

## REPORT of the South West Implement Petrology Group 2007/8

1. The group offers a service of sampling and identifying the source rock from which stone implements have been made. This is still adding to our knowledge of settlement and social practice in the period roughly 2500 to 1500 BC.

### 2. The collection

Four samples of Neolithic/Early Bronze Age implement have been recorded. A third slide cabinet has been purchased to allow the slides to be sorted in full order by petrological source and to provide capacity for growth. It is intended that the records be digitised and published on the web.

### 3. Research

The group is collaborating with the Camborne School of Mines (University of Exeter) and English Heritage to design a funded investigation into defining characteristics of source rocks more precisely so that the information represented in the petrological samples can be better used.

One of the objects, working with the Royal Institute of Cornwall and the Cornwall Archaeological Unit, is to see if such techniques will help identify the sources of Cornish greenstone.

The group also participated in the formulation of the assessment and research agenda of the South West Archaeological Research Framework which has just been published in softback form as Webster, C.J. (ed.) 2008, *The Archaeology of South West England* but is easier to access on [www.somerset.gov.uk/heritage](http://www.somerset.gov.uk/heritage).

Member museums who participated in the study on sources of jadeite will be sad to hear that one of the two sources, an outcrop high and remote in the Alps has been pirated. Despite being given statutory protection it has been blown up and every usable fragment removed, presumably by helicopter.

4. The group was pleased to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> birthday of Nicholas Thomas, a former Chairman and former President of the Federation.

### 5. Workshop

The group is organising a workshop to be held in the autumn designed for curators of archaeology collections, great and small, centred on the theme of using archaeological evidence to demonstrate the changing shape and climate of the South West over the last five millennia. At the beginning of this period membership of an hypothetical Federation would of course have come from a much wider geographical area, especially along the south coast.

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