

INDOOR RESEARCH

July 24, 2015 Don Henson Archaeological Media, Education, Explore Posts, Museum Archaeology, Prehistory, Public Archaeology cake, communication, Mesolithic, Research

So here I am spending another day indoors in front of my laptop. Not all archaeology is having fun in the field! Instead, I have fun doing PhD research. My research topic is how to improve public perception of the Mesolithic in Britain. I've been undertaking an analysis of the narratives used to portray the period by academics in learned publications and in more public-facing media. I've also been developing resources for teachers to use in the classroom based on using compelling narratives that will help children understand this strange and far-off period of prehistory.

Today's work.

Item 1 – continue compiling a list of wild foods that have been eaten in Britain, and identifying which of these would have been available in the Mesolithic, and which have been found on Mesolithic sites. Why? I want to get children to see the differences between their modern foods and what their forebears had to eat, and I want them to understand what kind of diet may or may not be healthy. It's also good for me to see how many wild plants I could now use for food myself!

Item 2 – continue my analysis of the content of 178 items covering the Mesolithic that have been published in three popular archaeology magazines since the early 1970s. Not only is this essential to see how the subject is presented to an interested public, but it also helps me learn more about the period. I've already come across sites I had not heard about. How about Langley's Lane? Possible Mesolithic votive deposits on the edge of a patch of tufa.

Item 3 – read an article on 'perspicuous meta-narratives'! In other words how archaeology should use clear language to communicate instead of jargon. Another reference I can add to my thesis, and more words that I shall have edit down later on (already over 84,000 of the damned things!).

Item 4 – make sure I have a piece of cake. I did some baking last night and brought in cake for the postgraduate room here in York – a squidgy oatmeal cake and a chocolate buckwheat cake with blackcurrant jam in the middle.

Item 5 – if I get time, investigate flights to Göteborg in Sweden in October, and trains to København in Denmark, and then to Schleswig and The Hague as part of round trip to look at museum displays and school visits on the Mesolithic later in the year.

Item 6 – pour myself a bottle of beer at home this evening and hope I have achieved half of the above.