

EDITORIAL

Dear Reader,

On behalf of the Lithic Studies Society executive committee, I welcome you to *Lithics* 40. I must begin this editorial with an apology for the delay to its publication. The unprecedented challenges that we have all faced over the past months exacerbated our own challenge of bringing you this volume without an editor in post. That it is with you now is testament to the hard work of several people who have gone above and beyond the call of LSS duty, volunteering their time, knowledge and skills to put together this excellent edition of *Lithics*. Special thanks must go to Freddie Foulds for copy editing, to all our authors for their patience during the drawn-out publication process, and of course to the continuing support of our members. We hope to fill the vacant Editor position at the upcoming AGM and we are determined to bring you the next issue, *Lithics* 41, in good time.

Since the publication of the last issue of *Lithics*, we have had the sad news of the passing of two important members of the lithics community, Terry Hardaker and Peter Hoare. Terry was a member of the Society for over 25 years. He was a regular at Society events and made several contributions to this journal, including to the current issue. Peter, a geologist by profession, joined the LSS in 2010 and made a significant contribution to the publication of *Lithics*, both as an author but also as Assistant Editor, serving on the committee from 2016 to 2018. Peter continued to volunteer his considerable copy editing skills in support of successive editors. Both will be dearly missed.

So to the current volume, which brings you a series of research papers, reports and a book review that showcase the amazing breadth of work undertaken by members of the Lithic Studies Society. Bishop and colleagues open the volume with their study of the exceptional Middle Neolithic assemblage from West Amesbury Farm located within the Stonehenge landscape. This is followed by Hardaker and Rose with a study of new Lower Palaeolithic

assemblages collected from three key sites associated with the former River Bytham. Moving away from Britain, Biagi and Nisbet report on an andesite Levallois point discovered in the Javakheti Highland of the Lesser Caucasus of Georgia. The final paper by Dale presents a study of a little-known collection of artefacts from one of Britain's flagship Lower Palaeolithic sites, Furze Platt, held at the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada.

The research papers are followed by two reports by recipients of funding awarded by the Lithic Studies Society during 2019. Clarke provides a report of the lithic assemblage recovered during a fieldwalking survey at East Park, Drumoak, conducted by the Mesolithic Deeside group and supported by the inaugural Saville Grant. Birtwistle reports on preliminary results from the test excavations at Shish-Guzey and Gadir-Dere in northwestern Azerbaijan, which were supported by a Wymer Bursary. Together, these reports demonstrate the Society's commitment to support new research that advances and increases engagement with lithic studies. The volume is completed with Hayward's review of Allen (2017) "Geology for Archaeologists: A Short Introduction".

This volume provides an excellent example of the publishing niche that *Lithics* fills, providing researchers engaged in lithic studies in all its different contexts and at all career stages a platform for sharing their research. I encourage all our members actively engaged in lithic studies in any shape or form to consider contributing to future volumes. Articles may be submitted to the journal at any time. Please visit our website for further details, while enquiries can be emailed to the editorial team.

While we strive to ensure that the next issue is published in good time, I hope you will enjoy reading *Lithics* 40 and agree that it was worth the wait!

Rob Davis