

The social side of the Symposium was complicated by the delegates being split between numerous hotels and hostels in different parts of Madrid, but the reception at the Town Hall on the first evening and the Farewell Dinner on the last were a great success. However, it was a very big disappointment on the evening visit to the National Archaeological Museum in Madrid to discover no member of staff on hand to welcome us or introduce us to the Museum and its collections - and what magnificent collections! This inexplicable own goal on the part of the Museum left everyone somewhat bemused as we drifted anticlimatically around the displays.

The general consensus, as I picked it up, seemed to be that this was not one of the best Flint Symposia, though it had its moments and the quality of work presented in both the lectures and the poster sessions cannot be gainsaid. Even so, for many the highlight was the fantastic bookstall laid on by Portico Librerias of Zaragoza. There was a special Symposium book catalogue, and the conference hall lobby had tables spread with a wonderful feast of publications on lithics from around the world, including British publications now unobtainable new over here. The fact that the booksellers took plastic meant many delegates had a lean following month!

The Symposium was preceded by a geological excursion in northern Spain, and succeeded by an archaeological one to the south east, terminating in Almeria. Again the handbook for the archaeological field excursion was splendid (Ramos Millan *et al.* 1991), and the trip itself was a visual treat, culminating in a visit to the remarkable Fort 1 at Los Millares in the process of excavation. Nevertheless, the trip was not without its problems, and perhaps future Symposia organisers should consider a return to the format last used at the Brighton Symposium in 1983, whereby site visits are an integral part of the main proceedings in which all delegates participate. Such visits give the chance for both geologists and archaeologists to appreciate and discuss the same sites and locations, more easily fostering the inter-disciplinary dialogue which is surely one of the main aims of the Flint Symposia?

For 1995 the International Committee have selected Poland as the first-choice host country. The hope was unanimously expressed that our colleagues in Poland will be able to succeed in their plans for that will undoubtedly be a major event.

References

Bustillo, M.A. and Ramos Millan, A (eds). 1991. *VI International Flint Symposium: Abstracts*. Madrid (ISBN 84-00-07180-8).

Ramos Millan, A., Martinez Fernandez, G., Rios Jimenez, G. and Afonso Marrero, J.A. 1991. *Flint production and exchange in the Iberian Southeast, III millennium BC (VI International Flint Symposium Post-Symposium Field Trip)*. Granada (ISBN 84-338-1437-0).

BOOK REVIEWS

Hengistbury Head, Dorset. Volume 2: The Late Upper Palaeolithic and Early Mesolithic Sites by R.N.E. Barton, with contributions from D.E. Barton, C.E. Bergman, S.N. Collcutt, J. Cook, J. Huxtable, I. Levi-Sala, R.I. MacPhail, E.J. Rhodes, J.L. Ruiz, C. Salter, R. Sanderson, R.G. Scaife, B.A. Tocher and R. Unger-Hamilton. Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph No. 34. 1992. 299pp. Price £38.00.

Roger Jacobi

This volume presents the results of the 1980-84 excavations at the Late Upper Palaeolithic (Mace) and Early Mesolithic (Powell) sites, 650 metres apart on the southern margin of Hengistbury Head, Dorset. The former had already been sampled by Angela Mace in 1957 and by John Campbell in 1968-9, while the latter was only discovered by Ronald Powell in 1977. In addition, excavation of 96m² of the Upper Palaeolithic sites was supplemented by trial pitting of a 660m² area - the Eastern Depression - to its north.

Let it be said that at a time when archaeology appears to be heading for publication hyperdrive - strangulation by paper guaranteeing academic survival - yet another monograph, this time with 15 contributors, would normally occasion only dread. In this case, think again.

Firstly, I congratulate Nick Barton on his decision to produce what is, in effect, a single text divided into chapters not by individual contributors but by the sense of the contents. Secondly, I congratulate him on achieving what is, by and large, not an easy road. As an outsider to this research, and only sometimes an observer, I appreciated being gently led through the history of past work, project design, excavation and post-excavation methodology and then step by step to the results and discussion of results. The effect of this integrated text is very much that of a well-prepared lecture, and we all know how rare that is.

Before passing on to the 'meat', it is worth further commenting to a Society, many of whose members are hopefully still interested in lithic artefacts rather than the theory of lithics, that this is one of what are still relatively few examples of a report where there has been a clear understanding between technologist and artist. The fine drawings (by Rupert Cook, Hazel Martingell, Jeffrey Wallis and Christine Wilson) are thankfully traditional, and so legible. Can I also recommend the decision to use photographs to illustrate the majority of the re-fitting in preference to line-drawings which are both expensive and, because of their complexity,

rarely successful? Returning, for the last time, to the structure of the volume it is also worth noting how comprehension is greatly eased by having the plans, drawings, photos and the large number of very clear SEM photomicrographs (by Alison Roberts and Jill Cook) adjacent to the relevant text rather than segregated at one point. The result is that this monograph has a vastly enhanced (if perhaps subconscious) didactic merit, as well as being a pair of site reports.

The 'Mace' site is of particular importance. Including 645 retouched tools this is the largest sample of Late Upper Palaeolithic flint-work presently available from Britain. While the full significance of re-fitting are still to be debated what it clearly has established here is that it is impossible to split the collection chronologically on the basis of depth within a podzol whose horizons in turn are, of course, without stratigraphic significance. Hence Mace's rather than Campbell's interpretation of the collection is supported.

Perhaps Campbell was worried by the total dissimilarity of this material (with its numerous straight-backed blades and bladelets and rare tanged points) to the smaller collection from British cave-sites, many of them rich in Cheddar and Creswell points. Convincing parallels are found at Brockhill, in Surrey, and at find-spots close to Etouvy in the Somme Valley. Important is the demonstration, difficult to impress into some very thick skulls, that it is no longer possible to describe all British Lateglacial lithic collections as 'Creswellian'. Whilst the distinctiveness of the Mace site assemblage can be demonstrated on the basis of retouched tools, particular attention should be paid to the discussion of styles of lithic debitage, especially core reduction and platform preparation.

Many of the Society's members have to be field-walkers and, as Nick Barton points out, more and more open-air Lateglacial find-spots are being recognized. Most depend upon the recognition of isolated diagnostic artefacts whose significance in the landscape are, however, virtually impossible to assess. Our sensitivity to many aspects of Upper Palaeolithic technology has remained poorly developed. It will be interesting to see, if some of the hints offered by this monograph are followed through, how great a part of what would until now have conventionally been assumed Mesolithic will instead become attributed to earlier stages.

The flint from which these artefacts were made came from 12km away and refitting suggests that it entered the site as whole nodules. Of particular interest to members should be the descriptions of the refitted groups which allow us to follow the knapper as he (or she) adapted the reduction sequence to coping with the problems and potentials of individual nodules. These reconstructions are a model of clarity and do much to justify the enormous spans of time spent in reversing the industry of Stone Age people. They also allow discrimination of activity areas within the excavated area - a total of over 300m².

Individual items of note from the Mace site are a piece of rubbed and abraded ochre, and a core with re-attached flake whose cortex bears an abstract design. How many members can really put hand on heart and claim to have examined every cortical fragment which crossed their path?

There are of course negative aspects to looking at sites in sand. There is no fauna from either of the two Hengistbury sites and with the present uncertainties surrounding studies of supposed blood-residues it is difficult to see how we can establish the species exploited. Post-depositional alteration of flint surfaces raises questions as to the applicability of use-wear studies to lithics from sandy contexts. Whether, in most cases, such studies truly enhance our knowledge of the past is an issue beyond the scope of this review. Finally, it is important to note the failure of wood charcoals to provide radiocarbon ages relevant to the Upper Palaeolithic use of the Mace site. This is not a failing unique to Hengistbury, although its implications have been more discussed for continental than for British findspots. While there are TL dates for both the Hengistbury sites, I am less convinced than I was that this technique will help us understand the chronology of the Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic. There are still insufficient comparisons between TL and radiocarbon results for the same findspots, the error ranges for TL dates are still very great, and there remains the possibility of heating of artefacts long after discard.

Most of my remarks have been of greater relevance to the Mace site. I must, however, praise Nick Barton for developing Ronald Powell's original impeccable field-work to recover and describe one of the largest samples (626 tools) presently available of that very early British Mesolithic technology defined by the combination of obliquely-backed ('A') points, scrapers, and microdenticulates. There are clear structural differences between the tool inventories from these early find-spots both in terms of proportions and in the present/absence of individual tool-forms, for example burins and core adzes. This report initiates discussion of this variability and suggests differences between river-side and (present day) heath-land localities. It will be interesting to see how this model fares as members add to the database. To conclude - why is this such an important contribution to lithic studies? To answer this I want, once again, to focus on the Mace site. Recent discussions of the British Upper Palaeolithic have treated (abused) the database as so many disjecta. Thank goodness with the publication of this report this is no longer admissible.