

emphasis on the logic of certain associations. For example the first descriptive section is on technologically defined tools and groups the Levallois (1-4) with pseudo-Levallois points (5), which are by-products of discoidal flaking, and naturally backed knives (38). Points, notches and denticulates, Upper Palaeolithic types, and scrapers each have their own sections. Within these the authors are careful to identify potential sources of confusion. In its original layout the typelist is a sprawling collection, and I felt this re-organisation a useful one, and one that should help to make the diversity of the original less daunting. This is an important aspect, especially for students new to typology. The inclusion of a flow chart to help order the decision making process is a useful addition.

It is difficult in a review on this subject to limit comment to the book alone, and not extend criticism to the type list itself. The non-judgemental stance is laudable, but it is difficult not to become quickly disillusioned with the type list as the authors are at pains to show ambiguities in Bordes' own thinking. Some tools were defined on morphological grounds, others on technological ones, and some on Bordes' subjective preferences. (For example the primacy of endscrapers in all things, the failure to incorporate transverse scrapers with thinned backs into the category designed for the latter (technical) feature, and the sheer diversity of scrapers but paucity of sub-division in other tool groups.) A simple glance at the section on technologically-defined tools should convince most readers that the Bordes method is not a level playing field. But the point is, as flawed as it is, does it still contribute something worthwhile? Does this book go toward helping it work?

The answer to the first is a guarded 'yes'. The method does reveal patterns in stone tool assemblages, and they must be somehow explained. In that sense the type list is a heuristic device. Here the book does score. In defining the ambiguity at both the level of recognising individual tool types, and at the higher level of recognising the inconsistent nature of tool definitions, the handbook goes a long way to achieving its stated aims. It would be nice to think that this would stimulate a revision of the system, but it probably will not.

One point of interest is the number of people who have expressed shock and horror at one of the authors involvement in this project. What does Dibble think he is playing at? This I find odd. Dibble is not anti-type or type list, never was; a brief reading of one of his Mousterian papers on the Near East serves to demonstrate this. Dibble is anti-template; there is a difference.

An area of the book that did disappoint was the all too brief section on how the type list was originally used, and how it is used today. I am surprised that this section, relegated to the appendix, was not developed further. Clear demonstration of continuing contribution, and the ability of Bordes' method to generate dialogue, would have gone a long way to dispelling the misgivings some readers may develop.

I will not forget that far away day. For me it marked the beginning of doubt in much that I had been taught, and in those who had taught me. I sat in

the bar that afternoon wrestling with the contradiction of a pre-Anglian Mousterian. Something was wrong, but I could not then divorce the archaeological pattern from its meaning. In time I came to solve that contradiction. Years later I was asked by Nick Ashton to collaborate with him on the lithic interpretation chapter of the High Lodge report. As I wrote the last sentence in that chapter I had that meeting in my tutors' office in mind 'Context before culture, and don't put all your bifaces in one basket.' There are patterns in human action but this is different from the premise that human action is patterned. A subtle but important difference. It is how High Lodge can be pre-Anglian and Mousterian at the same time.

I think Débenath and Dibble have written a good book about a very problematic system, I wish I had had it a decade ago. But, I can not help thinking it ought to be the last book about the Bordes system.

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ANOTHER ONE BITES THE DUST

Bernard Conway, John McNabb and Nick Ashton (eds) with illustrations by Phil Dean. 1996. *Excavations at Barnfield Pit, Swanscombe, 1968-72*. British Museum Occasional Paper 94. Price: £20.00.

Callow's (1993) review of the recently published High Lodge volume (Ashton *et al.* 1992) ended with the somewhat forlorn hope expressed that High Lodge would be one of the last sites to be published over 20 years after its excavation had finished. Now the British Museum has produced another backlog volume, guided to completion by Ashton and McNabb, this time concerning the late Professor Waechter's programme of excavations at Swanscombe carried out in the summers of 1968-72. Unfortunately there are no grounds for confidence that this in turn will be one of the last, since it seems that there is no mechanism to control the loose cannons who create the backlogs. One has to examine the road into the field - who gives permission and who gives money. There is scope for the exercise of more control at these stages. Committee-members who approve funds to those with "form" regardless of their eminent positions must share the blame, and could suggest that continuing funding is dependent upon publication of previous work.

The importance of Swanscombe for Palaeolithic research hardly needs reiterating to readers of *Lithics*. It was until the 1980s the only source in Britain of Archaic (ie. not anatomically modern) hominid material - now we are spoilt with Pontnewydd (Green 1984) and Boxgrove (Roberts *et al.* 1994), and it contains deeply stratified sequences of fossiliferous and artefact-bearing deposits

enabling cultural change to be investigated in an environmental context. These deposits are part of a large Pleistocene river system whose remnants are preserved across southern England. This enables them to be dated in relation to other sites throughout the Thames basin and also across East Anglia by virtue of the classic locality of Hornchurch railway cutting where ancient Thames gravels cut into till (sorry, diamicton in the correct parlance - cf. Lewis 1992) associated with the Anglian glaciation (Bridgland 1994). Furthermore Swanscombe has been at the centre of British Palaeolithic study from near the beginning of the 20th century, making it significant for its role in the development of theoretical frameworks applied across the country as a whole (Hawkes 1938; Wymer 1968; Roe 1981).

This volume covers wider horizons than might be expected from the title. After a very brief introduction (Chapter 1), Chapters 2-4 set the scene for Waechter's work by reviewing previous research at Swanscombe. Chapter 2 is a somewhat anachronistic review of commercial quarrying practices and the growth of the cement industry in the late 19th and early 20th century, perhaps better relegated to an appendix. Chapter 3 is a meticulously detailed survey by Conway of primary geological observations at the site. This became slightly repetitious as many workers seem to have unsurprisingly seen pretty much the same deposits and in the same order as Dewey in his original stratigraphic study (Smith & Dewey 1913). It might have been better to have concentrated on observations which supplemented or contradicted Dewey's work. By the end of the chapter we are much better informed but little wiser - the only change to Dewey's pioneering sequence is the division of the Middle Gravels into upper and lower parts. Chapter 4 is an equally intense survey by McNabb of the role of the archaeological material recovered from the site in both creating and also perpetuating evolutionary culture-historical frameworks for the Palaeolithic. It might seem at first that these points, well-made and sound as they are, are slightly over-egged. However McNabb's prose is fluid and entertaining, and he also has a particular biface to grind, more of which later.

The remainder of the book covers the detail of the results of the various different aspects of Waechter's campaign. After a useful introduction by McNabb & Ashton to the progression of Waechter's excavations and the methodology used (Chapter 5), there are chapters covering the results of the geological investigations, the environmental evidence, the animal track horizons, the lithic artefacts and finally a brief overview. Conway gives a detailed survey of new exposures into the deposits of both the Barnfield pit itself and its immediate environs. This time the detail is valuable and justified, expanding knowledge of the horizontal variation and extent of the by-now familiar major units of the sequence. Conway's overall chrono-stratigraphic summary (Chapter 8) puzzlingly is placed before the wealth of environmental evidence is presented, much of which is potentially of bio-stratigraphic significance, and at least one part of which (the disputed presence of *Stephanorhinus hundsheimensis* in the Lower Gravel) contradicts his attribution of the Lower Gravel to the major

interglacial following the Anglian glaciation. It is up to the experts to sort this one out with calipers at dawn, but in view of the presence in the Lower Gravel of exotic lithology introduced into the Thames Valley by the Anglian glaciation (Bridgland *et al* 1985) despite the Lower Gravel's erosional surface it looks as if we have either post-Anglian *S. hundsheimensis* or a mis-identification.

The environmental material includes chapters by: Parry on birds (9), Irving on fish (10), Schreve on Waechter's mammals (11), Currant on Swanscombe mammals generally (12), Davies & Walker on animal tracks (13), Robinson on ostracods (14) and Hubbard on pollen (15). This evidence combines to provide an unparalleled insight into the environmental context associated with deposition of each of the major stratigraphic units, and exemplifies the value of the multi-disciplinary approach which is becoming usual in Palaeolithic research, for instance as at Boxgrove (Roberts 1986) and Barnham (Ashton *et al* 1994). Hubbard boldly re-affirms his convictions of the value of the pollen in the upper parts of the sequences which has been disputed by other workers such as Bridgland (1994) and Turner (1985). The conclusion of this part of the book was that the archaeologically rich lower parts of the sequence (the Lower Gravel, the Lower Loam and the Middle Gravels) can all be attributed to fluvial action a) within a single interglacial despite the number of erosional horizons within the sequence, and b) immediately following the Anglian glaciation, which is widely regarded as equivalent to Oxygen Isotope Stage 12 of the deep-sea sequence (Shackleton 1987; Bridgland 1994). This is not a novel conclusion, but a significant one to re-iterate in view of the archaeological variability within this part of the sequence and the claimed presence of an otherwise pre-Anglian rhino. In addition, and of potential significance for the value of the site for investigating human behaviour, the Lower Loam was shown to contain a series of temporary land-surfaces reflecting periodic dessication during a predominant regime of low energy fluvial deposition in an open, but lightly wooded environment.

So what about the lithics then, the evidence of actual human behaviour which is the point of the Palaeolithic archaeological exercise for the non-zoologists and non-geologists? These are covered by Ashton & McNabb in Chapter 16, which includes information on the raw material, condition and lithic technology from each of the main stratigraphic units, including a detailed report on refitting groups of artefacts recovered from a particular horizon within the Lower Loam, the "Knapping Floor", and an innovative scheme for the technological recording of Palaeolithic cores. The text is accompanied by truly exquisite illustrations by Dean, whose lithic work just gets better and better. Among the most significant results are i) the evidence of *in situ* horizons within the Lower Loam containing lithic and faunal material in association, ii) the presence of numerous cores in the Middle Gravels, and iii) the presence of a handaxe in the Lower Gravel.

As explained by McNabb in Chapter 4, the sequence at Swanscombe has formed the basis for the creation of a Palaeolithic culture-historical framework

applied beyond the site itself. The construction and refinement of such frameworks has been the major focus of Palaeolithic research through most of this century. This continues to be the case despite the attack on the theoretical basis of this endeavour by the Binforths in the 1960s (1962, 1966 & 1969) and the subsequent move by some towards a more adaptive and behavioural agenda. The long-standing culture-historical agenda has influenced our understanding of the nature of the archaeological record by stimulating the collection and dissemination of lithic data specifically selected as relevant to this agenda. Whatever one's views on the culture-historical exercise, it has produced patterns of data and, despite the restrictions of the biases of selection inherent, these patterns of data are legitimate targets for explanation; what is essential is to base these explanations on as accurate a factual picture as possible by separating the scum of interpretation from the broth of fact.

At the bottom of the Swanscombe sequence, in the Lower Gravel, an industry characterised by the presence of cores and flakes but without handaxes was identified in the first part of this century (labelled "Clactonian"). Higher up the sequence, in the Middle Gravels, an industry characterised by abundant handaxes and the debitage from their manufacture was identified (labelled "Acheulian"). Acheulian and Clactonian industries have also been claimed to be present stratified in the same order at the site of Barnham in Suffolk (Paterson 1937; Wymer 1985), and Clactonian industries have also been recognised from broadly contemporary levels at Clacton-on-Sea and Little Thurrock (Wymer 1957 & 1985; Singer *et al.* 1973). In the traditional view Clactonian and Acheulian industries are consistently and sufficiently distinct, despite both occurring within the post-Anglian interglacial, to reflect the presence in England of two groups whose different traditions of tool-making are held to reflect differences in other unpreserved aspects of culture, sufficient for two distinct Childean cultures to be recognised. Since the theoretical basis of culture-historical interpretations in the Palaeolithic was severely attacked by the Binforths the Clactonian/Acheulian separation has been challenged or re-interpreted regularly, originally by Ohel (1979) and more recently by McNabb (1992), McNabb & Ashton (1992), Mithen (1994), Ashton & McNabb (1994) and Ashton *et al.* (1994).

Ohel argued that both Clactonian and Acheulian were integral parts of a single sequence of reduction taking place in different parts of the landscape. Ohel suggested that Clactonian industries represented preliminary roughing-out of bifaces and Acheulian industries represented the later stages of manufacture and the abandonment of the finished tools. While this idea is in tune with the theoretical ideas put forward by the Binforths explaining contemporary variation as reflecting the organisation of different activities within a landscape, it foundered on the rocks of factual evidence. There was a) a complete lack of the distinctive debitage from handaxe manufacturing, and b) only a single disputed handaxe, in rich Clactonian levels from fluvial gravels which contained lithic material presumably gathered from a fairly large catchment, and hence likely to

include a good sample of the lithic technology being practised. Furthermore it was already shown by the time of Ohel's work that the Swanscombe Lower Loam contained refitting Clactonian sequences which could not have been continued towards a biface (Newcomer 1970). It should also be pointed out that the basis of Ohel's claim that the metrical characteristics of debitage from Clactonian and Acheulian sites overlap relies on the statistical jiggery-pokery of testing the probability that Clactonian and Acheulian debitage assemblages come from the same population by using a range of ± 2 standard errors from the mean of each population. Such a wide range includes over 99% of the normal variability of each population so a high degree of overlap is almost inevitable, without it indicating at all that there is any similarity between the populations. McNabb and Ashton do not follow Ohel's idea that Clactonian and Acheulian industries are integral parts of a single reduction sequence, but suggest instead that they are complementary aspects of a single industrial tradition, which involved both core-and-flake technology and handaxe-making technology according to circumstances. Exhibits supporting this argument are a) the presence of numerous cores in Acheulian industries from a number of sites, indistinguishable from those in Clactonian industries, b) the presence of very variable proportions of cores and handaxes in Acheulian industries suggesting they are not so internally homogenous as supposed, c) the presence of several handaxes in Clactonian industries, suggesting these too are also not so internally homogenous, and d) the apparent existence at Barnham of Acheulian and Clactonian lithic material at the same stratigraphic level. The new evidence from the Swanscombe deposits presented in Chapter 16 plays a key role in this debate with the cores from the Middle Gravels and the biface from the Lower Gravel. There are two main questions which need to be asked concerning exhibits a)-d), namely i) have they been proven? And ii) what do they prove?

The technological analysis in Chapter 16 and a swift examination of the Lower Middle Gravel cores by the writer confirms that, although they are not illustrated, they are indistinguishable from cores associated with Clactonian industries. Otherwise exhibits a) and b) are based on McNabb's wide-ranging re-examination of Palaeolithic material for his thesis (McNabb 1992) and so can be accepted. The presence of handaxes in Clactonian industries is more problematic. In addition to the handaxe from Waechter's excavation, which was provenanced to the top excavated spit of the Lower Gravels, McNabb and Ashton have listed ten bifaces in print as associated with Clactonian levels (McNabb & Ashton 1992; Ashton & McNabb 1994). There is no reason to suppose that Waechter's handaxe is wrongly provenanced, although it is possible that it may be.

Of the other ten, five collected by Warren from the Clacton foreshore at Lion Point are accepted as being found out of context, and although it might be reasonable to suppose that they came from the nearby Clacton Channel, an established source of Clactonian material, this lack of certainty makes it unreasonable to use them as the basis for overturning a long-established

Palaeolithic framework. Three handaxes were collected by Chandler (1928, Figures 20, 23 & 24) from the Lower Gravel at Swanscombe - these are what Ashton & McNabb (1994) have called "non-classic" bifaces. One might think that this is a ruse worthy of "Yes, Minister", but it is a genuine attempt to categorise artefacts whose shape they believe has been formed with a bifacial intent but which do not conform to established ideas of a nice thin and symmetrical handaxe. However, there is inevitably a grey area between co-incidentally bifacial cores and non-classic bifaces. This grey area is more problematic still when added to the rolling damage afflicting most Lower Gravel artefacts which can round off pointed parts of artefacts and give the illusion of more refined working and shaping than was actually the case. Having examined Chandler's specimens, this writer's opinion is that two of them seem to be cores with a co-incident point, and the other is a large implement with one end slightly worked to form a point, which means it can slip in at the non-classic end of the non-classic biface category.

Of the remaining two claimed Clactonian handaxes, one collected by Marston is provenanced to "Lower Gravel?" from Rickson's Pit, and the other collected by Dewey is provenanced to the Lower Gravel from Barnfield Pit. These specimens are also "non-classic", although more classic than Chandler's in the writer's view. Ashton & McNabb have suggested that the query in Marston's provenance relates to his surprise at finding a handaxe in a supposedly Clactonian level. However, in view of the lack of records by Marston showing the location and stratigraphic position of his find, and the complex Pleistocene deposits of Rickson's Pit, it cannot be presumed that this specimen came from a deposit equivalent to the Lower Gravel in Barnfield Pit. Finally, Dewey's handaxe is the most classic of the lot, although still called non-classic by Ashton & McNabb, and one cannot doubt its provenance as Dewey was the one who defined the Lower Gravel in the first place. Therefore the presence of handaxes in Clactonian levels is reduced to three reliable specimens, all of them non-classic.

The final exhibit is the apparent contemporaneity of Clactonian and Acheulian material at Barnham (Ashton *et al.* 1994). At Area I there is a classic Clactonian industry consisting of refitting cores and flakes. This level occurs at the base of a deposit of Light Gray Silt around 30 cm thick, and on, and within the top of, a Lag Gravel deposit whose surface also is marked by a layer of large flint cobbles. Above the Light Gray Silt there is a Dark Band at the base of a thick brickearth deposit, and this Dark Band contains handaxes. This sequence was also investigated by Paterson (1937) and is one of the two stratigraphic pillars upholding the classic framework. At Area IV-4 unequivocal handaxe-thinning debitage has been found at a level regarded as equivalent to the Clactonian horizon in Area I. This equivalence depends upon the Light Gray Silt continuing from Area I to Area IV-4, and the handaxe-making debitage occurring under the Light Gray Silt at Area IV-4. In Figure 2 (Ashton *et al.* 1994) this continuation is not shown, the Light Gray Silt is absent at Area IV-4.

However Ashton & McNabb (pers. comm.) claim that the continuation has been proven by more recent fieldwork, and that it was not apparent before as the Light Gray Silt becomes darker and more clayey towards Area IV-4. Therefore, the evidence from Barnham indicates flake/core and handaxe-making technology not only during the same geological period, but on contemporarily exposed landsurfaces separated by only c. 100 m.

In summary, there is evidence i) that Acheulian industries contain large and variable amounts of core-and-flake production, ii) that Acheulian industries are also internally variable in the numbers and types of handaxes, including large quantities of non-classic types, iii) that non-classic handaxes are very occasionally found in Clactonian industries, and iv) that handaxe-making was taking place not only in the same interglacial stage as the production of classic Clactonian industries, but also contemporaneously with the Clactonian industry at Barnham. The insidious and seductive attraction of culture-history is that it is immune to factual disproof, at the same time as providing no explanation for why cultures evolve and mingle as they are claimed to do. If one is a sufficiently hardened culture-historicist then none of this evidence will prove anything other than cultural integrity and distance were maintained even on the same knapping floor. However less severe cases would concede that this evidence does suggest that a) we need to re-assess our ideas of the technological variability subsumed within the Clactonian and Acheulian pigeonholes, and b) we should take seriously the McNabb-Ashton postulate that there may be a seamless continuum between these longstanding pigeon-holes.

If so, we are left with the problems of i) explaining why handaxes, and the evidence of handaxe-making, are so scarce in certain (and co-incidentally - ? - always stratigraphically lower) horizons, and ii) documenting this variability within the context of new theories about the relevance of assemblage composition. Raw material quality seems an unlikely explanation. Experiments by the writer (Wenban-Smith & Ashton in prep.) have confirmed that there is no problem making classic, "nice" Acheulian ovates from the raw material associated with the Clactonian horizons at Barnham. Furthermore, it is hard to imagine what raw material restrictions could prevail during formation of the Swanscombe Lower Gravel which don't prevail during formation of the Middle Gravel, and which would lead to such a drastic difference in handaxe-making prevalence.

One interesting avenue is an explanation relating to the degree of social learning behind an applied technological repertoire (cf. Mithen 1994). While I applaud Mithen's ambition to develop new explanations of Palaeolithic datasets inherited from the culture-historical era of the discipline, he seems to have overstated the influence of environmental context upon hominid behaviour in a slightly deterministic way, and to fly in the face of other ecologically based theories about the impact of environment on hominid groups. Firstly, he suggests that minor, and hard to demonstrate, variations in environment could be affecting group-size and so technology. Secondly, if one accepts that the

environment does affect adaptive strategies, then conventional wisdom is that surviving in interglacial wooded environments requires complex group networking (Kelly 1983; Gamble 1986 & 1987), and thus would support rather than hinder the learning and transference of "difficult" handaxe-making technology. The evidence from Swanscombe also refutes some aspects of Mithen's model. All environmental and geological evidence suggests that the Swanscombe Lower Gravel and Middle Gravels were formed during very similar climatic regimes, and during the same interglacial period. Furthermore both deposits contain derived artefacts gathered from comparable catchment zones. However, these two deposits contain a highly contrasting prevalence of handaxes (see Wymer 1968 for evidence from the Middle Gravels, which were only minimally investigated by Waechter), which seems incompatible with Mithen's model.

Variations on Mithen's theme might however explain the observed data. For example, consider the following lead balloon. We know that good quality bifaces with advanced technical features such as tranchet-sharpening were a common feature of pre-Anglian occupation (Roberts 1986; Ashton & McNabb 1992). And in early post-Anglian contexts such as Swanscombe and the Clacton Channel the bifacial element of technological practice is both technically crude and very rare. However, in later post-Anglian contexts the technical quality and frequency of handaxes increases again. This could possibly be reflecting the splintering of previously stable pre-Anglian hominid groups by the extreme stresses of the Anglian ice-age, and their subsequent re-grouping under the impact of prolonged temperate conditions - evidence from Boxgrove of mint refitting material in solifluction deposits associated with periglacial conditions suggests occupation persisted at least during the beginning of the Anglian (Roberts, ed. 1996). Other explanations could involve changing balances between expedient core/flake strategies practised at the point of contact with a food-resource and more logistically planned strategies based on ported bifaces carried in advance of contact. There is clearly much scope for further work in the areas of both understanding better the facts of the archaeological record, and also interpreting them.

This report of Waechter's work provides a valuable summary of the stratigraphy and environment of one of England's most important Palaeolithic and Quaternary sites. The lithic data presented is mostly restricted to the Lower Gravel and Lower Loam, because that was where Waechter dug. Despite this limitation, the results contribute to the current debate on the meaning of one of the long-standing patterns recognised in the NW European Palaeolithic dataset. Additionally, the *in situ* material from the Lower Loam is of particular importance. Material of this nature gives the opportunity to reconstruct short episodes of behaviour as they happened, and a major concern of Palaeolithic study now must be to develop theoretical approaches which use this kind of data productively to investigate the questions posed in the concluding summary (Chapter 17) relating to hominid behaviour and mental capabilities in the Middle

Pleistocene. Unfortunately these questions are posed rather than answered, but one can't have everything and we certainly have been given a superb basis of fact for others to integrate with theory.

In conclusion, Waechter deserves some praise, because although he clearly participated in the culture-historical folly of the times, of which McNabb makes so much, among his original intentions in starting his work at Swanscombe was to investigate *in situ* horizons for the behavioural information they might contain. Apparently (Waechter 1968) he expected to find such horizons in the Lower Gravel as well as the Lower Loam, but he should be commended for identifying the potential of the Lower Loam, and acting upon it. Despite the lack of a final publication Waechter produced detailed interim reports after each season except the last, and his excavation and recording techniques were sufficient for most of his faunal and lithic material to be accurately provenanced. Conway, McNabb and Ashton should be congratulated on having found the energy to bring to fruition a project which must have lost momentum with Waechter's death, and on having the strength of purpose to make sense of the old excavation records, to the extent of being able to present a coherent report 25 years after the site was excavated. Buy it, it's excellent value at the price.

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Minutes of the Annual General Meeting, held at 11.15 on 29th November 1995 at Franks House, 31-46 Orsman Rd, London N1 5QJ.

Present: F.Healy (Chairman), J.Humble (Vice Chairman), J.Lewis (Hon. Secretary), L.Austin (Hon. Treasurer & Membership Sec.), A.David, N.Ashton, P.Bradley, L.Bevan, J.Wymer, J.Schofield, P.Berridge, E.Healey, A.Saville, B.Casway, K.Fernie (RCHM), D.Field.

1. Apologies were received from P.Pettitt and A.Roberts (Hon. Editor).
2. The minutes of the previous committee meeting held on 26/9/95 and the AGM held on 30/11/94 were accepted as a correct record. One matter which arose from the committee meeting was that J.Humble said he would distribute our brochure, and L.Bevan said she would supply him with a list of consultants.

3. Matters Arising. 1. Francis Healy would produce a project outline for future directions in lithics research in December. 2. P.Bradley was prepared to publish the Oxford lithic scatters meeting as a monograph. 3. F.Healy said that a meeting in Exeter was still in preparation and that A.Roberts would remain the contact for this. 4. Kate Fernie from the Royal Commission spoke to the meeting about her project to index lithic material on the NMR and make the entries more consistent, structured and accessible. She had come to the Society's AGM to explain the project and to seek some advice on how best to go about this task. Unfortunately many of the replies outlined the problems affecting lithic studies rather than offering a way forward. F.Healy said that we were a very long way from achieving a standardised artefact recording system. N.Ashton explained the problems encountered by the BM when they started to computerise their accessions records. J.Schofield outlined areas where the RCHM project might overlap with the English Heritage Lithic Scatters Project, and offered to forward the county reports from this project to Kate Fernie.

4. Officers Reports.

Hon Secretaries Report. John Lewis summarised the meetings held during the past year which consisted of :January, Recent work on lithics in Wales, held in Cardiff.March, a talk by Jill Varndell of the BM on Grimes Graves.April, a joint meeting with the QRA on the Torbryan Valley, held in the BM. August, the field meeting at the Boxgrove Lower Palaeolithic excavations. September, a talk by M. Raynier on typological classification of the early Mesolithic.October, a seminar held at the Oxford Unit on evaluating lithic scatters. Finally at todays meeting a talk by Nick Barton on work in the Wye Valley caves. This year has thus been a busy one and John thanked all the people who contributed to and especially organised the day meetings. He also repeated his intention to stand down as secretary at this AGM due to pressure of work, and thanked all the members of the committee for their support over the past two years.

Hon Editors Report. Both the new Hon Editor (P.Pettitt) and the outgoing one (A.Roberts) were absent from the meeting. However a message from P.Pettitt stated that many articles had been arranged for the *Lithics* after next. A.David raised the fact that the latest double edition of *Lithics*, Vols 14/15 was full of errors. F.Healy said that Alison was aware of this and apologised.

Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary's Report. L.Austin presented a provisional accounts statement for the year. This was not however a definitive statement as it had been very difficult to keep the accounts due to the lack of computing facilities (see below). She also appealed for assistance from any members who had accountancy experience. However it became clear that due to the production of the recent publications such as "*Lithics in Context*" the Society would have a cash-flow problem, possibly to the detriment of the publication of the "*Glossary*". In addition, BM Litho had pulled out of printing "*Lithics*", thus requiring a commercial printer to do the job. A long debate ensued over publications policy and finances. A.Saville thought that publication of large Occasional Papers should be backed by a grant from a suitable body, rather than spending the Society's surplus. This should be kept for publishing the "*Glossary*". It was pointed out that the *Glossary* is still not ready after at least a decade of work. The nature of the Society's agreement with Oxbow books to produce and distribute the *Glossary* was reviewed. Was the initial promise that each member should receive a free copy now realistic? Should the Society distribute publications ourselves and keep a bigger percentage of the profits than if Oxbow did the work? It was pointed out that it took a considerable amount of time and effort to distribute books, and a further debate ensued over the distribution of "*Lithics in Context*". It was clear that this publication had to be sold quickly to recoup the outlay on it. J.Schofield agreed to handle the pre-publication offers on this Paper, and would then approach Oxbow to negotiate for them to handle further