



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

Bringing it all back home. The Ommerschans hoard returns to the Netherlands after almost a century

Amkreutz, L.; Fontijn, D.R.

Citation

Amkreutz, L., & Fontijn, D. R. (2018). Bringing it all back home. The Ommerschans hoard returns to the Netherlands after almost a century. *Past. Newsletter Of The Prehistoric Society*, 88(1). Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/82153>

Version: Publisher's Version

License: [Leiden University Non-exclusive license](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/82153>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

PAST

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE PREHISTORIC SOCIETY



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

<http://www.prehistoricsociety.org/>

Bringing it all back home

The Ommerschans hoard returns to the Netherlands after almost a century

Some objects are more mysterious than others. This definitely goes for the Ommerschans dirk and associated objects that form part of a Middle Bronze Age hoard discovered in the eastern Netherlands in 1896. Its mystery in part relates to the extraordinary character of the impressive giant sword or dirk, which could only have been used for ceremonial or ritual purposes, to the fact that only six of these objects are known, and equally to the phantom-like status it achieved after being 'lost' and in private possession for over 120 years. This all changed last July when the entire hoard was auctioned at Christies in London. The most special find of the entire Dutch Bronze Age finally came home.

But why is this such an extraordinary group of artefacts? The Plougrescant-Ommerschans dirks are a group of Bronze Age weapons roughly dating to 1500–1300 BC. They are

rather large (the largest measures over 70 cm), heavy, thick and wide at the side of the hilt. Moreover, none of these unwieldy weapons seems to have been attached to a hilt or grip, sharpened or used in combat. They are therefore not functional weapons. At the same time, they are an absolutely stunning example of the finest bronze casting craftsmanship. Their overall shape and the intricate yet simple run of the ridges, ribs and bevels demonstrate a mastery of moulding, casting and finishing that resulted in a timeless design and drives home that the element of display or signalling was essential here. This particular design must have a point of origin somewhere. Currently the most likely candidate (as already argued by Stuart Needham) are the Middle Bronze Age dirks of the so-called Kimberley type. Some of these were probably functional weapons, while others were neither riveted nor sharpened. In this sense one could argue that



Distribution map of the Plougrescant-Ommerschans dirks: 1. Oxborough; 2. Rudham; 3. Plougrescant; 4. Beaune; 5. Jutphaas; 6. Ommerschans (adapted from *Archeologie in Nederland*).



L. Amkreutz holding the Ommerschans dirk prior to installing it in the museum's Taffeh-temple (photo: Taco van der Eb/Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden).

the Plougrescant-Ommerschans weapons are supersized enlargements of these dirks and that it is more correct to speak of dirks rather than swords.

The Plougrescant dirk and the one from Ommerschans form the eponymous pair. The former was found near Plougrescant in Brittany and described by Gabriel de Mortillet in 1881, who already was of the opinion that it was not an ordinary weapon. The other French example from Beaune in Burgundy was acquired by Reverend William Greenwell, but later bought by John Pierpont Morgan and donated to the British Museum in 1908. Interestingly the lower half of this piece is a recent addition, probably based on a so-called 'Kimberly dagger' from the same collection. The other Dutch dirk, that from Jutphaas, was dredged from an old tributary of the Rhine near Utrecht in 1946 and decorated the room of a young lad before it was identified as a prehistoric sword. It is distinctly smaller than the others but in every other respect an exact copy. As for the British counterparts, Oxborough with over 70 cm is the largest. In 1988, a hiker tripped over its protruding hilt in a forest. It appeared that it had been pushed down into the soft peaty soil in the Bronze Age: ritually sacrificed in a wet site. The most recent addition, the Rudham dirk, came to light in 2014. A farmer had uncovered a bent piece of metal while ploughing his field and used it as a handy doorstep for his barn for years. The Rudham dirk is the only one of the six that has been deliberately bent. This already occurred in the Bronze Age, and required preparation and expertise.

What is very important to note is that the individual members have a strong resemblance. There are slight differences in size, shape and execution, with the relatively small Jutphaas dirk as the only outlier. The similarities suggest that originally all could have come from the same place, as also indicated by the early results of metal analysis. The pieces are so alike that there must have been a similar idea or template guiding their design and execution. Indeed, in

200 years of intensive antiquarian and archaeological research only six of these dirks have turned up, distributed over a wide area: two from France, two from the Netherlands and two from the UK. Whether the eastern UK was in fact the origin, given the distribution pattern of the Kimberley dirks, remains to be seen.

Given their rarity and high quality, these were probably important ceremonial objects, as already argued by Gabriel de Mortillet and later by Butler and Needham. Supersized versions of ordinary objects often play a role in ceremonies, rituals and general cosmivision, probably circulated over large distances and must have been rich in history or even sacred. Moreover, as far as can be reconstructed, they met a common end. The Rudham, Oxborough, Ommerschans and Jutphaas dirks were deliberately deposited in the landscape, most probably in a wet environment. We are therefore dealing with ritual depositions of costly and valued ceremonial objects. In addition, the Rudham dirk was bent in at least two directions, which required planning and preparation. However, the Ommerschans dirk is the only one of the six that was found together with other objects, including small bronze chisels, needles, scrap metal, a possible razor, as well as stone and flint grinding and polishing stones. Records suggest they were lying on top of the sword, itself supposedly resting on a platform of birch logs.

After the discovery of the Ommerschans hoard in 1896, the finder, Geert Remmelts, was obliged to give the objects to the landowners, the rich German industrial Lüps family. They nailed all the objects and the sword on a wooden board, much like a trophy. When Jan Hendrik Holwerda, director of the National Museum of Antiquities, saw the finds he immediately recognized their importance, but the family would only agree to a brief loan. Holwerda took photos and made a plaster copy. Soon after, the family left for Germany. No other Dutch archaeologist would see the objects again for almost 90 years, as all further attempts to acquire them failed.



The 15 bronze and stone objects found with, and possibly on top of, the Ommerschans dirk. The upper right object is possibly a razor (photo: Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden).



Display of all the Plougrescant-Ommerschans dirks during the 'Vlijmscherp Verleden/Cutting Edge Past' exhibition at the National Museum of Antiquities in Leiden in 2016. Ommerschans itself is represented by its replica (photo: Rijksmuseum van Oudheden, Leiden).

However, in 2016 the National Museum of Antiquities organised an exhibition on swords. The hope was to bring all six Plougrescant-Ommerschans dirks together for the first time since the Bronze Age. Having traced the family after almost 50 years of no contact, a loan was requested, but eventually refused. Instead, the family chose to sell the hoard through Christies. As one of the previous dirks was sold through the same auction house and as they had become aware of the hoard's importance for Dutch cultural heritage, the clever people at Christies rightly assumed there would be considerable interest. The National Museum had to dig deep into its reserves and enlist the support of national

funding bodies such as the Vereniging Rembrandt and the Mondriaanstichting. With their help and convincing letters by colleagues such as Steward Needham, Neil Wilkin and the National Archaeology Museum at St-Germain-en-Laye, we were able to secure a substantial amount and buy the hoard for £485,000. As the last of its family, it is now finally in a museum and can be studied and enjoyed. The National Museum celebrates its 200th anniversary in 2018, and this is the best present we could wish for. Future research on the dirk and the other finds in the hoard is planned in cooperation with the Faculty of Archaeology at Leiden University.

Luc Amkreutz, National Museum of Antiquities (RMO) Leiden (L.Amkreutz@rmo.nl) and David Fontijn, Leiden University

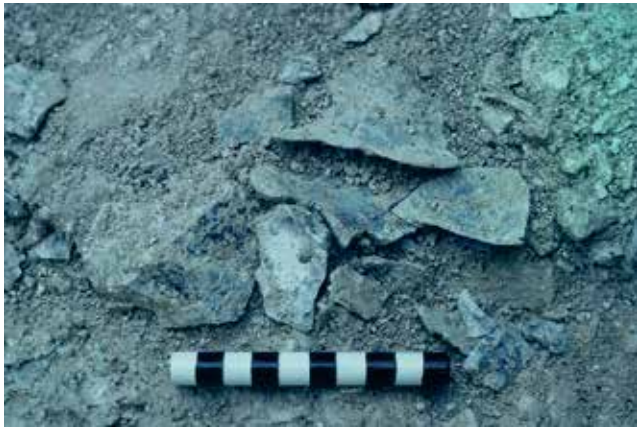
Neolithic flint mining in southern England: new radiocarbon dates for Long Down, West Sussex, and their implications

Fieldwalking at Long Down and Harrow Hill, West Sussex, in 1984 identified previously unknown flint-working areas at both sites. Fieldwork at Grimes Graves, the 'classic' flint-mining site in Norfolk which is Late Neolithic in date, produced a series of flint-working areas where mainly ovates and discoidal knives were being made. These areas were found adjacent to mines throughout the site. However, the flint-working areas at Long Down and Harrow Hill are both peripheral to the main cluster of mines, and are larger in diameter than their counterparts at Grimes Graves. Radiocarbon dates from Harrow Hill and other Sussex flint-mining sites suggested they pre-dated Grimes Graves. Excavations followed in 1985–86 at both Long Down and Harrow Hill to date these flint-working areas and establish their relationship with the immediately adjacent mines. Alongside recent publication of the fieldwork results, further radiocarbon dates have been obtained for Long Down, which provide insight into the dating of flint mining and one of the earliest Neolithic 'horizons' in southern England.

At Harrow Hill, the large, roughly circular flint-working area lies on the southern edge of the D-shaped cluster of flint mines. The sample excavation of the flint-working area

in 1986 produced axe-thinning flakes and roughouts or preforms for mostly axes and a small number of sickles and ovates. Although completely truncated by recent ploughing, the flint-working area was partly overlying a band of open-cast quarries at the periphery of the cluster of flint mines. The open-cast quarries are likely to pre-date the flint-working area.

The fieldwork at Long Down recovered axe-thinning flakes and roughouts from the production of axes and ovate/discoidal knives from the oval-shaped flint-working area; in one place *in situ* debitage had survived immediately below the plough soil, associated with fragments of Early Neolithic plain bowl pottery, including probable Carinated Ware. The area lies immediately to the east of the main cluster of flint mines; a trench excavated here in 1985 yielded fragments of Early Neolithic pottery, probably Carinated Ware, as well as an antler pick fragment and an ox scapula 'shovel' which produced radiocarbon dates of 4900±100 cal BP and 5050±100 cal BP respectively. The Neomine Project has recently obtained further radiocarbon dates from five antler picks from the fill of a mine shaft excavated in the 1950s to the west of the 1985 excavation. They cluster between 4863±32 cal BP to 4544±32 cal BP.



Above: Cluster of flint debitage and fragments of probable Carinated Bowl in the upper fill of the mine at Long Down.

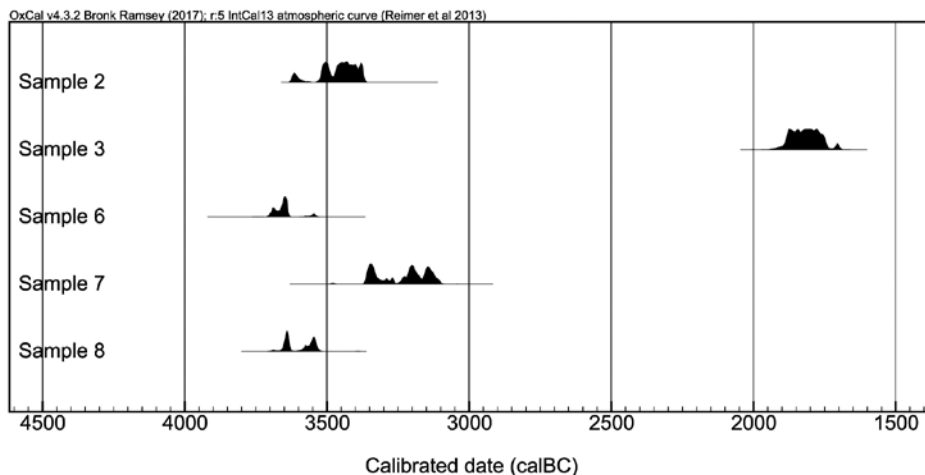


Right: Upper fill of the mine partially excavated at Long Down in 1985 showing the layers from which the antler pick fragment and ox scapula 'shovel' were recovered.

Radiocarbon dates obtained from mining tools, notably antler picks, from flint-mining sites in southern England, especially those recovered from the base of shafts, provide reliable dates for when mining took place. At Harrow Hill and Cissbury, where antler picks from different shafts have been dated, flint mining appears to have begun by the 39th century cal BC, continuing until the 37th century cal BC at Harrow Hill and the late 37th century cal BC at Cissbury. With between 120 and 140 shafts at each site, the dates are consistent with the possibility that one or two shafts were excavated at a time, either seasonally or when the need arose, over a period spanning at least 150–200 years. The date of 4050–3640 cal BC (95% probability) for the ox scapula from the upper fill of a shaft at Long Down links flint mining with Neolithic animal husbandry practices. Antler picks from Martin's Clump, Blackpatch and Church Hill, Findon produced slightly earlier dates in the 40th to 39th centuries cal BC. It is thus likely that the flint-mining sites which stretched in a line from Martin's Clump in eastern Hampshire to Cissbury in central Sussex were in use if not all at the same time, then certainly at overlapping periods during at least the late 40th

to late 37th centuries cal BC. Mining at the Sussex sites was waning, or had certainly ceased at some sites, by the time the first causewayed enclosures were constructed.

The Early Neolithic period in southern England spans the 41st to 38th centuries cal BC, at which point causewayed enclosures and new styles of pottery, including decorated wares, came into existence. Alongside flint mining and axehead manufacture, key characteristics of the earliest 'horizon' between the 41st and 39th centuries cal BC comprise Carinated Bowl pottery and the introduction of both cultivated cereals and domesticated animals. Besides horticulture and animal husbandry, votive deposition of Carinated Bowls and axeheads is also recorded, as exemplified by the broken vessels and two complete, unhafted axeheads in pristine condition (one a polished jadeitite axehead of Alpine origin and the other a flaked flint axehead 'preform') that were deliberately deposited in shallow water beside the late 39th century cal BC Sweet Track in the Somerset Levels. Axeheads, including hoards of flint axeheads, also occur unaccompanied by other artefacts in watery contexts



Date ranges of the five radiocarbon dates obtained by the Neomine Project in 2017 on antler picks from the 1950s excavation at Long Down.



Two of the flint axeheads from a votive hoard found in Seaford, East Sussex in the mid-1980s.

and low-lying places elsewhere in southern England. Thus, alongside new subsistence practices, the Early Neolithic period in southern England involved the transformation of certain resources from the earth, predominantly flint and clay, into items that were returned to the earth as part of an interdependent belief system. This included the extraction of 'special' flint to fabricate axeheads 'symbolic of the earth' from selective, permanently-maintained mining sites on the Hampshire and Sussex chalklands. These were circulated amongst early farming communities and used as votive offerings to ensure the continued fertility of animals and crops.

At both Harrow Hill and Long Down the mined flint was flaked mostly into axe roughouts at a working area immediately adjacent to the mines, a practice also known from mining sites in continental Europe, notably at

Rijckholt-St. Geertruid in the Netherlands and Spiennes in Belgium. Mining tools radiocarbon dated to the 45th to 43rd century cal BC have been excavated from flint-mining sites located in an arc from the Dutch Limburg to Normandy in France, demonstrating that flint mining in southern England began later than on the adjacent Continent. Recent dating of mining sites in Belgium and northern France indicates that flint mining reached its peak in the 41st to 39th centuries cal BC on both sides of the English Channel.

There has been considerable debate in recent years regarding the origins of Neolithic activities in Britain, and whether there was a single or multiple places of introduction. Given the close proximity of flint-mining sites in Normandy, Belgium and the Netherlands pre-dating the southern English sites, fully-developed mining techniques were introduced to Britain with people from Continental Europe via a safe cross-channel route, such as from the Seine estuary and Normandy to the Solent. Extracting flint from sites on the chalklands in central southern England was a crucial part of the process whereby farming took hold in Britain through establishing territory and reinforcing the adherence to cultural beliefs and rituals associated with farming practice.

Acknowledgements

The report on the fieldwork at Long Down and Harrow Hill has been published in *Sussex Archaeological Collections* (2017) with a publication grant from Historic England. The recent radiocarbon dates obtained from the Long Down antler picks were produced as part of University College London's 'Supply and demand in prehistory? Economics of Neolithic mining in NW Europe' project funded by the Leverhulme Trust.

*Jon Baczkowski and Robin Holgate
University of Southampton and Archaeological Research Services Ltd*

Characterising survivors, explaining absence: a survey of preserved East Anglian long barrows

The almost total absence of long barrows from the Midlands and East Anglia has long been a problem; all other evidence of Early and Middle Neolithic activity is present, often in abundance. Given that the two regions have been the heartland of cereal cultivation from at least the medieval period, it is hardly surprising that earthworks are rare. Yet continuous cropping regimes across large areas where soils furnish ideal conditions for aerial photography should have delivered a rash of sites comparable to those of ploughed-out long barrows on the chalk. That has signally failed to happen.

An answer may lie in differing structural traditions: whereas chalkland long barrows were created by spoil from two flanking quarry ditches, the rare upstanding Midland and East Anglian long barrows that have been excavated (West Rudham, Norfolk; Royston, Herts.; Haddenham, Cambs.) have revealed the use of turf, which leaves no subsoil signature of its gathering. Additionally, the ditches

of these long barrows enclosed the monuments and were comparatively slight, since they furnished no more than a thin capping for the turf mound. From this excavated sample it has seemed likely that the large number of parallel-sided, elongated crop mark 'long enclosures' found across the two regions record the missing, plough-raised long barrows. This is in turn supported by the absence of ridge and furrow sub-soil plough scarring within the excavated long enclosure at Charlecote, Warwicks., suggesting the existence of a protective mound now ploughed away.

Two developments have recently called this neat answer into question. First, a number of levelled long barrows revealed by excavation (e.g. Redlands Farm, Raunds, Northants.) have typical chalkland flanking quarry ditches. Second, accumulating dates for cropmark long enclosures point to a Middle Neolithic horizon (c. 3500–2900 cal BC) rather than an Early Neolithic one (c. 4000–3500 cal BC). It is

possible, then, that these were small, localised versions of cursuses rather than long barrows. This would accord with the evidence of the long enclosure of site VIII at Dorchester upon Thames (bisected by a cursus ditch) and the similar site at Raunds (immediately adjacent to a partially preserved, ditchless long mound). But the evidence from Charlecote, mentioned above, seems unassailable and former mounds apparently also exist within rectangular 'mortuary enclosures' at Manor Farm, Milton Keynes, Bucks., and Slough House Farm, Heybridge, Essex. Missing long barrows of distinctive construction or mini cursuses of slightly later date? How are we to decide?

Excavation seems unlikely to furnish an answer given the renowned cleanliness of long enclosure ditches, the total absence of earthwork evidence and the lack of an archaeological signature for the utilisation of turf. The handful of long barrows that survived in heath or common land, however, furnish an invaluable resource that can be tapped by geophysical analysis. Such a survey can establish their ditch plans and so furnish a database of securely identified sites for use in the interpretation of aerial photographs. Supported by a grant from the Prehistoric Society and using equipment from the Universities of Winchester and Leicester, we surveyed the Norfolk sites of Ditchingham (Broome Heath), West Rudham and Harpley. The first two survive as impressive mounds but are covered in rampant 'elephant' bracken that forced the work to be scheduled for cold, pre-growth March days. Ironically, the iron fencing posts set to protect the sites rendered magnetic surveys useless. Resistivity furnished better results but was severely limited by the dry, sandy sub-soils, so much so that at Ditchingham it had to be abandoned. GPR, however, produced excellent results.

All three barrows proved to have enclosing ditches of fairly modest size. At West Rudham, survey suggested the ditch

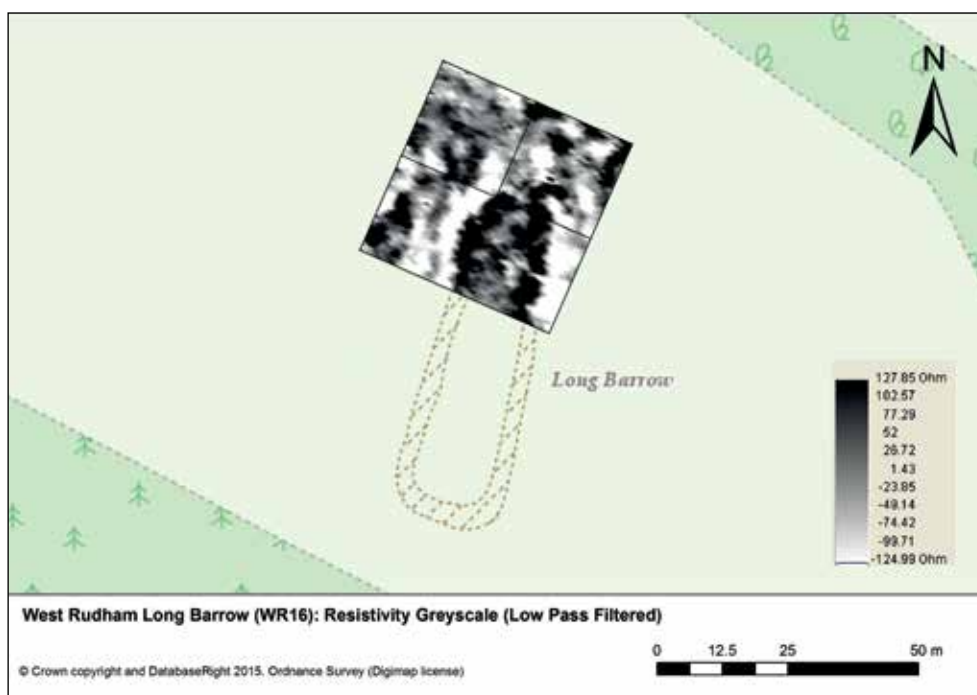


Battling dead bracken at Ditchingham

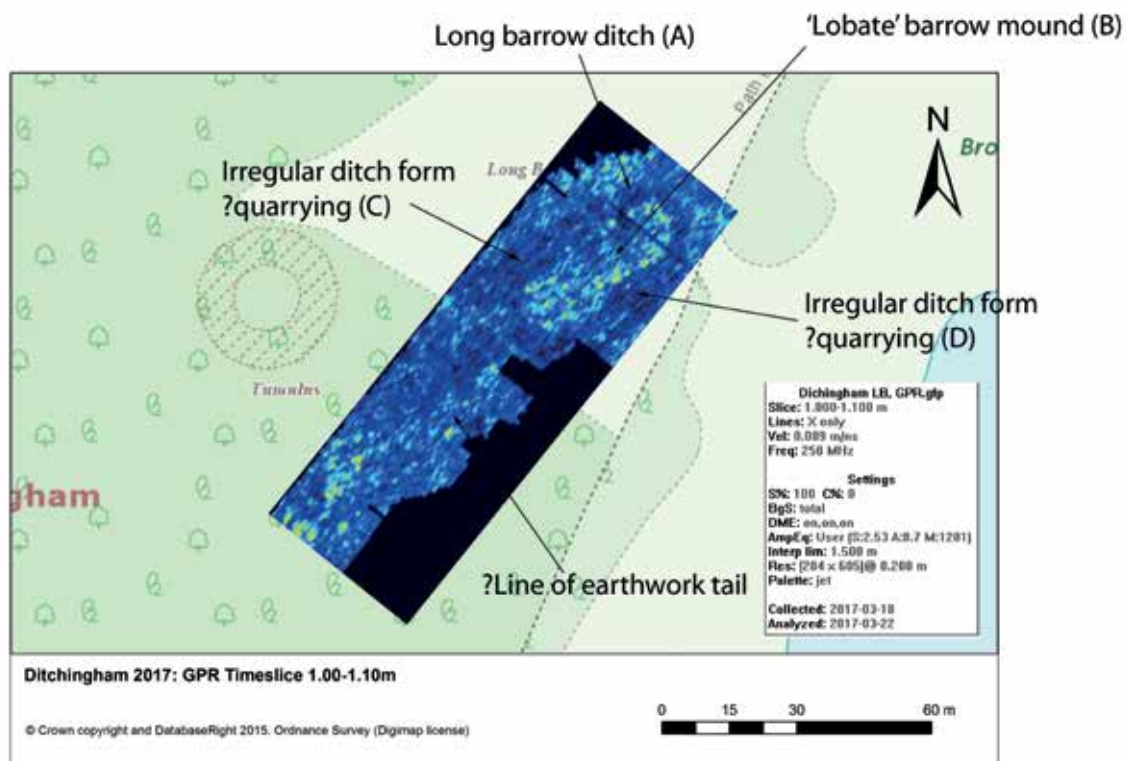
was rather more ragged along the flanks of the barrow than Hogg's 1940 excavation had revealed. It also identified a probable corner causeway, comparable to those at Giants' Hills I, Lincs., Charlecote and at the unexcavated crop mark long enclosures at Roughton and Broome, Norfolk.

The unexcavated, plough-damaged Harpley long barrow, sited just 190 m south of the West Rudham mound, is only about half its length, but a road bending slightly around it held out the possibility that the mound had been truncated. Our survey disproved this, but did suggest that the road probably impinged on the enclosing ditch. It seems it is a small (*c.* 30 m long) oval long barrow.

The unexcavated Ditchingham long barrow (*c.* 38 × 25 m) exhibited a distinct bay at about the midpoint of its south-eastern, long side. GPR survey demonstrated that this was echoed by the ditch (again of enclosing plan) and therefore not a result of later disturbance. It resembles a kink on the northern side of the comparably sized long enclosure at Broome, just 1 km away. Other examples occur in East



Resistivity survey of the northern end of the West Rudham long barrow, showing probable causeway

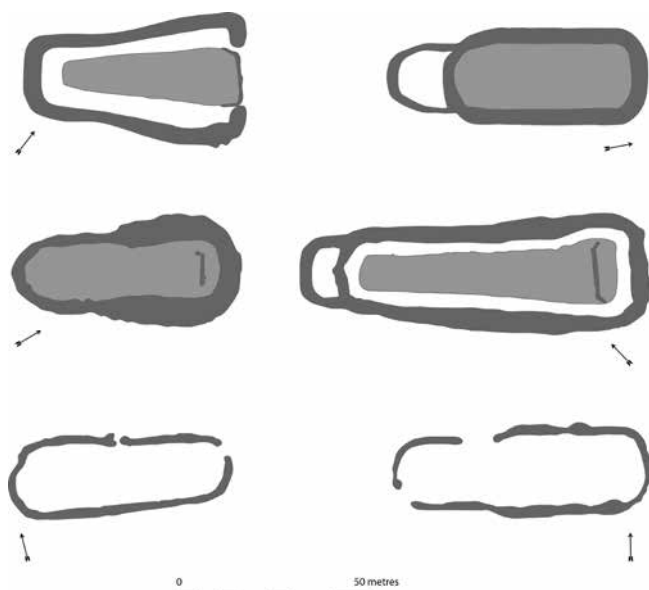


GPR survey of the Ditchingham (Broome Heath) long barrow

Anglia: at one of the long enclosures at Roughton and at the plough-razed Eynesbury long barrow, Cambs. In the latter two cases this pattern could have resulted from small-scale quarry widening along the ditch, but our survey shows no such correlation at Ditchingham. An extension of the barrow, on a much larger scale than at West Rudham and Giants' Hills II, is possible but GPR did not indicate a cross ditch under the mound at the point of constriction. If that is the explanation, the original mound must have had an open-ended ditch. The indented side ditch pattern is repeated at

a recently photographed long enclosure at Stoke Hammond, Bucks., which points to it being of more than just local significance. Intriguingly, it recalls expansion of the post enclosure around the mortuary structure at the end of the Kilham long barrow, East Yorks. Unfortunately, none of our surveys produced evidence of internal barrow structures.

Survey of these three sites has rapidly and economically demonstrated the prevalence of moderately-sized enclosing ditches around East Anglian long barrows and suggests that other ploughed 'long enclosures' may similarly represent these kinds of monuments. Added to very clear aerial photographic coverage of the recorded – but now flattened – Swaffham Prior mound and the excavated evidence from Haddenham (both Cambs.), it confirms the existence of a distinctive, although not exclusive, tradition in eastern England. As always, problems remain: are the much narrower ditches that define long enclosures such as Broome (excavated) and Stoke Hammond (cropmark) the product of severe plough truncation, indicators of a parallel structural tradition that demarcated the perimeter of a turf mound (as at Dalladies, Grampian), or evidence of open enclosures? And need the Middle Neolithic Peterborough Ware and dated material recovered from some long enclosure ditches represent anything more than the similar – often sole – deposits found in some chalkland long barrow ditches? In the plough-razed landscapes of the Midlands and East Anglia, our best hope of answering these questions almost certainly lies with sites protected by river valley alluvium or fenland peat.



Comparative regional plans. Top: Haddenham; West Rudham; Middle: Eynesbury; Giants' Hills 2; Bottom: Broome long enclosure; Roughton long enclosure (with thanks to Chris Evans and David Robertson; re-drawn by F. Görke).

Roy Loveday (r.e.loveday@btinternet.com), Oliver Harris (University of Leicester), Giles Carey (Shropshire County Council), David Ashby (University of Winchester)

The Fourth Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Research Student Symposium (NEBARSS)

On the 17–18th of November the University of Central Lancashire (Uclan) hosted the 4th Neolithic and Early Bronze Age Research Student Symposium (NEBARSS). As in previous years (2014–16), the symposium provided an opportunity for postgraduate, early career and independent researchers working on the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age to meet with their peers and present their thoughts on current or completed research. This year's symposium was attended by over 30 delegates. On the 17th of November, two keynote lectures were delivered by Uclan's very own Dr Vicki Cummings, talking about Neolithic chambered tombs of Britain and Ireland, and Dr Rick Peterson, discussing cave burial rites in the Neolithic. This was followed on the 18th with papers on three broad themes. The first session focused on Cumbria with the environmental (Nathaniel Welsby, Uclan) and lithic (Robert Leedham, Uclan) records of the Mesolithic–Neolithic transition, as well as osteoarchaeology and taphonomy of Neolithic and Bronze Age human remains (Keziah Warburton, Uclan) from sites within the region. Moving on to material culture, session two discussed the use of fire and wood in the Early Neolithic (Dr Ellen McInnes, Manchester), representations on Grooved Ware ceramics (Sarah Botfield, Manchester), Scottish Bronze Age Food Vessels

(Marta Innes, Glasgow) and wear patterns of Early Bronze Age perforated stone tools (Amber Roy, Newcastle). The last session moved to more social issues, with papers on Scotland in the third millennium BC (Dr Michael Copper, Bradford) and the socio-economic development of the Chalcolithic in Bulgaria (Ekaterina Stamboliyska-Petrova, Sofia). The day's events were rounded off with a final keynote lecture from Prof Julian Thomas (Manchester) on his latest excavations at Dorstone Hill and its implications. Throughout the day poster presentations were also displayed, covering a range of topics from shifting scales of analysis in Mesolithic–Neolithic landscapes (Samantha Brummage, Birkbeck, and Robert Leedham on use of lithics) to Neolithic cooking practices at Çatalhöyük (Christine Fuchs-Khakhhar, Birkbeck) and rethinking the henge monuments of the British Isles (Lucy Cummings, Newcastle). This year successfully continued the ethos of NEBARSS in providing a friendly platform for postgraduate researchers of the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age to present their research. Thanks are due to all who supported and attended this year's event, particularly the University of Central Lancashire.

*Robert Rhys Leedham, University of Central Lancashire
(RRLeedham@uclan.ac.uk)*



The speakers at NEBARSS 2017. From left to right: Michael Copper, Robert Leedham, Ellen McInnes, Marta Innes, Amber Roy, Sarah Botfield, Ekaterina Stamboliyska-Petrova and Nathaniel Welsby (photo: author)

Conference announcement: Celebrating Our Woodland Heritage, University of Bradford 16–18 November 2018

This three-day conference in celebration of our native woodlands will explore key themes related to woodland history, including an interdisciplinary understanding of past wooded landscapes; the challenges of collaborative research across disciplines and different spatial scales; the contribution of community-based landscape archaeology projects; and open-source technologies for community and individual research. The programme will include academic researchers, community and professional archaeologists, teachers and volunteers from national projects. The organising team welcomes the submission of papers (deadline 22 June) and posters (deadline 18 October) for presentation at the conference. For further information contact woodlandsconference@bradford.ac.uk or visit the website: <https://woodlandheritageconference2018.com>

The Prehistoric Society 2017

This report covers the period of January to December 2017.

Meetings and study tours

The Society has continued to fulfil its commitment to reach a wide range of regional audiences and to promote its aims and objectives through a wide range of lectures, conferences and tours throughout Britain. The Society continues to collaborate with other archaeological bodies and societies, this year focusing particularly on the Iron Age. In January a joint lecture was given with the Devon Archaeology Society, where Ian Leins (English Heritage) presented on 'Iron Age coinage and communities' in Exeter, while Chris Evans (our Vice-President) spoke on 'Ritual logics: bodily violence and burial rites (and 'wrongs') in the Iron Age of the Cambridge region' to the Cambridge Antiquarian Society. John Talbot delivered the joint lecture with the Norfolk Archaeology Society, asking 'What are Icenian coins?'. The inaugural joint Yorkshire Archaeological Society / Prehistoric Society lecture was given in Leeds City Museum by David Gibson (Cambridge Archaeological Unit) on 'The Must Farm pile dwelling: taste, appearance, lifestyle and communication in the Late Bronze Age'. In December, Nick Card (University of the Highlands and Islands) delivered the joint Cornwall Archaeological Society 'Corfield Nankivell' lecture on 'Secrets of the Ness of Brodgar: a Stone-Age complex in the Heart of Neolithic Orkney World Heritage Site' in Truro. In October, Richard Bradley presented the first annual Pitt Rivers Lecture, 'Pitt Rivers as pioneer', in association with the Prehistoric Society at Bournemouth University.

In October, Julia Farley delivered the 16th Sara Champion lecture at the Society of Antiquaries, 'Making and breaking the British Iron Age: a holistic approach to craft and material culture'. The Society's springtime one-day conference held in May at the Society of Antiquaries (the second in a series exploring new directions in landscape research) focused on 'Uplands and Lowlands'. In April, a joint conference was held with the University of Reading on Iron Age oppida. Reports on both conferences can be found in *PAST* 86.

Another impressive range of tours to sites, museums and excavations were offered, including to excavations in the Vale of Pewsey (July), led by Jim Leary, and the Dorstone Hill excavations (July), led by Julian Thomas and Keith Ray. Josh Pollard led a tour of Avebury excavations (August) and serving Council member Jody Joy offered a behind the scenes tour of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge (September). In August there was a visit to Willow Row Barrow contemporary megalithic burial ground, led by the managing director of Sacred Stones Ltd., Toby Angel.

Europa Prize

Professor Helle Vandkilde (University of Aarhus) was the 2017 recipient of the Europa Prize. The theme of the Europa conference, held at the University of Southampton (23rd/24th June) was 'The Bronze Age as pre-modern

globalisation'. The Society's AGM followed (see below) and the day culminated in the presentation of the Europa award to Prof Vandkilde, who then delivered the Europa lecture, 'Small, medium, and large: globalization perspectives on the Afro-Eurasian Bronze Age'. A review appeared in *PAST* 87.

Research Grants

Research grants were awarded to Martin Bell (University of Reading) for publication of the Belle Tout shaft, John Chapman (Durham University) for the Ukrainian Trypillia mega-sites project, David Gonzalez-Alvarez (Durham University/CSIC, Spain) for prehistoric occupation of the Cantabrian Mountains, Gary Lock (University of Oxford) for excavation at Moel y Gaer, Denbighshire, Neogi Sayantani (LMU Munich/University of Cambridge) for geoarchaeological work, Matilda Sebire (Leiden University) for technological choices in prehistoric bead technologies and Marie Louise Stig Sørensen (University of Cambridge) for Middle Bronze Age beads and pendants from Százhalombatta-Földvár, Hungary. An award from the conference fund was made to Annabell Zander (University of York) to attend the 26th Annual Meeting of the German Mesolithic Workgroup.

The John and Bryony Coles Award went to Eoin Parkinson (University of Cambridge) for analysis on the Chalcolithic necropolis of Forlì-Cellesta, Italy, the Bob Smith Prize was awarded to Martin Bell (University of Reading) and the James Dyer Prize to Gary Lock (University of Oxford). SUERC Awards went to P. Bickle, K. Alasmari and G. Bailey (University of York; one date for Al Uyanah, Saudi Arabia) and E. Parkinson (University of Cambridge; two dates for Fonteviva Neolithic village, Italy). The Leslie Grinsell Prize went to Marie Louise Stig Sørensen (University of Cambridge). The Collections Study Award went to Rob Dinnis (University of Oxford) to work with Nick Ashton (British Museum) on 'A taphonomic investigation of the Ksar Akil Initial Upper Palaeolithic'.

The Annual General Meeting for 2016/17

The AGM was held on Saturday 24th June 2017 at 4.25pm at the University of Southampton, after the 26th Europa Conference and immediately before the Europa Lecture.

The President reported on a very busy, yet successful year, providing details of the Society's core activities, publications, lectures, conferences and excursions. It was noted that subscription rates may need to increase in coming years with due notice to be given to members. The President then thanked all Council and members who have assisted with events during the year. Warm thanks were offered to retiring officers (Vice President Bob Chapman) and Council members (Penny Bickle, Julie English, Janet Montgomery and Matt Pope).

The following officers and members of Council were then elected:

President	Dr Alex Gibson
Vice-Presidents	Dr Melanie Giles Dr Chris Evans, Dr Nicky Milner
Treasurer	Dr Clare Randall
Secretary	Dr Neil Wilkin
Managing Editor/Editor of PPS	Dr Julie Gardiner
Editor PAST	Dr Daniela Hofmann
Editor, Prehistoric Society Research Papers Series	Dr Mike Allen
Book Reviews Editor	Ms Pippa Bradley
Meetings Secretary	Dr Marcus Brittain
Conservation Co-ordinator	Dr Jane Siddell
Council	Ms Annabell Zander Mr Matt Knight Dr Leo Webley Dr Ben Gearey

The Baguley Award

The Baguley Award was presented to Richard Bradley and his team (Alice Rogers, Fraser Sturt, Aaron Watson, Diana Coles, Julie Gardiner and Ronnie Scott) for their article on ‘Maritime havens in earlier prehistoric Britain’.

Undergraduate Dissertation Prize

As in previous years, each University department was invited to submit only one dissertation for the Society’s Undergraduate Dissertation Prize. The winner was Gonzalo Linares Matás (University of Oxford). The runners-up were Rain Sanderson (University of Cambridge), Jessica Bates (University of York) and Jake Rowland (University of Southampton). The awards were made after the Sara Champion lecture. A report is included in this issue of *PAST*.

Publications

During 2016, the Society published Volume 83 of the *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society*, containing 14 refereed papers on a range of topics spanning the Neolithic to the Iron Age in Britain, Ireland and Europe. Three editions of *PAST*, the Society’s newsletter, were also published.

Advocacy

The Society continued its active role in relation to the New Neighbourhood Planning and Infrastructure Bill, the Stonehenge Tunnel plan by Highway England and the plan to abolish A-level Archaeology. Stronger links were also made with the European Association of Archaeologists and the President addressed the issue of Brexit in *PAST* 86. The Society continued to support the inclusion of prehistory in the primary school’s National Curriculum by providing assistance to teachers and working on a range of free and trusted teaching resources relating to prehistory, available on the Society website.

Membership and administration

Membership of the Society is healthy and continues to rise. The Society’s online and social media presence (Facebook and Twitter) has also developed considerably in the last year, with 3131 followers on Twitter (up from 2300) and 9884 followers on Facebook (up from 8500).

As ever, the Society would not be able to function without a large number of individuals giving freely of their time and knowledge to organise events and to deliver the results of their fieldwork and research. The Society offers sincere thanks to all those who have helped throughout the year, especially to its administrator, Tessa Machling.

EAA / Prehistoric Society Collaboration

With Brexit negotiations taking place, uncertainty hangs over the future of British and European relations, especially in the realms of academia and research. The Prehistoric Society is committed to European prehistory, as demonstrated in the level of grant aid we give to non-UK projects and in our annual Europa conference. Recent awards have supported projects in Turkey, Sweden, Macedonia, Italy, Romania, Spain, Denmark, Ukraine, Hungary and the Netherlands. The Europa conference is supported by a legacy from the late Professor Grahame Clark and is awarded to a prehistorian who has made a substantial contribution to European prehistory. Previous recipients have included Pierre Pétrequin, Kristian Kristiansen, Richard Bradley, Alasdair Whittle and Helle Vandkilde.

Against this background, the Society has been in dialogue with the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) as to the best way to demonstrate our continued support for British–European collaboration in prehistoric research. As a result of these negotiations, I am delighted to announce that the Prehistoric Society will become a corporate member of EAA in early 2018. We shall have a corporate presence at the 2018 EAA conference in Barcelona, after which we look forward to taking a more pro-active role in EAA conference organisation. I would like to thank EAA President Felipe Criado-Boado for his role in our negotiations and I look forward to a future of collaboration within EAA.

Alex Gibson

Grave Matters: interpreting objects and death in later prehistoric Europe

The AHRC-funded Grave Goods project is pleased to announce a day conference on ‘Grave Matters: interpreting objects and death in later prehistoric Europe’. This will take place on Friday 29 June 2018 at the University of Manchester. Speakers include: Joanna Brück, Harry Fokkens, David Fontijn, Daniela Hofmann, Laurent Olivier, Katharina Rebay-Salisbury and Alison Sheridan, along with the project team. Cost: £25 (£15 for students). Visit www.gravegoodsproject.org for further details and booking information.

Notice of the 2018 (for 2017) Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on Saturday 23rd June 2018 at 4.00pm at Berrick Saul Building, Heslington West campus, University of York.

Agenda

1. Minutes of the Annual General Meeting held at University of Southampton on 24th June 2017 (papers available from the website or from the Honorary Secretary)
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
 - Collections Study Award
 - John and Bryony Coles Award
 - Research Grants (Bob Smith Award and Leslie Grinsell Award)
 - Conference Fund
8. Election of officers and members of Council

The meeting will be followed at 4.30pm by the 27th Europa Lecture by Prof Geoff Bailey (University of York): 'Between the devil and the deep blue sea: the archaeology of prehistoric coastlines'. The lecture will be followed by a wine reception.

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

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 Britain, Europe & Prehistory, The British Museum, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3DG, by 4.30pm on the 23 May 2018.
3. Forms of proxy may be obtained from the Secretary at the above address.

The 16th Sara Champion Memorial Lecture, October 2017

The Sara Champion Memorial Lecture for 2017 was given by Dr Julia Farley, curator at the British Museum. In an entertaining talk on 'Making and breaking the British Iron Age: a holistic approach to craft and material culture', she wove together an understanding of the world of both materials and skills which distinguish this exciting period. Throughout, she showcased the collections of the British Museum – from its glowing icons of gold torcs and bronze mirrors to lesser-known gems of impressed, mineralised textiles on small iron brooches.

Focusing on her recent work on Staple Howe, North Yorkshire, she unpicked the crafts represented in this assemblage and showed how they could help understand the spatial and temporal rhythms of making and breaking.



Julia Farley delivering the Sara Champion lecture (photo: Neil Wilkin).

From the bronze and ironwork of blades and razors to the ceramic temper of its pottery, and from the carpentry of its roundhouses and raised stores to the working of jet, Julia conjured for us the to-and-fro not just of people but stock, between the elevated Wolds and the Vale of Pickering below.

Moving on to some of the better-known objects under her care, she showed how a knowledge of weaving was essential to the techniques deployed for linking together strands of fine goldwork on objects such as the Snettisham torcs, and how the distinctive basket-work relief infilling panels of Celtic art design conjured the effects of textiles. Julia's work reminded us of the special social role of Iron Age craftspeople and brought to light the conversations through which skills in different materials melded together to create some of the most glorious composite objects that define Celtic art. She also exhorted us to re-contextualise these objects against the world from which they came: the glossy hide of a horse (for chariot-gear), the grain of timber (for fixtures on a wooden shield or scabbard) or the weave of cloth (for ornaments and jewellery). Our appreciation for these 'communities of skill' was not limited to the abstract: the audience was encouraged to better understand these skills through Julia's own experimental weaving. Julia literally and metaphorically 'spun' for her audience a rich, humorous and lively talk. The presence of Prof Tim Champion in the audience made it an especially memorable evening, and conversations flowed long afterwards.

Melanie Giles (melanie.giles@manchester.ac.uk)

Prehistoric Society Undergraduate Dissertation Prize 2017

The awards to the winner and three runners-up for the Society's 2017 Undergraduate Dissertation Prize were presented at the Society of Antiquaries before the Sara Champion lecture on the 25th of October. The overall winner of the prize was Gonzalo Linares Matás (University of Oxford) for his dissertation on 'The earliest Palaeolithic bone toolkit in Eurasia. Cueva Negra del Estrecho del Río Quípar (Murcia, Spain)'. Gonzalo received three years' free membership of the Society, his choice of one of the Society's in-print monographs, a cheque for £100 and the opportunity to submit an abridged version of his dissertation for publication in the *Proceedings*. The three runners-up, each receiving a year's membership of the Society, were Rain Sandieson (University of Cambridge) for her work on 'Harvesting the Mesolithic: deep time, deeper water'; Jessica Bates (University of York), for 'A critical exploration of gender assignment to burial goods in the European Mesolithic and Neolithic'; and Jake Rowland (University of Southampton) for 'A little flaky: a typological and technological analysis



This year's prize winners. From left to right: Jake Rowland, Gonzalo Linares Matás, the President, Jessica Bates, Rain Sandieson. Photo: Mike Allen.

of microdebitage from the West Kennet Avenue occupation site, Avebury'. Three further dissertations were highly commended. The judges of the prize were very impressed with the overall quality of the winning dissertations and with that of all the submitted work this year.

Prehistoric Society Undergraduate Dissertation Prize 2018

The Prehistoric Society invites submissions for the 2018 undergraduate dissertation prize. The award celebrates the dissertation that has made the greatest contribution to the study of prehistory in any part of the world. The prize is open to students from any University in Britain and Ireland. Each Department is invited to submit one dissertation by a candidate who completes her or his degree during the 2017/18 academic year. The judges will assess entries on the basis of the quality of work, the originality of the approach and the degree to which the research advances our understanding of prehistory. The final decision is at the discretion of the Society.

The winner will receive three years' free membership of the Society, the choice of one of the Society's in-print monographs and £100. An abridged version of the successful dissertation will be considered for publication in the *Proceedings*. Three runners-up will be awarded a year's free membership and

will be invited to the award ceremony, where they will be presented with a certificate. Highly commended entries will also receive a year's free membership. The Prize will be presented prior to the Sara Champion lecture on the 31st of October 2018.

This prestigious award represents an excellent opportunity for outstanding young scholars to have their work publicly recognised, in the magnificent setting of the Society of Antiquaries, Burlington House in Piccadilly. Entries for the current academic year are to be sent as a single PDF document by the host department to Professor Nicky Milner at nicky.milner@york.ac.uk by **Friday 13th July**. It is advised that the file name comprise the student's name and institution. Entries can only be accepted if accompanied by the email address, postal address and contact phone number **both** for the candidates **and** for their supervisors.

Archaeology of the Severn Estuary – free online access

The Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee has been co-ordinating archaeological research in the Severn Estuary area for over 20 years, bringing together academics, field and curatorial archaeologists and interested amateurs. The publication *Archaeology of the Severn Estuary* has highlighted the fascinating results of this work from all periods.

In partnership with the Archaeological Data Service all the volumes of the publication are now available online for free at <https://doi.org/10.5284/1044660>. All future issues will also be available for free online, immediately after they are approved by the editorial team.

In addition, membership of SELRC will also be entirely free from now on. To join, simply send your name and a contact email address to Richard.brunning@swheritage.org.uk. All communication will be solely by email and will include notification of meetings, publications and special offers for members.

Richard Brunning, Chairman of Severn Estuary Levels Research Committee

Wet worlds in context –The prehistoric East Anglian Fens and their regional setting

'Although their condition was very miserable, they enjoyed a sort of wild liberty amid the watery wastes [...] the fen was [...] their only source of subsistence, precarious though it may be'. This 19th century description of the 'Fen slodgers' then inhabiting the East Anglian Fens demonstrates a rather negative attitude to both wetland environments and wetland people, which occurs in the writings of various authors throughout history, from Tacitus' description of the saltmarsh-dwelling Chauci as a 'miserable race' to early medieval monk Felix' account of the Fens as 'immense marshes [...] which many men had attempted to inhabit, but none could [...] because of manifold horrors and fears'.

Such outsider views have influenced our own perceptions of wetlands and greatly affect the ways in which we study and understand these landscapes and the communities inhabiting them in prehistory. We tend to see wetlands as marginal landscapes, clearly different and often divorced from drylands. Yet past perceptions of and attitudes to these landscapes seem to have been rather different. These were valued and often well-connected parts of the landscape, with waterways acting as trade and communication routes.

The East Anglian Fens are no exception, as recent excavations by the Cambridge Archaeological Unit at the famous Late Bronze Age pile-dwelling settlement of Must Farm have demonstrated (for updates, see <http://www.mustfarm.com/bronze-age-settlement/>). Dubbed Britain's Pompeii, Must Farm's stilted roundhouses were built above a small river, possibly to control access to trade routes. Many of the well-preserved finds from this site, including glass beads of probable eastern Mediterranean origin, demonstrate that the settlement was far from isolated. Thus, it is important to place wetland sites and communities like that of Must Farm in a wider socio-cultural and landscape context.

Yet due to our modern perception of wetland(er)s as different and divorced from dryland(er)s, many wetland sites and communities are studied in relative isolation. At most, parallels are looked for in other wetlands, sometimes located hundreds of kilometres away. However, it is the more immediate local and regional context of wetland sites, which includes drier parts of the landscape, that would have been most meaningful to the inhabitants.

To contextualise later prehistoric Fenland sites and communities we could ask when, why and how people inhabited the dynamic wetland landscape and whether they differed from 'dryland' communities nearby, as well as what their role and place in the wider (inter)regional network and longer-term, larger-scale socio-cultural developments was. Because identity is closely linked to landscape and environment, these questions may be answered by examining the long-term interaction between people and the East Anglian Fen wetlands. The author's current PhD aims to achieve this through a large-scale comparison of foodways through time

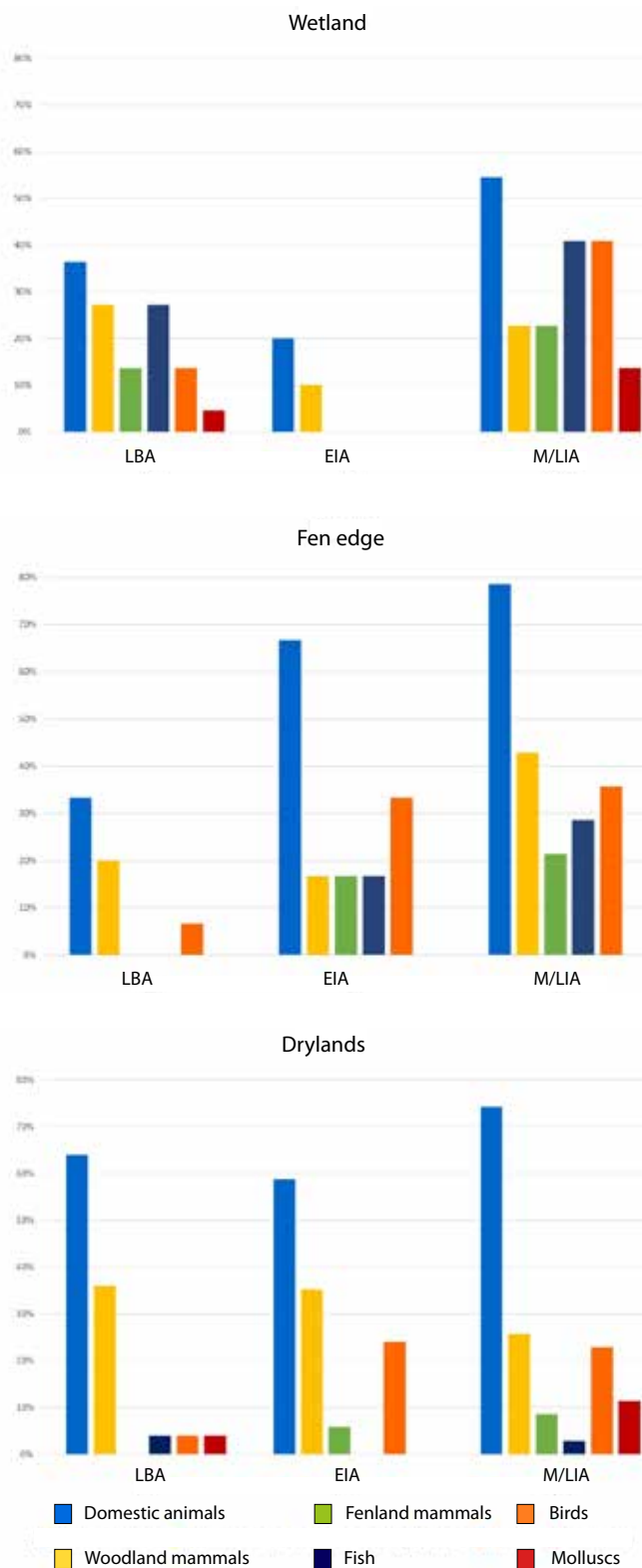


Fen Slodgers' (from W.H. Wheeler, 1896, A history of the fens of south Lincolnshire, Boston: J.M. Newcomb, page xix)

(from the Neolithic to the Iron Age, c. 4000 BC – 40 AD) and in different environments (wetlands, drylands and an intermediate, fen edge zone). Foodways were chosen as they are closely linked to the physical environment, but also highly social and cultural in nature.



The 145 selected sites within the study area, mapped over an outline of the Fenland region as defined in Natural England's National Character Area division (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-character-area-profiles-data-for-local-decision-making>).



The ubiquity of various groups of animals in the different environmental zones from the Late Bronze Age to the Middle/Late Iron Age. The values on the Y-axis represent the percentage of all site phases falling within the periods displayed on the X-axis with a particular animal group in it, e.g. 36% of all Late Bronze Age phases on wetland sites contained domesticated animals. From the occurrences of wetland species (fenland mammals, fish, birds and molluscs) it seems the Fens were 'in focus' in the Late Bronze Age and Middle/Late Iron Age, whilst the occurrence of birds on dryland sites in the Iron Age may suggest wetland/dryland interaction. By the Middle/Late Iron Age, the fen edge, which seems less 'popular' in the Late Bronze Age, was also back in focus.

Overall, 145 sites in and around the former Fens were selected and the presence and absence of numerous domestic and wild plant and animal species was recorded for a total of 440 site phases. These phases were divided into ten periods between the Early Neolithic and Late Iron Age, and for all phases the main environment at the time was established as wetland, dryland or fen edge. This allowed for a comparison of the ubiquity of plant and animal species in different periods and environments, giving insight into people's interaction with and use of these environments over time.

There are clear differences in the frequencies of various wild and domestic plants and animals in the three environments. The changes in wetland species' ubiquity over time in combination with other archaeological evidence suggest that there was not one point in time at which people in or near the Fens became 'wetlanders' as opposed to 'drylanders'. Instead, there are a few periods in which the fen edge or wetland environments were interesting to people, as reflected in higher occurrences of wetland mammals, birds and fish.

This dynamic, in which the wetland and wetland edges came into and went out of focus in various periods, has been noted previously at sites like Colne Fen or Haddenham. Local sequences differ, but it seems that the wetland was a focus in the Late Bronze Age. People exploited fenland resources, constructed timber trackways across the marsh, deposited metalwork at Flag Fen and even, as evidenced by Must Farm, inhabited this landscape. Perhaps previous generations' interaction with the developing wetlands throughout the Early and Middle Bronze Age had provided the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to 'colonise' the deeper Fens in the Late Bronze Age.

In this period some communities (like the one at Must Farm) may have developed a 'wetland worldview' and identity. However, this may not have set them apart from 'drylanders' yet. At Must Farm, the use of oak uprights for the structures, cereals, domestic animals and wild woodland species indicate dryland connections and interactions with fen edge and inland communities further upstream. The exotic glass beads demonstrate that goods and people also travelled in the other direction, into the Wash, along the coast and even across the Channel.

Similarly, in the Middle/Late Iron Age the presence of wetland species in drylands suggest that wetland communities were not isolated or marginalised, but part of wider (inter)regional and long-range networks. Close social relations between wet- and drylanders were hence probably more important in the shaping of people's identities than the environment they inhabited. If wetland identities did develop, they were a less crucial part of people's overall identity than in the later historic period, when people became defined as 'fen slodgers' through their close connection with the wetlands. Their wetland identity, though presumably equally fluid, was more pronounced.

The above results and interpretations suggest that a study of foodways may give us insights into how people interacted

with wetland environments and each other over time. Rather than always being marginal and distinct from drylands, the East Anglian Fens were an integral part of the landscape in some periods, but less important in others (e.g. the Early Iron Age). More in-depth analysis of these developments and a more detailed examination of the relations and interactions between people inhabiting the Fen and fen edge landscapes and those living in drier inland areas will help place wetland sites like Must Farm, and the people dwelling here, in a wider social-cultural context.

Acknowledgements

Thanks are due to the AHRC Northern Bridge Doctoral Training Partnership for funding the ongoing PhD research at Durham University on which this contribution is based. I am also grateful to Chris Evans and Mark Knight (Cambridge Archaeological Unit) for giving me the opportunity to join the excavations at Must Farm and allowing me to read their unpublished work. Comments on this piece from Chris Scarre and Mark Knight are much appreciated.

*Floor Huisman, Durham University
(f.j.huisman@durham.ac.uk)*

Further Neolithic wooden structures at Walpole Landfill Site, Somerset, UK

Walpole Landfill Site is situated towards the coastal edge of the Somerset Levels between Bridgwater and Burnham-on-Sea in south-west England. Archaeological investigations ahead of landfill extension have been ongoing since 2000 and have uncovered a deeply stratified coastal wetland sequence surrounding an outcrop of Lias limestone, which survived as an island until the third millennium BC. Within the wetland to the north and west of the buried island, 13 wooden structures, all dated to the fifth or sixth millennium BC, have been discovered, along with numerous palaeochannels and *in situ* tree stumps. These structures are in varying degrees of preservation ranging from well-preserved platforms bridging palaeochannels (e.g. Walpole 16 – numbering includes both structures and other archaeological findspots) to the remnants of structures whose original form was only suggested by parallel lines of wooden posts with staked ends (e.g. Walpole 8).

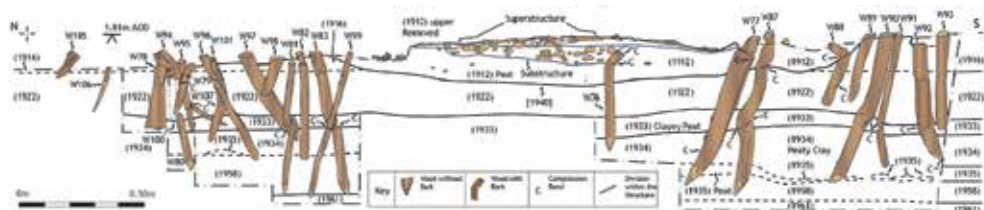
Fieldwork in 2014 revealed two further Neolithic structures north of the buried island, radiocarbon dates for which are

now available. The earliest of these, Walpole 18, lay *c.* 250 m due north of the buried island and consisted of a largely disturbed trackway laid horizontally and pegged into place across the lowest fill of a palaeochannel. The structure consisted of four surviving horizontal pieces of wood and at least forty small pegs covering a length of 4 m. Species identification by Dana Challinor revealed that the structure consisted of two pieces of alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and one each of hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and apple (*Maloideae* sp.). Analysis of the worked ends by Richard Brunning showed that three of the pieces were naturally split, although the hazel had a point formed from two cut faces at angles of between 14° to 20°, with concave toolmarks up to 20 mm wide with flat margins. The pegs were similarly alder, apple and hazel. Radiocarbon dating of one of the pieces of alder returned a result of 4782 ± 30BP (3641–3520 cal BC; Wk45396).

The second structure, Walpole 19, was a platform over a pool at a confluence of narrow palaeochannels within a few metres of the northern edge of the buried island. The



Photo of Structure 19, looking south-east. The landfill cell at the rear is the site of the buried island



West-facing section of Walpole 19, WG26 and WG27

structure comprised a complex of well-preserved *in situ* wooden stakes and a wooden platform. The platform overlay an ancient pool, from which a series of palaeochannels of between 0.2 and 0.5 m width radiated. It was surrounded by three groups of vertical stakes, while two other groups of vertical stakes were associated with the palaeochannels. The total area of Walpole 19 measured approximately 12 m NE–SW by 18 m NW–SE. A total of 104 pieces of wood were numbered and recorded from the structure.

The platform consisted of a brushwood superstructure with vertical pegs, underlain by a brushwood substructure with a well-defined surface, which was not pegged into place. The wood was predominantly poplar (*Populus*) or willow (*Salix*). Groups of stakes were excavated around the margins of the platform. The two largest concentrations of stakes, numbered as wood groups 26 and 27, each consisted of 22 willow or poplar stakes with impact bends at the tip and compression bends on the tops, presumably caused by a combination of the initial act of being driven into the ground followed by compression by the accumulative stratigraphic deposits. Two further groups of stakes were situated in palaeochannels a short distance from the platform. Richard Brunning's analysis showed that all of the wood is beaver-gnawed rather than worked with stone implements. It is likely that the

wood is derived from a former beaver lodge and dam. The possibility remains that the entire structure is a collapsed lodge, the narrow palaeochannels representing beaver-dug channels, although the lines of stakes may be suggestive of deliberate repurposing of the structure for human activity (alternating human and beaver reuse of a wooden structure has been suggested by Bryony Coles for the Bronze Age Baker Platform in Somerset).

Three pieces of wood associated with Walpole 19 were submitted for dating: an outlying stake, a vertical stake from underneath the platform and a piece of wood from the substructure of the platform. These returned radiocarbon results of 4325 ± 35BP (3021–2939 cal BC; Wk45037); 4286 ± 31BP (3011–2914 cal BC; Wk45036) and 4179 ± 23 BP (2860–2677 cal BC; Wk45033) respectively.

Work at Walpole Landfill Site is ongoing, with recent excavations returning to the island surface where evidence of Neolithic and Bronze Age activity has been found, including two ring ditches of Early Bronze Age date. The complete programme of work will be brought to publication and project updates are available online at <http://www.hollinrake.org.uk/walpole>

Arthur Hollinrake, Hollinrake Archaeology Co-operative and Matt Law, Bath Spa University (m.law@bathspa.ac.uk).

The copy date for PAST 89 is the 14th of May 2018. Contributions to Editor, Daniela Hofmann, Archäologisches Institut, Universität Hamburg, Germany. Email: daniela.hofmann@uni-hamburg.de. Contributions as e-mail attachments are preferred (either Word or rtf files) but submissions on disc are 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.