



Editorial

2016 *ADD TEXT*

In the beginning of 2017 issues 1-45 will be placed on the ATN homepage as free download pdfs, while three copies collecting issues 1-??, ??-?? and ??-45 are available as a print-on-demand solution from the University of Copenhagen webshop. In connection with this long expected release the editorial group has asked the former editors to share their memory of the early work with ATN.

Gillian Vogelsang-Eastwood, Director at the Textile Research Centre in Leiden, The Netherlands writes:

“The origins of *Archaeological Textiles Newsletter* lie in various informal discussions between John Peter Wild, Lise Bender-Jørgensen and myself, about the need to collect information on what was going on in the field of archaeological textiles. We all had the nagging feeling that something should be done! But done about what and how? More and more people were getting interested in archaeological textiles, but there was a lack of information about who was doing what, where and when. So the ATN was born in 1985, moulded and run from my home in Leiden.

The aim of the ATN was to provide up-to-date information – bearing in mind that this was in the period when computers were not widely available and the internet, as we know it now, simply did not exist. So information was sent to us via snail mail, sorted out into various topics, with telephone calls being made, and contacts persuaded to send in further details about excavations, museum collections, books, events, and indeed anything related to the subject. Gradually more and more people became involved in collecting information and if someone heard about something, they were sent out as ‘roving reporters’ to gather the all-important details. The ATN was designed to be a clearing house of information, rather than a journal of learned articles.

At first everything was written in columns on a simple typewriter, sent out to be checked, and mistakes covered with a slip of paper with the corrected information. There were line-drawings or black and white images to stick down on the correct pages and then down to the local printing shop to make enough copies to send around – again by snail mail. And it worked! The ATN became an essential tool for students and researchers wanting to build up a network and to learn what was happening in other parts of the world with respect to archaeological textiles.

After a number of years preparing and editing the ATN, it was clear that it was time for someone else to take it over and this task was given to Elizabeth Peacock in Trondheim. I still have the early proofs of the ATN, complete with paper corrections, and they bring a smile to my face as I think of the hard work, swearing, and

fun involved in producing the early ATN’s and how this newsletter was able to bring so many people together and set the stage for further research and contacts in the field of archaeological textiles.”

And John Peter Wild continues the story:

“We took over *ATN* from Elizabeth Peacock in 1998 (*ATN* 27) on the understanding that it would be a low-tech publication – *very* low-tech by today’s standards! All incoming text was retyped into two columns on our trusty Canon word-processor, and printed out. Strips of paper with the headers and footers were glued to each page by hand, as were the photographs and drawings submitted. Our print-shop scanned the document, printed it out page by page, and stapled each bundle. We found that colour photographs could be reproduced more successfully than black-and-white: the cost was initially greater, but dropped over the years.

We never needed to raise the subscription rate, though our postal costs on each issue became a problem. The other problem was finding a way for our subscribers to pay their subscriptions from abroad without incurring punitive bank charges. Since we regularly attended textile conferences transfer of cash by hand was an option; but otherwise posting bank notes in an envelope became the default method, and rarely failed!

ATN and *ATR* of course can only be as good as the articles they contain, and our authors literally *made* the newsletter! We shall always be grateful to them. However, there was rarely a consistent flow of suitable manuscripts into our hands, and pressing invitations were often issued when the editors got to hear of some new excitement! Two issues per year gave us the chance to keep readers abreast of the latest discoveries and ideas before they heard about them elsewhere; but it meant that there was no editorial closed season. Our final number was *ATN* 45 in 2007. Our word-processor must have known that its task was over; for after we had printed out the very last page, it broke down terminally. The age of low-tech was over!”

The next deadline for contributions is **1st May 2017**. Please also remember to send us any news of new projects, publications and conferences, so that we can continue to act as a hub for our growing archaeological textiles community.

The Editors