

ABC OF SWEDISH PLANNING ARCHAEOLOGY AND AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARADOX

July 26, 2013 Magnus Reuterdaahl Archaeological Prospection, Commercial Archaeology, Community Archaeology, Day of Archaeology, Day of Archaeology 2013, Excavation, Historical Archaeology, Museum Archaeology, Osteology, Science, Survey archaeological contractor, archaeologist, archaeologist at the County Administrative board, Archaeology, County Board, Cultural heritage, Excavation, Magnus Reuterdaahl, Östergöland, planning, survey, Sweden

There are many kinds of archaeologist – some are specialized in a region or on a period others do contract archaeology, surveys, work at museums, laboratories or work with planning issues etc etc. We do many many things. We do archaeology!!'ve done it all – more or less: I'm an osteologist so I do the odd osteological analysis. I'm an archaeologist so I've done surveys, contract archaeology, research archaeology and currently I work at the County board of Östergöland in Sweden doing what could be called planning archaeology.



Osteology, mesolithic skeleton, Övra Wannborga, Öland, Sweden

So what is planning archaeology? Well lets say it's a form of archaeological desk-based assessments – what kind of archaeology is needed in a certain situation – for example when someone wants to build a road or house. In Sweden the County boards are responsible for this part, we also order the archaeology and then let the developer pay for it – sounds sweet, it has its ups and downs. Of course I can't just decide from the top of my head, the decisions are made according to law and praxis.

This is how it works in Sweden, in three easy (or not) steps!

Step one. Person A, the developer, submitting a notification that he or she is planning a development of some sorts. The County Board will make an assessment concerning if there are archaeological needs, based on archaeological records, previous digs, historical maps and other studies. If we find that we don't have enough knowledge to make a decision or if the data points to the likelihood that one may encounter ancient remains – then we order a preliminary archaeological investigation.



Ismantorp ancient fortress, Öland, Sweden

During a preliminary archaeological investigation an archaeological contractor, a museum or other archaeological institution of the County board's choice is chosen. They do a review of historical sources, archaeological material as well as a survey (field walking) and, if necessary, do search trenches.



Excavation 2010, Västra Götaland, Sweden

Based on the information from the preliminary archaeological investigation we then either say that archaeology in some form is needed or not.

Step two. If needed the next step in the process is an archaeological investigation. During this the ancient monument is to be defined geographically, decide its function, be dated and its scientific potential should be described. For this a limited archaeological excavation is needed. The result should give us the information needed to decide if the final step is needed, a full archaeological excavation, but also facts enough for others to be able to make an excavation plan and a cost estimate.



Excavation, Blekinge, Sweden 2011

Step three. The final step, if needed, is a full excavation, meaning the ancient monument is to be removed and documented. If this cost is under 890 000 Swedish crowns, ca: 104000 Euro, the County Board can decide who will do the archaeology, if it costs more it needs to be procured.

In most cases the developer has to pay for all archaeology. Among the various steps in the process the developer can of course choose to cancel the archaeological process (and stop the development), they also aim to give the developer the opportunity to look at other opportunities or changes to lower their costs. In the end the less archaeology being made the better we do our jobs – as the intention is to preserve monuments rather than make them disappear – a kind of archaeological paradox, wouldn't you say.

A lot of what I do is this – is that boring?

– No, it actually is quite interesting and in many cases complex, and you get to learn new things along the way. I never thought I'd be doing make procurements when I studied archaeology, and by the way I wasn't taught how to either!



Rock art, Hästholmen, Östergötland, Sweden

Is this all that we do? No we do lots of other things concerning cultural heritage, such as signs at ancient monuments, small surveys, projects, meeting land owners, forest owners, looking into environments and landscapes etc. But when the sun shines outside I can feel the trowel luring me, but then again when its rainy/snowy, cold and/or wet it's quite good to be sitting inside – looking out 😊



Winter dig Sweden 2010

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