

A RARE SUMMER LULL FOR US GATHERERS

July 29, 2011 Åsa M Larsson Commercial Archaeology, Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2011 administrator, Anthropology, Archaeology, Åsa, Åsa M Larsson, Britta, County Administration Office, Department of Archaeology, Excavation, GPS, Local History, Managing Director, Medieval cemetery, Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis, Sweden, Uppsala University



Boxes with bones from the Medieval cemetery at Sala silver mine, Sweden. These were excavated as part of a research project led by one of our osteologists, Ylva Bäckström. (Photo: Åsa M Larsson)

Usually this time of year, most of us at [SAU](#) should be knee deep in a trench or stumbling through brush doing a survey. But this is a somewhat unusual July for us. For once, most of my co-workers are experiencing something incredibly rare for archaeologists: a long summer vacation! There are two reasons for this. Firstly, we moved our office to a new building last week, and the chaos before, during and after was not deemed conducive to an effective work environment. So it was mainly me, Britta (our administrator), and Anneli (one of our project leaders) who stayed on as movers carried the staggering amount of office stuff, books, and assorted prehistoric stuff we have littering our workplaces. Really brought home the insight that we have gone from being mobile hunter-gatherers to being virtually immobile gatherers... The second reason so many of us are on vacation is because the season got off to an unusually slow start. Apart from taking part in a joint venture [excavating at Old Uppsala](#), in preparation for

the major excavations taking place there next year as a new rail road is being constructed, there was little going on in spring. Just your usual run-of-the-mill minor surveys and small-scale preliminary excavations. In Sweden all prehistoric sites enjoy a very strong protection by the law, and any decision to remove one to make room for houses or roads must be taken by the archaeologists at the County Administration Office – regardless of who owns the land. The decision process usually goes from initial survey, to preliminary excavation, to final excavation and each step is followed by an official report and a new round of decision making. They may decide to give the assignments directly to a firm or a museum, or if they are expected to cost a great deal the assignment is open to bids for any firm. It takes time, but on the bright side our sites are well excavated and well documented. Most of the time.



Ann returned this week and has already put her new office in order. She is preparing next weeks excavation and making changes to a report manuscript. (Photo: Åsa M Larsson)

This summer was a lesson in patience however, as it wasn't until the end of June that we learnt that we had won two bids and that more of the minor assignments came our way as well – probably because the County administrators were getting things off their table in preparation for their own vacations. So next week my co-workers will start returning to our new office, only to pick up work clothes, trowels and GPS and head out to their various excavations. I look forward to us returning to “normal”, but right now I am enjoying my last quiet day at the office, writing a short introduction of the Neolithic to a popular publication of a site we excavated a few years back, to be published by the Local History society. Then I have to write the monthly newsletter to

the Board members of the the Foundation in charge of our firm. And I have to fill in my time sheet as well. Must not forget that... *sigh*

Åsa M Larsson, Managing Director, *Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis*



Our new office building. It is sweet and well placed next to the Department of Archaeology at Uppsala University. Some of the floors tend to have a noticeable slant however... (Photo: Åsa M Larsson)