

NEWSLETTER

of the

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE:

- * Looting in Surrey
- * Report on Lillooet dig
- * Notice of important new book
- * Some dates for your diary

N. Russell
Editor

EXCAVATIONS AT LILLOOET, 1970: PRELIMINARY REPORT

By A.H. Stryd, Department of Archaeology, University
of Calgary.

In the summer of 1970 the author directed archaeological excavations along a ten-mile section of the Fraser River near Lillooet, B.C. The field work was supported by a National Museum of Man research contract. This work represents the second stage of a continuing project designed to investigate the semi-subterranean pithouse dwelling of the area.

A crew of six excavated for ten weeks at five sites. The crew consisted of site assistant Sheila Coulson (Simon Fraser University) and Grant Dickinson, Diana French (Simon Fraser University), Jenna Gaston (Western Washington State College), Jeff Levitt (University of Toronto) and Charlene Stryd.

Specialists in various disciplines are participating in this project. Dr. L.V. Hills of the University of Calgary is the consulting geologist while Dr. John Westgate of the University of Alberta is currently analyzing the volcanic ash samples. Mr. Robert Drake of Bio-Holocene Research Services will study all shell samples and Dr. L.B. Davis of the University of Montana is presently processing obsidian hydration dating specimens. Dr. David Huntley of Simon Fraser University joined the field crew for two weeks for a magnetometer and resistivity survey of several pithouse sites.

Five pithouse sites of both historic and prehistoric age were investigated. A circular pithouse depression (EeRk 1) was tested at Gibbs Creek, revealing a shallow cultural deposit on top of an unstepped living floor. An unlined hearth without deflector slab was centrally located on this floor but no post holes or moulds were found. Eighty-nine artifacts and 662 pieces of lithic debitage were collected but the assemblage lacked diagnostic artifacts. Retouched and utilized flakes dominate the assemblage; microblades, formed scrapers and projectile points (except one) are absent.

The Mitchell Site (FeR1 22), a double pithouse site, was extensively excavated. One pithouse contained an historic component with 55 artifacts of glass, metal and basalt. The second pithouse contained an as yet undetermined number of prehistoric components as well as one historic component. Six major living floors have been isolated but the cultural stratigraphy remains complex, partially due to the continuous aboriginal re-excavation of the original depression. A layer of white volcanic ash, presumably Bridge River ash dated from 100 to 600 B.C., is present near the bottom of the cultural deposits. Nearly 900 lithic and bone artifacts were recovered from the second pithouse.

Projectile points and formed scrapers are frequent but microblades and microblade cores are absent. Estimated maximum age for the site is 1,000 B.C.

The Fountain Site (EeRl 19) is a multi-component prehistoric village covering several acres. Unfortunately the surface has been extensively disturbed by cultivation. Excavations consisted of facing a 60-meter long road cut which exposed numerous cache-pits and several possible pithouses. Nearly 2,000 artifacts of all types were collected, including over 100 small triangular side-notched projectile points and 50 basalt microblades. Excellent organic preservation resulted in the collection of artifacts of bark, wood and pitch. A Kamloops Phase component dated A.D. 1250-1800 and at least one earlier microblade component can be defined. The latter may have a maximum date of as much as 3,000 B.C. Two crushed burials were associated with the Kamloops Phase occupation.

The Malm Site (EeRl 26) is a single pithouse site of historic age. Only 45 artifacts were recovered including square nails and scraps of iron. Of special note is a possible headband of woven copper strips.

Like EeRl 26, the Wilkinson Site (EeRl 27) consists of a single circular pithouse of historic age. A shallow cultural deposit containing 75 artifacts was exposed on top of an unstepped living floor. This floor was covered with extensive charcoal deposits which are interpreted as the remains of the burnt and collapsed pithouse roof.

Considerable information was obtained pertaining to the two major research objectives of the project: (1) to investigate the history of the semi-subterranean pithouse dwelling with emphasis on structural data; and (2) to construct a regional sequence of archaeological phases which could be compared to the sequence defined by David Sanger for the nearby Lochmore-Nesikeo Locality.

All sites but EeRl 19 yielded valuable information about pithouse construction. The horizontal extent of past living floor is an indication of prehistoric pithouse size and, possibly, of the size of the family unit that inhabited the structure. Numerous post moulds, post holes and hearths were located, giving some insight into the size and number of uprights within the pithouse. Stepped floors and stone-lined walls as reported by David Sanger are absent.

Preliminary analysis of the artifactual material has now only started so that little can presently be said about the artifacts and debitage. Six charcoal samples have been submitted for radiocarbon dating. These, along with eleven expected obsidian hydration dates as well as a positive identification of the volcanic ash, will be the basis for a chronology of the excavated components. Stratigraphy and artifact typology will, of course, also play a vital role.

Continued research into the history of the pithouse dwelling is planned. Extensive excavations are scheduled for three pithouse sites near Lillooet next summer.

VICTORIA VISIT ----ON...OFF...ON!

To replace the proposed tour of old Victoria (cancelled for lack of response) the Society is co-sponsoring a day trip to the provincial capital with the Vancouver Museums Association.

The trip will consist of a 7:30 start and return, a guided tour of the provincial museum, and visits to the Craigflower Manor and School.

The total cost for the simplified itinerary will be not more than \$6.50 per head (not including meals). The Society has been allocated only 15 seats on the bus for this project, so it will be strictly on a first come/first served basis, with bookings and payments in advance to:

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DATE: Saturday November 7

START: 7:30 a.m. promot, Centennial Museum Parking Lot.

DATEBOOKArchaeological Society Tours

Wednesday, October 14, 8:00 p.m.: Arch. Society meeting featuring History of the Alphabet.

Saturday, October 31, 2:00 p.m.: Tour of Fort Langley.

Saturday, November 7, 7:30 a.m. from Centennial Museum - Day trip to Victoria.

Wednesday, November 11, 8:00 p.m. Arch. Society Meeting.

Sunday, November 29, 1:30 p.m. Visit to Ladner and Surrey Museums (see note).

DATEBOOK (cont.)Some Museums Assn. Movies, in the Museum (8:00 p.m., 50¢)

- Fri./Sat., Oct. 23 & 24: "Archaeologist & How He Works"
 "Early Stone Tools"
 "Obsidian Point-making"
- Fri./Sat. Nov. 27 & 28: "Highland Indians of Peru"
 "The Aztecs"
 "Excavation at Le Venta, Mexico,
 1955"

U.B.C. Extension Courses

- Sunday, Oct. 4--Dec. 6: "Famous Cities of the Past"
 Kassis/Museum/ 8:00 p.m.

Museum

- Oct. 25: Open House
- Sept. -Summer '71: St. Mungo Cannery dig: materials on display.

SPECIAL ISSUE OF "B.C. STUDIES"

The quarterly magazine B.C. Studies this month issues a special edition to review the state of archaeology in the province.

The volume, edited by Roy Carlson, is substantially based on a U.B.C. Extension series last year in which many of the foremost B.C. archaeologists reported on their specialties.

Included are contributions by Charles Borden, Roy Carlson, James Baker, Gay Calvert, Knut Fladmark and Philip Hobler.

The book, which will be reviewed in this column in the next edition, is a special two-in-one issue and as such will cost \$4.00, compared to the regular annual subscription of \$5.00.

As the Archaeological Society warmly supports the project, it has been agreed that the book will be available for purchase at the next general meeting, in October.

It is already available from Duthie Books, university bookstores at UBC, UVic and SFU, Adelphi Books in Victoria and the Vancouver Centennial Museum bookstore.

* * * * *

THE BARBED POINT

(A highly irregular editorial column wholly unauthorized by management!)

The rivalry of Armchair Archaeologists versus Dirt Archaeologists is an old one, and not very important. There is, after all, a need for both -- the diggers to extend our sources of knowledge, and the academics to provide an overview.

But the rivalry is currently important to this Society because it reflects the different interests of its membership.

And if this summer's experience is indicative, then the Society has a preponderance of the Armchair sitters. For instance, our dig at Tsawwassen drew, during a warm and sunny September, an average of two diggers per day. Current membership: 200. There were some bleak occasions when only the Site Supervisor showed up all day, to dig the six pits blithely opened in June.

So perhaps this is the point when we should -- to mix metaphors -- retrench, and ask ourselves the Society's purpose and goals.

For example, in what way do we vary from the Vancouver chapter of the Archaeological Society of America, or the Museum's Association or the Historical Society? For vary we do, and as we grow it will become increasingly illogical for us to compete for the same speakers or plan the same tours - or write the same newsletters.

By its name, surely, the Archaeological Society of British Columbia specialises in the pre-history of this province, a history largely unrecorded and still largely undiscovered.

Hence our goal should be both to increase our own knowledge by drawing on the resources of the professionals, and also to help extend that knowledge in our own humble way.

What can we do? We can build a team of reliable diggers standing by with a highly mobile set of equipment, ready to help the professionals at anytime, anywhere, in rescue work (as we did in our way at the Katz Reserve site this fall.) Later, we can help the experts with washing, labelling and identifying their own material. We can also extend our own knowledge - Armchair and Dirt style - with guest speakers at meetings and with more formal evening courses.

Yet the Katz site and the plan to run a highway through it have been known for at least 20 years: Why did we not promote action earlier? And the recent vandalism in Surrey - we should have foreseen and prevented it.

So perhaps, before we launch into another dig of our own making next summer, we should take stock.

At present we have a bundle of loose ends from last year's dig (DgRsl1) which is still largely incomplete, lacking the doorbell follow-up, photography, identification of material, comparative analysis, and any sort of definitive final report. And now we have this year's dig, which we have just ended though ludicrously unfinished in the digging itself, let alone the follow-up.

By your vote, then (by not digging this summer) most people have implied we would indeed do better to emphasise the theoretical rather than the practical. Or was it just a communication problem?

Was it because you could not find the site? Because you expected to be invited down? Because you did not know it had started? Because you felt too inexperienced to go? Because you did not have a single Saturday or Sunday free? Because you felt you did not need the exercise?

Maybe over coffee after the next meeting you might pass on to the president your comments, as the executive really wants to know what you want -- especially if you were one of the 50-odd souls who actually signed the "dig list" last spring, then never turned up.

CRESCENT MIDDEN SUFFERS LOTTING

It was an exciting day for the youngsters of Crescent Beach . . . but for those interested in the history of British Columbia it was a day of disaster.

The construction crews installing the huge collector sewer mains were working last week along Bayview Street in Crescent Beach. This area is all part of the Crescent midden, and the sewer trench uncovered the Indian burial ground.

Saturday morning the excavation trench swarmed with youngsters and some adults, doing unauthorized excavation. The net result was the looting of what could have been an important archeological site.

Skulls and skeletons crumbled when handled; skeletons were scrambled; bones, arrowheads, bone awls and other artifacts were taken from the site by individuals.

Ignored entirely was the Provincial legislation which makes it illegal to disturb such prehistoric sites, or to take away the relics without a permit issued by the Provincial Government.

Surrey Museum and Historical Society tried to protect the site from digging, but without guards with authority to deal with the situation, this was not possible.

Some archeological information was secured by member Grant Keddy of North Surrey. Mr. Keddy is an archeological student at Simon Fraser University, and has participated in "digs" at Indian village sites.

He sketched the locations where the skulls and skeletons were found, from information secured at the site. From the complete stratification which was visible, Keddy states that the Indian burials were at the five foot level. They were probably buried two feet below what was then the surface of the ground.

Some of the Indians had been buried in the "flex" or foetal position, with the knees drawn up.

The archeology student stated that the original beach level is clearly visible in the stratification. He estimated that the burials would be at least 500 years old, and the midden itself may go back 2,000 years.

CRESCENT COLLECTION

A Crescent collection - properly assembled, documented and displayed - is suggested by Mr. Keddy. Besides these bones and artifacts there is a considerable amount of material from Crescent Beach already in Surrey Museum. And over the years a large number of residents in the area have found arrowheads and other works of historic importance.

Parents are asked to have their youngsters write down, now while details are fresh, all information on any bones or

artifacts they may have acquired last week-end. Where it was found, how deep under the ground, in what position, etc.

Those who have relics which may now have lost their curiosity value, are asked to donate them to the Surrey Museum - as part of what can become the Crescent collection of Indian history.

The Surrey Leader,
Thursday, October 1, 1970.

ARCHEOLOGISTS UNFARTH AN 'AMERICAN POMPEII'

by Frank Herbert, P-I Staff

CAPE ALAVA, Clallam County - An American Pompeii, buried in a clay slide some 500 to 1,000 years ago, has disgorged such a wealth of unique Indian artifacts that the site at Cape Alava on Washington's coast is attracting national attention.

The site is so rich in relics of Indian life it astonishes investigators. Where most archeological sites give up only a few artifacts for several square yards of excavation, Alava produces hundreds per square yard.

Not only has the site produced exciting artifacts, it has produced many in duplicate.

As one of the workers put it: "We have at least two of many things other archeologists have never seen."

The fine blue clay, cut away by a remarkably gentle hydraulic washing system, has disgorged several seal and salmon clubs, many cedar bark hats, numerous carved and inlaid boxes, baskets, ropes, matting, tools, harpoons, paddles, bowls, looms, spoons, bows and arrows, spears and countless NTEKs.

That stands for "Nice Thing. Don't Know."

The original use of some of the artifacts is lost behind the cultural chasm which white civilization smashed through the Indian way of life.

Even more artifacts which could build a bridge to their cultural heritage for coast Indians remain beneath the slide and may be lost for all time because the archeologists are running out of money.

Washington State University experts, working under a \$70,000 grant from the Bureau of Indian Affairs, have been conducting the dig as an emergency salvage operation of the one house which was uncovered by storms last winter.

They have asked for a \$325,000 Federal grant to complete the project over the next three years. In the present austerity, their hopes appear dim and the site probably will go with the next winter storms.

The dig is being directed by Prof. Richard D. Daugherty, chairman of WSU's anthropology department, with Gerald H. Grosso as project manager. They have had from 12 to 18 student, graduate student and volunteer workers with them all summer.

They began digging last April and are scheduled to stop September 15 unless additional money is provided.

More than 1,000 artifacts already have been removed and catalogued, most of them unique for their usually perishable nature.

The archeologists are preserving their finds by sealing them in carbowax according to a process developed in Sweden to save the salvaged medieval warship Vasa.

Daugherty hopes to recover enough of the house now being excavated that it can be rebuilt with its contents as a museum display - possibly at Neah Bay, possibly in the Seattle Science Center.

There often is something emotionally touching in what the archeologists recover here - a length of rope with a knot in it, cedar chips still fresh and yellow, a seal-oil bowl still smelling of seal oil.

The elaborate carving and decoration, sometimes with seal-tooth inlays, demonstrate the high level of culture attained by the original inhabitants. This once was probably the largest native village in what is now the continental United States.

The inhabitants were sea mammal hunters, mostly after seal, but with at least a 6,000-year tradition of whaling. In the one house now being excavated there are bones from six separate whales.

Tribal accounts related by the Makahs at Neah Bay indicate their ancestors at the big village brought in several whale each year, often three or four.

The house being excavated reveals abundant evidence of this with its harpoons and mussel-shell points and harpoon lines.

What makes the site so rich is the fact that the clay slide which buried it sealed off oxygen and thus preserved rope, reed and wood artifacts which otherwise would have disintegrated.

How did the slide occur? The Indian occupants probably were not as wise ecologically as myth would make them. They denuded the hillside for firewood, allowing the clay to liquify in winter rains.

This was one of the five original Makah villages, and it was abandoned in the 1920s when the Bureau of Indian Affairs ordered the inhabitants to bring their children to school at Neah Bay.

DUES TIME? AGAIN

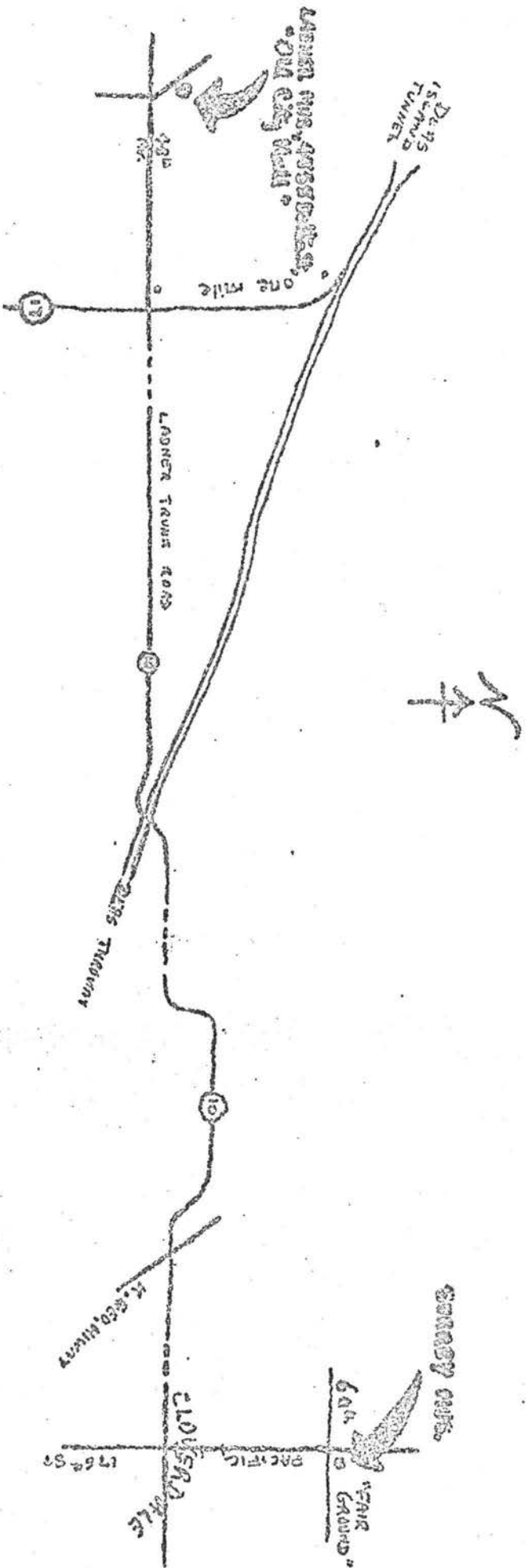
If you have not got round to pay this year's subscription, now due, you might consider sending it to the treasurer, rather than lining up to pay at the next meeting.

He is George Archer of 3162 Astor Drive, Burnaby 3.

And for the record, other members of the new executive for the new society year, just started, are:

President:	Bill Lane
Vice President:	Sheila Neville
Corresponding Secretary:	Nevis Belshaw
Recording Secretary:	Vera Ransom
Past President:	Ron Sutherland
Publications Chairman:	Gladys Groves
Publicity Chairman:	Hilary Stewart
Projects Chairman:	Nick Russell
Program Chairman:	Merie Duncan
Social Chairman:	Grace Griffiths.

PROJECT, NOV. 29, 1970



MEET AT LADNER MUSEUM AT 11:30 AM, SUNDAY
LEAVE INDEPENDENTLY AT ABOUT 2:30 PM.
REACH SANDY MUSEUM AT 3 PM.
MUSEUM CLOSES AT 4 PM.
(No admission charge at either)