

# EXTREME ARCHAEOLOGY



Cornelius has put me on to a new archaeology TV series in the UK –Extreme Archaeology – from Channel 4. It runs 20 June to 8 August – eight programs.

These are the people that brought you Time Team – the archaeologists who tackle a site in a weekend.

Here they are to tackle sites beyond the reach of normal investigations – tidal flats, sea caves, remote jungles, volcanoes ...

Until the Extreme Archaeology team arrived to solve the long-standing mystery of the rectangular structures on the Kame of Isbister, no archaeologist had ever carried out an excavation there. The Kame, which means rocky point or promontory, is a jagged stack of rock off the north coast of Shetland and one of the most remote archaeological sites in Britain. Almost impossible to view from the shore, the site can only be approached by

a narrow and eroding ar?te, or ridge, restricting access to skilled climbers and suicidal sheep ...

Cornelius was with me in Sicily in 1999, maybe 2000, and went off to visit Etna – because the underworld has always featured in the archaeological imagination – Jules Verne’s Journey to the Center of the Earth, Tolkein, H.G. Well’s Lost World, Planet of the Apes – and volcanoes are often a means of access to what lies within ...



One of Wright of Derby’s many paintings of Vesuvius, this one from 1774

The eighteenth century was one of volcanic eruptions that inspired the new **sensibility of the sublime** – awesome spectacles that included the ruins of time – here is one of the origins of an archaeological sensibility, the archaeological imagination.