

NEWSLETTER

of the

ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF B. C.

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HIGHLIGHTS:

- * Tsawwassen dig: a preliminary report
- * UBC extension courses on archaeology

N. Russell
Editor

THE SUMMER DIG AT TSAWWASSEN BLUFF

Despite its traditional discipline, Archaeology retains all of the attractions of a treasure hunt, a detective story and a science-fiction novel. The first major independent dig of the Archaeological Society of British Columbia this summer at Tsawwassen was no exception.

House building had been planned on the last remaining vacant lot at the top of English Bluff. Upon receiving word of the threatened site from Society member Jack Meek, our President, Ron Sutherland, carried out a field reconnaissance in the blustery days of late spring. A test pit revealed a complex occupation zone about four feet in depth. After checking with Dr. Charles Borden and Miss Gay Calvert as to the relative importance of this site (no digging had been done before at the top of the bluff) the necessary permits for the dig were quickly arranged. Following a ground survey, through the kindness of Moira Irvine of U.B.C., to establish a datum plane, five 5' x 5' pits were staked out and work began.

While the immense job of interpretation and full report lies ahead a few highlights may now be of interest to the general membership. Treasure there was. Not in the jade idol sense, but in the sense of more than 200 artifacts of the hard working people who lived along the bluff over the centuries.

In the absence of a proper appraisal of their archaeological worth I will mention only a few that were intrinsically interesting. First was an outsized stone net weight, as large as a soup bowl, and carefully grooved around its circumference to hold a tether rope. Several polished jade (nephrite) adz blades including one splendid example, along with several antler wedges, evidenced a well established woodworking industry. For functional beauty nothing could excel the quartz-like shear point. So sheer was it that light shone through it when held up to the sun. Various tools of bone and antler made up a large proportion of the finds. Among them was one of the largest antler woodworking tools yet found in the Fraser Delta region. Not unexpectedly we also discovered a variety of polished bone harpoon points, including a fine example of a type which may possibly predate those found in the Marpole phase. There was also a stone toggling harpoon head and a number of more conventional stone points as well as many ground-slate knife fragments. Every item was properly documented as to its exact place of finding and each has been separately packaged and labeled for a thorough study of the site data this winter.

An element of mystery involves both major and minor aspects of the dig. The first and most obvious question is why this large village was situated at the top of English Bluff, nearly 170 feet above sea level. Undoubtedly peopled by men who harvested the sea, every one of the thousands upon thousands of shell fish and salmon consumed on the site had to be carried up what must have been the highest point of land for miles around. Even the net anchor we found represented a 5 lb. weight carried up to the equivalent height of the top of a 17-storey building. And we cannot establish where these people obtained their fresh water in the summer time; no creeks are now in evidence in July or August.

At the other extreme in scale, but equally mystifying, is the question of the vertebrae beads. We found numerous small bone cones with a neat little hole in the centre of each. At first glance they seemed to be beads carefully made from salmon vertebrae. But later we uncovered some hour-glass shaped vertebrae composed of pairs of cones, point to point so to speak. The issue hotly debated at the scene, is whether the single cones are merely a phase in the natural disintegration of the hour-glass vertebrae or are they indeed worked beads.

Under the heading of lesser mysteries come the "whatsits". First is a fragment of a handsomely made stone container shaped much like a portion of a demitasse cup. Our current guess is that it is part of a smoker's pipe. We also found what can best be described as a bone screw-driver. It is probably a small chisel. An eminent local archaeologist could not recall having seen one before. Beaver teeth, giant barnacles, and tiny dentalium shells were also part of the cultural resources of the people of the bluff.

What may well be the most exciting discovery was a surface find turned in by a sympathetic neighbour. It appears to be a lip labret of a shape previously unknown in this area. The projecting end of the ornament is some 2-3/4" in length and until its existence was reported to Dr. Borden by the Society it had not been believed that labrets of this size were in use south of Alaska.

Your Society will have to rely on many specialist skills in preparing its official report. Of course we hope to establish the place of this village in the North West Coast sequence by use of Radio Carbon Dating. Samples may have to be sent to Japan for analysis. Another type of expertise needed is the precise identification of materials used in the manufacture of the artifacts. A variety of stone, bones, shells and antlers will have to be accurately classified. Roberts Bank at the foot of English

Bluff will be the subject of some research to see to what extent it altered in the last 1000 years. This may give us some clue as to why the settlement was located at the top of the cliff rather than at the water's edge.

If any member is professionally qualified to assist us in some of these matters, or if he knows of skilled persons who might like to volunteer such assistance, would he kindly advise our President at his home telephone (988-0479) in the evenings.

Your excavation committee proposes to display the more interesting finds in the Centennial Museum following publication of the report on the dig. It is hoped to display this material at a time and date to be announced.

In conclusion, we particularly wish to thank Mr. K. D. Gordon, owner of the lot, for his kindness in permitting us to do this dig while his house is being built. We also want to thank Fiscus Construction Co. Ltd. for their co-operation in asking their people to take extra pains to avoid the site. We express our thanks to Mr. and Mrs. A. M. Whisker whose remarkable help and encouragement continued throughout the dig. The generosity of Mr. W. E. Barnes as well as Mr. and Mrs. R. J. Meek, in turning over to us significant surface finds, is also gratefully acknowledged. As ever, we are indebted to Dr. Borden, Miss Gay Calvert and other professional archaeologists in Greater Vancouver, for material help and guidance of every sort.

W. T. Lane

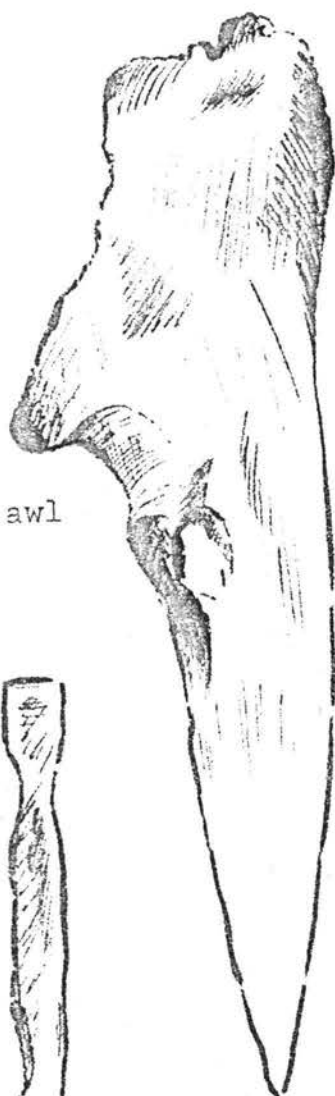
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A. S. OF B. C. DIARY

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|---------|--|
| Oct. 8 | Bill Lane, Vice-President of the Society, on Archaeology in Yucatan and Central America. Centennial Museum, 8 p.m. |
| Nov. 12 | Dr. James Russell, UBC, on Pompeii. Centennial Museum, 8 p.m. |

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TSAWWASSEN BLUFF ARTIFACTS



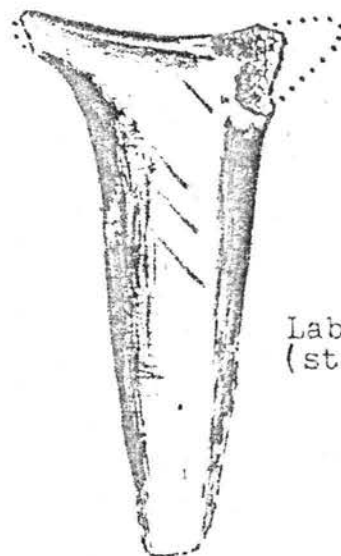
Bone awl



Bone chisel



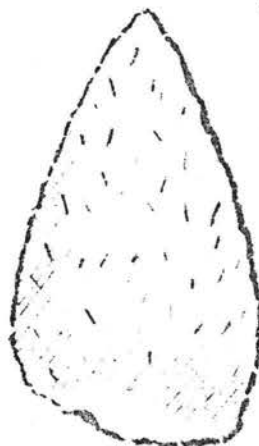
Pipe (?)
fragment
(stone)



Labret
(stone)



Antler wedge



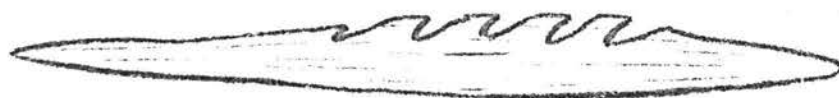
Quartz
point



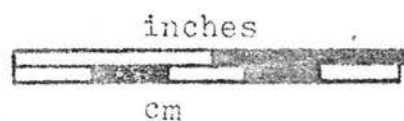
Stone
point



Fixed point



Fixed barbed point



TSAWWASSEN DIG : late news

Work has progressed well on the rescue dig - site number DgRs11 - and the site owner has granted permission to the Society to continue digging until the end of October.

Accordingly the Dig Committee has decided to step up work at the site. All volunteers are welcome on weekends, starting 9:30 a.m. No need to wait for a call to turn out.

The Dig Committee, recently constituted, comprises Eileen Sutherland, Bill Lane, Hilary Stewart, David Archer and Nick Russell.

Subsequent work will include processing the rich collection of finds, plus contacting neighbours in the Tsawwassen area so the Society can make an inventory of related finds in private hands.

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RCMP and Surveyors Will Help

The Society has won the co-operation of the provincial government in two important new areas.

Following an exchange of letters between Society president Ron Sutherland and the Deputy Provincial Secretary, Laurie Wallace, the government has agreed to:

1. Circularize all RCMP detachments requesting their help in protecting known historic sites and catching vandals,
2. Circularize all government surveyors, ordering full reports on any possible historic sites encountered during their work,
3. Circularize all B.C. surveyors, requesting they report any possible sites they too encounter.

Mr. Wallace has also offered to pass on the results of such reports to the Society.

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NIGHT SCHOOL COURSES

The UBC Extension Department is offering a series of eight lectures on "Archaeological Discoveries in B. C." on Tuesday evenings at 8 p.m. at the Vancouver Public Library auditorium, Burrard and Robson Streets. (N.B. This series was wrongly advertised in the press and in the Extension Dept. brochure as being held on Thursdays. It will be held on Tuesday evenings.) By special arrangement with the Extension Dept., members of our Society will be allowed to enroll in this course at a special reduced rate of \$12.00, providing they show their Archaeological Society of B. C. membership cards. These cards will be issued by our Treasurer, Mr. J. K. Campbell, 6891 Laburnum Street, Vancouver 14, on receipt of payment of annual dues: \$8.00 family, \$5.00 single, \$2.00 student. The lectures will be as follows:

Oct.	7	Dr. Roy L. Carlson	Introduction to B. C. Archaeology
Oct.	14	Mr. Knut Fladmark	Early Man in the Queen Charlotte Islands
Oct.	21	Dr. Charles E. Borden	Early Cultures in the Fraser Canyon
Oct.	28	Miss Gay Calvert	New Discoveries in the Fraser Delta
Nov.	4	Mr. P. M. Hobler	Underwater Archaeology at Kwatna Inlet
Nov.	18	Mr. James Baker	Archaeology from Lytton to Lillooet
Nov.	25	Dr. Roy L. Carlson	The Gulf Islands
Dec.	2	A panel discussion:	The Future of Archaeology in B.C.

UBC is also offering at Christmas time an archaeological tour entitled "Mayan Trail" which will visit major sites in Yucatan and Guatemala as well as other parts of Mexico and Central America. Dr. Alfred Siemens, of the UBC Geography Dept., who recently discovered a major city in Mexico will be in charge of the tour. Orientation lectures, which are open to non-tour members, will be held in the Kitsilano Library on Sept. 30, Oct. 14, Oct. 28, Nov. 25 and Dec. 9. For further details please contact the UBC Extension Dept. at 228-2181.

Ten lectures, commencing Monday, Oct. 6 at 8 p.m., will be given by Dr. Hanna E. Kassis, Dept. of Religious Studies, UBC, on Archaeology of the Near East. This course, which will concentrate on the art and architecture of Egypt and Mesopotamia, will be held in Room 100, Buchanan Bldg., UBC. Enrollment is limited. By special arrangement with the Extension Dept., members of the A. S. of B. C. will be admitted to this class at a reduced rate of \$15.00

Excerpts from the September 1st Newsletter of the
Vancouver Museums Association

1st Anniversary Museum and Planetarium Benefit Ball - Friday, November 7, 9 p.m. - 2 a.m., \$15.00 per person. Details of the Ball, official reservation forms, and the phone number to call for further information, will appear in the October 1st newsletter. Priority will be given to Museums Association members who forward reservations with payment to the office from October 1st to 8th. Please do not phone the Museums Association office. And do not send payment for reservations before October 1. Any volunteers who would like to help with the Ball arrangements, please contact the Chairman of the Ball Committee, Mrs. Gordon Lyall, at 224-1637 after Sept. 1st.

The Association still has several openings for volunteers in the many facets of its activities - hospitality, office, evening programs, docents and museum shop. As always, special interests or skills are invaluable to the Association and most welcome. Name, address, telephone number and an indication of your particular area of interest should be sent to Mrs. J. A. Coles, 6788 Selkirk, Vancouver 13, or contact the office.

Miss Shirley Cuthbertson, Junior Museum Supervisor, reported that the first summer courses in Natural History, Geology and Archaeology ended in early August. The young people who attended spent eight thoroughly enjoyable sessions in the field, for most an entirely new experience. The classes were experimental, and enrolment was limited to about fifteen members between the ages of 12 and 15, who were recommended through Vancouver schools. The Archaeology students excavated four pits under the direction of Mr. R. Percy. The material excavated will become the property of the Museum, and it is expected that some or all of the students will assist during the fall and winter in turning their field records into a preliminary report on the site. If further work is done on the area before it is destroyed for residential purposes, the students' work will help prepare for professional excavation.

Friday evening Films, Centennial Museum Auditorium, 8 p.m., 25¢ admission

Sept. 26	Moon trap (white Beluga whales in the St. Lawrence)
Oct. 3	Poisons, Pests and People
	The River Must Live
	Waterfowl: Resource in Danger
Oct. 10	Birth of the Earth - 1924 (famous film by Dr. R.L. Ditmars of the New York Zoological Society)
Oct. 17	Silent World (a Cousteau underwater film)
Oct. 24	World Without Sun (Jacques-Yves Cousteau's undersea film of oceanauts)
Oct. 31	Space Films (titles to be announced)
Nov. 7	Pomo Shaman (authentic healing ceremony of southwestern Pomo Indians)
	Dream Dances of Kashia Pomo

Friday evening films - cont'd

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| Nov. | 14 | Calumet, Pipe of Peace
Totem Pole
Dance of Kwakiutl |
| Nov. | 21 | Voyage to the Enchanted Isles (theories of evolution on the
Galapagos Islands, where Charles Darwin once
visited) |
| Nov. | 28 | Trance and Dance in Bali (commentary and film by Margaret
Mead)
New Guinea 1904 - 1906 |
| Dec. | 5 | Okan, Sun Dance of the Blackfoot (filmed by the Glenbow
Foundation of Calgary) |
| Dec. | 12 | Elsa the Lioness (of "Born Free" fame)
African Birdlife
African Fauna |
| Dec. | 19 | Merry World of Leopold Z (Christmas Eve in Montreal)
Christmas Cracker (short animated film) |
| Dec. | 26 | Space Films (titles to be announced) |

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HELP WANTED!

We are constantly striving to improve the nature and scope of this Society in order to bring greater interest, enjoyment and participation to all our members. It would help us greatly in doing this if you would fill in all, or part, of the following questionnaire, tear off, and drop it into the box provided in the members' lounge, during coffee time after the October meeting. For those unable to attend the meeting, the box will again be there after the November meeting. Don't forget!

.....(tear here).....

1. What do you enjoy most about the Archaeological Society of B.C.?
2. What type of archaeology interests you most?
3. What activity or facility would you like to see added to our programme this year?
4. Are there any other suggestions or comments you would like to make?

(If you need more space, please write on the back)

COAST SAFARI

Oct. 14, 15 and 16, 8:30 p.m., Queen Elizabeth Theatre.
This excellent two-hour colour film on the wildlife of British Columbia returns by popular demand. It features the adventures of wildlife biologists, David and Lyn Hancock, on their coastal expeditions, and takes a special look at the magnificent totem poles of the old abandoned Haida Indian villages on the Queen Charlotte Islands, as well as the argillite carvers still at work today.

Adults: \$2.00, Students: \$1.00

Tickets at the Vancouver Ticket Centre or at the door.

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EXECUTIVE OF SOCIETY - 1969/70

President	Ron Sutherland
Past President	Alex Ennenberg
Vice-President	Bill Lane
Treasurer	Ken Campbell
Corresponding Secretary	Miss Pearl Hawley
Recording Secretary	Art Davies
Programme Committee	Mrs. Sheila Neville
Publicity & Membership	Miss Hilary Stewart
Projects	Nick Russell
Publications	Gladys Groves

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NEW MEMBERS

The Society welcomes the following new members who have joined since our last Newsletter was published:

Mrs. Margot Allingham	Mrs. Lucille Smith
Mr. & Mrs. Brian Byrnes	Mr. Michael Gray
Mr. Ronald E. Eden	Mr. Ian MacGregor
Mr. David Langdon	Miss Sheila Coulson
Miss Elizabeth Mobbs	Mr. & Mrs. J. Roff and family
Mr. & Mrs. W. N. Tivy	Miss Daphne Hutchins
Miss Cathy Batten	Mrs. Nan Stuart
Miss Linda Todd	Miss Mary L. Freeze
Mr. Richard Percy	Mr. Grant Keddie

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