This may seem a pessimistic note on which to end, but we have shown that the detailed observations made by earlier researchers in the south of England may have no validity in the northern regions where similar work has not been previously undertaken.

We do not feel that the conclusions put forward in the Sheffield paper, referred to above, have in any way been invalidated by our statistical analyses. Indeed we would welcome feedback from colleagues with an interest in the statistical analysis of lithic material with a view to applying further discrimination tests to our sample.

Perhaps the only real test of the speculations set out in the first part of this paper would be to excavate, and date by 14C, undisturbed Mesolithic, Neolithic/Bronze Age and mixed sites in situ. However, therein lies the main problem, for the presence of these sites is only indicated after ploughing and/or erosion, which ultimately destroys stratigraphical relationships, has taken place.

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REVIEW


To echo Roe in his introductory article, this publication is a 'very worthwhile addition' to the literature of the Old Stone age in this country. It addresses a theme which has otherwise tended to be treated as peripheral in the face of the overwhelming preponderance of flint in the collections preserved in Britain's museums. The book undoubtedly faces up to a need, therefore. But, more than is usually the case, it may also be seen as a sort of social document reflecting the very diverse character of Palaeolithic society in this country ... which is largely responsible for the book's form and content, and indeed both its strengths and its weaknesses. It gives an insight, valuable and also unusual in a single volume, into the range of activity and of the practitioners themselves, amateur and professional. Its chapters are correspondingly diverse in their approach and presentation. They give the impression of having been edited with a fairly light touch, too, so the personalities of the contributors have not been reduced to a common shade of academic grey.

The book is divided into a number of parts, some represented by a single chapter, others by several. It ends with a Gazetteer of known non-flint artefacts.

Wymer offers a brief reassessment of the geographical range of the British Upper Palaeolithic, mapping finds from above the Severn-Wash line and concluding that the picture has changed rather little since a similar essay by Boyd Dawkins in 1910. This is followed by two excellent papers on experimental flint manufacture. The first is by Moloney, Bergman, Newcomer and Wenban-Smith and is based on Bunter quartzite pebbles as raw material. The results are set against British and continental archaeological data. The second is written by Moloney alone, flaking eight different rock types, and is even more carefully documented. Among other conclusions, it was found that the initial selection of the block of raw material is more critical for hard rocks than it is for flint.

The volume then develops a 'regional' structure, with four papers on the Midlands of England, six on the Upper Thames, and one on Southern England. Within this scheme, though, there is great diversity. Saville describes the Wists collection from the Nuneaton area, followed by Shotton on Wolstonian geology and north Warwickshire finds. MacRae then undertakes a brief historical synthesis of research in Warwickshire; the section is concluded by Whitehead, who catalogues finds from the Severn-Avon valley.

Consideration of the Upper Thames starts with a useful account of the area and its quartzite implements, by MacRae, who has done much good work collecting thereabouts. This includes an exuberant inscriptions of the third largest hand axe in Britain - actually of flint, from Stanton Harcourt and christened the "Giant of Gravelly Guy" (for the benefit of aficionados: the length is 269 mm). A short note by Wallis then
approached, encouraged and probably badgered (human nature being what it is when it comes to deadlines) sixteen other people to contribute to the realisation of a concept, without the familiar inducements of spending someone else's money by way of compensation, or travel grants, or the social junketing that usually goes with this. It was a credit to them, therefore, for making the book work. For that matter, I hope the publishers will not take it too much amiss if I say that the sense of relief which this belongs has some speedy and economical publishing as its particular attraction, rather than the prestige of a glossy, highly-packaged and expensive list backed by a centuries-old reputation. It is the kind of project for which B.A.R. works particularly well: one with modest objectives and technical demands, which fills a niche within the literature but which would not be viable further up-market.

Asking whether the editors have been entirely successful, I conclude that they have met the objectives that they set themselves: they have brought together a useful fund of knowledge and in the process have provided something for everyone. The latter perhaps inevitably creates a certain unevenness, and will probably also leave many readers slightly dissatisfied. As an essentially academic archaeologist with a particularly European orientation, I found myself hoping for more of an outward-looking approach, perhaps also with more ambitious discussion of raw material procurement strategies and some topics, until I realized that I was not being altogether fair. I should mention a word of appreciation for the editors, and, one which no one seriously committed to the British Palaeolithic should be without.

Paul Cally, February 1989


This volume aims to reconstruct 'the patterns of settlement and economy immediately preceding and during the Neolithic period' (p.1) within the Thames Basin. There is a considerable variety of landscape and environmental zones within this area, and the quality and distribution of known monuments and sites of the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic periods combined with the author's research data, there should be great potential for detailed and stimulating discussion.

Dr Holgate has obviously amassed a great deal of information and studied a large body of data. I would like to be able to review the results of his labours in a positive and enthusiastic tone but, sorry to say, the report does not fulfill its promise. To be fair, this is a much distilled version of an original doctoral thesis, but it is to be hoped that it represents more edited highlights than overall synthesis since discussion throughout is extremely brief and peppered with a host of sweeping statements.

The report has its good points certainly - there is useful discussion of the post-depositional factors affecting surface and flint assemblages, for instance, and the catalogue of sites and finds is clearly formatted and accompanied by neat distribution maps. The phasing of certain groups of sites is considered and

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