



Photo courtesy of Earthwatch

British archaeologist David Price Williams (with pointer) on a dig in Swaziland.

Man's history in Africa found

By Sandy Johnstone
Of the Emerald

British archaeologist David Price Williams tried to "fill in the gaps" on the evolution of man in prehistoric Africa with his recent expeditions to Swaziland.

Williams spoke Monday about man's evolution in Africa, specifically between 12,000 and 40,000 years ago. Many archaeologists claim there was no human life in Africa then, he said, because there was no substantial evidence.

But Williams and his team of workers have found evidence of man from about 14,000 years ago.

"We found most unexpected, exquisitely made stone tools" about half the size of a match,

he said. He said the tools are "extremely cleverly made," and when first made, sharper than steel. In the same layer of earth, he also found crudely-made lava flakes known as "Christmas boots."

These discoveries have not been found in the African interior before, although similar sites exist on the South African coast. Because Swaziland is inland, finding these types of tools have created discrepancies with other theories which said the "Christmas boot" people lived near the coast, Williams said.

Besides Williams' inland discoveries of the "Christmas boot" people, he found evidence of a group of people who used small pieces of quartz, about the size of a

thumbnail, to scrape animal skins. These "thumbnail scraper" people existed about 6,000 to 8,000 years ago, Williams estimated. The tiny tools were used to scrape skins about the same way razor blades are used today.

Excavating caves, as Williams did in his recent expeditions, is a slow, meticulous process. It has taken him and his team of workers about two years to excavate four square meters.

"We can't use bulldozers," he laughed.

Williams' presentation was jointly sponsored by the Arts and Humanities Committee, the Eugene Chapter of the Archaeological Institute of America and Earthwatch, a research volunteer recruiting organization in Belmont, Mass.

Campus survey wants student views on advising, drug use, relationships

A campus-wide survey is probing student attitudes toward academic advising, drug use, dating and courtship.

Six hundred survey booklets have been mailed to randomly selected undergraduates in an effort to gauge current opinions and behavior patterns, says Patty Gwartney-Gibbs, a sociology professor coordinating the survey.

Students who have received the booklets are urged to complete and return them to Gwartney-Gibbs before the Thanksgiving break. Results of the survey should be tabulated by next spring, she says.

Survey results will be used to determine whether students care about academic advice from peers or University counselors and will provide information on the amount and kind of

drugs being used by University students.

The dating and courtship section of the survey questions students on "sexual communications" rather than specific sexual behavior patterns, Gwartney-Gibbs says.

"There are hidden problems to courtship," she says. The survey will be used to help understand the nature of these problems.

This survey doesn't assume the male is the aggressor, making it different from previous surveys, Gwartney-Gibbs says. She adds that she knows of no other research being done in this area.

A graduate sociology class is conducting the survey and analyzing the results. Last year's class surveyed alcohol consumption and drinking problems among University students.

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