northern England Joint Royal Archaeological Institute and Prehistoric Society conference For full programme and booking form, please see the society website.
Wed 26 October 2016, 5pm	Lecture Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London	The 15th Sara Champion Memorial Lecture <i>“Antlerworking practices of the British Mesolithic: materials, identities and technologies within the landscape”</i> by Ben Elliott, University of York. Followed by free wine reception and presentation of the Society Undergraduate Dissertation Prize.
January 2017 (Exact date TBC)	Lecture Devon County Hall, Exeter	“Iron Age Coinage and Communities” by Iain Leins (British Museum) Joint Devon Archaeological Society and Prehistoric Society annual lecture
Mon 6 Feb 2016, 6pm	Lecture Law Faculty Building, West Road, Cambridge	“Ritual logics: bodily violence and burial rites (and ‘wrongs’) in the Iron Age of the Cambridge region” by Chris Evans (Cambridge Archaeological Unit) Joint Cambridge Antiquarian Society and Prehistoric Society annual lecture
Sat 4 March 2017, 9.30 am	Day School Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House, Piccadilly, London	New Directions in the Landscapes of Prehistory 2: Uplands and Lowlands Please check our website for further details. A booking form will be included in the autumn issue of PAST.
Sat 22 April 2017	Conference University of Reading	New Research into the Late Iron Age in Britain Joint University of Reading and Prehistoric Society conference Details are forthcoming, please check our website
Fri 23 & Sat 24 June 2017	Day conference & Europa lecture University of Southampton	Europa conference 2017: “The Bronze Age as pre-modern Globalization” This year’s recipient of the Europa Prize is Helle Vandkilde, Aarhus University
Weekly, autumn to spring	Lecture series University of Bradford	University of Bradford Archaeology Guest Lectures Weekly lectures on prehistoric topics open to members by kind invitation of Dr Alex Gibson. The first lecture is scheduled for Tue 27 September. For full details please see our website.

The Land, the Sea and the Sky – Conference report

The spring day-conference organised by the Prehistoric Society on the 5th of March at Burlington House, London, was well attended, despite one of the themed elements explored (the sky) not being visible due to dense fog! Julie Gardiner stated that the aim of this conference was to break down boundaries between water, land and sky, and re-consider the connections linking these domains in the past, both physically and conceptually. Her introduction was followed by two papers on environmental and landscape archaeology. Mike Allen began with the micro-scale, using snails to illuminate vegetation histories of larger landscapes. He demonstrated that on the chalk, the zones around Neolithic sites such as the Stonehenge Cursus were already open grassland, contrasting with the more closed woodlands of Sussex. Mike suggested that vegetation might have influenced the construction of quite different monument types in these two areas.

Chris Evans provided a detailed and entertaining synopsis of the total excavation of the Mucking landscape between 1965 and 1978. This was big digging on a unique site (over 70,000 finds and 1145 burials were recovered) in a strategic location above the Thames. Chris emphasised the uniqueness of this locale and the extraordinary archaeological sequence revealed. Thanks to this immense level of horizontal and vertical detail at Mucking, he was able to chart important changes and continuities through time.

Oscar Aldred gave an excellent overview of new techniques and results in aerial remote sensing of landscapes. In Scotland, this is going through a period of “big data gathering and interpretation” with 700,000 images collected since 2006. Despite this, some areas still remain quite empty and Oscar discussed the various reasons for this, including soils and vegetation. Imaging spectroscopy can now capture entire site complexes and allow them to be viewed at different spectral bands to increase feature recognition. Further complementary techniques allow time sequences or 3D visualisation of landscapes to be created.

Martin Bell explored patterns of movement in intertidal wetlands, focusing mainly on trackways. This thoughtful

talk revolved around how we experience and think through movement, and how such movement is often caught up and integrated with that of animals. The rich resource of the inter-tidal zone also allows the preservation of hoof- and footprints, as recently identified at Goldcliff East and Brean Down in the Severn estuary. Their close analysis allows the identification of convergence points, specific orientations of movement and patterns of seasonal mobility, revealing ephemeral and short-lived sets of activities between wet and dry land. Martin then integrated footprint evidence within a much broader context that involved boats, droveways and field systems to explore the complex regional wetland-dryland relationships. Even in the later Bronze Age, mobility was much more significant than we tend to think.

After lunch Vince Gaffney provided a multi-sensory experience with his 3D visualisations of Doggerland. Much of what we knew about Doggerland until fairly recently was more fiction than fact, but thanks to new development and the Aggregates Levy, that situation has fundamentally changed. Now that the archaeologists and others (e.g. off-shore wind farm developers, dredgers and fishermen) have started to talk to each other, seismic surveys have covered over 20,000 square km under the sea, creating high-quality 3D maps that show topographic features including rivers, lakes, salt marshes and hills. We can even identify detail like different sets of inundations belonging to separate periods. Julie Gardiner then summarised the results of an Aggregates Levy predictive modelling project of the Solent dealing with expansive time frames. She highlighted the significance of submerged palaeo-valleys and areas of deep sediment for archaeological potential. Julie began her overview at 500,000 BC when the sea level would have been 40m lower than today, and discussed the contemporary dryland sites (e.g. Boxgrove for this period) as she moved through various blocks over time.

Duncan Garrow and Fraser Sturt focused on the islands connecting the tripartite realms of sea, land and sky in prehistory. After discussing how these links were investigated in the past, they summarised sea-level changes over time and employed specific case studies from their recent excavations to show



how maritime connections may surprise us. Archaeologists still tend to perceive sea travel as something exceptional and often dangerous, and it is only recently that the sea has been brought back into our archaeological narratives (e.g. with Stuart Needham's maritories). That we need to think more open-mindedly about sea travel in the past was illustrated through Garrow and Sturt's excavations in Scilly, Guernsey and Jersey, which highlight long-distance connections between these islands and France from the Early Neolithic onwards.

The final two papers of the day focused on skylscapes. Frank Prendergast argued that processional space was emphasised at Irish Iron Age monuments, illustrating how the worlds of the land, sea and sky are inseparable. He pleaded that we

raise our eyes more often and take the celestial worlds into account. Fabio Silva reasoned that a better understanding of alignments and orientations of prehistoric monuments can be gained through identifying interactions between structures, landscapes and skyscapes. For instance, the corridors of passage graves in central Portugal followed specific alignments connected with a certain star, its spring rising, and its spatial indexing with nearby seasonal settlements.

This was an informative and engaging conference and many new ideas, methodologies and interpretations were considered, complemented with stimulating discussion sessions. The organisers and speakers should all be congratulated for making the day so successful.

Catriona Gibson, University of Reading

Conference Review: "First Cities" – An Exploration of Early Cities in Europe and Asia

The conference "First Cities' – An Exploration of Early Cities in Europe and Asia" was hosted by St Chad's College, Durham University from Friday 15th to Sunday 17th April. The conference marked the completion of the AHRC-funded project "Early urbanism in prehistoric Europe? The case of the Trypillia mega-sites", jointly run by the Department of Archaeology, Durham University and the Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2012–2016). A diverse programme brought current research on Trypillia mega-sites together with issues of size and scale in prehistoric settlements more generally and offered a broader comparative perspective with other anomalously large sites in Europe and Asia. The 23 papers were complemented by a poster session predominantly focused on the Trypillia sites and by the opening of the project exhibition "Trypillia mega-sites" at the Palace Green Library.

The keynote lecture was given by Roland Fletcher (Sydney) who presented a radical global model of trajectories of

settlement growth. This approach moves away from the notion of settlement types towards the observation that across time human settlements have followed three broad trajectories of development from high to low occupation density. In Fletcher's model, the Trypillia mega-sites and similar large, low occupation density settlements, such as the European oppida and the giant settlements of Neolithic China, would sit on the earliest trajectory which was unrelated to urbanism. As Bissierka Gaydarska (Durham) observed, while the analytical construct of urbanism is a significant boon for our research agendas, especially as far as funding is concerned, the label has become both vague and constraining. Gaydarska advocated a culture-relational framework for discussing settlements such as the Trypillia mega-sites not within our current "evolutionary" narratives, but in relation to the regional settlement system in which they develop. Such a model of 'urbanism' allows for far greater organisational diversity than the commonly used checklist definitions.



The 'First Cities' conference participants. Photo by Gilbert Mackay.

Aspects of traditional definitions were still high on the agenda, however, and a major point of difference between Trypillia specialists was the extent of possible coeval occupation and its implications for urbanism at the sites of Maidanetsk'e and Nebelivka. Analysis and interpretation of the coring, dating and spatial evidence at Maidanetsk'e by Wiebke Kirleis (Kiel) and Johannes Müller (Kiel) suggested that, at its apogee, more than 2,000 houses may have been contemporaneously occupied. In contrast, coring and dating evidence from Nebelivka analysed and interpreted by Bruce Albert (Texas), Jim Innes (Durham) and Andrew Millard (Durham) did not support a maximal occupation model.

On a regional scale, Francesco Menotti (Bradford) and Aleksander Diachenko (Kiev) considered demographic development in the context of their gravity model of regional migration based on social interaction. A spatio-statistical analysis of settlement cluster patterns presented by Marco Nebbia (Durham) supported a settlement development model based on seasonal occupation. This cohered with further research by Diachenko, who found synchronies in occupation across the east and the west of the Trypillia region based on overlapping local phases derived from ceramic typologies. New geomagnetic prospections at the Cucuteni-Trypillia sites of Petreni and Stolniceni were presented by Stanislaw Terna (Chişinău) and Knut Rassmann (Frankfurt), with several settlement development models proposed by Regina Uhl (Berlin).

Questions of the emergence of spatial, economic and organisational complexity within the context of the south-east European Late Neolithic were addressed by Boban Tripković (Belgrade), who modelled social relationships

based on house assemblages in the Vinča period. Pál Raczky and Alexandra Anders (Budapest) presented an analysis of structural organisation at the Polgár-Csőszhalom settlement complex (Hungary) and Catalin Lazar with Theodor Ignat (Bucureşti) further focused on settlement networks and tell sites by introducing new research on Sultana-Malu-Rosu (Romania). Highlighting the diversity of large settlement development and structure, Alasdair Whittle (Cardiff) presented high-resolution chronological models of Alsónyék (Hungary) and Valencina de la Concepción (Spain).

Broader comparative perspectives on large anomalous settlements and questions of urbanism were offered by Tom Moore (Durham) and Manuel Fernández-Götz (Edinburgh), who addressed the issue of decentralisation within a heterarchical model of social organisation at large agglomerated settlements of the European Iron Age. This broader comparative perspective was extended to Asia in presentations by Simon Kaner (Sainsbury Institute) on the Jomon sites of Japan, Kirrily White (Sydney) on the giant settlements of Neolithic China and Kasper Hanus (Poznań) on the early historic cities of the Tarim Basin, China.

The diversity and richness of the site data and ideas presented at this conference highlighted some significant issues for settlement categorisation in archaeology and, importantly, generated robust discussion. For some speakers, relinquishing an association with urbanism was a step too far, for others, a long way to go. The session structure brought together diverse traditions of archaeological practices and was a terrific way of provoking debate, ultimately generating new kinds of possibilities for comparative research and new ways of defining what we are trying to understand.

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Mobility and incremental dental dietary analysis of seven elite individuals from late Iron Age Dorset, England

Late Iron Age Britain (late 1st century BC to 1st century AD) was inhabited by numerous tribal communities, whose funerary practices and material culture display distinct differences. Our knowledge of their social structures, occupations and activities is mainly gleaned through analysis of objects. However, scientific analysis of the people from this period can provide a unique window into areas of their lives for which there is absence of primary evidence, particularly with respect to social activities such as child-rearing.

This project targeted seven individuals from Dorset to investigate mobility and diet using stable isotopes. It is the first time that individuals from this area of Britain have been analysed for population movement and diet using teeth. The incremental dentine technique means that tiny samples from inside the tooth, from crown to root, are taken. These layers correlate to different times in a person's life, allowing

an almost complete picture of dietary practices from infancy to adulthood to be established.

In this period of British prehistory, Dorset was inhabited by a tribal confederacy of agricultural groups known as the Durotriges, whose territory bordered other tribal groups, included many natural harbours and also provided access, along a sea-route, to north-west France. Coin finds indicate a north-south trade route that linked the Durotriges to the Dubunni tribe in the Somerset-Gloucestershire area and communities on the Isle of Wight, Channel Islands and Gallic coast. They were also one of the few tribes with an inhumation burial rite, a funerary tradition which may be related to those practised further west in Devon and Cornwall by the Dumnonii. Those who received this rite were buried with a "standard" range of grave goods, which included local Black Burnished ware pottery, utilitarian items, jewellery



Left: Map showing the location of the burial sites in Dorset (drawing by F. Görke).

Below: The female burial from Portesham Manor Farm (© AC Archaeology).



and cuts of meat. A minority of people were afforded “elite” burials with prestige items; these included imports, such as Samian ware and hobnail shoes, as well as indigenous items. It is these “elite” individuals which formed the focus of our study. A full list with references is available in the online version of this newsletter, which can be downloaded from the Prehistoric Society website.

It has been suggested that Iron Age communities were hierarchical, with a plethora of status groups ranging from warriors to the enslaved. The social and physical landscape of hillforts, prestige items (i.e. mirrors) and imported goods suggest that such groups and roles existed within the communities that formed the Durotriges. Although these statuses may have been socially and economically enacted from childhood, the bioarchaeological evidence suggests that they did not negatively impact on health during childhood, and did not create sex-related differences in health and mortality risk in adulthood.

Childhood is the time when differences between status groups are socialised, as this is when behaviours, patterns of activity and the acquisition of knowledge to learn a craft or skill begin. Our knowledge of childhood is very sketchy for this period, but analysis of the primary sources relating to Celtic communities emphasises that some status groups may have had a very mobile childhood and that children could be active social agents in these decisions. It must also not be forgotten that many children may have been forcibly removed from their natal locale through enslavement.

The dietary isotope results show that all of the individuals had received adequate nutrition during childhood, and their dietary contributions were dominated by terrestrial resources. There is no conclusive evidence for the consumption of marine resources. The results show that all had completed weaning by four years old, but also provided evidence for sex differences in carbon ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$) and nitrogen ($\delta^{15}\text{N}$) values,

meaning that females had consumed higher levels of dietary protein during childhood.

The results of the mobility stable isotope values for strontium ($^{87}\text{Sr}/^{86}\text{Sr}$) and oxygen ($\delta^{18}\text{O}$) provide some evidence for mobility within lowland Britain. Those obtained from the female from Langton Herring, the male from Whitcombe Farm and one of the two males (P7A) from Maiden Castle hillfort suggest that they had spent their childhood in Dorset. The young adult male from Gussage All Saints and the female from Portesham Farm were from south-west Britain. The young female from Portesham Manor Farm and the second male (P7) from Maiden Castle hillfort were likely to have spent their childhoods in eastern Britain.

In conclusion, the results provide a unique insight into a small but important group of individuals who are likely to have played key roles within their communities – from knowledge specialists to those who laid down their lives to safeguard the Durotriges during the Roman conquest. It has identified that the close economic relationships with communities in Devon and Cornwall were echoed socially, with individuals moving between groups over their lifetime. The movement of both sexes during adolescence lends support to the suggestion that individuals may have lived in other communities in order to acquire knowledge and skills. For the first time, the dietary evidence has revealed gendered practices with respect to foodways in the Durotrigan communities, reflecting complex social customs and activities which are not “seen” in other evidence from this locale.

Acknowledgements

This project was generously funded by the Society of Antiquaries, which enabled the stable isotope work to be undertaken as two MSc theses by Melissa Clark and Dr Julia Beaumont, University of Bradford; and Maggie Scollan and Dr Janet Montgomery, Durham University.

I am most grateful for the support and assistance of Dr Jon Murden, Dr Jenny Cripps and Richard Breward at Dorset County Museum; Emma Firth from AC Archaeology; Dr Nivien Speith, Dr Miles Russell, Paul Cheetham, Harry

Manley and Hayley Roberts at Bournemouth University; Helen Ganiaris and Rob Payton at Museum of London; Dr Christine Hamlin, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee; and The Haddon Library, University of Cambridge.

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Patterns on the rock: an unusual cairn in the Lake District, Cumbria

In April 2015, a walkover survey by Steve Dickinson in the central Lake District revealed a unique monument. Situated at the head of a steep gully, a low and overgrown cairn was defined by a line of placed boulders. One of these boulders displayed incised patterns which, at first sight, appeared to be artificial and were recorded using photogrammetry. Subsequent investigations, however, have placed this monument within a wider discussion of the interplay between nature and culture in prehistory.

The site is adjacent to the prominent tor of Scar Lathing in Upper Eskdale, a remote upland landscape characterised by glaciated cirques, crags and relict periglacial features, rocky outcrops, boulder fields and scree. The site is 428 m above sea level and overlooked by some of England's highest mountains, including Esk Pike, Bowfell and Scafell Pike. The immediate geology comprises the Borrowdale Volcanic Group. Extensive outcrops of epidotized tuff fringe the higher ground and were quarried in the Neolithic, with large numbers of Group VI stone axes being distributed across Britain and Ireland.

The Scar Lathing cairn measures 6 by 4 m, and its north-south orientation adopts the axis of a 14 m long scree-filled runnel. The body of the cairn incorporates a large glacial stone and its southern margin is marked by a concave "façade" of medium-sized boulders. These rocks were apparently not quarried but are local in origin and alternate between tan/orange and grey/white. The second boulder from the eastern end of the row is exceptional. Its upper face displays coloured banding that is characteristic of tuff, and incised into this

are distinct curvilinear patterns. These markings have little in common with cup and ring rock art, but do invite comparison with the scratched and incised designs found in Irish passage graves and on the walls of monuments and houses in Orkney. They are also reminiscent of the curvilinear decoration on some Grooved Ware pottery.

Only one other boulder displaying comparable markings has been located nearby, and this appears to have been glacially deposited. In contrast, fieldwork by Aaron Watson has recorded many examples upon outcrops of tuff on higher ground, often in close proximity to Neolithic quarries. Here the incisions intersect with the rock surface in ways that could not be recreated artificially and a close examination of the Scar Lathing boulder has revealed similar properties. Notwithstanding their potential affinities, the patterns on the rock appear to be the product of natural weathering. While archaeologists are unlikely to categorise such features as "rock art", knowledge of geological formation processes need not be a prerequisite for distinctive patterns to catch the eye. Indeed, special significance might have been bestowed upon such markings precisely because of their geometric character and likeness to wider traditions of material culture.

The morphology of the Scar Lathing monument is distinct from known cairns in Cumbria, but there may be wider parallels. On Bodmin Moor in Cornwall, excavations by Barbara Bender, Sue Hamilton and Chris Tilley revealed several small-scale Bronze Age sites equally adapted to features in the landscape. Like Scar Lathing, many incorporated pre-



Looking north, a line of placed boulders lit by sunlight separates the body of the Scar Lathing cairn from natural scree in the foreground. They also frame views of the high ground beyond, including the snowy peak of Scafell Pike with its Neolithic stone quarries (photo: Steve Dickinson).



Looking south, the body of the Scar Lathing cairn is marked by the area of green vegetation and outlined by a perimeter of boulders. The cairn body incorporates a large glacially deposited stone visible to the right. The ranging pole marks the line of placed boulders downslope, with a natural scree chute beyond (photo: Steve Dickinson).



A digital render of the Scar Lathing patterned boulder based on photogrammetric recording by Aaron Watson.

existing rocks and outcrops, while subtle re-arrangements of boulders and scree frequently created ambiguities between architecture and geology. These acts may have established connections to natural places already imbued with meaning or, as Richard Bradley has discussed, might even have been envisaged as ruined buildings by past peoples who did not share our modern differentiation between nature and culture.

It is within this context that the idiosyncratic monument at Scar Lathing may be better understood. Constructed as an

extension to a scree slope it is set amidst an extraordinary rocky landscape and overlooked by some of the most extensive prehistoric quarries in Britain. An observer arriving upslope at the boulder façade will see these higher mountains framed behind the cairn, while the presence of the patterned stone creates material connections to both the axe sources above and the wider prehistoric world. In turn, this might offer a clue as to why the Lake District remained a special focus for stone circles, funerary monuments and rock art long after the quarries themselves had been abandoned.

Many questions remain to be answered, and investigations into this remarkable monument and its environs will continue.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Peter Wilson and Alan Smith for geological advice and to Richard Bradley for comments. An early draft was presented by Steve Dickinson in the Prehistoric Art session at TAG Bradford 2015. Thanks to participants, and the session organiser Andy Needham, for their observations.

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The naming of Doggerland

Recently, in a second-hand bookshop in Hay-on-Wye, I picked up *Stone Spring* by Stephen Baxter and turned it over to see what the story was about. I had a shock when I read that it was “set in prehistoric Doggerland”, and then a feeling that Doggerland had truly made it into public awareness – obviously not the instant awareness that Stonehenge receives, or Richard III, but recognition all the same, beyond the world of prehistoric archaeology. Shortly after, reading *The Guardian* for May 21st 2015, I found that Carol Ann Duffy’s choice for “A poem a Day” was “Doggerland” by Jo Bell.

It was well over a decade ago, in 1998, that the Prehistoric Society published “Doggerland: a Speculative Survey”, but my interest in submerged landscapes goes further back, at least to an encounter in Leiden Museum with the bones of mammoths and other creatures and a handful of humanly made artefacts recovered from Brown Bank, under the North Sea. Possibly the first influence was as far back as my early school years when I borrowed *The Cave Twins* by Lucy Fitch Perkins from our local library – the plot includes a natural disaster which severs what is now the Isle of Wight from mainland Britain, and the cutting-off was all the more vivid to me as I knew the island from family holidays there.

As a lecturer in prehistory at the University of Exeter in the 1970s and 80s, and working in the Somerset Levels with John Coles, my understanding of wetland archaeology expanded and I became increasingly aware of what seemed to me a flaw in many discussions of the earlier Mesolithic, particularly when flint artefacts appeared to belt across a narrow land

bridge into Britain, as if afraid the bridge would soon be swept away. Such a view, I thought, neglected the people who made and used the artefacts, and the vast landscape in which they lived, most of them probably without any concern of reaching dry land before the bridge broke, since they were already home and dry. But in these decades other work left little time to look into the matter.



Doggerland during the last Ice Age (© B.J. Coles and S.E. Rouillard).



Doggerland during the Early Holocene (© B.J. Coles and S.E. Rouillard).

In the early 1990s, I applied to the British Academy for a Research Readership which would bring two years of funding for a replacement lecturer while I concentrated on research. My topic was British wetland archaeology and in my proposal I included the submerged landscape of the North Sea. I had by then made several journeys by ferry from Harwich or Felixstowe to Gothenburg, to act as assistant for John's rock art recording in Sweden. Each time the ferry chugged over Dogger Bank my thoughts turned to the millennia when this spot on the earth was part of a landscape, not a seascape, home to terrestrial vegetation and populated by living creatures that needed fresh water. Despite my enthusiasm for the invisible terrain, the committee that interviewed me queried the feasibility of including it in the research project and awarded the Readership to someone else. I reverted to Plan A, a normal academic year. But then the successful candidate got another job, not a University one, and I was suddenly and most unexpectedly offered the Readership and the opportunity for a concentrated period of research on British wetlands.

None of the resulting publications was quite what I had initially planned. They were more varied in some ways, focussed less exclusively on British wetlands, and the research was interspersed with a related survey on the heritage management of wetlands for English Heritage. For one long summer, having finished and written up fieldwork on river names and river routeways, I concentrated on the drowned landscape so well evoked by Grahame Clark's map of the distribution of Early Mesolithic finds in north-west Europe. My aim was to shift perceptions, from "land bridge" to "landscape". I was not the first to attempt this, and I knew the "bridge" was firmly embedded in the literature of more than one discipline. I studied the available maps and read more widely, including geological surveys and

reports stemming from exploration for oil. There was also a useful surge of research being published on late Pleistocene glaciations and the extent of ice-sheets, and a new awareness of the complexities of relative land and sea levels.

I started to think that the former landscape needed a name. Much of archaeology, like other disciplines, is involved with defining and naming, especially in the early stages of understanding, and perhaps in some way it is the naming that validates the defining. I began to try out names for the drowned area, looking for something that would relate to all the surrounding countries, from Hordaland and Rogaland in southern Norway, via Jutland and the Netherlands to England and Scotland – and it soon became clear that the name should have a "–land" element.

Various other things came together: an interest in wood species and how they were put to different uses by the Neolithic and later inhabitants of the Somerset Levels and the use of a guide to tree identification written by two Danish authors (but translated into English), from which I learned that dogwood was so called from the Danish word for "dagger" (which is "dag") – daggerwood, hard and sharp, though supple when young, as used to make the Early Neolithic Bergschenhoek fish-trap on display in Leiden museum, alongside those alluring artefacts from Brown Bank. With no evidence whatsoever to support the idea, it still came to my mind that "Dogger Bank" was perhaps once a good source of wood for the Mesolithic people who lived and belonged in the former landscape, to make daggers and arrows, as well as providing younger flexible stems for fish-traps. So it was that the major bank in the southern North Sea, so close to the surface that it could be explored by underwater archaeologists, completed the name that I used for the paper published in the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*: "Doggerland: a Speculative Survey". The paper has turned out to be the most influential of the outcomes from the Research Readership, though neither I nor the awarding committee would have predicted it from the outset.

As I hoped, researchers from either side of Doggerland have continued to expand their explorations of the former landscape, including teams from Wessex Archaeology and the Universities of Birmingham and Southampton, who have made good use of technological developments in several fields, and their results begin to provide some much-needed solidity to our knowledge of the region. Not all have used the name Doggerland, but that chance find in a Hay bookshop suggests that the place, the landscape before submergence, is now beginning to be known more widely, beyond the archaeological community, as a once-familiar place, home to people who may or may not have perceived its shrinking, people who had relatives and trade partners, friends and enemies to the east and west, people whose descendants maybe led their lives on islands in the sea, and for generations maybe these islanders paddled to their meetings, long after their forebears had walked to their meetings at the confluence of the Thames and the Rhine.

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A re-discovered figurine from Skara Brae, Orkney, Scotland

Recent work on the Skara Brae collections held by Stromness Museum, Orkney, has led to the re-discovery of a figurine from Skara Brae. The figurine had previously been known only through a brief mention by George Petrie in the *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland* (1867) and a drawing among his papers in the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland manuscripts.

The figurine has been sculpted from a small piece of unidentified cetacean bone and has maximum dimensions of 94.8 mm high by 75.2 mm wide and 57.5 mm thick; it weighs 146.5 g. The torso is sub-rectangular and measures 66.1 mm high by 75 mm wide at the base and 75.2 mm at the shoulder by 57.5 mm thick. The front and sides of the figurine are flat, with the sides tapering slightly towards the rear, while the back of the figure is domed. The body is unadorned, except for a circular indentation low down on the centre of the front face that can be interpreted as a navel. The neck is reasonably indistinct, but is indicated by a shallow *c.* 2 mm incised line on the right hand side. The head is sub-rectangular, with a curved back and irregular, flattened top and measures 28.7 mm high by 50.5 mm wide and 39.2 mm thick. The head exhibits three indentations that can be interpreted as eyes and a mouth. The base is flat, allowing the figurine to stand upright, but a circular indentation, *c.* 15 mm in diameter, is present towards the centre of the surface. Traces of a surface polish are apparent over parts of the artefact, although in places the surface of the cancellous bone has degraded and flaked.

The figure carefully incorporates two natural bone canals to provide transverse perforations through the head and body of the figurine. The perforation through the head is circular and perfectly straight, measuring 9.5 mm in diameter, while the perforation through the body is curved and measures 14.5 mm in diameter. The holes may have provided a method of suspending this figure, although the lower perforations

may instead have held separately modelled limbs. No obvious wear is apparent in the holes or at their mouths.

In his publication, Petrie chose not to illustrate the piece, providing only a simple description: "A small piece of Whalebone, cut as if intended for an idol or 'Fetish'". His plan shows that it was found in the bed enclosure in House 3. The notes accompanying the drawing in his papers offer a better insight into his interpretation of the piece:

? Rude Idol

Piece of whale vertebrae carved into rude resemblance of a head & body with holes for mouth & eyes. Also transverse holes as if it were intended to be hung up.

From weem [an underground dwelling] at Skaill, Orkney.

Petrie's reluctance to make more of this remarkable piece may have stemmed from his own social position and the consequent need to avoid his interpretations becoming the subject of ridicule. Although well known to antiquaries, both at home and abroad, Petrie did not have the resources to initiate excavations. It was his willingness to record and publish the work of others that led to his being elected a corresponding member of the Society of Antiquaries of Scotland in 1848; fellowship was reserved for landowners, members of the professions and the clergy. In these circumstances, Petrie might have felt inclined to keep his thoughts to himself. This is, of course, mere speculation, but it seems strange that more was not made of the piece at the time of its discovery.

The piece formed part of the private museum in Skaill House that was gifted to a number of museums in the 1930s, including Stromness. What does seem clear is that the object was forgotten, and was probably languishing without provenance in the Skaill collection when Childe became involved with Skara Brae. He never refers to this figurine. Since he was willing to acknowledge the possible human form of a slate object in his 1931 report on the site, we can reasonably suppose that this figurine would also have attracted some comment from him. Certainly, its reappearance into a world where other Orcadian Grooved Ware sites have produced human images is most welcome.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Kathleen Ireland and Janette Park of Stromness Museum for facilitating our access to their collections. Dr Alison Sheridan has contributed in so many ways. Indeed, one of us (DC) would not have seen the figurine without her. Rebecca Marr has provided us with the photographs. David Clarke's visit to Orkney was kindly funded by Historic Environment Scotland.

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Left: Drawing of the figurine by George Petrie. © Trustees of the National Museums of Scotland. Right: The figurine. © Stromness Museum/Rebecca Marr. A 3D model of this artefact can be viewed on SketchFab: <https://skfb.ly/NKDt>

The copy date for PAST 84 is the 18th of September 2016. Contributions to Editor, Daniela Hofmann, Archäologisches Institut, Universität Hamburg, Germany. Email: daniela.hofmann@uni-hamburg.de. Contributions on disc or as e-mail attachments are preferred (either Word or rtf files) but hardcopy is also accepted. Illustrations can be sent as drawings, prints, tif or jpeg files. The book reviews editor is Pippa Bradley, c/o Wessex Archaeology, Portway House, Old Sarum Park, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 6EB, email: p.bradley@wessexarch.co.uk. Queries over subscriptions and membership should go to the Society administrator Tessa Machling at the London address on page 1.

Data for “Mobility and incremental dental dietary analysis of seven elite individuals from late Iron Age Dorset, England”

Rebecca Redfern

Table 1. Summary of individuals sampled for diet and mobility from late Iron Age Dorset

Site	Individual	Funerary context	References
Gussage All Saints	Male (285.3) aged 20–35 years old	Single crouched pit burial accompanied by two fragments of iron at waist	Wainwright 1979
Langton Herring	Female aged 18–23 years old	Crouched mirror burial	Murden 2014; Miles pers. comm; Atkins 2011
Maiden Castle hillfort	Male (P7) aged 25–35 years old	Double burial, each accompanied by Black Burnished ware; P7A had an embedded projectile point	Wheeler 1943; Redfern 2011; Redfern and Chamberlain 2011
	Male (P7A) aged 20–34 years old		
Portesham Farm	Female (527) aged 25–45 years old	Crouched burial accompanied by bronze mirror, animal bone, ceramic bowls, brooches, Roman toilet set, knife in a leather sheath and strainer pan	Fitzpatrick 1997
Portesham Manor Farm	Female (502) aged 18–24 years old	Single extended burial accompanied by Samian ware, Black Burnished ware, hobnailed footwear and animal bones from different species arranged vertically in an arc around her head	Valentin 2003
Whitcombe Farm	Male (527) aged 23–57 years old	Single crouched pit burial accompanied by large sword, scabbard, spearhead, brooch, spindle whorl, hammer-head, file and bronze strips	Aitken and Aitken 1991

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