

FINDING NEANDERTHALS IN FRANCE, ARTICLE REVIEWS, AND CONFERENCE PLANNING.

July 29, 2011 Becky Wragg Sykes Day of Archaeology 2011, Finds, Prehistory Archaeology, Centre for Archaeology of Human Origins, Europe, European Commission, European research networks, France, John McNabb, Marie Curie, Neanderthal, Nick Taylor, PACEA laboratory, Radioactivity, renowned scientist, Southampton University, Thora Moutsiou, University of Bordeaux

My last post for the Day of Archaeology is a mix of writing about another Postdoc project I am hoping to work on (and the process of shaping your research career), as well as describing other typical activities that researchers get done over a day.

I spent most of today working on a Postdoc application with a deadline looming alarmingly close. I've been busy writing a [Marie Curie Intra-European Fellowship](#) application, which has to be submitted on 11th August. This is basically a European-wide competition for a two year research position, where you must move outside your normal country of residence. It's up to you to find a research team at a European lab, propose a project to them, and get the go-ahead to apply for the funding from the central European Commission for Research and Innovation, which for early career researchers is called 'Marie Curie' Actions after the renowned scientist. These brilliant fellowships are aimed at supporting young researchers by training them in new skills within different research communities, and helping Europe as a whole become a more vibrant competitive research community.

As I've discovered over the past few years, perhaps the most important thing you can do to help your research career (apart from publish, publish, publish!), is to get out and meet people. Go to conferences, talk to colleagues, attend workshops, and take the opportunity to network whenever it presents itself. All the projects I am currently involved in have happened this way, by meeting people outside of the Universities where I did my degrees.



With colleagues at the CAHO conference: Dr John McNabb, Dr Thora Moutsiou and Dr Nick Taylor

The Marie Curie application is a brilliant example of this: I'm writing an application to hopefully become part of an amazing project with the [PACEA](#) laboratory at University of Bordeaux (also part of CNRS). This is one of the premier institutions for Neanderthal archaeology in the world. I was lucky enough to meet one its Research Directors at a [conference in January](#) at the Centre for Archaeology of Human Origins (Southampton University) where we both presented papers on Neanderthal landscape use. Following this we determined that there would be a great opportunity for me to join their current project looking at Neanderthal subsistence and landscape use in the south Massif Central. While the project team has already done fantastic work on caves and rockshelters, there are also open-air sites which although lacking nicely stratified deposits, with artefacts in clear layers, are still central to understanding how Neanderthals were organizing themselves within their landscapes.

In between working on the Marie Curie application and the other things I've written about today, I made progress on a few other tasks, including reviewing a couple of articles for the CAHO conference volume to be published, and sketching out my own next publication. I also drafted emails inviting colleagues to a session at a big conference in 2013 that a friend and I are hoping to organise. We need to begin this so early in order to get a really top quality representation of researchers from across the globe, as we intend the session to have a high impact.

So, rather later than normal due to taking part in today's great Day of Archaeology, I'm signing off for now, although this weekend will involve more Marie Curie writing, alongside some quality birding. I hope that my posts have given an insight into a typical day for someone who's done a PhD, and is embarking on a research career. For now, I'm heading downstairs to get some recreational activities in: a nice bit of Xbox will do the trick.



A bit of gaming to end the day.