

Barbarians Prehistory: Special Lecture

Friday 7 June, 4–5 pm, Institute of Archaeology Lecture Theatre

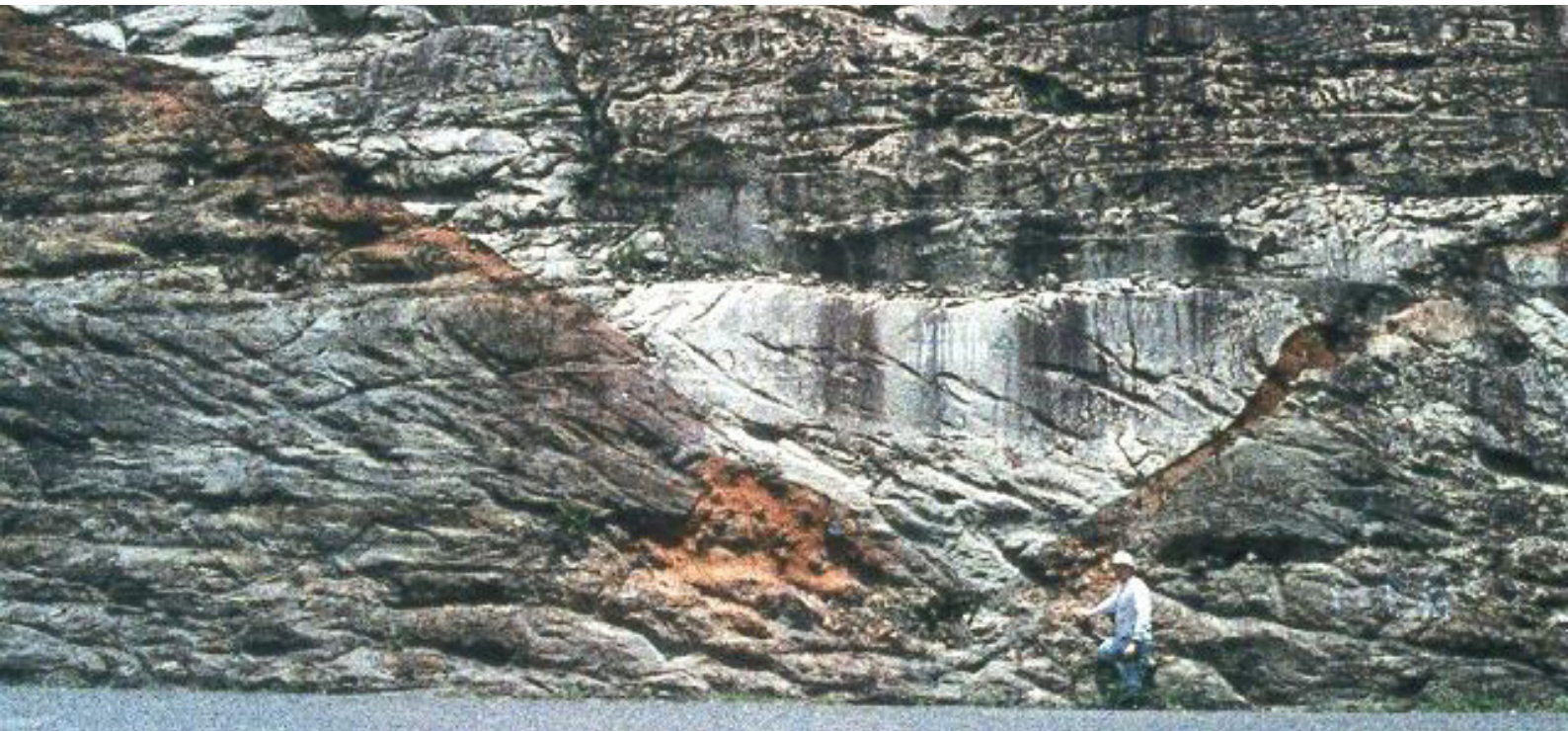
Prof Rosemary Joyce

University of California, Berkeley

The Active Materiality of Obsidian

How can we move away from assumptions conditioned by modern values of efficiency and contemporary understandings of the properties of materials? This talk, part of a consideration of geologic materials that entered into relationships with humans between 1500 BCE and 1200 CE in Caribbean Honduras, takes up this question in respect to obsidian. It reconsiders how obsidian manifests today to archaeologists, and the degree to which it may have presented itself differently to people in the area before 900 BCE when local sources came into use. Drawing on compositional analyses, geologic survey, ethnographic perspectives, and new materialist approaches, it examines volcanic glass in ancient Honduras as a material whose boundaries and properties were different from those highlighted by archaeologists, and considers the implications for understanding technological innovations in this region.

Please join us for a drink in the Institute Common Room directly following the lecture.



Ash-flow tuff deposit with base surge in palaeochannel, Padre Miguel Formation, Honduras

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