



# ASM Ink

August 2009, Vol. 35, No. 8

Newsletter of the Archeological Society of Maryland, Inc.

[www.marylandarcheology.org](http://www.marylandarcheology.org)

## Oldest Indian structure yet found in AA

By Frank Roylance

*Condensed from the Baltimore Sun, July 2, 2009*

Anne Arundel County archeologists have uncovered an Algonquian Indian camp on a bluff above a lush bend in the Patuxent River, a find that includes the oldest human structure ever detected in Maryland.

Artifacts show that the campsite - in a location favored by native people for hundreds of years for its bounty of fish, shellfish and game - was in use two centuries and more before Christopher Columbus set sail.

The dig has uncovered traces of oval Algonquian wigwams; rare tools of stone, bone and antler; fragments of a highly decorated pot; an intact paint pot and a broken gorget.

"It is clearly the most important prehistoric site in the county, and if it keeps going like this we'll be in the running for the most important prehistoric site in the state," said county archeologist Al Luckenbach.

Carbon 14 dating on charcoal from a hearth found outside the outline of the wigwam suggests that the site was occupied between 1290 and 1300, making it the oldest dwelling ever discovered in the state, Luckenbach said. Outlines of other dwellings at the site might be older.

Dennis Curry, an archeologist with the Maryland Historical Trust, calls the Pig Point site "spectacular." "Finding what certainly look like house patterns up there is astonishing," he said.

Unusual sandy soil at Pig Point has preserved plant remains, including carbonized nuts and seeds that provide a rare look at the broad spectrum of the Native American diet of the period.

Luckenbach was enthusiastic about the elaborate geometric designs found on fragments of a football-size ceramic pot he's been reassembling. Prehistoric sites in Maryland more typically turn up pottery shards with simple decoration, much of it made by pressing twisted cords into the soft clay.

"This is beyond decoration; this is art," Luckenbach said. "Nobody's seen anything like it. All of us were blown away. ... The pottery gives us a rare glimpse of what they were capable of."

Curry called the decoration unique. He said the fancy pot, along with an intact paint pot and the wealth of other rare tools and artifacts, and their abundance at the site, suggest that Pig Point might have been a distribution point for trade among far-flung Indian groups.

"There's something going on at this site that's a little more than a little habitation site," he said.

"I've not had a site pique my interest this quickly in quite a while."

Continued on Page 6

## Upcoming events

**September 12:** ASM board meeting. Howard County Central Library, Columbia. 10 a.m. All members are welcome to attend.

**October 17:** Annual ASM Meeting, Havre de Grace Maritime Museum.

### Volunteer opportunities

The following volunteer opportunities are open to CAT program participants and other ASM members:

**Montgomery County** is offering opportunities for lab and field work Wednesdays, 9:30 to 2:30. Call 301-840-5848 or contact [james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mncppc-mc.org) or [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org). CAT opportunity.

**ASM field session collection:** Volunteers are needed to work on up-grading collections associated with previous field sessions. The project is almost finished. The final batch is the collection from the Kanawa Springs Site (18FR8), a Frederick County Woodland site. The lab in Crownsville is open Tuesdays from 9:30 until 4. Contact Louise Akerson at [lakerson1@verizon.net](mailto:lakerson1@verizon.net) or Charlie Hall [chall@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:chall@mdp.state.md.us).

**The Lost Towns Project** of Anne Arundel County. 410-222-7440.

**Mount Calvert.** Lab work and field work. 301-627-1286.

**Jefferson Patterson Park** invites volunteers to take part in its various activities, including archeology, historical research and artifact conservation. Contact Ed Chaney at [echaney@mdp.state.md.us](mailto:echaney@mdp.state.md.us) or 410-586-8554.

The Archaeological Institute of America provides an online listing of fieldwork opportunities worldwide, Call up [www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/](http://www.archaeological.org/fieldwork/) to get started. Remember to add the extra A in archaeological.

### CAT corner

For updates and information on other CAT activities check the ASM website.

A website has been set up for candidates and graduates:

<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/MDcat/> . To join the group email [MDcat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:MDcat-subscribe@yahoogroups.com) Members can choose to get emails or just use the website to send messages. Courtesy of CAT candidate Tom Forhan.

## SHA gets grants to study 1812 Bladensburg

In preparation for marking the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the War of 1812, the Maryland State Highway Administration has received \$120,000 in grants for its investigation into the Bladensburg battlefield in Prince George's County.

The historic and archeological probe already is examining two 18<sup>th</sup> Century structures in the area. In addition, SHA plans conducting an archeological examination along U.S. Route 1, which runs through the battlefield, and investigating other related areas.

The battle erupted when American sailors, led by Commodore Joshua Barney, attempted unsuccessfully to stop the 1814 British march that burned Washington and sent Dolley Madison fleeing.

An account of digging conducted earlier this summer at the Magruder House and the Market Master's House can be seen at the website <http://bladenarch.blogspot.com>

"The ultimate goal of our initiative is to create an interactive website that showcases the Battle of Bladensburg and historic-period sites that bore witness to the military engagement between the American and British troops," said SHA archeologist Julie Schablitsky.

Half of the grant comes from the National Park Service's American Battlefield Protection Program, the other half from the Federal Highway Administration's Transportation Enhancement Program.

## Who should get ASM's highest honor?

This is your opportunity to recognize individuals who have given yeoman service in the advancement of Maryland archeology. The William B. Marye Award is ASM's highest honor. Nominees need not be ASM members or residents of Maryland. The only criteria is that they have made outstanding contributions to Maryland archeology.

Please provide as much detail as possible in a concise statement on the form included with this issue of ASM Ink. Nominations are due by September 21 and should be mailed to the Marye Award Committee chair: Tyler Bastian, 13047 Penn Shop Road, Mt. Airy, MD 21771.

## Unpointed flute shows early music lure

By Thomas H. Maugh II

*Condensed from the Los Angeles Times, June 25, 2009*

The wing bone of a griffon vulture with five precisely drilled holes in it is the oldest known musical instrument, a 35,000-year-old relic of an early human society that drank beer, played flute and drums and danced around the campfire on cold winter evenings, researchers said Wednesday.

Excavated from a cave in Germany, the nearly complete flute suggests that the first humans to occupy Europe had a fairly sophisticated culture, complete with alcohol, adornments, art objects and music that they developed there or even brought with them from Africa when they moved to the new continent 40,000 years or so ago.

"It is not too surprising that music was a part of their culture," said archeologist John J. Shea of Stony Brook University, who was not involved in the research. "Every single society we know of has music. The more widespread a characteristic is today, the more likely it is to spread back into the past."

The making of music probably extended even further back into the past, he said, but the flute may represent "the first time that people invested time and energy in making instruments that were [durable enough to be] preserved."

The flute was discovered last summer in the Hohle Fels cave, about 14 miles southwest of the city of Ulm, by archeologist Nicholas J. Conard of University of Tübingen in Germany. Conard described the find in a report published online by the journal [Nature](#).

The cave is the same one where Conard found the recently described 40,000-year-old Venus figurine, the oldest known representation of the female form, as well as a host of other carvings.

The cave, which was occupied for millennia, "is one of the most wonderfully clear windows into the past, where conditions of preservation are just right," Shea said. "Combine that with a gifted excavator, and you get truly great archeology."

The reconstructed flute, a little under 9 inches long, was found in 12 pieces in a layer of sediment nearly 9 feet below the cave's floor. The team also found fragments of two ivory flutes -- which are less durable -- that are probably not quite as old.

The surfaces of the flute and the structure of the bone are in excellent condition and reveal many details about its manufacture. The maker carved two deep, V-shaped notches into one end of the instrument, presumably to form the end into which the musician blew, and four fine lines near the finger holes. The other end is broken off, but, based on the normal size of the vultures, Conard estimates the intact flute was probably 2 to 3 inches longer.

## New PBS series offers quick results

By Joe Dent

*ASM Ink media & pop culture critic*

PBS has launched a new series, Time Team America. The first episode, focusing on Fort Raleigh, North Carolina, and the Lost Colony, aired early in July. At the request your editor I have turned TV critic.

The new Wednesday show is unabashedly modeled on the popular Time Team program of Britain's Channel 4. That's a very high mark to set. The host of the parent program, Tony Robinson, is both knowledgeable and a genuine character. Tony regularly transmits enough enthusiasm to make even a hardened modernist want to quit the day job and head for the nearest excavation unit. Watch it on local cable channels or at [www.channel4.com/history/microsites/t/timeteam](http://www.channel4.com/history/microsites/t/timeteam) if you don't believe me. Like the original, the American version is both the show and a glitzy web site. I doubt that branded merchandise will be far behind.

The basic formula of Time Team America is simple. This gaggle (too many to my mind) of archeologists shows up and works for three days at a site. The first site was on Roanoke Island and they were there to help the First Colony Foundation search for the remains of the Lost Colony. They bring all their expertise along with high-tech geophysical surveying equipment. They then turn this loose on a problem and the site.

After the high tech stuff did its thing and recent sand overlays were mechanically removed, the time team turned, as archeologists must, to excavating. The show is both about how archeologists work and what is or isn't found. There are also back-stories woven into the fabric of the almost hour-long show. In this episode they trotted out Sir Ivor Noel Hume for an injection of personality into the search.

As for the historical facts showcased in this first episode, it seemed on the mark. Viewers received background on the first sustained English effort to plant a colony in the New World. It more or less ended in 1590 when the Lost Colony was discovered to be lost and entered the firmament of history and legend. The facts of those events were accompanied by forays into period material culture, soil science, shoreline erosion, geophysical survey, possible alternative locations for the settlement on the island, and more.

All the while three days of excavations went on in a trench by a heavily pierced and tattooed crew of excavators looking for evidence of the settlement. And viewers were treated to a great deal of excitement over some very small 16th Century sherds and other artifacts that were recovered.

That much about the show is fine, and I suppose Sir Walter Raleigh's beheaded torso (his wife, Bess, retained his head after the execution and it was eventually buried with his son!) only very occasionally twitched in his grave during the show's airing. I also tell you that the time team did expose some possible post molds in the trench, but the horde of on-site experts seemed reluctant to proclaim they had indeed found part of the Lost Colony. The web site ([www.PBS.org/opb/timeteam](http://www.PBS.org/opb/timeteam)) also adds that two small pits were later exposed, one with some beads and the other with small copper plates. Still, nobody's yet publicly claiming outright success.

My criticisms of this first episode are more focused on presentation than substance. As I said twice earlier, there were way too many experts milling about on site. Many added little to the story and this is

a show that needs more personality and less opinion. That perception of mine obviously could be a result of how the final footage was cut and mixed rather than the dedicated time travelers themselves.

The host of the program, Colin Campbell, a Baltimorean and graduate of the Maryland Institute of Art, however, clearly did not reveal a strong enough personality to carry the narrative. With his artistic skills, he sketched scenes appropriate to the investigation, but they weren't featured in any meaningful way and did little for one's understanding of the site or the show's message.

For this show to come even close to equaling its British role model and for it to reach its potential here, a strong as well as enthusiastic and knowledgeable narrator will need to emerge or be found. As it now stands, the most charming and engaging characters on site are the trench crew. But perhaps that's often the case.

On a more charitable note, the series has just started, and it will no doubt evolve.

As for this first episode, Time Team America's foray on the island was unable to clear up the question marks surrounding the colony. Alas, we've all been part of excavations that don't end definitively. Let's hope for the best for the series, but only time and more excavation will solve the Roanoke mystery.

## Getting the public involved in digs

By Jonathan Pitts

*Condensed from the Baltimore Sun, July 5, 2009*

In her hands, a scrap becomes a story. Jessie Grow fishes through a box full of what looks to be junk, pulling out a 2-inch fragment of clay pipe. It brings to mind a time long ago - hard to imagine now - when men, women and children routinely smoked tobacco, thinking it was good for their health.

A rust-eaten nail evokes the late 1600s, when settlers near the South River built small homes out of wood, never realizing they wouldn't last 30 years in termite-infested Maryland.

And a chunk of pottery evokes Colonial days, when traders from the Far East shipped their fine porcelain to the mid-Atlantic region in exchange for tobacco - the crop that gave birth to London Town, a bustling community that served as a major seaport for 90 years, then silently passed away.

Welcome to Historic London Town and Gardens, the Anne Arundel County park that houses one of the richest archeological sites in Maryland: 100 acres packed with artifacts dating back three centuries. Grow is education coordinator here, an archeologist who has tramped the grounds for more than half her life.

Grow, 26, and her colleagues will share their soil-sifting and storytelling skills with the public on Saturday, when young and old alike are invited to the park for Dig Day, when visitors can play archeologist alongside the pros, digging up the shards that speak of Maryland's past.

She ought to know. When she was 12, growing up in nearby Davidsonville, her father read about a "dig day" at London Town and asked his daughter whether she'd like to go. She did, and she didn't miss one for the next four years.

"I just loved it from the beginning," says Grow, who studied public archeology - the art of sharing archeological findings and their meaning with the public - in college and graduate school and scored a full-time gig centered on the London Town dig in 2007. Her job includes leading the site's tours for visitors, including regular field trips for schoolchildren, and giving talks.

When the economy was stronger and grants more plentiful, there were as many as six Dig Days per year. Now there are three, including the one next weekend and another Sept. 12. Then, as now, they were free to the public.

London Town is one of three active sites that make up the Lost Towns Project, a nonprofit archeological enterprise begun in the early 1990s by Al Luckenbach, official archeologist for Anne Arundel County.

When his crew started excavating in the neighborhood in 1994, Luckenbach knew the old port was nearby, but he had no idea so much of it lay in the 23-acre park itself. Over the past 15 years, as they've sifted through much of the county-owned land in 5-foot-by-5-foot sections, Luckenbach and company have been able to map it out in detail, and a portrait of life in the "lost town" has emerged.

"Nothing was here before," says Grow. "But this was a strategic site. The South River was like I-95." The town thrived until just before the Revolutionary War, when the Maryland government - in order, some say, to foster the growth of Annapolis - moved the tobacco taxing station elsewhere. By 1780, London Town was virtually gone.

What was not known was the warp and woof of life in the town. That was left to archeologists, the men and women whose job is part physical (digging, sifting with screens, sorting, storing), part narrative (assembling from the artifacts an ever-richer, more-accurate tale of the life lived by those who used the stuff). The London Town site was so rich that it has yielded more than 2 million artifacts.

Grow says the bucket of stuff she grabs from a shelf and sifts through is typical of what guests might find. When they sift through dirt with archeologists' screens next week, they'll very likely find something in each scoop - shards of pipes, nails, bits of pottery or porcelain, oyster shells. Each tells a story.

A bent nail prompts a disquisition on building practices and living conditions of the time. Though modern Americans might see the stately Georgian mansion as the quintessential Colonial structure, those places were only for the rich.

That image endures, in part, because those brick structures have lasted. Truth be told, most London

**Continued on next page**

Towners lived in tiny, hastily made wooden houses. These were earth-fast (lacking a permanent foundation), usually no bigger than 20 feet by 20 feet in size, and as often as not, each was home to more than a dozen people.

The project's assistant director, C. Jane Cox, says that because immigrants from big, abundantly paved cities like London, England, knew little of the potency of rural termites, the earliest builders had no idea most of the places would collapse in less than 25 years.

"The facts of life in Maryland were kind of a rude awakening," Cox said.

## Two more Lost Towns lectures this summer

Lost Towns has two more lectures this summer in its evening series designed to tell the public about some of its latest work. The Wednesday lectures are held at the London Town Visitor's Center, 839 Londontown Road in Edgewater, from 5:30 to 6:30. The programs are free to members and cost \$3 for nonmembers. Light refreshments are served.

On August 5 Lauren Schiszik will talk about "The Old Treasury Building in Annapolis." On September 9 Jesse Grow will discuss "Understanding Subfloor Pits at Java."

Lost Towns also wants to call attention to its website, [www.losttownsproject.org](http://www.losttownsproject.org)

## Oldest Indian structure yet found in AA

**Continued from Page One**

The county's archeologists were alerted to the Pig Point site last year while Luckenbach and his crews were digging on the site of a 17th-Century house at the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center in Edgewater. A contractor doing unrelated work on the property showed an interest in the archeology and



mentioned that he had found Indian artifacts for years on his property at Bristol Landing.

He knew it should be excavated by professionals and finally persuaded Luckenbach to take a look.

The dig is co-funded by the Anne Arundel Trust for Preservation and the Maryland Historical Trust.

Anne Arundel County Executive John R. Leopold said Luckenbach and his staff "are to be commended for the enthusiasm they bring to their job ... and the educational opportunities they provide for young people."

Leopold, who recalled finding arrowheads and Indian pottery in New Mexico as a teenager, visited Pig Point recently for a closer look.

The Algonquians, Luckenbach said, built their dwellings by cutting saplings, jamming them into the ground in an oval pattern, and then bending the tops together to form the skeleton of a lodge. They would be strapped together and covered with matting to keep out the weather, making a home for 10 to 12 people.

Some oval patterns in the pit suggest occupations over several centuries. Some Middle Woodland pottery fragments found there date to between 200 and 900, Luckenbach said. And a few serrated arrowheads date to the Archaic period, perhaps 8,000 years ago, indicating that people have been attracted to the spot for thousands of years.

Among the food waste that archeologists and their summer interns found are the bones of fish, turtles and deer; the shells of freshwater clams; and traces of hickory nuts, grape seeds, acorns and corn.

Curry said the importance of the site would argue for its preservation beyond this season's dig. Future expansion of the excavations and improved technology might someday extract more knowledge from the site than is now possible, he said.

## Chapter notes

### Anne Arundel

Meeting five times a year in February, April, June, September and November, the chapter has a new meeting location: Severna Park Branch of the Anne Arundel County Public Library, 45 McKinsey Road. 7:30 p.m. Contact Mechelle Kerns-Nocerito at [AACHapASM@hotmail.com](mailto:AACHapASM@hotmail.com) or visit the chapter website [www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php](http://www.marylandarcheology.org/aacashome.php)

**September 8:** Speaker TBA

**November 3:** Speaker TBA

### Central

Central Chapter has no formal meetings planned, but it does engage in field work and related activities. Contact chapter President Stephen Israel, 410-945-5514 or [ssisrael@verizon.net](mailto:ssisrael@verizon.net)

### Charles County

Meetings are held 7:30 on the second Tuesday (September-May) at the Port Tobacco Court House. Contact President Paula Martino at [paulamartino@hotmail.com](mailto:paulamartino@hotmail.com) or 301-752-2852.

### Mid-Potomac

The chapter meets the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 p.m. at the Agricultural History Farm Park Activity Center in Derwood. Dinner at a local restaurant is at 6. Monthly lab nights are the first Thursday of the month. Contact [heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org](mailto:heather.bouslog@mncppc-mc.org), or call 301-840-5848 or Don Housley at [donhou704@earthlink.net](mailto:donhou704@earthlink.net) or 301-424-8526. Chapter website: [www.asmmidpotomac.wordpress.com](http://www.asmmidpotomac.wordpress.com)

### Monocacy

The chapter meets in the C. Burr Artz Library in Frederick on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. Contact Jeremy Lazelle at 301-845-9855 or [jlazelle@msn.com](mailto:jlazelle@msn.com) or Nancy Geasey at 301-378-0212.

## Northern Chesapeake

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month. Members and guests assemble at 6:30 p.m. for light refreshments. A business meeting at 7 is followed by the presentation at 7:30. Contact Ann Persson at 410-272-3425 or [aspst20@yahoo.com](mailto:aspst20@yahoo.com) Website: <http://sites.google.com/site/northernchesapeake>

## Upper Patuxent

Programs are the second Monday of every other month at 7:30 p.m. at Mt. Ida, near the courthouse in Ellicott City. Potluck suppers are held at 6:15 in September and March. Otherwise, dinner is available at an Ellicott City restaurant. Contact Lee Preston at 443-745-1202 or [leeprestonjr@comcast.net](mailto:leeprestonjr@comcast.net)

**September 14:** Dan Coates "Prehistoric Soapstone and Bone - Hard Use of Soft Tools", a lecture and hands-on demonstration.

**November 9:** Lee Preston, "Extreme Mammals: From Mole Rats to Bipedes, Let's Look at the 200 Million Year History of Mammals and Their Uniqueness."

**January 11:** Steve Israel, "Report on the Rockdale Road Rockshelter: A Late Woodland Campsite."

**March 8:** Laura Cripps, "Report on Bibracte, a Romano-Celtic Temple Site in France " (excavated in 2009.)

**May 10:** "The Brown's of Mt. Pleasant : 307 Years of Ownership in Howard County " or the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual J. Alfred Prufrock History/Archaeology Team Competition Game."

## Western Maryland

Programs are the fourth Friday of the month, at 7:30 p.m. in the LaVale Library, unless noted. Contact Roy Brown, 301-724-7769. Chapter email: [wmdasm@yahoo.com](mailto:wmdasm@yahoo.com) Website: [www.geocities.com/wmdasm](http://www.geocities.com/wmdasm)

**The Archeological Society of Maryland Inc. is a statewide nonprofit organization devoted to the study and conservation of Maryland archeology.**

ASM, Inc members receive the monthly newsletter ASM Ink, the biannual journal MARYLAND ARCHEOLOGY, reduced admission to ASM events and a 10% discount on items sold by the Society. Contact Membership Secretary Belinda Urquiza for membership rates. For publication sales, contact Dan Coates at ASM Publications, 716 Country Club Rd., Havre de Grace, MD 21078-2104 or 410-273-9619 or [dancoates@comcast.net](mailto:dancoates@comcast.net).

**Submissions welcome.** Please send to Myron Beckenstein, 6817 Pineway, University Park, MD 20782, 301-864-5289 or [myronbeck@verizon.net](mailto:myronbeck@verizon.net)

### President

John Fiveash  
443-618-0494  
[jsfiveash@comcast.net](mailto:jsfiveash@comcast.net)

### Vice President

Jim Gibb  
410-263-1102  
[JamesGGibb@comcast.net](mailto:JamesGGibb@comcast.net)

### Secretary

Kelly Derwart  
410-592-5992  
[Kderwart@yahoo.com](mailto:Kderwart@yahoo.com)

### Treasurer

Sean Sweeney  
410-569-8715

[seansweeney1224@comcast.net](mailto:seansweeney1224@comcast.net)

### Membership Secretary

Belinda Urquiza  
PO Box 1331  
Huntingtown, MD  
20639  
410-535-2586

[burquiza@comcast.net](mailto:burquiza@comcast.net)

### At-Large Trustees

Claude Bowen  
301-953-1947  
[clauderbowen@comcast.net](mailto:clauderbowen@comcast.net)



Suzanne Bucci  
304-876-2189  
[suzruns4fun@frontier.com](mailto:suzruns4fun@frontier.com)

301-270-8073  
[dufour27@gmail.com](mailto:dufour27@gmail.com)

Tom Forhan

Gary Hall  
301-762-0925  
[Ghall777@hotmail.com](mailto:Ghall777@hotmail.com)

**Archeological Society of Maryland**  
**ASM Ink**  
**P.O. Box 1331**  
**Huntingtown, MD 20639-1331**

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**

John Newton  
443-904-5385  
[jnewton@mtamaryland.com](mailto:jnewton@mtamaryland.com)

Jim Sorensen  
301-434-8316  
[james.sorensen@mnepmc.org](mailto:james.sorensen@mnepmc.org)

**Non-profit Org.**  
**U.S. Postage PAID**  
**Baltimore, MD.**  
**Permit 705**

**TIME SENSITIVE: DELIVER BY JULY 30**

