

Association for Environmental Archaeology Newsletter 66 (November 1999)

ISSN 1363-6553

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Copy dates for Newsletter: 20th of the following months - January / April / July / October

Edited by Wendy Carruthers and Vanessa Straker

Items for the Newsletter may be submitted on 3.5" floppy disks in IBM-PC format as WordPerfect, Word or ASCII files, Fax or e-mail. Items in typescript or neat manuscript should be sent to Wendy Carruthers.

(e-mail addresses: wendy.carruthers@virgin.net; V.Straker@Bristol.ac.uk; FAX: 0117 928 7878)

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Wendy Carruthers, Sawmills House, Castellau, Llantrisant, Mid Glamorgan CF72 8LQ (Tel: 01443 223462).

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EDITORIAL

Enclosed with this Newsletter, at last, is the 1999 Membership Interests List. Our apologies for the delay in sending this out – pressures of work are to blame, as usual!

This issue includes information about the AEA Conference in Guildford (April 14th-16th 2000). A booking form is provided at the back of the Newsletter – please book early (before 15th March).

Please note that Becky Nicholson, the AEA membership secretary encloses subscription reminder letters for 2000 with this Newsletter.

AEA PAYMENTS CO-ORDINATOR FOR BELGIUM

Jan Bastiaens has volunteered to be the AEA payments co-ordinator for Belgium. People can contact him for further details at:

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Jan says that he will try to find co-ordinators for other countries, and will announce the names in the AEA website, at <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/eau/aea>

CONFERENCES & MEETINGS

AEA CONFERENCE

The Environmental Archaeology of Industry
14th-16th April 2000, University of Surrey, Guildford.

Organisers: Patricia Wiltshire (UCL) and Peter Murphy (UEA)

The environmental impacts of industry are obviously profound and far-reaching, yet in general they have been curiously neglected by environmental archaeologists. This conference aims to bridge the gap between environmental and industrial archaeology. The effects of mining on sedimentation and vegetation in river catchments have plainly been extensive; and from sedimentological, geochemical and palynological studies inferences about early mining are possible. The fuel-supplying infrastructure of industry, and its effects on vegetation and woodland management, will also be discussed. Other raw materials for industrial production considered will include timber, horn, skins and shell. Papers on a suite of techniques based on chemistry, soil science and macrofossil studies will also be presented, all of which have a bearing on past industry. Results from a modern microbiological study will be used to assess problems that may have been encountered with carcass disposal in the past. The effects of industrialisation on human health and prospects for characterising the occupations of individuals from skeletal features will also be examined. The scope of the conference will be international, including papers presenting studies from Britain, Austria, Belgium, Greece, Egypt and Uganda.

The programme of papers is now complete, but offers of posters are invited. The programme will include:

Friday 14th April

Introduction: Setting the scene
Frank Chambers

Proxy indicators of the environmental impacts of metallurgy: palynological and geoarchaeological approaches

The use of Environmental Impact Models in Non-Ferrous Metal Mining History - Geraint Coles, Mike Cressey and Gordon Cooke
Reconstructing the environmental impact of past metallurgical activities - P.D. Marshall
Impacts of historic metal mining on the geoarchaeological landscape of the Yorkshire Dales - A.J. Howard, K.A. Hudson Edwards and M.G. Macklin.

The archaeology of tin mining on Dartmoor: a sediment-based approach - V. Thorndycroft, D.Pirriet and A.G. Brown

Geochemical evidence for atmospheric pollution close to the prehistoric copper mine at Copa Hill, Cwmystwyth, mid-Wales, U.K. - T.M. Mighall, J.P. Grattan, J.P.Timberlake, and S. Forsyth.

Fuel supplies and industry

Wood charcoal and iron-working: a case study from Uganda - Ruth Young and Gill Thompson

Industrial fuels and their environmental impact in lowland Britain - Rowena Gale

The implication for the management of woodlands of the Romano-British iron production industry.

Creeton Quarry, Lincolnshire: a case study. - Jane Cowgill

History, archaeology and palaeoecology of the peat industry: a case study from the Humberhead levels, Eastern England - Nicki Whitehouse

Biological raw materials and infrastructure

Timber availability and woodworking techniques in Lowland Britain - Richard Darrah

Horn working and tannery at late Mediaeval Bruges: the environmental evidence - Anton Ervynck and Bieke Hillewaert

Tawyers, tanners, horn trade and the mystery of the missing goat: zooarchaeological considerations - Umberto Albarella

Choice and use of shells for artefacts at Roman sites in the Eastern Desert of Egypt - Sheila Hamilton-Dyer

Saturday 15th April

Proxy indicators of industry: Chemical, pedological and macrofossil approaches

Organic Residues in Ancient Pottery and Archaeological Economies - Richard P. Evershed

Industrial activities - some suggested microstratigraphic signatures - Richard Macphail

"Fault" maps may be a better option! - Robert Shiel

Can we identify biological indicator groups for craft and industry? - Allan Hall and Harry Kenward

Saxon flax retting without pollution - Mark Robinson and Patricia Wiltshire

The taphonomy of arthropod remains - Jaap Schelvis

Charred mollusc shells as indicators of industrial activities - Peter Murphy

Impacts of industry on human populations

The rise and fall of rickets - Simon Mays

Tinker, tailor, soldier ...How can we tell the occupation of the dead? - Tony Waldron

Experimental approaches

Microbial characteristics of soils from graves: an investigation at the interface of soil microbiology and archaeological science - David Hopkins, Patricia Wiltshire & Bryan Turner

Concluding remarks - Geraint Coles

Sunday 16th April

Field excursion on Sunday 16th April, visiting the Fishbourne Roman Palace and the Wealden and Downland Museum, Singleton, Sussex.

A Booking Form for the conference will be found at the back of this newsletter. Please return this by 15th March at the latest. Accommodation will be provided at the University of Surrey during the conference, and bed and breakfast will also be available at the University for the nights of 13th and 16th April. Information on hotels and guest houses in Guildford will be provided for those preferring to make their own arrangements, but the Guildford Tourist Office (01483 444333) tell us that early booking is advised. Please note that we need to be told about your dietary requirements and any

other special needs.

Costs for the field excursion depend partly on the size of the party, but for Fishbourne entrance should be £3.30 and for Singleton £4.20 (Full-time students £2.20). Lunch and tea will be available. Costs of transport will again depend on numbers attending, so please remember to indicate on the booking form whether you expect to come.

POSTGRADUATE PALAEOECOLOGY CONFERENCE 2000

17-19th April 2000

University of Plymouth

The Geography Department at Plymouth University invites postgraduates, of all years, to present and discuss their research in an informal setting. This conference will be run by postgraduates, for postgraduates in the field of Quaternary and recent environmental change, incorporating palaeoecology, micropalaeontology, archaeology and sedimentology. The conference will comprise presentations, poster presentations, laboratory techniques and a local field excursion, providing an ideal opportunity to network with postgraduates carrying out research in similar fields.

For further details contact:

Amy Burgess, Elizabeth Hunt or Tony Massey, Department of Geographical Sciences, University of Plymouth, Drake Circus, Plymouth, Devon. PL4 8AA.

Tel: 01752 233050 (AB & EH) or 01752 232974 (TM)

Fax: 01752 233054 (departmental)

E-mail: aburgess@plymouth.ac.uk, ehunt@plymouth.ac.uk or amassey@plymouth.ac.uk

Please also check the University of Plymouth web pages, where further information and a registration form will be posted shortly.

REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

[\[GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY - BEAVER IN BRITAIN'S PAST\]](#)

GUIDELINES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ARCHAEOLOGY

English Heritage has recently set up nine regional advisor posts for archaeological science, one in each of the English Heritage regions (North West, North East, Yorkshire, East of England, London, East Midlands, West Midlands, South East, South West).

One of the responsibilities of the posts is to improve the range and quality of archaeological science in developer-funded archaeology. We provide comments to Curators on the archaeological science aspects of Briefs and Specifications, but these documents do not often contain much detail on appropriate methodology etc. The Regional Advisors are therefore in the process of writing guidelines for Environmental Archaeology, with a similar format to the other English Heritage guidelines on Dendrochronology, Geophysics etc.

We realise that many people find guidelines restrictive, inadequate or over detailed; however both Curators and Contractors consistently request them. We feel that producing the guidelines is a first step on the way to raising standards and although bound to be both painful (for the collators at least) and inadequate, it has to be taken.

Lisa Moffett and I are in the process of collating a first draft. At present the document is envisaged as having a number of sections aimed at different readers (see the EH dendrochronology guidelines for a similar approach).

Part 1 will cover topics such as:

- What is Environmental Archaeology and the historical background to the subject

The material of study

- what you find
- where you find it
- what it can tell you

and Part 2 will be a succinct guide to good practice for Environmental sampling in fieldwork (evaluations and/or excavations).

We also intend to address the issue of the general requirements for assessments and full reports. The document will stress the need to contact suitably experienced environmental archaeologists from the planning stage of projects onwards.

If any of you have written / got copies of guidelines in the general area of environmental archaeology, please could you send / email / fax them to us (address below). All contributions will be acknowledged.

On a related issue, The AEA has been in consultation with the IFA about their 'Standards and Guidance notes for Finds Work', which could also include a version of the Environmental Archaeology Guidelines outlined above. One of the points we have raised with the IFA is the title 'finds' work. We have been asked to canvass AEA members' opinions on the use of this term to cover Environmental Archaeology as well as finds work. The IFA does have a formal definition of 'finds work' that definitely includes everything you 'find' on a site/landscape. HOWEVER, DO YOU feel that the addition of 'and environmental analysis' or some such phrase would be more inclusive? Please send your views on this, and copies of Guidelines by post, email, phone or fax to the below address, before the 9th December 1999.

With thanks for your help,

Jacqui Mulville
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BEAVER IN BRITAIN'S PAST: A REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ABOUT BONES

Professor Bryony Coles

I am just starting a new research project, funded by AHRB and the Leverhulme Trust, to examine the presence and distribution of beaver in Britain from the end of the last Ice Age onwards, and to assess their significance for human societies. This project has developed from on-going research funded by HRB and NERC on beaver structures (eg dams and lodges) and beaver landscape modifications; results have already demonstrated the potential significance of the European beaver, *Castor fiber*, in the lives and landscapes of the past.

As part of the new project, I hope to locate as many native beaver bones as possible, from museums and other collections in Britain. Some of these finds will be from archaeological excavations, some from chance finds in natural contexts, and some no doubt unprovenanced. The general distribution should provide some idea of when and where beaver were present, although the beaver is a burrowing animal and due account will need to be taken of this.

I hope also to obtain funding for a programme of radiocarbon dating of a number of the bones, to elucidate questions such as the timing of beaver extinction in different regions of Britain.

Please send any information which you may have about beaver bones to me at the address below, or contact me via e-mail. Indirect information, e.g. about beaver-chewed wood or pictorial evidence, will also be welcome. If you think you have any relevant material but do not have time to check the details, I would still like to hear from you.

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PhD THESIS ABSTRACT

Hellqvist, M., 1999. Urban and Rural Environments from Iron Age to Medieval Time in Northern Europe. Evidence from Fossil Insect Remains from South-Eastern Sweden and Novgorod, Russia. Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis. Comprehensive Summaries of Uppsala Dissertations from the Faculty of Science and Technology 430. 33 pp. Uppsala. 20. ISBN 91-554-4394-X.

This thesis presents and discusses results from studies of subfossil insect remains of natural and cultural origin. Samples were obtained by coring in sediments or by collection during archaeological excavations. The aim was to reconstruct local environment and climate in rural and early urban situations from Iron Age to medieval time. A taphonomic study, from a modern farm settlement, is also presented.

The palaeoentomological results from the Iron Age environment in south-central and south-eastern Sweden, indicate a mosaic and species diverse cultural landscape, including open land with pastures, cultivated fields, meadows and probably also grazed forests. In spite of the rather sparse insect assemblages from Gamla Uppsala the continuous records of dung beetles indicate that the dominant land use in the area from the beginning of the Vendel period to at least the 17th century was grazing.

Two investigated early towns, Uppsala and Novgorod, show transport to the towns of supplies and building material from the areas surrounding the town. The medieval town Uppsala was of a more rural than urban character, which is in agreement with results from similar sites in other parts of southern Sweden. Similarly, Novgorod was probably of a more rural character.

The studies on subrecent insect assemblages from farm and house environments have shown that even if suitable habitats and food substrates are available, it is not evident that beetles confined to these habitats turn up in well deposits. These substrates were probably deliberately dumped into covered wells, or the species entered during local flight if the wells are open to the air. Moreover, climatic reconstructions tested on the same material suggest that microclimates generated by buildings and decaying substrates may well attract species that normally prefer warmer conditions than are available in the surrounding natural environment.

Climatic reconstructions are tested on subfossil insects obtained from settlement deposits in some of the prehistoric material through the Mutual Climatic Range Method (MCR). Based on the experience of applying the MCR method, it is concluded that climate reconstructions carried out in an archaeological context may not be useful or should even be avoided. Ancient settlements provided many favourable habitats where some species may linger on in an area generally unsuitable for their continuance. Insect analysis carried out in prehistoric or historic deposits may often provide finds of species that today are rare or even regionally extinct, contributing to a better understanding of changes in forest environments and the cultural landscape.

Key words: Late Holocene, Iron Age, Medieval time, subfossil insects, Coleoptera, environment, climate, human environment, taphonomy, south-eastern Sweden, Novgorod.

Magnus Hellqvist, Institute of Earth Sciences, Quaternary Geology, Villavägen 16, SE-752 36 Uppsala, Sweden

JOB ADVERTISEMENT

POSTDOCTORAL PALYNOLOGIST REQUIRED (April 2000-April 2001)

A postdoctoral palynologist is required for one year starting April 1st 2000. The project is supported by the Leverhulme trust and is based at the University of Exeter, although some travelling will be required. The project is titled Roman Vineyards in Britain: A Combined Stratigraphic and Palynological Approach and involves work on both ancient and modern pollen. The postdoctoral researcher will be required to help establish pollen monitoring sites and work on sediments from excavations. Qualifications must include palynological expertise to PhD level and both excavation experience and knowledge of Roman archaeology would be an advantage. Final applications will be requested by January 2000. The person appointed will be working within the Palaeoenvironments Research Group within the School of Geography and Archaeology.

Salary will be £17,500.

For further details please Email Prof. A.G. Brown (a.g.brown@exeter.ac.uk) or write to:

Professor A.G. Brown
School of Geography and Archaeology
University of Exeter
Amory Building
Rennes Drive
Exeter EX4 4RJ

PUBLICATIONS [[Books](#) - [Theses](#) - [Chapters](#) - [Articles](#)]

Many thanks to James Greig for the following information:

James says: "Thanks to those who sent in references, especially U. Albarella, B. Cooremans, S. Jacomet and J. Wiethold. Most of the books are available from Oxbow Books: <http://www.oxbowbooks.com>. Please send in references to greigjra@bham.ac.uk"

BOOKS

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