

WHO IS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST?

June 29, 2012 Magnus Reuterdaahl Archaeological Propection, Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2012, Survey Academia, Anthropology, archaeologist, archaeologist at a government agency, Archaeology, archeologist, Arkeologi, author, based archaeologist, China, coal mining, Excavation, journalist, lake Vettern, Länsstyrelsen i östergötland, Magnus Reuterdaahl, Museology, Östergötland County, Östergötland County Administrative Board, Stockholm University, Sverige, Sweden

Who is an archeologist? – This might seem an easy question and in some cases it might be, for example if you work as an archaeologist or if you have a degree in archaeology. Then again there are several trades that deal somewhat with archaeology, for example a guide at museum, an author or an journalist that write about archaeology, that doesn't require an archaeological degree or that you've worked as an archaeologist. Others might have a degree in archaeology but has worked or intended to work as an archaeologist. The last six months I've been part of a work group for the Swedish Union DIK ([Link in Swedish](#)) to set down ethical guidelines for archaeology. The work is not done but it's been interesting to read other ethical guidelines, for example the [EAA](#) and the [AAA](#) and sit down and discuss ethical issues as well as issues' concerning what is archaeology and who is an archaeologist.

Now this was not what I was intending to write about, but it works well as an introduction as this post can be seen as the description of one kind of archaeology – let's call it antiquarian archaeology or perhaps better official agency archaeology.

My name is Magnus Reuterdaahl, I'm a Swedish based archaeologist currently working at [Östergötland County Administrative Board](#) (Länsstyrelsen i Östergötland) with social planning and cultural heritage. My archaeological journey stretches from the most northern parts of Sweden to the most southern parts, from Haparanda to Sölvesborg, and it has also taken me abroad on research projects such as [the Yangsahoproject](#) that aims for China. I've worked for Stockholm University as an osteologist, I've worked with contract archaeology for several museums and private companies where I've done excavations and surveys and I've worked for and work for a couple of government agencies.

As this is Day of Archaeology I'd thought I'd shed some light on what I do as an archaeologist at a government agency, in the case a County Administrative board. As you might guess a lot of what I do concerns administration of different sorts, decisons, answering questions regarding

developments and site planning, assessing the need for archaeological protection or work in different kinds of situations. Furthermore, we deal with issues concerning archaeological conservation, ancient monuments, cultural reserves and national interest in cultural heritage management. Prior to forestry, we help forest owners with the pointing out and marking ancient monuments and give notice of the protective measures that may be needed, we also answer several questions from the government and parliament if necessary etc. etc. IN other words we are the governments extended hand out to citizens on a local level.

My day normally means I'm sitting behind a desk, in front of the computer, working via the phone, internet and with GIS-programs using my head rather than collecting soil under my finger nails. This might sound boring but really it's not, I get to be part of processes, seeing how society is formed and reformed and in a best case scenario in harmony with the cultural heritage. I get to meet and talk to many interesting persons and constantly read up on what's going on in archaeology right now and sometimes also be part of forming it through decisions and answers.

I wont lie to you though, when the wheather is good you long for some outdoor jobs and sometimes I also get to leave my office, as yesterday when I went check up on a tip regarding a previously unknown ancient monument. Most often these tips turns out to be either historical remains such as clearing cairns, foundations of crofts or other remains of different kinds of activities such as coal mining or forestry. These are also of great interest to us but as many parts of Sweden is well surveyed for ancient monuments and remains it's kind of cool to find something "new" ancient. The cairn was reported by forestry workers doing forest thinning work at Omberg on east side of lake Vettern.



This time it was prehistoric grave, a cairn, ca 13 meters in diameter, 0,5-0,6 meter high, built with rounded rocks ca 0,2-0,6 meter big and probably from the Bronze Age or Iron Age.



Finds like these are important as they give evidence that there are still much to be found even in areas that we believe are well surveyed, such as Omberg, and that there is value in teaching those who work with forestry about our culture heritage and how to avoid damaging it.

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