

ARCHAEOLOGY NEWS



Ancient History and Environments of Northeastern BC Being Examined

Fort St. John, BC -The first major archaeological excavation in Northeastern BC, in over a decade, has just begun. Local archaeologist, Keary Walde, is carrying out this research at a site in the Gutah gas field, 176 Km north of Fort St. John. "The archaeological study is being complemented by an equally significant examination of environmental changes over the past 10,000 - 12,000 years," said Mr. Walde. "Analysis of nearby lake bottom deposits, overseen by Royal BC Museum palaeobotanist, Dr. Richard Hebda, will provide pollen evidence of vegetation changes people learned to live with over that time." A report on this project will form a component of the Museum's Living Landscapes: Peace River Northern Rockies initiative.

Jamestown Fort

Jamestown, Va. - Seven years after archaeologists discovered evidence of the fort built when Jamestown was founded in 1607, they finally know how big the triangle-shaped log enclosure was. Based on the finding in 1996 of the fort's east corner and on historical documents, archaeologists had been searching for the outlines of a fort that covered 1.75 acres, said William Kelso, director of archaeology for the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities. Digging this summer unearthed evidence of the fort's western wall and north corner, defining the fort's shape for the first time and indicating the fort actually enclosed 1.1 acres, Kelso said.

The Archaeology and Registry Services Branch has moved.

It is now located on the 3rd Floor, 3400 Davidson Street, Victoria, B.C.

New fax number, mailing address, and phone numbers are as follows:

Fax Number: (250) 952-4188

Reception Number: (250) 952-4300

Mailing Address: PO Box 9375, Stn Prov Govt, Victoria BC, V8W 9M5

Branch Email: archweb@tbc.gov.bc.ca

Remote Access to Archaeological Data

RAAD is a web based application that enables authorized users to view, select, and download information about archaeological sites in British Columbia. Users can browse the data for specific site information using the online mapping and query utilities and download the information they want in a variety of data formats. The primary purpose of RAAD is to serve clients who require archaeological information on a frequent basis for land use planning or impact assessment projects. Examples of such clients include: archaeological and environmental consultants, federal and provincial land use planning agencies, regional districts, municipalities and first nations. For more information visit: <http://srmwww.gov.bc.ca/arch/RAADintro.html>.

Job opportunity at SFU

The Department of Archaeology at Simon Fraser University is seeking applications for a Tier 1 Canada Research Chair in the field of Forensic Science. With its primary focus on research, this position will serve as the catalyst for creation of a cross disciplinary forensic research and training centre at Simon

Fraser University with provincial, national and international application. For details and requirements visit: <http://www.sfu.ca/archaeology/dept/jobs/crcfs.htm>.

West Moberly Heritage Trails Rediscovered

Moberly Lake, B.C.

The West Moberly First Nation will be mapping the locations of three heritage trails and through oral history, documenting their traditional use and heritage significance to the community. Moberly Lake Heritage Trails Research is a project being supported by the Royal BC Museum's Living Landscapes: Peace River-Northern Rockies initiative. The long-term goal of the West Moberly First Nation is to repair the trails and create interpretive signage that would inform visitors about the history and heritage of their people. The West Moberly believe that this project will begin to help bridge the gap between youth and elders, as well as surrounding communities, by encouraging Elders to share their stories about the trails and what they meant to the survival of the First Nations People and non-native pioneers of the north. Research and educational material obtained through this project will also become available on the Living Landscapes website as well as the West Moberly website. The RBCM's Living Landscapes program is entering its ninth year, with earlier work having occurred in the Thompson Okanagan, Columbia River Basin, and Upper Fraser Basin regions.

Living Landscapes is a research and public education project focusing on encouraging the exploration and appreciation of the diverse human and

natural history of British Columbia on a regional basis. For more information on the Royal BC Museum's Living Landscapes initiative please visit <http://livinglandscapes.bc.ca>

Lost sacred language of the Maya is rediscovered

Linguists have discovered a still-surviving version of the sacred religious language of the ancient Maya - the great pyramid-building civilisation that once dominated Central America.

For years some Maya hieroglyphic texts have defied interpretation - but now archaeologists and linguists have identified a little-known native Indian language as the descendant of the elite tongue spoken by rulers and religious leaders of the ancient Maya.

The language, Ch'orti - spoken today by just a few thousand Guatemalan Indians - will become a living "Rosetta Stone", a key to unraveling those aspects of Maya hieroglyphic writings which have so far not been properly understood. Over the next few years dozens of linguists and anthropologists are expected to start "mining" Ch'orti language and culture for words and expressions relating to everything from blood-letting to fasting.

Workers unearth ancient chariot.

An Iron Age chariot from about 500 BC has been discovered by engineers working on the new A1 motorway in West Yorkshire. The site near Ferrybridge is said to hold articles of great significance. In what seems to be a burial chamber, there are the remains of a man aged about 40 and the bones of 250 cattle, as well as the chariot. It is thought the cattle could have formed part of a huge funeral feast. Archaeologists say the chariot appears to have been placed in the pit intact.

Shipwreck Gold Found

National Geographic is documenting the S.S. Republic expedition for broadcast on Dateline NBC and National Geographic Ultimate Explorer on MSNBC in January 2004 and for a National Geographic Special on PBS later in 2004.

Deep-water shipwreck explorers have raised Reconstruction-era gold and silver coins and other precious artifacts from what could be one of the richest shipwreck treasures ever found. The treasure was found in the wreck of the S.S. Republic, which sank during a hurricane off the coast of Georgia in 1865. Records indicate that the ship was carrying coins worth U.S. \$400,000-a fortune at today's values. Many of the coins observed on the S.S. Republic shipwreck site are in pristine condition. Some have a light film that rinses away easily on the surface, revealing gleaming gold. The paddlewheel steamship went to the bottom of the Atlantic in October 1865. The ship was en route to New Orleans with a cargo of coins and other supplies destined to aid post Civil War Reconstruction.

Discovery of buried megaliths completes Avebury circle

Archaeologists have discovered an arc of buried megaliths that once formed part of the great stone circle at Avebury in Wiltshire (England). Visitors to Avebury will see most of the standing megaliths in the western half of the stone circle. The famous map of the site drawn in the 1720s by William Stukeley, the first secretary of the Society of Antiquaries of London, showed that many of the stones in the south-east and north-east quadrants of the circle were missing. Now, the first geophysics survey of these areas of Avebury, carried out by the National Trust, has revealed that at least 15 of the megaliths lie buried in the circle itself. The massive stones show up very clearly as computer images and the National Trust has been able to identify their sizes, where they lie and how they fit in the circle.

Neanderthal "face" found in Loire

A flint object with a striking likeness to a human face may be one of the best examples of art by Neanderthal man ever found, the journal *Antiquity* reports. The "mask", which is dated to be about 35,000 years old, was recovered on the banks of the Loire at La Roche-Cotard. It is about

10 cm tall and wide and has a bone splinter rammed through a hole, making the rock look as if it has eyes. Commentators say the object shows the Neanderthals were more sophisticated than their caveman image suggests.

Firefighters unearth ancient Indian camp

Firefighters who dug trenches in the San Bernardino Mountains during the wildfires two months ago turned up what experts believe is an ancient Serrano Indian encampment. The U.S. Forest Service dug the fire line Oct. 30 during a successful battle to save Big Bear City from flames. But around the line west of Baldwin Lake, Forest Service officials unearthed nonnative stone materials such as jasper and obsidian that were used by American Indians to make cutting tools or arrowheads. Archaeologist Daniel McCarthy and his team uncovered grinding stones at least 250 years old, ceramic pieces about 300 years old, arrow points about 500 years old, and fire pits that could date back 1,000 years. They are continuing to excavate.