

RECORDERS' REPORTS

Archaeology and Palaeontology

As usual the winter season has seen a substantial amount of field work being done by visiting archaeologists and palaeontologists, as well as by teams from local Departments of Antiquities.

On the palaeontological front, the team led by Peter Whybrow of the Natural History Museum in London completed two months of work in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi in late April, with the support of our corporate member the Abu Dhabi Company for Onshore Oil Operations, ADCO. Their work concentrated on the Miocene outcrops of the Bainuna Formation. Work included the excavation of more fragments of the fossil elephant uncovered at Shuweihat in 1993.

Under the sponsorship of Fujairah Ruler and Supreme Council member Sheikh Hamad bin Mohammed al Sharqi, the team also conducted a preliminary investigation of Lower Cretaceous rocks to be found at the Dibba Marble Quarry in Fujairah, where fossil corals and molluscs and micro-fossils were located, which were taken to London for identification.

Archaeologically, the winter of 1993-1994 has been perhaps the most active ever, with at least fifteen separate excavations and surveys being undertaken by foreign teams.

The Belgian team from the University of Ghent, under the direction of Professor Ernie Haerinck continued work at the settlement site of Ad Door in Umm al Qaiwain, although planned excavations at the Tell Abraq site by a University of Sydney, Australia team under Professor Dan Potts were halted as a by-product of a border demarcation dispute between Sharjah and Umm al Qaiwain.

In Ras al Khaimah, a British team under Derek Kennet carried out surveys in the Khatt area, locating a number of additional 'tells,' containing material from the pre-Islamic period up to early Islamic times, while a trial trench at the newly-discovered mound of Qush, near Shimal, produced finds ranging from the late Iron Age up until the Thirteenth or Fourteenth centuries AD, the longest sequence of early Islamic material yet found in the Emirates.

Also in Ras al Khaimah, a French team under Dr. Claire Hardy-Guilbert concluded excavations at the site of the Islamic port-city at Julfar, uncovering the remains of a fortress, while a German team concluded excavations of a section of city wall, as well as carrying out surveys in the mountains.

A team from Japan's Kanazawa University completed a study of a settlement area of Julfar, before moving to the East Coast enclaves of Sharjah, in search of material from the Islamic period, particularly Far Eastern porcelain.

A team from Britain's Institute of Archaeology continued excavations on a Third and Second Millennium BC site in the Sharjah enclave of Kalba, while on the Madam Plain, also in Sharjah, a French team headed by Michel Mou-

ton and a joint Franco-Spanish expedition continued work at the site of the fort at Mileiha, dated to the first centuries of the Christian era.

Sharjah's own Department of Antiquities and Heritage carried out excavations near Mileiha, with discoveries of particular interest including a graveyard from around the early centuries of the Christian era.

The Australian excavations at Jebel Emalah are covered elsewhere, (See Page 12).

In Fujairah, the Swiss-Liechtenstein Foundation for Archaeological Research Abroad completed a second season of work at the Iron Age hill-top fortress of Husn Madhab, and carried out excavations on Iron Age sites near Bithna, while a British team carried out a preliminary survey of sites in the Wadi Safad, just north of Fujairah.

In Dubai, excavations by Dr. Hassan Qandeel of the Municipality focussed on the pre-Islamic site in Jumeirah, where an extensive settlement dating from the late Sassanian/early Islamic period, including extensive walls and pillars, was identified.

In the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the Department of Antiquities and Tourism in Al Ain carried out conservation work at the Third Millennium site at Umm an Nar, as well as undertaking work in the Hill area, while a French team completed a sondage at the Iron Age village at Rumeilah first excavated in the early 1980s, prior to preparation of a publication.

The third season of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey Project, directed by Dr. Geoffrey King, and including many of our Corporate members amongst its sponsors, carried out further work on the Late Stone Age site at Merawah, (see Vol 3.1., April 1993), and on the 'Ubaid site at Dalma, (see Vol. 3.2., October 1993), and also extended excavations at the late pre-Islamic/early Islamic site on Sir Bani Yas, as well as continuing surveys on islands in the Western Region, including Ghaghah, Yasat and Al F'zaiyyah, on each of which sites from the early centuries of the Christian era were identified.

A survey was also made of a late Islamic fortress in the Western Region. (See page 9)

The extent of the work this winter precludes detailed reports on each excavation, but subsequent issues of the magazine will report on some sites.

Group members paid a visit to the Sir Bani Yas site in April 1994, while member Kate Bonner assisted in excavations under Derek Kennet in Ras al Khaimah and Michel Mouton in Mileiha.

The archaeology of the Emirates is now one of the fastest-growing areas of scientific research within the country. There is room for Group members, and others, to become more closely involved.

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Archaeology Recorder

