

by John Schofield

Frances Healy's rejoinder raises the very points which I expected the 'ASDA Factor' would provoke, some of which are dealt with in detail in the forthcoming Avon Valley Report (Light, Schofield, and Shennan in prep.). There are, however, a couple of general points which do need to be made and which concern the aims of the paper rather than its content.

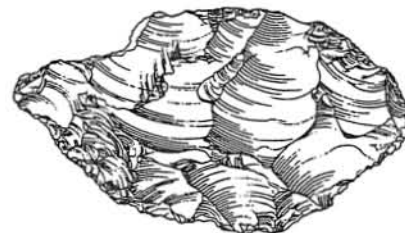
The first is that this was never intended as a final report but rather as an attempt to raise discussion on the subject of variation in surface lithic collections. 7,000 flint artefacts were studied in the Avon Valley survey, of which only thirty could be attributed a broad cultural label. What of the remaining 99%; surely they too could be assigned a useful role in the analysis of prehistoric behaviour?

The reason chronology was 'abbreviated' was simply that flints recovered by surface collection cannot be assigned accurate dates. At best an item could be identified as 'Mesolithic' or 'Early Neolithic', but even then there is often a good deal of overlap between cultural episodes. The aim here was to produce a picture, not of pin-point variations in time but of general trends against a less rigid background such as we may expect to see in the analysis of surface collections. Variables such as source area were isolated to the extreme so as to illustrate the potential for such an enquiry. Gravel flint was never ignored; it was simply that chalk source areas could be more clearly identified and were more conducive to localised mapping than were long stretches of valley gravels.

Site analysis was brief but was never intended as a central part of the argument. It was simply suggested that patterns could be discerned and that they may have been subjected to the same processes which governed the nature of surface lithic collections. In other words it was used as a brief example of how best to use excavated material for purposes of calibration. The points made were necessarily brief due to the nature of reports, while the sites listed in the rejoinder were outside the chosen study area.

The points raised by Frances Healy reinforce those of my own paper, that we need to pay more attention to variation in surface lithic collections, both in terms of technological and ecological factors. The core-reduction sequence is, as its name implies, both reductive and sequential and hence if we can locate source areas we may go some way towards understanding the nature and density of lithic scatters across the landscape. Frances Healy's rejoinder tends to concentrate on specific points, many of which are limitations but which could not be overcome in the time available. The general points which I raised do, I think, remain valid and are indeed strengthened by the additional comments.

ILLUSTRATOR



JOANNA RICHARDS
BA, AAL & S.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ILLUSTRATION

"The Sconce",
42 Clayton's Way,
Huntingdon,
Cambs. PE18 7UT.

Tel. 0480 53231



I should be happy to hear from anyone requiring an illustrator to work on lithic material. I have nine years experience in the field, and should be pleased to supply the names of referees.

J. Richards