**EAA and EAC Joint Working Group on Farming, Forestry and Rural Land Management**

**Progress Report: March 2016**

The Working Group, originally organised under the aegis of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA) became a joint Working Group of EAC and EAA in March 2009. This report covers the work of the joint group during 2015-16.

**Background**

The Working Group has identified rural land uses (most notably agriculture and forestry) as amongst the most destructive of processes acting on the archaeological historical landscape in Europe. It is a particular concern that these processes, in contrast to construction and development, have few or no established mechanisms for archaeological impact assessment, avoidance or mitigation.

**Membership**

The group continues to reach new professional archaeologists interested in the interface between archaeological heritage management, landscape, rural land use and nature conservation. Group membership is now almost 50 participants or correspondents, representing 19[[1]](#footnote-1) countries.

**Business meeting 2015**

The 2015 annual business meeting of the Working Group was held in the margins of 2015 EAA conference in Glasgow. Karl Cordemans (Flemish Land Agency) was confirmed as Chair of the Working Group. Vince Holyoak (Head of National Rural and Environmental Advice, English Heritage) stays on as Vice-Chair of the Group with responsibility for its position on agriculture / CAP reform. Riika Mustonen of Finland will succeed Emmet Byrnes as Vice-Chair responsible for Forestry matters.

The Chair and Vice Chair positions are on the agenda for discussion at each yearly business meeting.

Members present gave an update on the situation in their country. Recent relevant developments regarding heritage and agriculture & forestry were discussed. We agreed to try to organise a new session on EAA 2016 Vilnius. We discussed the possibilities of strengthening our working. A European project would be perfect for this, considering the main focus of the working group is to defend the archaeological heritage in a global European agricultural context. The problem is that the available frameworks are not easily applicable for our goals and what’s more important that nobody has time to develop this. We agree that we continue to monitor all developments and will try to make a bid if there is a suitable opportunity. The website needs an update too.

**Developments in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy and Forestry**

In 2014, most activities and energy of working group members was focused on the developments in their respective countries regarding the operationalisation of the heritage stewardship schemes within the new established Rural Development plan 2015-2020. In 2015 focus shifted to the monitoring of the delivered results and possible adaptations of measures.

**EAA Conference session 2015**

On the EAA Annual Meeting held in Glasgow, UK, the working group organised two Round Tables.

The first one was organised by Jonathan Wordsworth and Karl Cordemans and was called **Archaeology at rural crossroads; towards an integrated approach to Archaeological Heritage Management**. The programme was very interesting and the round table was well attended:

* ARCHAEOLOGY IN HIGH NATURE VALUE LANDSCAPES - OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES (Christine Grant DEPT. OF ARTS, HERITAGE AND THE GAELTACHT)
* FOLLOWING IN THE WAKE OF CANUTE: A PERSPECTIVE FROM THE NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK (Frank Green NEW FOREST NATIONAL PARK AUTHORITY)
* LOST LEGACIES: THE DIMINISHING RESOURCE OF ORKNEY’S COASTAL HERITAGE (Julie Gibson ORKNEY ISLANDS COUNCIL/UHI ORKNEY)
* METAL ARTEFACT DECAY AND THE BURIAL ENVIRONMENT: THE EFFECT OF LAND USE ON BURIED HERITAGE (Samantha Rowe UNIVERSITY HUDDERSFIELD)
* THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR ENGLAND 2015-2020 (Amanda Chadburn/Vince Holyoak HISTORIC ENGLAND)
* Discussion

The second one was supposed to be a follow up of a key conclusion of our Istanbul session, notably that the EAA working groups should seek  to share their experiences,  and explore the potential for creating a network of overlapping interests and synergies - for example,  with common themes such as 'landscape'.  This Round Table had to be cancelled due to illness of the lead-organiser Jon Humble (together with Karl Cordemans). The RT was called **Thinking Outside of Our Boxes - a round table for EAA working groups on shared experience, common themes and collaborative working**.

Since Jon Humble sadly passed away in December 2015, our plan to postpone it to Vilnius 2016 will not take place.

However, our idea was recycled by Sophie Hueglin, who will organise a Round Table in Vlinius on 'Political Strategies for the EAA', together with Jean-Olivier Gransard-Desmond and Raimund Karl. Our working group was invited for this, and Vince Holyoak will talk on behalf of the group about our experiences.

**EAA Conference session 2016**

John Raven (Historic Scotland) and Karl Cordemans (VLM) will organise a session in Vilnius called ‘Papers and Round Table Discussion: Successful Partnerships: Recognizing and Improving Heritage Management in Landscape and Rural Land Use Policy and Practice’.

**Future**

The Working group will continue to monitor the impact of European policy on heritage and to try to influence the decision making regarding this. We will try to broaden our geographical working field and actively seek collaboration by Member states in South and Eastern Europe.

**Karl Cordemans**

**Working Group Chair**

**Archaeologist**

**Vlaamse Landmaatschappij**

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1. Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Eire/Ireland, England, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Norway, Poland, Romania, Scotland, Sweden, Slovenia, Slovakia, Wales [↑](#footnote-ref-1)