

Take a dip into the past.....

If the TV coverage of the Olympics is leaving you feeling a little jaded and if you can't face yet another fifty programmes on how to bake a cake, then take refuge in the BBC Archive website. For the archaeologist this offers a choice of gems from the **Chronicle** series covering the years 1966 until 1989. Compared with Tony Robinson running around waving his arms about on **Time Team**, these earlier programmes are presented with a considered and informed approach by such luminaries as Dr. Glyn Daniel, Jacquetta Hawkes and Magnus Magnusson.

There is, for example, a programme from 1966 (still in black and white) in which Glyn Daniel explores the claim made by Pliny in his **Natural History** that the Romans, eager to satisfy their large appetite for foie gras (goose liver), would drive large flocks of geese from northern Gaul, apparently the source of the finest foie gras, all the way to Rome., approximately some 1000 miles. To test the validity of this claim, in what was an early example of experimental archaeology, **Chronicle** took half a dozen or so geese up on to the Ridgeway in Berkshire and set them walking. Much to everyone's surprise the geese in no way objected to this enforced goose march and ambled happily along at about one mile per hour, covering perhaps ten miles in a day. The conclusion was that the walk from Gaul to Rome might take some 100 days, but was perfectly feasible. (In this country of course geese were regularly marched long distances to fairs in the 18th and 19th centuries.)

Other programmes available include Silbury Hill, Sutton Hoo, Stonehenge and the Rosetta Stone. There is also an exploration of Britain from the air looking for new crop marks revealed after the long dry summer of 1976.

To access the programmes:

1. Type BBC Archive into Google.
2. When the Archive website opens click on COLLECTIONS in the top menu.
3. Scroll down through the topics until you reach CULTURAL HERITAGE.

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