

THE SOUTH AMERICAN ARCHAEOLOGY SEMINAR

This seminar was held on the 8th December at the Institute of Latin American studies having been jointly organised by Gill Hay of the Oxford Archaeology Field Unit and part time PhD student at the Institute of Archaeology and Tim Holden ex. of the Institute of Archaeology, now at the Museum of London. The intention was to provide an informal forum where those with a continuing interest in South America could meet to present recent work and exchange news and ideas.

We were pleased to be able to attract a varied group of speakers who gave 20 minute presentations on a wide range of subjects orientated towards the archaeology of Peru, Chile and Bolivia. The Institute of Archaeology was well represented with talks by John Merkel, Michael Czwarno on copper production at Baten Grande and the redefinition of the Wari empire respectively. Ann Kendall gave a resume of some of the most important aspects of the influential Cusichaca project and introduced the on going exploratory work in the nearby Patacancha valley. Another ex Institute person, Bill Sillar, gave a graphic account of some of his ethnographic work on ceramic manufacture in the Cuzco Region. This should form part of his PhD which he is taking at the University of Cambridge.

The second half of the seminar was devoted more to the environmental side of the subject starting with an innovative piece of work by John Rick on prehistoric hunter-gatherer subsistence in the Peruvian Puna. Dr. Rick is presently over from the USA a guest of Cambridge University. Claudio Vita-Finzi (University College London) gave a thought provoking presentation on tectonic uplift on the Peruvian Coast while Richard Smith (University of Leeds) recounted some of his earlier work on the important but fast disappearing sunken field systems on the Peruvian Coast. The session was rounded off by Tim Holden who presented his work on prehistoric diet in the Tulan Quebrada, Chile - one aspect of his recently completed PhD thesis.

We felt that the seminar was generally well received and it was decided that they should continue to be held every six months, at the Institute of Latin American Studies if possible. We hope to keep the format informal, the topics varied and to widen the scope into other areas of South America. The next seminar will therefore be held on the 27th April 1991. All are welcome and if anyone would like to be included on the mailing list please contact Tim Holden at the Environmental Department, the Museum of London, London Wall, Lond EC2.

Tim Holden