

THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGISTS IN UNDERSTANDING AND PREVENTING THE IMPACTS OF MARINE INDUSTRIES ON THE PREHISTORIC ENVIRONMENT

Martin Bates – University of Wales Trinity Saint David, UK

A wide range of impacts are caused by marine industries on the seabed and in some instances these impacts may affect archaeological remains associated with the seabed or buried in sediments beneath the seabed. Where we understand something of the nature of the submerged landscapes (such as the southern North Sea) these impacts can be mitigated through a range of approaches. In other areas deemed to be ‘unknown’ or of low archaeological potential it is very difficult to develop an approach to the seabed prehistory because of a set of pre-conceptions about the nature of the seabed.

In order to help educate and inform maritime industries about the nature of the archaeological problems of submerged prehistory it is important that as an industry we are clear about what our aims and objectives are when considering developing projects in the marine sector. Too often we only have vague notions of what we mean when we discuss the prehistoric record and there is little consideration for example that approaches to late Palaeolithic/Holocene prehistories require different strategies to those dealing with the lower and middle Palaeolithic.