

need for selectivity in the collection and analysis of lithic material in field survey, if only to avoid being crushed beneath an unmanageable mountain of aggregate. He advocated surface mapping by broad technological categories, without collection, as a first step in the examination of most scatters, and a straightforward count of broad categories as a first step in the analysis of collected material. A significant and enviable development was that the project had created its own comparative standard for detailed study of selected surface collections by identifying and excavating single-episode deposits of appropriate dates and subjecting them to consistent and far-reaching technological and typological analysis.

Richard Bradley wove these disparate threads into the conclusion that, in order to shape and justify its future, lithic analysis must think BIG: landscapes rather than individual living-places, societies rather than single knappers, subsistence-bases rather than sickle-manufacture; in short, the mainstream of prehistory rather than a bypassable backwater. The potential for scale and depth is there; it is for us to realize it and to communicate it.

A FIELDWALKER'S REPLY

by Bob Silvester

Somehow I doubt whether I am the only fieldwalker who, while traversing some muddy field on a murky winter's day, reflects on the deeper significance of collecting a mass of little fragments of flint and chert, fragments which must later be washed, marked and bagged ready (one hopes) for a lithic specialist to examine at some unspecified time in the future. A meeting such as that organised by the Prehistoric Society on 'Putting Lithics to Work' is thus welcome, not least to reassure the fieldwalker, whether amateur or professional, that those assiduously gathered fragments may be of some use over and above plotting the location of yet another prehistoric 'site' on the regional distribution map. The proceedings of the symposium are summarised above and need not be reiterated here. Instead I would like to consider two points which occurred to me as the afternoon progressed.

The first resulted from Julie Gardiner's paper on lithic collections in museums. Her analysis of the mass of material from three counties in southern England stumbled against two fundamental problems: some collections were poorly provenanced and many were biased in favour of the more recognisable artefacts. With today's more rigorous standards of recording the first of these should no longer be a handicap, but can we be entirely confident that fieldwalkers are now collecting a sufficiently full and representative selection of lithics from any given 'site' to satisfy the specialists who will study museum collections in the next century? I am not particularly optimistic about this. It seems to be a fact that the serious fieldwalker, if he or she professes any specialism at all, is likely to have a more detailed knowledge of pottery than of lithics and to be more interested in Iron Age and later than in earlier periods. The converse also appears true: few lithic specialists actually get out in the field and collect their own material. There is the great danger that the fieldwalker's ability to recognise and collect relevant material is not keeping pace with the improving techniques of collection and more sophisticated methods of analysis. Some lithic types must be obvious to all fieldwalkers - axes, arrowheads, blades, etc. - but can we be certain that those categories of tool with which the fieldwalker is less familiar will be recovered; and what of the waste material and less obvious cores? Equally problematic is the use of different kinds of flint and chert: familiarity with a particular variety of raw material may lead to oversight where tools and waste of unusual colour and texture are involved. If, as I believe, these factors affect most of today's surface collections to some degree, are we justified in assuming our data are any more valuable than those of fifty years ago? And should we simply acknowledge that the problem is insuperable or perhaps aim for closer cooperation between collectors and lithic specialists?

My second concern should not be viewed as a criticism of the symposium which achieved, perhaps a little unevenly, what it set out to do, but rather the legitimate reaction of a fieldwalker to the emphasis of most of the papers: fieldwork complemented by selective excavation or, in the case of Spong Hill, Norfolk, extensive excavation accompanied by limited field collection. Such an integrated approach is, of course, something that should

be welcomed, but sadly it cannot be considered the norm. Some university departments have managed successfully on limited funding; Reading University's work under the guiding hand of Richard Bradley, first in Cranborne Chase and now in the Lake District, is a good example. Likewise HBMC has on occasion taken a broad view of landscape studies and funded such fieldwork/excavation projects as the Stonehenge Environs Project and, more recently, that at Raunds, Northamptonshire. But, even where there is a considerable input of government funds into fieldwork, there is not necessarily a guarantee of further funding for backup excavation. Thus with the Fenland Project, which must be the most extensive survey ever financed by HBMC/DOE, - five fieldworkers employed over a seven year period - there is no indication, as yet, that any of the multitude of questions raised by our work will be pursued by excavation.

The vast majority of fieldwalking projects, both amateur and professional, will never be followed up, but there is always the hope that the ploughsoil finds can be put to some use other than adding dots to the map. In concentrating on integrated projects the symposium papers avoided this aspect - hence the disappointment! Yet there is obvious potential in such survey data as is well demonstrated by the recent publication of Archaeology from the Ploughsoil (Haselgrove, Millett, and Smith (eds.), 1985), as well as as several isolated papers in journals. However, a cursory glance at these would suggest that, with one or two exceptions, lithic specialists are not in the forefront of this developing study. Perhaps the subject for a future symposium?

REFERENCE

Haselgrove, C., Millett, M., and Smith, I. (eds.), 1985, Archaeology from the ploughsoil (Sheffield, Department of Archaeology and Prehistory)

THE 'ASDA FACTOR': CORE REDUCTION, RESOURCE STRESS AND THE NATURE OF LITHIC ASSEMBLAGES IN CENTRAL-SOUTHERN ENGLAND

by John Schofield

Introduction

This paper is intended as a summary of work carried out between 1984 and 1986 as part of my postgraduate research. The idea has been to investigate the relationship between earlier prehistoric settlement and certain ecological variables in the landscape of central-southern England. Data were collected by fieldwalking in two survey areas and the main characteristics of the various flint collections were recorded. It soon became apparent through this analysis that a clear relationship existed between the size and form of flint collections on the one hand and the location and nature of flint as a raw material on the other.

In order to clarify the nature of these relationships it was assumed that flint is generally derived from one of two sources and that the source used may have depended on the importance attached to flint by the societies concerned. On the one hand, flint may be obtained from non-localised, usually derived sources. Such locations cannot be mapped nor accurately predicted by archaeological detection and were probably only important for the manufacture and use of 'instant tools', made and discarded on site. It is this uncertainty and lack of organisation which necessitates the exclusion of this class from the discussions which follow. Localised sources or quarries, on the other hand, can be mapped and imply a degree of planning and premeditated activities. Hayden has suggested that in such cases large amounts of debris are generated and that quarries in general are recognised by prehistorians for what they are and do not pose a major interpretative problem (1978, 192). In the ethnographic record, observers have noted a tendency for groups to visit such sites, apply crude core-reduction techniques, and return with prepared nodules to the settlement (Gould 1980, 126). Such a degree of organisation should, as Hayden suggests, generate specific patterns or signatures in the archaeological record, and it is with these signatures that this paper is primarily concerned.

In order to investigate the nature of these relationships and to test the validity of applying general models to this area of human activity, a bimodal research strategy was adopted; this involved:

1. Examining in detail the flint collections from the Middle Avon valley (Schofield forthcoming) and East Hampshire (Gardiner and Shennan 1985) survey areas.
2. Comparing those results with a number of excavated assemblages to see if the same relationship existed between assemblage form and size and the location and nature of raw material.