UNITING SEA II
STONE AGE SOCIETIES IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION

Editors:
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Abstract
In this paper, the critical role of the archaeological excavation as a source of scientific knowledge is emphasised. The point of departure is the Neolithic on the island of Öland in the Baltic Sea. Examples from three recently performed small-scale excavations on the island are presented, in an attempt to illustrate that not only large-scale excavations in typical locations have a large scientific potential. In connection to this discussion, the concepts of deductive and inductive excavation strategies are presented. Furthermore, the importance of public outreach in connection to excavations is stressed, and it is argued that in order to reach a broader audience, we need to think outside the box and dare tread new paths in terms of communication media as well as in terms of the message we deliver. At one of the excavations exemplified, some effort was put into public outreach, and among other things participant public archaeology was conducted. This was very successful, and it is argued that most excavations situated close to settled areas have the potential of presenting to the public an exciting glimpse of archaeology as an important and valuable enterprise.

Keywords: Archaeological excavation, Öland, Neolithic, public outreach
Introduction

During the last ten or so years, I have spent much of my time thinking and writing about the Stone Age period of the island of Öland in the Baltic Sea. In the year 2006, this resulted in my PhD-thesis being publicly defended and published (Papmehl-Dufay 2006), in fact only a week ahead of the second Uniting Sea meeting in Stockholm, from which the present publication emanates. My presentation at the US II conference therefore quite naturally came to deal with the work of my thesis, which was a thorough study of the ceramic craft of the middle Neolithic Pitted Ware culture on the island of Öland in the Baltic Sea. Having published this work in one monograph and several papers since (Papmehl-Dufay 2006, 2007, 2010c), I have decided to change the content of my paper for this publication. During the last three years I have been professionally involved in contract archaeology on the island of Öland, and I was soon overwhelmed by the large scientific potential of even the smallest excavation. In a region where large-scale exploitations are few and most excavations are limited to small areas and low budgets, during a period of c. 1 ½ year at least six excavations produced material that to my mind have contributed in a profound way to our increased knowledge of the Stone Age on the island of Öland (Papmehl-Dufay 2008a, 2008b, 2008c, 2009a, 2009b, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Alexandersson & Papmehl-Dufay 2009). Most of these excavations were covered in one way or the other by local media, and the degree of interest shown by people in general regarding the excavations and the archaeological results was typically high. This inspired me to write this paper, in which the Neolithic of the island of Öland serves as departure in a discussion on the role of excavations and public outreach in archaeology as an academic discipline.

To most people, archaeology is the search for and investigation of material traces of past human societies and their inhabitants. As such, the archaeological excavation remains the ultimate symbol of this enterprise, and it is a fact that anywhere excavations are carried out close to settled areas, people will continuously pop by to ask questions and get a glimpse of living and working archaeologists and possibly even some newly discovered archaeological artefacts (Angelin Holmén 2001; Nordell 2006). But what is the main attraction? An often-made mistake is probably the assumption by archaeologists that what people are most eager about to learn is the absolute truth about the past. This is not to say that knowledge is unimportant to non-archaeologists. However, what makes archaeology as an enterprise so exiting and intriguing is the way towards to this knowledge, the journey itself, the exploration of ancient remains (see Svanberg & Hauptman Wahlgren 2007). In common thought (fig 1), the concept of “archaeological excavation” is associated with excitement, the unknown and treasure,
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and popular culture on the theme commonly enjoys an enormous response. No wonder why people stop by to get a glimpse of what is going on! It is only within the branch of archaeology itself, I think, that the role of excavations as a source for archaeological knowledge has been seriously questioned (e.g. Andersson 2005). At many universities in Sweden, a separation can be noted between non-digging, “thinking” archaeologists on the one hand and digging “non-thinkers” on the other, the former clearly enjoying a higher academic status than the latter. Outside the universities, however, this partition is problematic, since practically all excavations are carried out within the field of contract archaeology, where the demands for scientifically well-founded and research-oriented strategies are being more and more articulated (Paulsson & Svensson 2005; Johansson & Liliequist 2007). In this paper, I will argue that archaeological excavation, not least within contract archaeology, is absolutely crucial to archaeology as an academic discipline, and that the excavated archaeological source material can be utilised to a greater extent by researchers at the university departments than what is currently the case. I will also argue that public outreach in connection to excavations is central to the survival of the discipline, and that we must start to realise just what an enormous potential for public outreach the archaeological excavation has as a phenomenon. Practically without exception, all excavations can be seen as arenas for public communication, and since most excavations are in one way or another publicly funded we had better present a positive image of what we are doing. In the following, some examples from my own experience in this matter will be drawn upon. A brief outline of previous research on the Neolithic of Öland is followed by a presentation of three small excavations carried out by Kalmar county museum during the last couple of years, leading to a discussion on the issues of excavation and public outreach.
Öland
The island of Öland is situated between the island of Gotland and the Swedish mainland (fig 2). With an area of 1342 km², it is the fourth largest island in the Baltic Sea. It has an elongated shape and stretches from SSW to NNE, with a maximal length of c. 140 km and a maximal width of c. 20 km. The distance from the mainland nowadays ranges between 3 and 14 km, and given the slow land uplift and local topography, Öland would have been visible from the mainland during Neolithic times as well (Svensson 2001). The bedrock on Öland consists of Ordovician limestone, with Cambrian slate and sandstone on the western slopes. The most marked topographic feature is the “western escarpment” (Sw. västra landborgen), a cuesta ridge running along the western part of the island with its steep side to the west and its gentle slope to the east. The most elevated part of the western escarpment rises about 58 m above the present sea level, constituting the highest point on the island.

With some 14 000 recorded ancient sites and monuments and massive numbers of stray finds of prehistoric artefacts, Öland is the second most archaeologically productive region in Sweden, exceeded only by Gotland (Häggström 2003: 15). The most eye-catching among the prehistoric remains on Öland are the Iron Age ring forts and the innumerable Iron Age cemeteries spread all over the island. Some of the best-preserved Iron Age villages in Europe are to be found at Rosendal and Skäftekärr in the northernmost part of the island (Fallgren 2006), and besides these, the island is also famous for its large number of finds of Roman imports.

Öland has attracted archaeologists for a long time, but most studies have dealt with Iron Age and Medieval times, while practically no studies have concentrated on the Bronze Age and only very few have targeted Stone Age remains (Papmehl-Dufay 2006: 69ff). An interesting chronological development can be seen throughout the 20th century, where the amount of research in a very clear way reflects certain individual events and research initiatives. The number of archaeological studies dealing with Öland was altogether very small prior to the 1920s. During the first post-war decades, studies concerning the Middle Ages and historical times predominated, but from the 1960s onwards, Iron Age studies increased enormously. The upswing during the 1960s can probably at least in part be explained by the large-scale excavations first at Skedemosse (1959-1964) and then at Eketorp (1964-1971), the former a sacrificial bog from the pre-Roman and Roman Iron Age and the latter an Iron Age ring fort dating from c. AD 1 to AD 1300. Both of these were large excavation-based research projects that to a significant extent triggered further research on the time pe-
The National Heritage Board, in close collaboration with the National Labour Market Board, established an archaeological excavation office (Riksantikvarieämbetets Ölandskontor, RÖK) in Borgholm on Öland in 1969, and this institution was very active during the 1970s and early 1980s, conducting numerous rescue excavations and smaller research excavations, until the office was disbanded in 1984. In 1983, a large-scale project was launched with the purpose of bringing together and publishing all archaeological data on Iron Age burials on the island. The project “The Iron Age cemeteries of Öland” (Sw. Ölands järnåldersgravfält) was tightly connected to the RÖK both personally and archaeologically (Hagberg 1991). Headed by RÖK-directors Ulf-Erik Hagberg and Monica Rasch and involving a number of previously RÖK-employees, numerous excavations carried out by RÖK in the 1970s and early 1980s were included in the publications. The project resulted in four extensive volumes, and was finished in 2001 (Beskow-Sjöberg 1987; Hagberg et al. 1991; Hagberg et al. 1996; Rasch 2001).
Stone Age studies were few on Öland throughout the 20th century, which in no way reflects a lack of suitable material but rather reflects the powerful dominance of Iron Age studies as reviewed above. Furthermore, a general lack of archaeological research altogether can be noted in large parts of south-east Sweden, where the geographical distance from large universities and the lack of large development projects in recent decades have been decisive (Häggström 2003; see, however, Magnusson 2001).

A gap to be filled
The lack of modern Stone Age research as reviewed above was one of the main reasons for me to take on Öland as the area of study for my PhD in the year 2000, and also for the research programme “Us and Them” running from 2003-2006 and of which my PhD was a part (Larsson et al. 2005). It was clear from the start that the potential for especially Neolithic studies on Öland is enormous, not least when considering the favourable conditions for preservation of skeletal material due to the calcareous soils. In addition to this, the insular geographic setting was seen as an interesting subject to explore, in particular its influence on various cultural expressions (Papmehl-Dufay 2003). Despite this, up to the mid-1990s, very little research existed on the Stone Age of the island. In 1995, skeletal material from the Mysinge passage tomb was included in a study of stable isotopes and trace elements (Lidén 1995), and in 1996-1997 an extensive field-walking survey project (Sw. “Ölandsprojektet”) was carried out revealing a very large number of previously unknown sites of varying character and date spread all over the island (Alexandersson et al. 1996).

The Stone Age remains on the island of Öland have been presented in detail elsewhere (Papmehl-Dufay 2006). Suffice to say here that, at the onset of the Us and Them project in 2003, an extensive and varied but poorly investigated set of Neolithic remains existed including four megalithic tombs (of which only one excavated) in the parish of Resmo (Arne 1909), a Pitted Ware site with several burials at Köpingsvik (e.g. Schulze 1978) and a late Neolithic stone cist cemetery at Torsborg (Petersson 1956). In addition to these a very large number of sites had been identified through the field-walking surveys, but none were excavated to any great extent. At the turn of the 21st century the three above-mentioned sites thus constituted the main part of the archaeologically excavated Neolithic sites on Öland. Within the Us and Them project this was seen as somewhat of an obstacle, and in order to complement the sparsely available excavated material, two small-scale excavations were performed within the project, at the passage tomb in Mysinge and at the Pitted Ware site at Ottenby Royal Manor respectively (Alexandersson 2005; Papmehl-Dufay 2005). Furthermore, great effort was put
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into various scientific analyses of previously excavated material, in particular skeletal material and ceramic assemblages (Eriksson et al. 2008; Papmehl-Dufay 2006). In this way, new data was obtained from old assemblages through renewed “excavation” in the laboratory.

The laboratory analyses performed within the Us and Them project were highly successful, in that a large body of data became available for new interpretations regarding the Neolithic period of the island. It was shown that the shift to an agriculturally based diet took place at the onset of the late Neolithic rather than at the shift from the Mesolithic to the Neolithic (Kanstrup 2004; Eriksson et al. 2008), and the passage tomb at Mysinge was shown to have been in use for a period of more than 2000 years (Eriksson et al. 2008). The analysis of ceramic assemblages from Pitted Ware sites revealed a highly elaborate and varied craft, far from the simple and primitive image presented by common textbooks on the subject (Papmehl-Dufay 2006). The laboratory work of the Us and Them project also triggered further studies on bone chemistry and biomolecular archaeology, some of which are still in progress. In 2008 a large study of stable isotopes and ancient DNA in which skeletal material from Öland played an important role was published (Linderholm 2008), and currently a study of strontium isotopes is carried out at Stockholm university (Fornander et al. manuscript).

From this it can be stated that the last 10 or so years have seen a renewed interest in research on the Neolithic of Öland, and especially laboratory analyses have been highly successful and productive. The number of excavated sites was still very few at the concluding of the Us and Them project in 2006, however, and especially settlement patterns and technology therefore remained to a large extent hidden.

**Even the smallest excavation...**

The last couple of years have seen an increase in construction activities on Öland and especially around the city of Kalmar on the neighbouring Swedish mainland. A growing number of large companies are establishing themselves in the Kalmar region, and in certain areas on Öland a marked increase in the building of new houses can be noted. These activities are clearly reflected in the number of excavations performed, although most of these are small-scale ones and often stay at the level of trial excavation and site evaluation. Still, even the smallest excavation occasionally gives surprisingly important results, and thus from the many small-scale excavations carried out on Öland during the last c. 2 years at least six have contributed to a significant extent to our knowledge on the Stone Age of the island. Below, I will summarize three of these, all of which I was in charge of myself.
Kolstad, parish of Köping
The first case I will draw upon was an archaeological trial excavation in late October 2007 at Kolstad, in the parish of Köping on the mid-western part of the island (Papmehl-Dufay 2008a). The area to be investigated covered some 100 000 m² of ploughed fields, and hosted two previously recorded sites with finds of knapped flint and a few stone axes of late Neolithic types. The trial excavation aimed at determining the presence and state of preservation of any prehistoric remains below the plough soil, and was conducted by means of the digging of test trenches with a mechanical excavator.

A total of 71 trenches were placed at spaces of 25-50 m covering the entire area, including the two topographically elevated recorded sites as well as the shallow area in between. Sunken features were found below the plough soil at both sites, although severely damaged by agricultural activities. The area outside the two sites was characterised by a lower topography, and along the southern and eastern edge of the site Raä 410 an ancient stream could be seen as a distinct shade in the surface of the ploughed field (fig. 3). Two trenches were placed 50 m apart within the extent of the ancient stream, and below the plough soil in both trenches a black layer of high organic content emerged representing the successive overgrowth of the stream. In one trench, this layer was dug through, and at a depth of c. 0.8 m from the surface a brownish layer appeared, containing large amounts of extremely well preserved and in some cases clearly worked wood. The wood-bearing layer was dug through, reaching a depth of almost 2 m below the surface and containing large amounts of wood through the whole sequence (fig. 4). At the bottom of the trench a circular wooden vessel c. 0.6 m in diameter was found, unfortunately almost completely destroyed by the digging machine. Two samples, from a wooden plank and the wooden vessel, were submitted to 14C-dating, and the results clearly showed that the wooden artefacts are of late Neolithic date at around 2100-1900 cal BC, i.e. broadly contemporary with the two sites.

At first it was assumed that the wood-bearing layer was contextually connected to the ancient stream, and thus that the geographical limits of the two were identical. This would mean that we had located a late Neolithic wetland site, at least 50 x 10 m in size and around 1.5 m in depth, containing large amounts of extremely well preserved organic material and situated right next to a contemporary but severely damaged settlement site. In order to further investigate the nature of the find, a brief test-drill survey was conducted in January 2008, and it was soon realised that the wood-bearing layer was of a much more local character than was assumed at first. At the present, the most probable interpretation is
that the deep-dug trench accidentally was placed right into a late Neolithic well or some similar feature, and that the wooden vessel encountered at the bottom of the trench is connected to the function of this feature. It is still not known whether more similar features occur in the vicinity, although this seems likely. Hopefully further excavations at this site will be made possible some time in the future.
Björnhovda, parish of Torslunda
The second case concerns an archaeological site evaluation and a following excavation performed in August and November 2008, just west of the village Björnhovda, in the parish of Torslunda on west Öland. The area to be investigated measured some 30,000 m², and hosted two previously recorded Stone Age sites with finds of knapped flint. The trial excavation in August aimed at delimiting the occurrence of prehistoric settlement remains below the plough soil, and it was soon realised that buildings and agricultural activities in historical times had almost completely destroyed the two Stone Age sites. In the shallow area right in the middle between the two sites, however, one of the test trenches revealed a burial containing a thick-butted stone axe and a hammer axe of late Neolithic type placed close together (fig. 5). No skeletal remains were preserved, but based on the shape and size of the dugout feature and the placing of the axes in the north-eastern end, a possible interpretation would be that the burial had contained a body in crouched position with head placed in the north-east (fig. 6).
In November 2008 a c. 3000 m² large area around the burial was stripped in order to further investigate the context of the burial. Apart from a few flakes of porphyry and one hearth, the only features found were another four potential burials situated in a cluster close to the southeast of the first burial. None of the features contained any clear grave goods or skeletal remains, but the size of the features (c. 1.6-3.0 x 0.9-1.2 m) and their position clearly suggest that we have located a cemetery, at least partly from the late Neolithic (Papmehl-Dufay 2009a). The find has important implications for our understanding of burial practice on the island during the late Neolithic. With the Björnhovda find, the number of sites with possible late Neolithic burials recorded on the island so far is 12 (Papmehl-Dufay manuscript). The variation is considerable, including classical stone cists as well as earth burials, burials in a passage tomb and a cremation.

Figure 6. Plan drawing of burial 1 at Björnhovda. The hatched lines indicate trenches from the site evaluation. After Papmehl-Dufay 2009a.
**Runsbäck, parish of Torsunda**

The third case is an excavation in 2008 of two settlement sites at Runsbäck, parish of Torsunda, just 2 kilometres to the southwest of the Björnhovda burial on west Öland. The settlement sites at Runsbäck are located only c. 200 m apart, and were identified through an archaeological trial excavation in 2007. The final excavation was undertaken in July and October 2008, during a total of c. 6 weeks with a workforce of 2-4 archaeologists. At the onset of the excavation in July, the sites were known to host rich traces of settlement remains from large parts of the Neolithic, seemingly with an emphasis on the periods middle Neolithic B and the late Neolithic.

The excavation has generated a large assemblage of Stone Age finds covering a period of nearly 6000 years (Alexandersson & Papmehl-Dufay 2009; Papmehl-Dufay 2010b). The true extent of this chronological scope was not realised until at a rather late stage in the process. While the excavation in July mostly confirmed the initial impression with an emphasis on settlement remains dating from the MN B and the LN at both sites (c. 2800-1800 BC), the continued excavation in October managed to get a more nuanced view involving a greater time span and a certain difference between the two sites. At both sites Mesolithic as well as Neolithic settlement remains could be identified, and among the Neolithic remains several distinctive phases were present. At the eastern site, the excavation in October revealed a much more articulated presence of early Neolithic remains of TRB character than was realised in July. Within a limited area c. 20 x 20 m an extreme wealth of finds and sunken features was recorded, and as work progressed it was realised that the area contained the traces of a two-aisled long house, at least c. 12 m long and about 5 m wide (fig. 7). The house is oriented approximately in east-west direction, and the eastern end has been destroyed by modern activities. The remaining traces consist of three large post-holes representing roof-bearing uprights and a number of smaller post-holes interpreted as part of the wall construction. Typologically the house at Runsbäck is in good accordance with early Neolithic houses of so-called Mossby type, which have been identified in southern and central Sweden during the last couple of decades (Larsson 1992; Artursson et al. 2003). Few houses of this type have been found in southeast Sweden, and none previously on the island of Öland.

The area around the house at Runsbäck is very rich in finds clearly reflecting several periods of occupation, all of which should not be connected to the use of the house. Two microliths and one handle core represent activities on the site during the Mesolithic, and only c. 20 m to the west a late Neolithic flint dagger was found during the excavation in July. The main part of the finds around the
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house is of typical early Neolithic TRB character, however, and includes decorated TRB pottery, transverse flint arrowheads, fragments of thin-butted flint axes and a saddle shaped quern stone (fig. 8). The latter is of special interest, since it is a type commonly found on EN TRB sites in eastern central Sweden and in Demark (Lidström Holmberg 2004). Stylistically the bulk of the pottery around the house can be dated to the second half of the early Neolithic at c. 3600-3300 BC, which is in good accordance with results from 14C-dates of hazelnut shells from the site, as well as the date of Mossby-houses in general.

Figure 7. Plan drawing of the Runsbäck house (Alexandersson & Papmehl-Dufay 2009).

Figure 8. TRB pottery from the area around the house at Runsbäck (Alexandersson & Papmehl-Dufay 2009).
Archaeological excavations and public outreach

Traditionally, communication of archaeological knowledge to the public has been conducted mainly in museum exhibitions and textbooks. The stereotype image of the archaeological expert telling people what life was like in the past is a strong one, but also one that has been severely criticised in recent years. It has been argued that archaeologists’ communication with non-archaeologists is characterised by a static, one-way communication, lacking the important dialogue and leading only to an increase in the gap between the expert and the layman and in effect a mental separation of people from their cultural heritage (Karlsson & Nilsson 2001). Others have rightly argued that, at least in a field situation, communication between an archaeologist and a group of people is far from static, and almost by definition dialogical in character (Nordell 2006: 28ff). On practically every excavation I have participated in or conducted, curious and interested people have passed by asking questions about what we are doing and what we have found. Once the dialogue is running, the range of questions and critical reflections is more or less unlimited. Communication in this sort of interaction is thus completely dialogical, which makes it fruitful as a platform for engagement and getting people emotionally involved in the archaeological enterprise and their cultural heritage. As stated in the introduction, what engages people the most is not the archaeological knowledge per se but the intriguing methods that we use to reach it, i.e. the excavation and the successive analytical work (which in effect could be seen as a continued excavation indoors). It is clear to me that the potential for public mediation and outreach at an archaeological excavation is more or less constantly high, and mainly dependent not on the scientific quality of the archaeological site but rather on physical access and weather conditions. In some cases it seems that it is not the archaeological site or artefact that is the main attraction but the archaeologist, in which case any excavation will do. In my view, public outreach in the broader sense is of immense importance and a much-needed chance to provide a positive image of archaeology as an enterprise of importance to society at large. This is also very much in line with the proclaimed direction for contract archaeology in the 21st century, as officially stated during the last couple of years (Paulsson & Svensson 2005).

The three excavations briefly presented above were all of a very limited scale, compared to the enormous projects in connection to new railroads and motorways that occasionally make it out to the public (see Stenbäck this volume). The excavation at Kolstad only lasted a few days, and the excavation at Björnhovda was mainly undertaken in late November when weather conditions were far from ideal. The Runsbäck excavation however lasted several weeks, and was partly undertaken during summer when tourists as well as locals on holiday were
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present nearby. It was decided early on that some effort was to be put into public outreach in connection with the ongoing excavations. In July, the local schools were on holiday and thus could not be invited, and instead we invited local kindergartens with groups of smaller children to come for a special tour of the excavation. We also announced in the local newspaper that families were welcome to visit the excavation at a given date and time, and that everyone was welcome on a guided tour the same evening. For the kindergarten and family tours, an archaeologist specialised in pedagogy was hired, and together with myself spent a day receiving more than a hundred children and parents eager to learn about archaeology, the Stone Age and our recent discoveries. Apart from trying replicas of Stone Age clothing and holding real archaeological artefacts from the museum collections in their hands, all attending children (and, as it turned out, their parents too) got a chance to try some real excavation. For this purpose I had spared the remaining half of a large Neolithic refuse pit excavated and documented the day before. This proved to be a huge success, and children as well as parents could hardly stop searching for tiny flints and potsherds in the dark sandy soil. Another c. 100 persons attended the guided tour in the evening, and thus in the end more than 200 people attended the relatively small effort on public outreach at Runsbäck. Furthermore, during the excavation in October, a local school contacted us and was given a special one-hour guided tour after the excavation was finished. The opportunity to physically enter the first Stone Age house to have been excavated on Öland was hugely appreciated, and the visit resulted in an illustrated full-page review written by the children themselves in a local newspaper a few weeks later (see Alexandersson & Papmehl-Dufay 2009: 31). Altogether, it was clear that the archaeological excavation as a phenomenon was something highly attractive and exciting to both children and grown-ups. A few years later, most people attending the activities that day at Runsbäck will probably not remember from what period the finds were or how we interpreted the site. But they will never forget the experience of actually digging up an ancient potsherd or flint scraper, or the feeling of holding a 5000 year-old flint axe in their hand.

The activities arranged at Runsbäck could be described as participant public archaeology, or just public archaeology (Svanberg & Hauptman Wahlgren 2007). The focus here is on the dialogical communication and participation, and to get people involved in the exploration of doing archaeology. “Archaeologist” is an often-heard answer to the question “what did you dream of becoming when you were a child?”. It is the exploration of the unknown past that inspires people, and not the image of the authority on Neolithic potsherds. This fact is something that we could benefit from in situations of archaeological public out-
reach. From my experience, the concept of participant public archaeology is a given hit at any time: even if the rain is pouring down, at the end of the day you will have to force people to stop exploring the ways of the past through doing archaeology. However, there are a lot of other ways that public outreach can be conducted, besides the traditional exhibitions and textbooks.

Excavations: expect the unexpected
Despite the increased interest during the last decade in research on the Stone Age of Öland, up till recently very few sites had been excavated to any greater extent in modern times. Still the number of excavated sites is very low, and the three excavations presented above do not change the overall picture that more sites need to be investigated. However, they do show that small-scale excavations can generate knowledge of large scientific potential, and also that it can be fruitful to excavate not only in “typical” localities. The finding of the burial and possible cemetery at Björnhovda is a healthy reminder of the importance of what could be termed deductive excavation. This refers to the practice of using the excavation to try and falsify established hypotheses, instead of verifying them. If the common archaeological sense is that all late Neolithic burials were located on elevated sandy ridges, the best way to test this is to search for burials in all possible locations other than sandy ridges. The inductive alternative would be to concentrate your search for burials in the locations that fit best with the preconceived image. This might result in further burials being found, but certainly not in any mind-blowing and revolutionary findings altering the established scientific knowledge in any profound way. Still, my highly subjective impression is that this is by far the most common strategy in archaeological surveys and trial excavations throughout large parts of Sweden. The excavations at Kolstad and Björnhovda both yielded important results that could not have been predicted based on what was known archaeologically beforehand. In both cases the subject to be investigated was Stone Age settlement sites, and in both cases these were situated in topographically elevated localities on sandy ancient beach ridges. In these parts of Sweden, such localities are often regarded as favourable sites in terms of prehistoric settlement activities, and thus surveys typically tend to favour similar localities in their search for sites, possibly resulting in an overrepresentation of sites located in topographically elevated positions on sandy ancient beach ridges. Furthermore, in some cases during trial excavation and site evaluation, such localities are also favoured since they are deemed to have the largest archaeological potential. With the terminology proposed above this strategy is based on inductive excavation. This will inevitably result in areas of “lower archaeological potential” seldom being investigated, and the sites that are excavated are those situated in “typical” localities. I find this situation a bit
disturbing, and the excavations at Kolstad and Björnhovda clearly shows the potential of a deductive excavation strategy including not only the “typical” localities but also more non-typical ones in site evaluation and trial excavation. Late Neolithic earth graves are generally believed to be located along eskers or some other elevated position in relation to the nearby surrounding area (e.g. Björnhem & Säfvestad 1989: 128). Is this because they are actually most common in such localities, or is it because we only look there?

Following the three examples presented above, it can easily be argued that even the smallest excavation can be of large importance in the process of generating archaeological knowledge. Of course the overwhelming majority of excavations will not reveal the missing link in terms of finds or features, but it is my firm belief that every now and again we will come across things that in one way or another has the potential of altering our image of the past and contributing with new archaeological knowledge.

Public outreach: think outside of the box
As technology develops, so does the opportunity for archaeology of reaching people in new ways. During the last 10 or so years, archaeological public outreach has seen an enormous methodological development, from the traditional exhibition/textbook/lecture model to an immense variety of means of getting people involved and interested in archaeology. At Kalmar county museum, Cultural Heritage Pedagogy has been an established concept for several decades, and the development of new methods for teaching and experiencing the cultural heritage is continuing (Angelin Holmén 2001; Westergren 2006). Here, focus is on experiencing the cultural heritage on site in the landscape, and through the aid of acting and imagination. This is a fruitful way to make the experience of archaeological sites appealing, and offers a platform for discussion and learning useful in teaching as well as in cultural heritage tourism.

The Internet offers a completely new arena for public outreach in archaeology; one that I think has only begun to be explored by archaeologists. In Sweden, archaeology blogs have seen an increase in popularity during the last couple of years, and in connection to large excavations it is now commonplace to set up a blog where the results of the excavation can be presented continuously. This is a useful and most welcome addition to guided tours and printed information at the site of excavation, and has the potential of reaching a much larger crowd than activities limited to a geographical location (i.e. the site of excavation). Another advantage with the blog as a medium for public outreach is the opportunity for dialogue in combination with the possibility of relating the discussion...
to images and maps etc; through the comment application, readers can discuss with the writers and thus a dialogue similar to that on site can develop. Another digital forum that has not been as widely applied in archaeology yet, but which has great potential for this field, is film-clips presented on Youtube.com. With relatively simple and inexpensive tools, it is today possible to produce short films and at no cost at all to present them on the Internet for anyone with a computer to watch. For this to work efficiently, we should use our creativity and think outside of the box. A film clip showing everyday work at an excavation may be appealing to some, but it most probably will not reach people not already into archaeology. However, if we focus on the exploration and present the archaeological excavation as an adventure, or if we use the knowledge that we have reached to write emotional and reflexive stories and present them as film clips, I think that Youtube.com has great potential in reaching a new audience. Surely there are other new tools to explore in this field, and I think that it is necessary for us to dare to tread new paths in order to fully utilise and develop the potential of archaeological public outreach.
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