

This may seem a pessimistic note on which to end, but we have shown that the detailed observations made by earlier researchers in the south of England may have no validity in the northern regions where similar work has not been previously undertaken.

We do not feel that the conclusions put forward in the Sheffield paper, referred to above, have in any way been invalidated by our statistical analyses. Indeed we would welcome feedback from colleagues with an interest in the statistical analysis of lithic material with a view to applying further discrimination tests to our sample.

Perhaps the only real test of the speculations set out in the first part of this paper would be to excavate, and date by 14C, undisturbed Mesolithic, Neolithic/Bronze Age and mixed sites in situ. However, therein lies the main problem, for the presence of these sites is only indicated after ploughing and/or erosion, which ultimately destroys stratigraphical relationships, has taken place.

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#### REVIEWS

Non-Flint Stone Tools and the Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain, edited by R.J. MacRae and N. Moloney. B.A.R. 189, 1988, 263 pp, including a Gazetteer of 21 pp., and numerous figs and tables. Price £16.00 post free.

To echo Roe in his introductory article, this publication is a 'very worthwhile addition' to the literature of the Old Stone age in this country. It addresses a theme which has otherwise tended to be treated as peripheral in the face of the overwhelming preponderance of flint in the lithic collections preserved in Britain's museums. The book undoubtedly faces up to a need, therefore. But, more than is usually the case, it may also be seen as a sort of social document reflecting the very diverse character of Palaeolithic archaeology in this country ... which is largely responsible for the book's form and content, and indeed both its strengths and its weaknesses. It gives an insight, valuable and also unusual in a single volume, into the range of activity and of the practitioners themselves, amateur and professional. Its chapters are correspondingly diverse in their approach and presentation. They give the impression of having been edited with a fairly light touch, too, so the personalities of the contributors have not been reduced to a common shade of academic grey.

The book is divided into a number of parts, some represented by a single chapter, others by several. It ends with a Gazetteer of known non-flint artefacts.

Wymer offers a brief reassessment of the geographical range of the British Lower Palaeolithic, mapping finds from above the Severn-Wash line and concluding that the picture has changed rather little since a similar essay by Boyd Dawkins in 1910. This is followed by two papers on experimental biface manufacture. The first is by Moloney, Bergman, Newcomer and Wenban-Smith and is based on Bunter quartzite pebbles as raw material. The results are set against British and continental archaeological data. The second is written by Moloney alone, flaking eight different rock types, and is even more carefully documented. Among other conclusions, it was found that the initial selection of the block of raw material is more critical for hard rocks than it is for flint.

The volume then develops a 'regional' structure, with four papers on the Midlands of England, six on the Upper Thames, and one on Southern England. Within this scheme, though, there is great diversity. Saville describes the Waite collection from the Nuneaton area, followed by Shotton on Wolstonian geology and north Warwickshire finds. MacRae then undertakes a brief historical synthesis of research in Warwickshire; the section is concluded by Whitehead, who catalogues finds from the Severn-Avon valley.

Consideration of the Upper Thames starts with a useful account of the area and its quartzite implements, by MacRae, who has done much good work collecting thereabouts. This includes an exuberant description of the third largest handaxe known from Britain - actually of flint, from Stanton Harcourt and christened the "Giant of Gravelly Guy" (for the benefit of aficionados: the length is 269 mm). A short note by Wallis then

reports on the range of natural damage observable on quartzite pebbles from a gravel pit. Tyldesley deals with the quartzite component of the well known industry from the Wolvercote Channel. But why, one asks, is the illustration of the best quartzite example of a plano-convex piriform handaxe, the type for which the site is famous, also the only one which does not allow the reader to judge that asymmetry (Fig. 1)? MacRae appends a comment on some less securely attributed material from Wolvercote.

The three remaining papers on the Upper Thames all take a more geological direction, beginning with Briggs, who reviews the terrace sequence and its interpretation regarding human environments. Bridgland then discusses the derivation, in the plateaux deposits, of the quartzites used by Palaeolithic man in this area, and finally Preston examines the Triassic Bunter pebble beds. Personally, I found this small group of contributions particularly valuable. The last of the strictly regional sections, on Southern England, contains just one paper on the raw materials in the south-west, by Alison Roberts.

A section entitled 'Caves' then follows. It consists of an article by Green on raw material selection and natural damage at Pontnewydd, and a note by the editors (*faute de mieux*) dealing with Creswell Crags. The case for abandoning the geographical structure at this point did not seem to me to be overwhelmingly strong, I must confess. The last chapter came almost as a shock, in the table of contents: the title is 'Africa: Everything but Flint'. But its inclusion makes good sense. Inskeep shows that Africa has a lot to tell us about what can be done with the rock types discussed in the previous couple of hundred pages! (Question: is it perverse to have left this until the end?).

Spending some time carrying the book around while travelling, and dipping into it occasionally (I re-read it more systematically later), I soon realised that there were small but significant improvements which would have been very helpful to the reader even under less trying conditions. The contents of some more or less adjacent chapters are sufficiently alike for it to be quite easy to lose one's place and hardly realise it. Modern word-processing software should by now have resulted, as a matter of course, in the provision of running heads identifying the papers. Also, at the expense of a little more editorial work a unified numbering system for illustrations and tables would have been helpful. Perhaps the editors could have been more demanding of their contributors, too. I was born in Warwickshire and (though not an inhabitant) have more knowledge of the county than do many other readers. Nevertheless, I found myself becoming irritated as I tried to work out how Professor Shotton's quite large-scale maps related to the Midlands generally ... so why no location map?

These are small and perhaps ungenerous quibbles, though. No less important is that the chapters are well laid out, the illustrations have reproduced clearly, and the proof-reading is excellent. I was briefly entertained on p. 252 by the idea of a four-dimensional handaxe from Iffley (9.5 x 6.5 x 3 x 5 cm), so do not regard this slip as serious grounds for complaint.

A point worth making is that this is not a conference volume. Rather, it is the result of the editors' having

approached, encouraged and probably badgered (human nature being what it is when it comes to deadlines) sixteen other people to contribute to the realisation of a concept, without the familiar inducements of spending someone else's money by way of conference or travel grants, or the social junketing that usually goes with this ... all the more credit to the editors, therefore, for making the book work. For that matter, I hope the publishers will not take it too much amiss if I say that the series to which this belongs has speedy and economical publishing as its particular attraction, rather than the prestige of a glossy, highly-packaged and expensive list backed by a centuries-old reputation. It is the kind of project for which B.A.R. works particularly well: one with modest objectives and technical demands, which fills a clear need in the literature but which would not be viable further up-market.

Asking whether the editors have been entirely successful, I conclude that they have met the objectives that they set themselves: they have brought together a useful fund of knowledge and in the process have provided something for everyone. The latter perhaps inevitably creates a certain unevenness, and will probably also leave many readers slightly dissatisfied. As an essentially academic archaeologist with a particularly European orientation, I found myself hoping for more of an outward-looking approach, perhaps also with more ambitious discussion of raw material procurement strategies and related topics, until I realised that I was not being altogether fair. I am not the only type of reader for whom it is intended. The verdict, then? It is a book that I welcome to my shelves, and one which no one seriously committed to the British Palaeolithic should be without.

Paul Callow, February 1989

Neolithic Settlement of the Thames Basin by Robin Holgate.  
B.A.R. 194, 1988, 391 pp., 143 figs, price £24.00.

This volume aims to reconstruct 'the patterns of settlement and economy immediately preceding and during the Neolithic period' (p.1) within the Thames Basin. There is a considerable variety of landscape and environmental zones within this area and the quality and distribution of known monuments and sites of the later prehistoric period is such that, when combined with the author's research data, there should be great potential for detailed and stimulating discussion.

Dr Holgate has obviously amassed a great deal of information and studied a large body of data. I would like to be able to review the results of his labours in a positive and enthusiastic tone but, sorry to say, the report does not fulfil its promise. To be fair, this is a much distilled version of an original doctoral thesis, but it is to be hoped that it represents more edited highlights than overall synthesis since discussion throughout is extremely brief and peppered with a host of sweeping statements.

The report has its good points certainly - there is useful discussion of the post-depositional factors affecting surface flint assemblages, for instance, and the catalogue of sites and finds is clearly formatted and accompanied by neat distribution maps. The phasing of certain groups of sites is considered and