

Humans and Biosphere Commission
(formerly Commission on Palaeoecology and Human Evolution)

February, 2009, President's Report

Gary Haynes (Commission President)

University of Nevada, Reno

Officers of the Commission, 2007-2011:

President: Gary Haynes (USA) gahaynes@unr.edu

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Secretary: David Taylor (Ireland) taylor@tcd.ie

Alphabetical list of corresponding members 2007-11, as of 07/07 – to be updated 2009:

Allen, Judy (UK)

Batterbee, Rick (UK)

Birks, John (Norway)

Brugal, Jean-Philip (France)

Bunting, Jane (UK)

Chauhan, Parth (USA/India)

Cooper, Alan (Australia)

Fernandez-Jalvo, Yolanda (Spain)

Fyfe, Ralph (UK)

Gao, Xing (China)

Goebel, Ted (USA)

Hicks, Sheila (Finland)

Huntsman-Mapila, Philippa (Botswana)

Jillani, Ngalla (Kenya)

Kubo, Sumiko (Japan)

Lamb, Henry (UK)

Langdon, Peter (UK)

Laukhin, Stanislaus (Russia)

Lejju Bunny, Julius (Uganda)

Lu, Houyuan (China)

Magri, Donatella (Italy)

Manthi, Fredrick Kyalo (Kenya)

Mishra, Sheila (India)

Mitchell, Fraser (Ireland)

Niven, Laura (Germany)

Norton, Christopher (USA/China)

Ono, Akira (Japan)

Pajakowski, Jaroslaw (Poland)

Palombo, Maria Rita (Italy)

Pappu, Shanti (India)

Robison, Mark (UK)

Schreve, Danielle (UK)

Schulte, Lothar (Spain)
 Straus, Lawrence Guy (USA)
 Szeroczyńska, Krystyna (Poland)
 Tong, Haowen (China)
 van Kolfschoten, Thijs (Netherlands)
 Whitehouse, Nicki (UK)
 Wojtal, Piotr (Poland)
 Wooller, Matthew (USA)
 Zhou, Liping (China)

The Commission-sponsored projects of 2004-08 (listed below) incorporate themes that are geographically and temporally wide-ranging, but they also share important characteristics -- they are concerned with how animals and plants adapted to changing palaeoenvironments, and how humans or human ancestors adapted culturally and biologically during sometimes challenging periods of climatic instability. All the projects are multidisciplinary and involve younger colleagues.

<u>Project No.</u>	<u>Awardee</u>	<u>Project Theme/Title</u>
0401	Deckers	Eastern Mediterranean/ Near Eastern geoarchaeology
0402	Dodson	Human dispersals in Australasia
0403	Lee-Thorp	Human biogeography in Pleistocene Africa
0404	Schreve	EuroMam 2004 excursion, UK
0504	Hicks	Pollen monitoring programme
0505	Cooper	Global megafaunal extinctions and biogeography
0506	Goebel	Human colonization of Arctic, Subarctic Siberia/Beringia
0601	Jillani	Palaeoenvironments during the first "Out of Africa"
0701	Lejju	African Great Lakes human-environment interactions
0702	Mapila	Integrating regional African climate change
0703	Chauhan	Hominid evolution in India
0807	Ono	E. Asian OIS 3-2 human dispersals and palaeoenvironments
0813	Courty	Integrating long archeostratigraphic records

 Reports Received on 2008 Projects 0807 and 0813 (0813 is requesting continued funding – an evaluation is in a separate 2009 file of PAHE applications):

0807: Report distributed to ExCom, with summary of activities and an accounting of funds spent. The project's first meeting was June 2008 in Tokyo; publication of papers is planned in *Quaternary International*. A second meeting was scheduled for 2010, but continued funding is not requested in the report.

0813: Report distributed to ExCom, with summary of activities and an accounting of funds spent. Another €2,000 is requested for an Oct. 2009 workshop in the project's second year; a third workshop is planned for 2010.

2008 Reported Activities of the PAHE's Working (or International Focus) Groups:

1. Human colonization and paleoenvironmental contexts in subarctic and arctic Siberia and Beringia. *CONTACTS:* Ted Goebel goebel@tamu.edu , Stanislaus Laukhin

Very active network of American and Russian researchers. Another major summit conference and workshop is in the pipeline for 2010 (INQUA support will be sought); a book is in progress (papers from the 2006 INQUA Workshop and a 2008 SAA symposium) and scheduled to be submitted to a publisher in May 2009; editors: Ted Goebel and Ian Buvit.

2. Hominin dispersals and palaeoenvironmental contexts in the Indian subcontinent.

CONTACTS: Parth Chauhan pchauhan@indiana.edu , Sheila Mishra sheila.mishra@gmail.com

Active researchers, two core groups. An INQUA grant (0703) was unclaimed by the submitter (Chauhan), but a revised proposal has been submitted this year. The prior INQUA award was unclaimed because adequate support came from another agency (Wenner-Gren) for one of two planned workshops, and the second planned workshop had to be re-thought because another team of Indian researchers was already active in the proposed study area (Thar Desert).

3. Quantitative reconstructions of palaeoclimate, vegetation, landscapes, and ecology from biological terrestrial proxies. *CONTACTS:* Nicki Whitehouse

N.Whitehouse@qub.ac.uk , Pete Langdon p.g.langdon@soton.ac.uk

Individual and collegial research progressing; no coordinated group activity reported. In 2007 and 2008, the group leaders endeavored to establish whether a working group is of wider interest to the community, and asked interested correspondents to brainstorm about issues and problems facing palaeoecologists involved with palaeoenvironmental reconstruction, and especially the quantification of terrestrial data.

Sub-group: Palaeoecology and the conservation of biodiversity. *CONTACT:* Fraser Mitchell fraser.mitchell@tcd.ie

A group newsletter ("Bridging the Gap") is available to inform about the activities of this lively group.

4. Late Quaternary faunal events in Eurasia. *CONTACTS:* Jean-Philip Brugal

brugal@msh.univ-aix.fr , Maria Rita Palombo mariarita.palombo@uniroma1.it , Danielle Schreve danielle.schreve@rhul.ac.uk , Thijs van Kolfschoten t.van.kolfschoten@arch.leidenuniv.nl

Very active research, at both individual and group levels; members of the group have produced useful database websites (e.g., <http://www.archeozoo.org/en>) and networking websites (e.g., <http://www.euromam.cnr.it/index/index.htm>). J.-P. Brugal and M. R. Palombo are finishing the editing of papers from their symposium at Cairns, to appear in *Quaternary International*, and working with a group of eight people from France and Italy on a joint-project (CNRS-CNR), "The Quaternary Evolution of Mammal Communities, Climatic Variations, and Human Dispersal in the Mediterranean Region." An effort is also being made to organize with different southern European researchers a database on mammals from MIS5-MIS2, to complete work undertaken with Italian colleagues. T. van Kolfschoten is leading a major project funded by the Dutch

government in cooperation with Russian colleagues, "The Collapse of the Mammoth Steppe Ecosystem," investigating faunal evolution 40-8 ka in northern Eurasia, including Beringia. A website <http://mammothsteppe.com> is available with more details.

5. Human colonization and paleoenvironmental contexts in China, Mongolia, and adjoining East Asia. *CONTACTS:* *Christopher Norton* cnorton@hawaii.edu, *Gao Xing* gaoxing@ivpp.ac.cn, *Akira Ono* ono@bcomp.metro-u.ac.jp

Active coordinated networks in China, Japan, and the USA. Papers from a symposium at the 2007 INQUA Congress will be published in a forthcoming *Quaternary International*. INQUA Project 0807 led by A. Ono ("Palaeoenvironmental Changes and Human Dispersals in North and East Asia During OIS3 and OIS2") was launched in June in Japan, at a meeting set around the theme "Palaeolithic Sites in the Japanese Islands: Distribution, Chronology, and Environment." The proceedings are being prepared for publication in *Quaternary International*. A 2009 meeting will be held in Beijing in connection with the 80th anniversary of the discovery of the first skull of Peking Man (go to http://www.ivpp.ac.cn/c/en/news/2008-11/19/news_795.html)

6. Holocene palaeoenvironmental changes in Africa. *CONTACTS:* *David Taylor* taylor@tcd.ie, *Julius Lejju Bunny* lejju2002@yahoo.co.uk

Very active core of researchers. EAQUA was established with INQUA funding in 2007 and a new application has been submitted from EAQUA member M. Umer to support a 2009 EAQUA workshop in Ethiopia. Interest has been expressed by another core of African researchers to establish a WAQUA (West African Quaternary Association) in 2009, and an application for INQUA support has been received. Working Group leader D. Taylor reports the following African research activity in 2008: (1) Environmental change research on the Virunga volcanoes of central Africa. Cores of Holocene-aged sediments collected from two sites (with several AMS dates) are now being processed for their microfossil and geochemical contents; and (2) an ongoing EU FW7-funded CREATING project supported a highly successful multi-venue field training workshop in late November-December 2008 for graduate research students from eastern African and European universities. The intention is to apply for funding from the EU FW 7 to support a much larger and more research-intensive programme.

7. The post-LGM Late Glacial: rapidly shifting palaeoenvironments and human responses. *CONTACT:* *Lawrence Guy Straus* lstraus@unm.edu

Individual and collegial research is progressing; Working Group leader L. G. Straus is now in the early stages of planning a symposium on the Magdalenian of Europe and adaptations to the Tardiglacial, with Denise Leesch of Neuchatel, for the 2011 INQUA Congress in Berne, and possibly a pair of symposia in the next two years on the theory of a Solutrean-Clovis connection, with David Meltzer (SMU) and Ted Goebel (TAMU).

8. The population genetics of extinct flora and fauna. *CONTACTS:* *Donatella Magri* Donatella.magri@uniroma1.it, *Alan Cooper* alan.cooper@adelaide.edu.au

Leader A. Cooper and colleagues are engaged in collaborative research, and are submitting grant applications to support larger international and multidisciplinary efforts.