

- Froom, R. 2005. *Late Glacial Long Blade sites in the Kennet Valley. Excavations and fieldwork at Avington VI, Wawcott XII and Crown Acres* (ed. J Cook). British Museum Research Publications 153, Bloomsbury Press, London.
- Healy, F., Heaton, M. & Lobb, S.J. 1992. Excavations at a Mesolithic site at Thatcham, Berkshire. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 58: 41–76.
- Jacobi, R. 1978. The Mesolithic of Sussex. In P. Drewett (ed.) *The archaeology of Sussex to AD 1500*: 15–22. CBA Research Report 29, London.
- Overton, N. 2014. Memorable Meetings in the Mesolithic: Tracing the Biography of Human–Nonhuman Relationships in the Kennet and Colne Valleys with Social Zooarchaeology. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester.
- Radley, J. & Mellars, P.A. 1964. A Mesolithic structure at Deepcar, Yorkshire, England and the affinities of its associated flint industries. *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 30: 1–24.

MUNNERY, TOM. 2014. LATE UPPER PALAEOLITHIC/EARLY MESOLITHIC, ROMAN AND SAXON DISCOVERIES AT FETCHAM NEAR LEATHERHEAD. SPOILHEAP OCCASIONAL PAPER 4.

ISBN NO 978-0-9576509-2-3 (90 PP., 71 ILLUS £12 + £2.80 P&P)

This monograph edited by Tom Munnery from the Surrey County Archaeological Unit presents the results of excavation at Cobham Road, Fetcham, an interesting site in Surrey exhibiting several occupations spanning from the Terminal Palaeolithic to the Anglo-Saxon period. This review uniquely focuses on Chapter 1 of the book that is dedicated to the prehistoric occupations of the site and especially the Upper Palaeolithic/Early Mesolithic occupation(s). This study is particularly interesting because of the scarcity of the Terminal Palaeolithic sites in the UK and indeed the general rarity of these sites in western Europe.

The Cobham Road assemblage is particularly unusual because of the presence in the same lithic assemblage of both a blade industry with Terminal Palaeolithic characteristics associated with microliths made by the microburin technique, usually found only in Early Mesolithic assemblages. It is not always clear how the author considers this issue. Most of the time he seems to consider this assemblage to be transitional. Sometimes he seems to consider these two periods, very different in many ways, as a whole. In the conclusion he however suggests the eventuality of a palimpsest. Even if the last hypothesis appears to me to be the more probable regarding the context of the site, this debate is particularly interesting in the perspective of the understanding of the Palaeolithic/Mesolithic transition in northwestern Europe.

In the first sections of the chapter the author presents the history of research, the geological and archaeological background of this part of Surrey, the methodology of the excavation, the stratigraphy of the site and describes the various archaeological components and features identified. As well as the Anglo-Saxon cemetery studied in Chapter 2 of the book and the Upper Palaeolithic/Early Mesolithic occupation(s) of the gridded area, the excavation highlighted Late Mesolithic, Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age and Roman testimonies. It is regrettable that the stratigraphy section is not more developed. This is a very important point, especially in the key question of determining if the “Upper Palaeolithic/Early Mesolithic” assemblage is the result of a transitional site or a palimpsest mixing several late Pleistocene/early Holocene occupations. The stratigraphy seems to be highly perturbed by biological and frost action. If, as suggested by the author, these taphonomic processes did not affect too much the spatial organisation of the site, these processes could have very much perturbed the vertical distribution of artefacts belonging to different prehistoric occupations, especially those that are very close chronologically such as with Terminal Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic occupations. It is thus essential to evaluate these perturbations in order to discuss the homogeneity of the lithic assemblage. The development of micromorphology studies, fabric studies, simple x/z projections and even just refittings, essential on any Palaeolithic

site, is thus particularly regrettable in the case of Cobham Road.

The main part of Chapter 1 is dedicated to the study of the lithic assemblage. The Cobham Road collection is not very rich with a total of 1843 lithic artefacts retrieved by hand and an additional 3608 lithic artefacts discovered from the bulk samples. Among this assemblage, only 843 artefacts (plus 1954 from the bulk samples) were recovered from the gridded area located on the western part of the site where the Upper Palaeolithic/Early Mesolithic collection has been excavated. The study starts with the description of the main lithic assemblage coming from the gridded area. The author considers the assemblage to be fairly homogeneous and attributed to the Upper Palaeolithic/Early Mesolithic (62% of the assemblage), even if some more recent elements have been recovered in this area (mainly Neolithic and Bronze Age with some possible late Mesolithic artefacts). The technological study of the assemblage is well conducted and gives a clear description of the raw materials and production objectives and methods. The comparisons with other sites are however too limited to a few English sites and two sites from the Netherlands. The author should have tried to extend his comparisons to a wider area, especially to France where the study of this period has been very dynamic in recent years.

The lithic production of this part of the site of Cobham Road is clearly oriented toward the extraction of blades. The author suggests similarities with Early Mesolithic assemblages based on the short length of the blades. On the other hand, the fact that some blades are extracted from two opposite platforms leads the author to suggest a Terminal Palaeolithic component. Even if some Terminal Palaeolithic sites (more often localised on excellent raw materials and with particular status) exhibit long and even very long blades, others assemblages are mainly constituted of relatively short blades. The size of the blade is not really good evidence for a dating an assemblage. This characteristic is rather indicative of raw materials availability and above all mobility and site status. Terminal Palaeolithic sites are actually much more diversified than previously described. Recent works showed that these communities were organised around a complex mobility system

constituted of a great variability of site status (Valentin 2008; Naudinot & Jacquier 2014). This tendency to 'do typology' with technological characteristics is relatively recurrent in the book. If technology is a particularly efficient tool, it is only when the various technological observations are considered as a whole.

The following paragraph describes the shaping and management of the cores. Despite the small size of the assemblage, it would have been interesting to describe the shaping and management processes in more detail, not only describing the various crests and tablets but considering the lithic entirety to discuss the various strategies developed by the knappers (extraction of large blades, use of two opposite platforms, thick blades to clean the extraction surface, lateral blades, etc.). As mentioned above in the case of the size of the blades, the morphology of the crests is also used as an element to discuss the chrono-cultural attribution of the assemblage. Again, this tendency to use technological criteria is particularly hazardous and dangerous. By example, even if unilaterally crests are common in Early Mesolithic assemblages as suggested by the author, they are also the main process used in core shaping, management and reduction re-initialisation in several part of western Europe during the Terminal Palaeolithic of the Younger Dryas/Preboreal transition.

The study of the cores suffers from the same problem. The size of a core cannot be considered as a diagnostic element to attribute an assemblage to a cultural component; too many parameters can have an impact on core size: raw material availability, production objectives (notably importance of projectile point production), skills, site status, mobility, etc. Likewise core shape is not a good criterion to discuss the attribution of an assemblage. The shape is however interesting to allow discussion of the process used to fashion and maintain the convexities of the volume, to describe the reduction of the core etc., all of which are interesting parameters to consider in the perspective of attributing an assemblage to a cultural component.

Some readers will probably be disturbed by the lack of drawings in this study; they are replaced by photographs here. I do not

consider this choice to be a problem since most of the images are of good quality and allow for a good understanding of most of the artefacts. However, in the case of the cores, more photos would be suitable for the reader to get a better idea of the volumes and to understand core exploitation and maintenance strategies. With the available photos I am even not sure that all of the cores presented are actually cores – No 2 notably which seems to be a large tablet, the large scar being probably the negative of a previous tablet extracted on the flank of the core. There is a similar problem with core No 3 that is supposed to be reduced from three platforms: looking at the photo, I would rather say that this third platform is actually the remains of a lateral crest. Is this third extraction surface on the back of the core? More photographs would help the reader to understand this kind of point.

The next part of the book is dedicated to the retouched tools. In this part the author describes the various types of retouched tools of the assemblage and compares them with other English lithic collections in a chrono-cultural perspective. The armatures of the sites are mainly obliquely truncated points which complicates being diagnostic since this kind of point is both common in the Terminal Palaeolithic assemblages and the Early Mesolithic collection. There are however some characteristics that distinguish these armatures from each other. The more obvious, well described by the author, is the concavity of the truncations in the Terminal Palaeolithic industries. These armatures have been well described for several sites in western Europe including Launde (Cooper 2006), Uxbridge (Lewis & Rackham 2011), Le Buhot (Biard & Hinguant 2011) or in western France (Naudinot 2010 & 2013). The author also tries to study the orientation of the apex of the points considering that Late Upper Palaeolithic microliths more often retain their proximal ends. I think the question is much more complex. In the case of the truncated backed points such as 'Blanchères points', the points are almost systematically realised on the proximal end of the bladelet (Valentin 1995; Naudinot 2014). The case of the truncated points as discovered at Cobham Road is less clear. In most of the sites where they were described, they seem to be realised with no preference in the orientation of their apex on

the proximal or the distal end of the bladelet. In my opinion, the only tendency that can be highlighted is a trend to produce the point of the armature on the larger extremity of the blank (maybe reserving the narrower extremity for the hafting of the projectile point). As suggested by some scholars (Cooper 2006; Naudinot 2013 & 2014), this technical choice, as well as the concavity of the truncation, could be evidence of affiliation between these points and the Ahrensburgian tanged points: such small truncated points could be a simplified form of these armatures. Finally, a trapeze is mentioned in the text but the photograph does not allow a clear understanding of this artefact. It is a pity since some recent works have demonstrated that this kind of projectile had been used very often at the very end of the Late Glacial and constitutes the first evidence of the use of transverse arrowhead in the prehistory of western Europe (Naudinot 2014).

The fact that some of the Cobham Road microliths are realised using the microburin technique is particularly interesting. This process is never identified in the Younger Dryas/Preboreal transition assemblages. When it is, it is generally the result of mixed industries or confusion between real microburin and Krukowski breakages. The presence of these elements at Cobham Road and the identification of microburin evidence on the microliths are thus critical in understanding the assemblage and the occupation(s) of the site.

Other non-microlithic retouched tools are rare. If this phenomenon can be interpreted as an evidence for a short-term occupation oriented toward the manufacture of projectiles it is however important to highlight that, unfortunately, no use wear analysis has been carried out on this assemblage. Recent works have demonstrated that unretouched blades constitute a very high proportion of the tools used by Terminal Palaeolithic communities at the very end of the Late Glacial (Jacquier 2014; Naudinot & Jacquier 2014).

With these rare retouched tools is a refitted blade exhibiting wear described by the author as similar to the Terminal Palaeolithic bruised blades. If for the author the damaging corresponds to the ones known on the bruised blades (it is hard to discuss this point with the

available photo), he underlines the facts that the size and weight of this artefact only correspond to the smaller and lighter bruised blades of the Avington VI assemblage. It is important here to be precise in that with some other assemblages, bruised blades can be small and light. It is also essential to keep in mind that what we call 'bruised blade' actually embrace a variety of different tools used on various materials for various tasks (Valentin 2008; Jacquier 2014; Naudinot 2014 & in prep.). If they were used in a percussion motion on mineral materials (notably to reshape soft stone hammers) they could also have been used to work hard organic materials like antler or bone.

The next part of the chapter is dedicated to the spatial analysis of the site. The study is well conducted and the illustrations are very clear. Because of the context of the site and the taphonomic problems described by the author, I however think that this study goes a little too far in its interpretations. If it is possible that the vertical perturbation did not affect the horizontal distribution of the artefacts too much, the succession of occupations on the same spot and the mixing of different cultural components had an impact on the interpretation of the distribution of the lithics. This part of the site of Cobham Road is interpreted by the author as a small knapping area of 4.5 x 6 m occupied during a single visit for intensive blade production and microlith manufacture.

The rest of the chapter is dedicated to the other area of the site where Palaeolithic/Mesolithic artefacts have been identified. East of the gridded area, one thousand lithic artefacts were collected by hand from a variety of context and a further 1654 lithic artefacts have been retrieved from the bulk samples. The author shows that the various assemblages retrieved in the different part of the site are very similar in their composition and could be attributed to the Late Mesolithic and that the raw materials used in this industry are different from the ones identified on the gridded area. In the same way, the technological study of the lithic assemblage suggest the production objectives and methods to be quite different from the ones identified in the gridded part of the site. With these elements are some artefacts also suggesting occupations during the Neolithic and the Bronze Age on this part of the site.

To conclude, this study will interest everybody involved in the study of Late Upper Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic periods in western Europe. The study is interesting and well conducted and furnishes new elements for the study of these Pleistocene/Holocene communities. I however look forward to reading more information about the stratigraphy and the complex question of taphonomy at Cobham Road in the future. This information is particularly critical for this site since it is still difficult to comprehend if the lithic assemblage is the result of an occupation by a transitional group or, more probably, the result of a succession of occupations on the same spot over several millennia. The study of the last communities of the Late Glacial has progressed well in recent years in northwestern Europe. It is thus not always easy to follow all the developments of this very active research. Sites, and especially those in a good context, are also quite rare and are not always published in English. Even if a more extended comparative study would have improved this study of the Fetcham site, the work presented in this book by Tom Munnery contributes to the building of a greater understanding of this complex period of climatic and cultural transition and there is no doubt that this book will be useful in future years for everybody trying to study the Palaeolithic–Mesolithic transition in England.

Nicolas Naudinot
University of Nice
CNRS UMR 7264 CEPAM

REFERENCES

- Biard, M. & Hinguant, S. 2011. Le bivouac préhistorique du Buhot à Calleville (Eure). *Recherches Archéologiques*, CNRS editions.
- Cooper, L.P. 2006. Launde, a Terminal Palaeolithic camp-site in the English Midlands and its North European context. *Proceeding of the Prehistoric Society* 72: 53–93.
- Lewis, J. & Rackham, J. 2011. *Three Ways Wharf, Uxbridge*, Museum of London Archaeology.
- Jacquier, J. in prep. Fonctions et gestions des outillages lithiques chez les groupes humains de la transition Pléistocène-Holocène dans le Nord-Ouest de la France. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Rennes 1.

- Jacquier, J. 2014. Analyse fonctionnelle des outillages lithiques et interprétations socio-économique du statut des sites tardiglaciaires du Buhot à Calleville (Eure) et de la Fosse à Villiers-Charlemagne (Mayenne). In M. Langlais, N. Naudinot & M. Peresani (eds) *Les sociétés de l'Allerød et du Dryas récent entre Atlantique et Méditerranée, Séance de la Société Préhistorique Française, (Bordeaux, 24–25 mai 2012)*. Mémoire de la société préhistorique française.
- Jacquier, J. & Naudinot, N. in press. Recycling, maintaining and anticipating: the various significance of management strategies at the end of the Pleistocene in Northwestern France. *Quaternary International*.
- Naudinot, N. 2008. Lithic weapon elements in Western France (Brittany and Pays de la Loire) during the late glacial period: a proposed chrono-cultural organization and reduction sequence. In J.-M. Pétilion, M.-H. Dias-Meirinho, P. Cattelain, M. Honegger, C. Normand & N. Valdeyron. Projectile weapon elements from the Upper Palaeolithic to the Neolithic, Proceedings of session C83, XVth UISPP World Congress, Lisbon, September 4–9, 2006. *P@lethnology* 1: 241–268.
- Naudinot, N. 2010. Dynamiques techno-économiques et de peuplement au Tardiglaciaire dans l'Ouest, Doctoral dissertation, University of Rennes 1.
- Naudinot, N. 2013. La fin du Tardiglaciaire dans le Grand-Ouest de la France. *Bulletin de la société préhistorique française* 110: 233–255.
- Naudinot, N. & Jacquier, J. 2014. Socio-economic organization of Final Paleolithic societies: new perspectives from an aggregation site in Western France. *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology* 35: 177–189.
- Valentin, B. 1995. Les groupes humains et leurs traditions au Tardiglaciaire dans le Bassin parisien. Apports de la technologie lithique comparée, Doctoral dissertation, University of Paris 1.
- Valentin, B. 2008. *Jalons pour une paléohistoire des derniers chasseurs, (XIV-VIe millénaire avant J.-C.)*, publications de la Sorbonne, Paris.

A REPORT ON THE 'WILD THINGS 2.0: FURTHER ADVANCES IN PALAEOLITHIC AND MESOLITHIC ARCHAEOLOGY' CONFERENCE 8th–10th JANUARY 2014, DURHAM UNIVERSITY

Between January 8th and 10th, Durham University once again played host to the Where the Wild Things Are conference, this time under the title of Wild Things 2.0 and brought under the umbrella of the larger series of symposia that began with the *Unravelling the Palaeolithic* conference at CAHO (University of Southampton) in 2010. The first Wild Things conference, which took place in March 2012, was a huge success, attracting over 120 delegates from a wide variety of international institutions. Therefore, the stakes were high to keep to this standard of quality. However, the conference organisers did a fantastic job, especially the postgraduate students amongst them, as attested by the exceptionally positive feedback received from attendees.

The conference opened on the 8th with registration followed by a thought-provoking keynote talk from Professor Robin Dennell (University of Sheffield), one of three invited speakers, who posited the concept of naïve faunas and how this may have affected

hominin dispersals in the Palaeolithic (Fig. 1). Afterwards, attendees retired for the drinks reception, where local beer and (not so local) wine was served (Fig. 2). Given the large contingent of postgraduate students, this also provided an excellent arena for networking and a chance for individuals to discuss research amongst their peers in an informal environment. A second chance for such networking was provided by the conference dinner on the Thursday evening.

The conference began in earnest on the morning of the 9th, with the two remaining days delivering a total of 24 research papers and two further keynote speeches. Unfortunately, given the winter season, there were a few absences due to illness, and the organisers and delegates hope that they subsequently made full recoveries. Professor Peter Mitchell (University of Oxford), who was due to give the keynote talk at the end of the second day, was one such speaker. While he was missed, Durham's own Peter Rowley-Conwy stepped in at the last second to provide