EDITORIAL

Jen Parker Wooding MCIfA (7885), Senior Professional Standards and Practice Coordinator CIfA

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With climate change at the top of agendas and an enhanced interest in past, present and future environments, the role of the environmental archaeologist has never been more important. This edition of TA showcases the breadth and depth of environmental archaeology and its far-reaching applications.

Innovations in techniques, analytical methods and the use of multidisciplinary approaches has resulted in a huge increase in environmental data, and its potential to contribute to current and future environmental debates and agendas. This has attracted large-scale funding for multi-partner, collaborative research projects, such as the UKRI-funded 'Rewilding' project introduced by Anwen Cooper and Tina Roushannafas. Here they emphasise the central role that archaeology can play when it comes to interdisciplinary nature recovery agendas. Similarly, Philip Barratt and Hannah O'Regan show the value of environmental data in the UKRI-funded Creative Adaptive Solutions for Treescapes Of Rivers (CASTOR) project, again illustrating the increased interest in environmental archaeology, especially outside of the sector. These projects demonstrate the importance of collaboration and research synthesis, but it is important to acknowledge that a lot of the data being generated is increasingly derived from developer-led archaeology, to which most of these articles can attest. Rebecca Nicholson and Denise Druce explain how Oxford Archaeology now has a greater ability to contribute more widely to research that would not ordinarily be associated with developer-funded archaeology. Andrew Margetts, Lucy Allott, Alice Dowsett and Richard James (Archaeology South-East) also emphasise the opportunities of working on large-scale projects to input into wider discussions to support conservation approaches or inform choices about land management.

Looking in detail at the study of specific environmental features and finds excavated at sites, Warren Bailie outlines the information that can be extracted from the study of palaeochannels, whilst Julie Curl details how animal tracks left on drying Roman ceramic tile fragments provides an alternative way of identifying the presence of wild and domestic animals in the absence of surviving faunal remains. These data sets paint a picture of past landscapes, climates, flora, and fauna and can add valuable historical context to an area. A great example of this is outlined by Richard Tipping, Eileen Tisdall, Morvern French and Stefan Sagrott's article. Their project, 'Weathering Extremes', used lidar data alongside environmental and scientific analyses to reconstruct the climatic impact of storm surges on the landscape at Caerlaverock with the newfound evidence supplementing the historical narrative of the medieval castles located there. However, reconstructing past environments and climates also comes with challenges and interpretation of the data is key. Elizabeth Pearson presents the conundrum of cross-referencing paleoenvironmental sequences against existing climate models, exploring the potential issues and inconsistencies involved, whilst discussing how environmental archaeologists can help to address any uncertainties faced.

Collectively these articles emphasise the role archaeologists play in communicating the results of environmental investigations, to inform stakeholders about the past, and to help navigate the environmental challenges of the future. Tabitha Gulliver Lawrence concludes with a think piece exploring an archaeologist's perspective of the natural world and how diverse interests within a team can help encourage lively discussion and knowledge exchange. That's what it all comes down to, whether it's 'big data' or an individual, a continuous cycle of learning and sharing maximises the benefits that archaeologists bring to society, and in this case that environmental archaeologists bring to society.