AML Rpt 3798 SITE 1648

Anglezarke, Lancashire.

June 30th 1982

The locality was visited by Drs Marijke van der Veen, Martin Jones and James Rackham. An area of Anglezarke Moor was walked, the ground covered included, Hurst Hill, Rushy Brow, The Flat, Limestone Clough and Round Loaf Tumulus. Surface erosion on Hurst Hill and the downslope side of Rushy Brow is extensive and the superficial peat covering and vegetated surface has been lost over large expanses of ground exposing a considerable number of stone accumulations and features. In many places this erosion has proceeded so far that it is no longer possible to carry out environmental studies although it may be that a buried land surface still survives under one or two of the larger cairns. The peat cover varied greatly in thickness but appeared to be rapidly eroding in many areas with an appreciable slope; to the east of Hurst Hill erosion appeared to be less of a problem and the peat was where observable uo to two metres thick at least.

A proposed environmental study of the area is:

1. Present and buried soil profiles- description.
2. Peat stratigraphy.
3. Carbonised plant remains.
4. Pollen analysis.

1. Soil Profiles.

There are a number of places where present and past soil profiles are exposed in the sections caused by erosion and run off. These could and should be recorded and described in conjunction with any archaeological survey of the moor. While walking the moor developed podsols were seen to be present in some areas but absent from others and an environmental record of the soil deterioration on the moor would be important.
Many of the eroded areas are unsuitable for this study since mush of the profile has been lost and erosion stabilised at the iron pan, but in those areas partially eroded or not yet eroded there is potentially a large source of information and any excavations on the moor must take into account the buried soil profiles beneath the features since these will be essential for a chronology of soil deterioration to be established.

2. Peat Stratigraphy.

A small number of peat sections are exposed on the moor and these could readily be supplemented by coring. Changes in the composition and degree of humification of the peat were observed and a study of these will be

important for establishing the pattern of change in environment and climate over the moor. In a section along Limestone Clough a birch wood layer was observed dividing the peat in the bed and suggesting a period of woodland regeneration on the moor. A programme of radiocarbon dating may permit the correlation of peat deposits across the moor and the specific timing of events.

3. Carbonised Material.

In the event of any excavations of potential settlements or hut platforms a sampling programme for the carbonised material must be established in advance. This would be developed through discussion but will be designed with the object of determining the presence and type of crop husbandry for any site.

4. Pollen Analysis.

Pollen analysis is likely to be the most time consuming and costly aspect of any environmental project on the moor. Since some pollen work has already been done in the area it may not be necessary to do anything further unless the work is developed into a large scale survey and excavation project at which time the project can be assessed against the already existing vegetational history data of the area.

In Summary:-

1. An archaeological survey of the area might usefully include a preliminary descriptive record of all exposed soil profiles (ancient and modern) and a study of the stratigraphy in the exposed peat sections. Neither of these studies is likely to be very time consuming.

2. In the event of excavation of any features, the soils beneath the stone cairns and other structures should be described.

3. If settlement sites are excavated both soils and samples for carbonised material must be studied.

4. A more comprehensive study of the peat stratigraphy with cores may be undertaken with a radiocarbon dating programme.

5. Pollen analysis can be undertaken should the work of the project suggest that this will produce useful additional information.

J. Rackham

August 1982.