The Society, founded in 1979, seeks to advance the international study of lithic industries in the broadest possible context. New members are welcome, and details of the Society’s activities may be obtained by sending a stamped, addressed envelope to the Secretary, Andrew David, Ancient Monuments Laboratory, English Heritage, Fortress House, 23 Savile Row, London W1X 1AB.

The officers of the society for 1990-1991 are: John Wymer (Chairman), George Smith (Vice-Chairman), Andrew David (Secretary) and Alison Roberts (Editor). Members serving on the General Committee are: Paul Callow, Stephen Green, Jon Hamble, Hazel Martindell, Rob Young, Robin Holgate and Elizabeth Healey.

The annual subscription, due on October 1st, is £5 and is payable to the Treasurer/Membership Secretary, Nick Ashton, British Museum, Franks House, 38-46 Orsman Road, London N1 5QI, from whom Banker’s Order forms may be obtained.

The Society would like to thank the British Museum and St Hilda’s College, Oxford, for assistance with the production of this issue of the newsletter. Contributions to the next edition - LITHICS 12 - are invited and should be sent to Alison Roberts, British Museum, Franks House, 38-46 Orsman Road, London N1 5QI by 31st May 1992. Manuscripts should be submitted in duplicate following the ‘Notes for Authors’ printed on the inside back cover of this issue.

This newsletter is circulated free of charge to all members of the Society. Non-members may obtain copies by writing to the editor. Back numbers may be obtained by sending orders, accompanied by payment, to Alan Saville, Artefact Research Unit, Royal Museum of Scotland, Queen Street, Edinburgh EH2 1JD. Make cheques/postal orders payable to THE LITHIC STUDIES SOCIETY.

Prices of Backnumbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Non-Members</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>#1 (1980) (A4 - 24pp - xerox supplied)</td>
<td>£1.50</td>
<td>£2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#2 (1981) (A5 - 30pp - few copies left)</td>
<td>£1.50</td>
<td>£2.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#3</td>
<td>£2.00</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#4</td>
<td>£2.00</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#5</td>
<td>£2.00</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#6</td>
<td>£2.00</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#7</td>
<td>£2.00</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#8</td>
<td>£2.00</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#9</td>
<td>£2.00</td>
<td>£3.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#10</td>
<td>£3.50</td>
<td>£4.50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

IRENE LEVI SALA

1929-1991

Irene Levi Sala began her career in archaeology in 1979 as an undergraduate at the Institute of Archaeology, London, earning a BA honours degree in 1982. Her interest in microwear began during her work on her undergraduate dissertation and was more fully developed in her Ph.D research.

In the early 1980’s microwear was a relatively new branch of archaeology. Irene soon discovered that the then accepted methods of research were not without their problems. She began to concentrate on the alterations visible on the surface of flint implements with two goals in mind: investigation of the processes involved in ‘polish’ formation and the study of the surface modifications caused by post-depositional processes. After meticulous testing and thorough analysis of her results Irene reached the conclusion that polish formation was the result of abrasion of the flint surface not an additive process as had been widely accepted. Her experiments led her to the conclusion that post-depositional surface modification affected wear traces visible on the surface of an implement. This effect, if ignored, could lead to a misinterpretation of use-wear patterns. She was concerned that archaeologists be aware of these effects and emphasised this concern in her Ph.D dissertation and publications. On completion of her Ph.D in 1989 she continued her work as an honorary research fellow of the Institute.

During her career, Irene worked on sites and material in England, Israel and Italy. She was a regular participant in the meetings of the Lithic Studies Society and the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic day conferences. Her most recent results were presented in December 1990 at ‘Les Gestes Retrouvés’ a microwear conference in Liège where she found her research corroborated by the work of Japanese colleagues.

Irene set herself a high academic standard which she achieved unfailingly. Her accomplishments are all the more remarkable as she started her archaeological studies at the age of 50 while bringing up a family, running a home and taking part in a number of charitable activities. Additionally she studied and wrote with great facility in a language which was not her mother tongue.

Irene Levi Sala was not just a respected colleague but a well loved friend. She had time for everyone and was always willing to advise or help on academic, or indeed on any other, matters. She was unobtrusively kind and
always good company; one felt better for having been with her. Irene had been an active member of the Lithic Studies Society for ten years. She was killed in an air crash in Southern Chile on February 20th 1991. Her absence will leave a personal and professional gap. We shall miss her deeply.

Norah Moloney

Publications:


A fund has been opened to establish an annual award in Irene's memory for a student at the Institute whose interests are connected with Irene's own work. Contributions may be sent to Judith Harris, Institute of Archaeology, 31-34 Gordon Square, London WC1E OPY. Cheques should be made payable to "University College London (Sala fund)."

NEW FINDS AND OLD PROBLEMS IN THE LOWER PALAEOLOITHIC OF THE UPPER THAMES VALLEY.

R.J. MacRae

Introduction

This paper has recorded an assemblage of flint artefacts found over the past 8 years in pits near the village of Stanton Harcourt in Oxfordshire, and has described work in progress, adding this to the writer's detailed account of the quartzite implements of the upper Thames valley (1988b). It has tried to indicate the relevance of the upper Thames sequence to the solving of current problems in the British Quaternary sequence and the chronology of the regional Lower Palaeolithic. It is possible that some of the Oxfordshire implements are older than previously thought, and some deductions have been essayed from the evidence. It is hoped that continued research over the next few years will clarify their origins. A note has been added about the current re-investigation of the Stanton Harcourt warm-stage channel.

The upper reaches of the Thames have in the past decade become the scene of much increased attention by Quaternary specialists in geology, geomorphology and palaeontology, and there has been a welcome collaboration with archaeology. Finds of early Palaeolithic implements have greatly increased during the past fifteen years, during which two substantial new sites have emerged in gravel pit complexes from which only half a dozen handaxes had previously been recovered. The Oxford regional total has thus been raised by more than 300 flint and quartzite artefacts of which 144 are handaxes of one sort or another. The two sites are at Berinsfield next to Dorchester-on-Thames, and Stanton Harcourt, eight kilometres west of Oxford.

As the Berinsfield finds have already been published (MacRae 1982) this article records the more recent retrievals at Stanton Harcourt - particularly the 49 flint handaxes to which only brief published reference has so far been made. These handaxes show features more than usually interesting in their provenance, condition and technology. This paper also touches upon some of the problems encountered in an attempt to fit them into a presumed upper Thames chronology, albeit in the full appreciation of the present uncertainties surrounding the climatic events in Britain in the last half-million years. There is now, however, a better understanding of those events as they occurred in the valley between the Chilterns and the Cotswolds, and of the nature and resources of the environments which Palaeolithic hunter-gatherers exploited. While more work is waiting to be done in all the relevant disciplines, publication does not lag behind, as no fewer than three British Archaeological Reports volumes have appeared.