

Directions: Answer the questions below based on the information in the accompanying passage.

The following passage is excerpted from a popular journal of archeology.

About 50 miles west of Stonehenge, buried in the peat bogs of the Somerset flatlands in southwestern England, lies the oldest road known to humanity. Dubbed the "Sweet Track" after its discoverer, Raymond Sweet, this painstakingly constructed 1,800-meter road dates back to the early Neolithic period, some 6,000 years ago. Thanks primarily to the overlying layer of acidic peat, which has kept the wood moist, inhibited the growth of decay bacteria, and discouraged the curiosity of animal life, the road is remarkably well preserved. Examination of its remains has provided extensive information about the people who constructed it.

The design of the Sweet Track indicates that its builders possessed extraordinary engineering skills. In constructing the road, they first hammered pegs into the soil in the form of upright X's. Single rails were slid beneath the pegs, so that the rails rested firmly on the soft surface of the bog. Then planks were placed in the V-shaped space formed by the upper arms of the pegs. This method of construction—allowing the underlying rail to distribute the weight of the plank above and thereby prevent the pegs from sinking into the marsh—is remarkably sophisticated, testifying to a surprisingly advanced level of technology.

Furthermore, in order to procure the materials for the road, several different species of tree had to be felled, debarked, and split. This suggests that the builders possessed high quality tools, and that they knew the differing properties of various roundwoods. It appears also that the builders were

privy to the finer points of lumbering, maximizing the amount of wood extracted from a given tree by slicing logs of large diameter radially and logs of small diameter tangentially.

Studies of the Sweet Track further indicate a high level of social organization among its builders. This is supported by the observation that the road seems to have been completed in a very short time; tree-ring analysis confirms that the components of the Sweet Track were probably all felled within a single year. Moreover, the fact that such an involved engineering effort could be orchestrated in the first place hints at a complex social structure.

Finally, excavation of the Sweet Track has provided evidence that the people who built it comprised a community devoted to land cultivation. It appears that the road was built to serve as a footpath linking two islands—lands that provided a source of timber, cropland, and pastures for the community that settled the hills to the south.

Furthermore, the quality of the pegs indicates that the workers knew enough to fell trees in such a way as to encourage the rapid growth of long, straight, rodlike shoots from the remaining stumps, to be used as pegs. This method is called coppicing and its practice by the settlers is the earliest known example of woodland management.

Undoubtedly, the discovery of the Sweet Track in 1970 added much to our knowledge of Neolithic technology. But while study of the remains has revealed unexpectedly high levels of engineering and social organization, it must be remembered that the Sweet Track represents the work of a single isolated community. One must be careful not to extrapolate sweeping generalizations from the achievements of such a small sample of Neolithic humanity.

1. In paragraph 1, the author claims that which of the following was primarily responsible for the preservation of the Sweet Track until modern times?

- (A) It was located in an area containing very few animals.
- (B) Its components were buried beneath the peat bog.
- (C) It was only lightly traveled during its period of use.
- (D) Local authorities prohibited development in

2. The author's reference to the peat bog as "acidic" (line 8) primarily serves to

- (A) indicate the importance of protecting ancient ruins from the effects of modern pollution
- (B) emphasize that the Sweet Track was constructed of noncorrosive materials
- (C) distinguish between the effects of acidic and basic conditions on ancient ruins
- (D) suggest that acidic conditions were important in inhibiting decay
- (E) prove the relevance of knowledge of chemical properties to archaeological concerns

3. In paragraph 2, the author describes the construction of the Sweet Track primarily in order to
  - (A) explain the unusual strength of the structure
  - (B) show how it could withstand 6,000 years buried underground
  - (C) prove that its builders cooperated efficiently
  - (D) indicate its builders' advanced level of technological expertise
  - (E) emphasize the importance of careful construction techniques
  
4. The primary focus of the passage is on
  - (A) the high degree of social organization exhibited by earlier cultures
  - (B) the complex construction and composition of the Sweet Track
  - (C) an explanation for the survival of the Sweet Track over 6,000 years
  - (D) ways in which the Sweet Track reveals aspects of a particular Neolithic society
  - (E) the innovative methods of woodland management practiced by early builders
  
5. In line 34, the phrase *privy to* means
  - (A) close to
  - (B) expert at
  - (C) concealed from
  - (D) likely to
  - (E) familiar with
  
6. In her discussion of social organization in paragraph 4, the author mentions ring analysis primarily as evidence that
  - (A) the road is at least 6,000 years old
  - (B) the Sweet Track was constructed quickly
  - (C) the techniques used in building the road were quite sophisticated
  - (D) the builders knew enough to split thick trees radially and thin trees tangentially
  - (E) the builders felled a large variety of trees
  
7. The cited example of "woodland management" (line 61) is best described as a system in which trees are
  - (A) lumbered in controlled quantities
  - (B) planted only among trees of their own species
  - (C) cultivated in specialized ways for specific purposes
  - (D) felled only as they are needed
  - (E) harvested for use in construction only
  
8. In the last paragraph, the author cautions that the Sweet Track
  - (A) is not as technologically advanced as is generally believed
  - (B) should not necessarily be regarded as representative of its time
  - (C) has not been studied extensively enough to support generalized conclusions
  - (D) is probably not the earliest road in existence
  - (E) will force historians to reevaluate their assumptions about the Neolithic technology