The Kuwaiti-Slovak Archaeological Mission (KSAM) is a joint project of the National Council of Culture, Arts and Letters; State of Kuwait, and the Institute of Archaeology, Slovak Academy of Sciences. KSAM was established in 2004 and originated from an idea put forward by Shehab A. H. Shehab, Director of the Department of Museums and Antiquities, National Council for Culture, in Kuwait. The main project, developed and directed by Lucia Benedíková and Peter Barta, is an interdisciplinary research endeavor focused on the endangered Dilmun site of Al-Khidr which is located on the northwestern shore of Failaka Island. The site dates from the late 3rd to early 2nd millennium BC. Excavations at Al-Khidr in 2004, 2006, and 2007 have exposed part of the settlement along with evidence of pottery, copper, and stone industries, Dilmun seals, and palaeoenvironmental remains. In contrast to Dilmun ruins from the southwestern part of the island, Al-Khidr has domestic structures with smaller rooms and seems to represent a village-like settlement.

Research, undertaken by Mária Hajnalová and Zora Miklíková, is a key component of the ongoing research at Al-Khidr. Investigations include the most current scientific recovery methods; up to 80% of all sediments are dry sieved and more than 25% subjected to flotation. The Al-Khidr excavations have produced the largest prehistoric archaeofaunal assemblage recovered to date in Kuwait. Archaeozoological studies aim to shed light on food production, animal husbandry practices, site seasonality, and information about the local and regional palaeoenvironment. Zora Miklíková is overseeing the study of the mammal and bird bones. The fish remains are being analyzed in cooperation with two other scholars working in the Gulf region, Dr. Mark Beech, from the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (fish bones), and Dr. Mohsen Al-Husaini, from the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research (fish otoliths). Preliminary analysis has identified at least three mammalian species (cattle, sheep, and goat) and twelve species of fish representing ten different families (Carcharhinidae, Pristidae, Ariidae, Serranidae, Carangidae, Haemulidae, Lethrinidae, Sparidae, Scoridae, and Sphyraenidae). A preliminary study of otoliths from sea catfish suggests that fishing at Al-Khidr took place mostly during the spring, between April and June.

In addition to ongoing research, a comparative collection of 26 local fish species has been established at the laboratory this year and new publications have been added to the environmental section of the newly founded library at the excavation house on Failaka Island. Scientists with the KSAM have also been collaborating with local specialists since 2006 to map the island’s current flora and fauna. Additional information about KSAM and the project at Al-Khidr is available online at http://www.kuwaitarchaeology.org.
Following the successful 1st Archaeomalacology Working Group meeting (which was held in Gainesville, Florida, USA, in 2005), the 2nd meeting will take place February 19-22, 2008, at the Escuela Técnica Superior de Nautica, Universidad de Cantabria, Santander, Spain. The meeting, titled “Not Only Food: Marine, Terrestrial and Freshwater Molluscs in Archaeological Sites,” is being organized by Esteban Álvarez Fernández, Instituto Internacional de Investigaciones Prehistóricas de Cantabria (E-mail: esteban.alvarez@unican.es), and Diana Rocío Carvajal Contreras, University of Calgary (E-mail: drcarvajal@ucalgary.ca). It will consist of two days of paper presentations plus two days of field trips to archaeological sites in the region. The deadline for paper and poster abstract submissions is October 30, 2007. Registration costs consist of the following: 80 Euros for full registration (which includes a copy of the meeting proceedings), 50 Euros for students (also includes a copy of the meeting proceedings), and 30 Euros for registration only. For more information, please contact the conference organizers at the e-mail addresses listed above. Additional details about the upcoming conference have also been posted on the web at http://triton.anu.edu.au/santander_meeting.htm.

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THE ROLE OF FISH RESEARCH: A MEETING POINT BETWEEN ARCHAEOLOGY AND ZOOARCHAEOLOGY

The proceedings of the last ICAZ Fish Remains Working Group (FRWG) meeting, held in Basel and Augst, Switzerland, in 2005 have been published. This attractive volume, titled The Role of Fish in Ancient Time, is edited by Heidemarie Hübner Plogmann. It is a welcome achievement for the FRWG in the often hectic publication record of conference proceedings. Congratulations to Heide and the volume contributors. For information about how to order this new book go to the publisher’s website at http://www.vml.de/detail.php?ISBN=978-3-89646-438-5.

By the time you receive this newsletter, the 14th FRWG meeting (titled “Archéologie du Poisson”) will have taken place on October 18-20, 2007, in Antibes, France. The conference, organized by Sandrine Grouard, Philippe Béarez, and Benoît Clavel, is dedicated to celebrating 30 years of scholarly research by Jean Desse and Nathalie Desse-Berset. The 39 papers and 16 posters to be presented during the 2½ day program represent a rich array of topics from around the world. In addition to the old guard, there will be new young scholars, colleagues from far away countries, and senior archaeozoologists previously not seen at FRWG meetings participating in this event. The broad geographic representation and discussions of research conducted by international teams are sure to be attractive features of this conference.

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Fellowships

THE DIENJE KENYON FELLOWSHIP

A fellowship in honor of the late Dienje M. E. Kenyon is offered to support the research of women archaeologists in the early stages of their graduate training. An award of $500 will be made to a student pursuing research in zooarchaeology, which was Kenyon’s specialty. To qualify for the award, applicants must be enrolled in a graduate degree program focusing on archaeology with the intention of receiving either the M.A. or Ph.D. on a topic related to zooarchaeology, and must be in the first two years of graduate studies. Strong preference will be given to students working with faculty members with zooarchaeological expertise. Applications are to consist of the following: 1) a statement of proposed research related to zooarchaeology, toward the conduct of which the award would be applied, of no more than 1500 words, including a brief statement indicating how the award would be spent in support of that research; 2) a curriculum vitae; and 3) two letters of support from individuals familiar with the applicant’s work and research potential. One of these letters must be from the student’s primary advisor, and must indicate the year in which the applicant began graduate studies. The statement and curriculum vitae should be sent as an e-mail attachment in Microsoft Word to Dr. Ariane Burke at a.burke@umontreal.ca. Letters of support should be e-mailed separately by the people providing them. Applications are due no later than January 5, 2008.

PALAEO VISITING FELLOWSHIPS

PALAEO (Palaeoecology, Archaeology and Evolutionary Origins) is an interdisciplinary training centre dedicated to the recovery of information about past peoples and their environment from sources that range from human skeletons to ancient biomolecules. As part of PALAEO’s commitment to the mobility of people and skills within and beyond Europe, we offer a number of six month visiting research fellowships. The aim of these fellowships is to provide research collaboration at the University of York as part of a PhD programme based elsewhere, to provide an opportunity to acquire specific research or analytical skills, or to allow the applicant to attend postgraduate training modules offered at the University of York as part of a Masters programmes. In the latter case, applicants may wish to consider registering for our MSc programmes in Zooarchaeology, Bioarchaeology, or Archaeological Research to undertake the taught component of either course during their placement at the university (please note that a tuition fee is required for course registration). If considering attending the MSc programmes, the value of the award is approximately £7,000, but varies slightly depending upon circumstances. Applications for six month placements will be considered throughout the year, however the intention is that up to three placements will start in April and October of 2006, 2007, 2008, and April 2009. Applicants wishing to register for MSc programmes should begin in October. To apply, please submit the following electronically: 1) letter of application, including an outline of proposed research, 2) curriculum vitae, 3) letters of support from two referees (your referees should not be related to you). Applications are considered at the May and November meetings of the Palaeo Management Team. Applications should be e-mailed to Holly Wright, PALAEO Coordinator, Department of Archaeology, University of York, E-mail: hew503@york.ac.uk. For additional information and deadlines, please check the website at http://admin.palaeo.googlepages.com/6monthplacement.