



Mesolithic Miscellany

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Editorial

Season's Greetings and welcome back to Mesolithic Miscellany! At the last Mesolithic symposium in Belfast, September 2005, it was agreed in the plenary session that Mesolithic Miscellany should be started up again, and York volunteered to facilitate this. In this internet age, there is no longer any need for subscriptions and to post out MM, and instead we are making it available to download from the MM webpage:

<http://www.york.ac.uk/depts/arch/Mesolithic/index.htm>

We have also scanned in all past copies of Mesolithic Miscellany (with thanks to Caroline Wickham-Jones for providing the copies, Kieron Niven and the Archaeology Data Service (ADS) for the work and storing the archive and the Department of Archaeology, University of York for funding the project). These are all available to download for free from the ADS site from a link on the MM website.

In addition, the Mesolithic Miscellany webpage also contains information on Mesolithic conferences and projects around the world. We have only just begun to collate this information and if you have any further links please let us know.

In this volume we have four articles on current fieldwork projects in various parts of Europe: Trou Al'Wesse, a cave site in Belgium; some Mesolithic discoveries near to Hopferau, Germany; further fieldwork at Vlasac in the Danube Gorges; further work at Zvejnieki, Latvia (the paper on Hopferau is also available in German on the MM website). In September a postgraduate conference was held at the University of York for Mesolithic students in Britain and Ireland and a brief report has been provided of the proceedings. We have also included information on some conferences to be held in 2007. In addition, we have a section which includes new publications and focuses on a number of books on the Mesolithic that have been published in the last couple of years.

Please think about providing papers, comments on the articles published here, publication details, conference reports and news for the next volume – details on the back page. And we hope you enjoy this one!

Nicky Milner

Trou Al'Wesse, Belgium

Rebecca Miller (University of Liège) and **John Stewart** (University College London, the-johnstewart@yahoo.co.uk). Project of the University of Liège. See <http://www.paleolithics.com>

The stratified cave site of Trou Al'Wesse in Belgium has a long Pleistocene-Holocene sequence containing human occupations from the Mousterian, Aurignacian, Mesolithic and Neolithic periods (figure 1). It is one of the few remaining intact prehistoric sites in Belgium that can address long-term cultural and environmental change from approximately 60,000 to 5,000 years ago.

Trou Al'Wesse is located on the right bank of the Hoyoux, a tributary originating on the Condroz Plateau draining into the Meuse River at the town of Huy. It has a large, relatively horizontal gallery extending around 35m to the back of the cave. The karstic system continues, but the corridors are filled with sediment and have not yet been explored. A 9m chimney, excavated in the 19th century and containing a collective Neolithic burial, opens onto the plateau above the site. Intact deposits are present both on the terrace and inside the cave.



Figure 1: cave of Trou Al'Wesse

Conditions at the site would have been favourable for human occupations. Open to the southwest, the large and deep cave is warmed by the afternoon sun. Fresh water would have been available from the Hoyoux; a wide range of subsistence resources would have been accessible in the valley as well as on the Condroz Plateau. The nearest sources of flint are on the Hesbaye Plateau in the Meuse Valley 15km north and on the Meuse terraces between Liège and Maastricht, some 40km distant. In 2003, the present project began with a hypothesis-based excavation and sampling program (Miller & Otte 2003; Miller *et al.* 2004, 2005). A long-term project has been developed to place the human occupations within a clear chronostratigraphic context and to study human adaptive strategies in the context of Pleistocene-Holocene climate and environmental change.

So far the project has demonstrated that there is genuine stratified occupation from Early to Late Mesolithic and on into the Neolithic. Analyses have been conducted on the fauna, the sediments and on the lithic and ceramic artefacts to best elucidate the site's occupation, the available resources, the site formation processes and the surrounding evolving landscape. These analyses are currently being prepared for publication.

References:

- Miller R. & Otte M. 2003. Trou Al'Wesse: Rapport préliminaire des fouilles 2003, *Notae Praehistoricae* 23, p. 75-78.
- Miller R., Zwyns N. & Otte M. 2004. Le site du Trou Al'Wesse (commune de Modave): Campagne de fouilles 2004, *Notae Praehistoricae* 24: 109-116.
- Miller R., Zwyns N., Stewart J., Otte M. & Noiret P. 2005. La séquence holocène du Trou Al'Wesse: géologie, archéologie et environnement. *Notae Praehistoricae* 25:129-144.



Figure 2: Mesolithic stone tools from the cave