

THE 2010 FIELD SEASON AT POINT RICHE, PORT AU CHOIX NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE

Robert J. Anstey, M.A.P. Renouf, P.J. Wells and D. Lavers
Memorial University of Newfoundland

*I*ntroduction

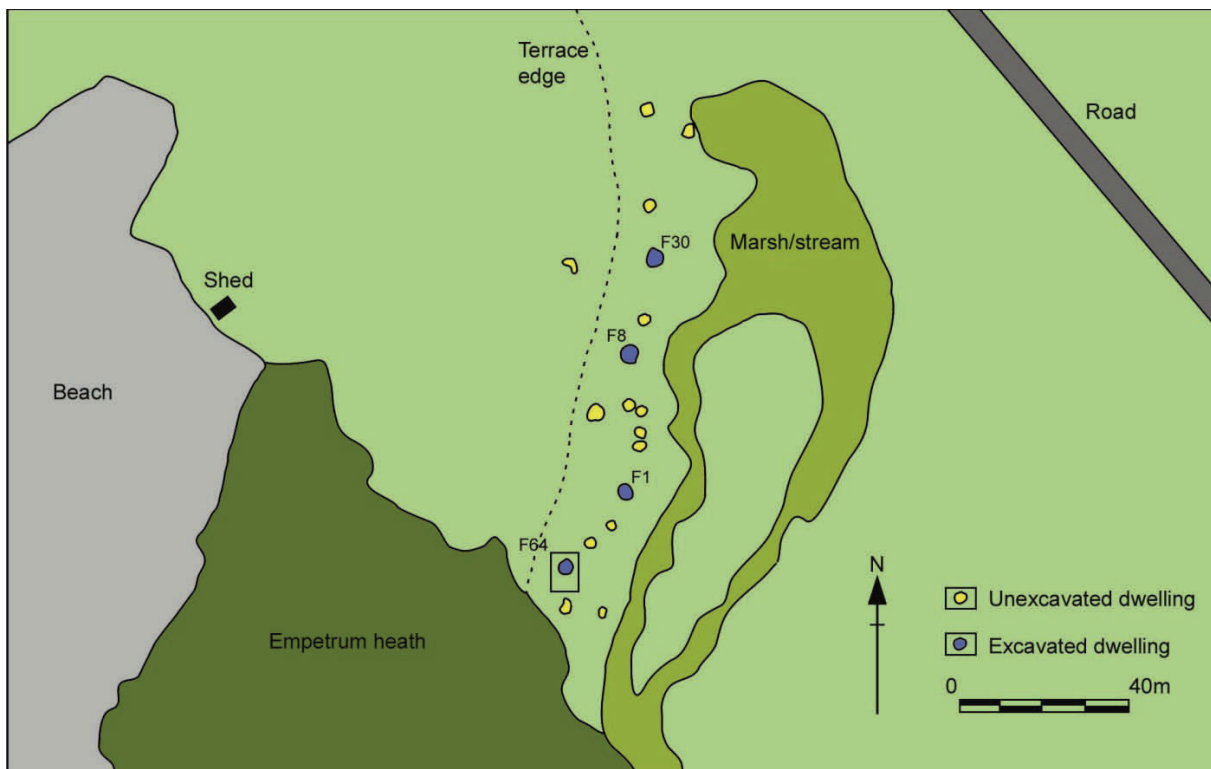
This past summer the Port au Choix Archaeology Project conducted excavations at Point Riche (EeBi-20), a large Dorset Palaeoeskimo site located near Port au Choix. The site consists of about 18 dwelling depressions -- identified through previous geophysical and archaeological work -- and dates to 1870-1330 cal BP (Anstey et al. 2011; Eastaugh 2002, 2003; Eastaugh and Taylor 2005; Renouf 1985, 1986, 1992). Prior to this field season, three depressions had been excavated. The results of those excavations indicated high intra-site architectural variability: one dwelling was identified as a winter dwelling, another was identified as a summer dwelling and a third was ambiguous.

The primary objective of the 2010 field season was to investigate a fourth depres-

sion, designated Feature 64, in the southern extent of the site (Fig. 1). A ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey of this depression indicated it had various geophysical features characteristic of other dwellings at the site. Our main aim in excavating this dwelling was to assess whether it was similar in architecture and function to the previously excavated dwellings.

The results of the 2010 field season, along with the existing Point Riche data, will form the basis for Anstey's MA research at Memorial University. This research focuses on the comparative analysis of architecture and lithic tool assemblages between Point Riche and Phillip's Garden (EeBi-1), the larger and better-known site that dates to 1990-1180 cal BP, with the overall goal of contributing to an understanding of the functional relation-

Figure 1 Map of Point Riche showing dwellings excavated and unexcavated.



ship between these two sites.

Results

We excavated a total of 70m², fully covering Feature 64 and an adjacent area. Once the sod layer was removed, we collected soil samples at 50cm intervals; analysis of these samples is ongoing (but see Guiry et al., this volume). The provenience of all features and artefacts was recorded with a Total Station; soil profiles and plan maps were also hand-drawn.

A total of 37 features was identified, which included a variety of pits, flake concentrations, stone arrangements, midden deposits and soil anomalies. Of particular note were: a thin 3 x 2.5m compacted soil berm (Fig. 2); a .90 x .38m arrangement of fire-heated rock (Fig. 3); and a shallow but widespread midden deposit. A total of 728 lithic artefacts was recovered from the Feature 64 area (e.g. Fig. 4); 14 organic artefacts were found (e.g. Fig. 5). Both the features and artefacts are undergoing

analysis as part of Anstey's MA research.

Three charcoal samples were sent to Beta Analytic for processing. In order to assess the association between Feature 64 and the midden, we selected two charcoal samples from the former and one from the latter. The two samples from Feature 64 produced similar dates of 1580 ± 40 BP (Beta-287751) and 1620 ± 40 BP (Beta-287752), while the midden sample produced a later date of 1490 ± 40 BP (Beta-287753). This indicates that the midden likely post-dates the occupation of the Feature 64 area; the later date from the midden also expands the site's temporal range, overlapping with the late phase occupation of Phillip's Garden.

Conclusions

The 2010 excavations at Point Riche revealed a relatively indistinct structure, with a variety of associated features. Like the other excavated dwellings at the site, occupation of Feature 64 seems to have been short-term,

Figure 2 Feature 64 looking northwest, showing soil berm outlined in yellow.





Figure 3 Arrangement of fire-heated rock.

Figure 4 Sample of endblades from Feature 64.





Figure 5 Bone pendants from Feature 64.

with low-investment architecture and widespread, shallow midden deposits. This contrasts with the situation at Phillip's Garden, which has much larger and well-built dwellings, and deep and discrete middens, which altogether indicate a much longer and more intensive occupation.

References

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