



AGBU LONDON LECTURE SERIES

Proud Past, Exciting Future. 1906 – 2006 AGBU Centennial

Tuesday 21st March 2006, 7.30pm

THE SEARCH FOR EARLY HUMANS AT AZOKH CAVE NAGORNO KARABAGH

Tania King

**Armenian House,
25 Cheniston Gardens, London W8 6TG
Admission Free**

Recent discoveries in the Caucasus indicate that early humans occupied this area over a period of nearly two million years. The earliest hominids outside Africa are known from the Georgian site of Dmanisi in the southern Caucasus (~1.8 million years ago). Human remains from Mezmaiskaya Cave in the northern Caucasus provide evidence that Neanderthals remained present in Eurasia to a later date than previously thought (~29000 years ago).

Azokh Cave, located in the district of Chadrut, in the Mountainous Karabagh Range of the eastern Armenian uplands is an important palaeontological and archaeological site in the Caucasus and is a key locality for the understanding of early human migrations from Africa into Europe. The site is located in a wide corridor situated between the Greater and Lesser Caucasus through which hominids migrated into Europe during the last two million years. This extended valley was protected from extremes in weather conditions, and may have provided a refuge for many relic species seen today. Excavation of this cave system began in the 1960s and human remains as well stone tools and animal remains were found. Excavations were re-opened in 2002 with the discovery of two further intact cave entrances, as well as the remains of a number of different fossil animal species, as well as stone tools. The project involves international and local researchers, as well as local students and field assistants from the village of Azokh.

This presentation will provide highlights of the four excavation seasons that have taken place since 2002. Information about the cave system, excavation techniques, finds and methods of analysis that are being used to evaluate early human activity at this site will be presented.

ABOUT THE SPEAKER: *Tania King trained in Biological Anthropology at University College London and The Natural History Museum, London, gaining her BSc. in 1992 and PhD. in 1997. She is co-director of Azokh Cave fieldwork project, and has worked on fieldwork projects in the UK, Spain, and Turkey. Other research interests include analysis of microscopic dental wear patterns to determine diet in fossil primates and humans, and analysis of developmental disruptions in the growth of tooth enamel caused by physiological stress in 18th and 19th century Londoners.*

For more information about the above presentation please email Louisa.Culleton@hotmail.com. You may also find information on AGBU London activities on www.agbu.org.uk