

# The Later Upper Palaeolithic Open Sites and Settlement Trajectories The evidence from the Mendip Hills, South-West Britain

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## 1. Introduction

The archaeology of the Later Upper Palaeolithic of the British Magdalenian, the Greswellian and Final Upper Palaeolithic, has previously focused on cave and rock shelter sequences. The earliest re-occupation of late Glacial Britain, being set by the lithic industries, animal and human bone assemblages recently dated by ultrafiltered radiocarbon dates at Sun Hole and Gough's Cave, respectively to 12,620±80 BP (OxA-19557) and 12,600±80 BP (OxA-18035) (Jacobi & Higham, 2011: 228-233, fig. 12.7, tab. 12.4-12.6). Whilst it is understandable, dating excavated sequences in sealed contexts is important for understanding the timing, cultural stage and occupation activity at particular sites, it can be argued that this approach has contributed little to understanding the process of colonising and settling the landscape of Britain. Lithic scatters – mostly flint tools and waste found as surface scatters in ploughed fields have not fully been explored as a resource (an exception is Jacobi *et al.*, 2001). This paper argues such early assemblages have been recovered, in this case by skilful amateur collectors, but ignored in their potential to map later Upper Palaeolithic activity across the landscape on Mendip.

The early 1970s saw Campbell research his doctoral thesis, reviewing the evidence for the later Upper Palaeolithic in Britain (1977). His work inspired local amateur archaeologists to try to locate surface scatters by walking Mendip (Fig. 1). The late Anne Everton, an active member of the Axbridge Archaeological and Historical Society had some success, finding individual tools, (1970), mentioned in Campbell's published thesis (1977: vol. II, fig. 130, nos 3-5). Importantly, other fieldworkers also walked the Mendip landscape and over time even published local reports itemising potential later Upper Palaeolithic lithics (Hack, 1984, 1988). Despite this, recent analysis of the lithic industries have continued to underplay the number of instances of possible later Upper Palaeolithic 'open sites' on Mendip and the surrounding area (Jacobi, 1991, 2004).

## 2. Museum Collections and Lithic Scatters

As part of my doctoral research (Bond, 2006) late in 1998 I started to visit, then search and catalogue lithic collections in local museums in Somerset. Early on, two amateur collectors stood out as prolific, skilful in recording field locations and able to collect all elements of an assemblage: the late Anne Everton and Brian Hack. Most bags and boxes of flints, collected over many years of fieldwalking on Mendip from the early 1970s appeared to be dominated by non-patinated flint and Holocene lithic industries (particularly, later Mesolithic and earlier Neolithic). However, a small component was different. In lithic technology, typology and condition, a small selection of lithics, many single finds, others part of later scatters could be isolated (Tab. 1). These sites and small assemblages have been identified from primary lithic analysis on collections in Axbridge Museum (Hack's and Everton's collections) and by considering documentary records, such as the Historic Environment Record (HER, 2004).

The following ‘open sites’ are thought to contain lithics of a late Upper Palaeolithic industry, updating Campbell’s inventory (1977, vol. II, 112-117) and Jacobi’s (2004) study:

*Callow Hill, Axbridge (PRN 00011)*: this site is located on the southern flank of Fry’s Hill/ Callow Hill, on the edge of a plateau and the crest of the rise (Fig. 1-3). From this position extensive views are available across the Axe valley, the Cheddar and Draycot Moors, towards the levels and Glastonbury Tor (Fig. 3). From this plateau a unique view is also

PRN	Points	Scrapers	Miscellaneous retouched	Long blade-like	Total	Archive
11412a	–	–	–	5	5	HER
30294	–	–	1	–	1	SLP
30295	1	–	–	–	1	SLP
30217	1	–	–	2	3	Box 34, 1 Bag B/Box 33
F4016	–	–	–	1	1	Shapwick Project
25445/25698	–	–	–	1	1	HER
30465	–	1	–	–	1	Box 34, 1 Bag B
30147	–	–	–	1	1	Box 34, 1 Bag B
30215	–	–	1	–	1	Box 34, 1 Bag B
30495	–	–	–	1	1	Box 34, 1 Bag B
30091	–	1	–	–	1	Box 36 (large bag)
30445	1	–	–	–	1	Box 36 (large bag)
30025	–	–	–	1	1	Box 34, 1 Bag B
30249	2	3	1	3	9	Box 19
00011	2	–	1	–	3	British Museum
12802	–	1	–	–	1	HER
25962	1	–	–	2	3	HER
25963	1	–	–	–	1	HER
<i>Total:</i>	9	6	4	17	36	

Column 1: *PRN* - Primary Record Number. Note, PRN codes that start with a ‘3’, ‘0’ or ‘F’, for example, PRN 30249, relate to project-based numbers. These are temporary PRN’s for the thesis (see Bond, 2006:DVD, iv). Other PRN codes relate to sites listed on the Somerset Historic Environment Record (2004).

Column 2: *Points* - A variety of typologically distinctive ‘points’, from the Creswellian and Final Upper Palaeolithic industries; Shouldered points, Penknife points, Obliquely truncated blades (Campbell, 1977: vol. II: 3-5; Jacobi, 1997: 497-499; Jacobi & Roberts, 1992: 36-37).

Column 3: *Scrapers* - Scraper forms, including the long end scrapers, a single side scraper (PRN 30091) and miscellaneous scraper types (Campbell, 1977, vol. II: 6-7; Jacobi, 1997: 499).

Column 4: *Miscellaneous Retouched* - The column groups miscellaneous retouched forms, such as an awl (PRN 00011), a retouched flake, with worn end (PRN 30294), and two retouched long blades (PRN 30215 and PRN 30249; Campbell, 1977, vol. II: 8, 12-13; Jacobi, 1997: 499).

Column 5: *Long blade-like* - Flakes that are of blade proportions, 2:1 (Inizan, et al., 1992: 76), and long (>c.70-100 mm) and are visually identified as ‘long blades’. These blades are comparable in technology, size and condition to other excavated late Upper Palaeolithic industries (Jacobi, 1997: 499).

Column 6: *Total* - Total number of artefacts recorded at an individual provenance. Note three lithic scatters also included other Holocene-related lithics not stated above: PRN 11412a - lithics, 573; PRN 30217 - lithics, 152; PRN 30249 - lithics, 56.

Column 7: *Archive* - This column relates to the location of the artefact, or its record: Box numbers relate to boxes of material and codes for that collection at King John’s Hunting Lodge Museum, Axbridge, current to October 1998; ‘SLP’ - Somerset Levels Project artefact and related to an artefact listed and observed in the archive at Somerset County Museum, Taunton (see listings in Coles, 1989); ‘Shapwick Project’ - artefact in the lithic assemblage of the Shapwick Project: core rejuvenation flake/blade, with worn/abraded edge, excavated from Church Field, Shapwick, Field 4016 (Bond, 2007: 728, fig.15.33, F1); ‘HER’ - Historic Environment Record, Primary Record Number (PRN), relating to an entry in the Somerset County Sites and Monuments Record, current to 2004; ‘British Museum’ - a collection of three artefacts, two penknife points and a heavy awl, part of the collections at King’s John’s Hunting Lodge Museum, Axbridge (Accession No.: 77/AX/200). These were unavailable for study due to Jacobi’s analysis (2004: 83), but had also been documented by Campbell, 1977, vol. II: fig. 130, nos. 2-5).

Tab. 1 – Quantification of later Upper Palaeolithic and probable later Upper Palaeolithic lithics isolated from lithic scatters in the Mendip area (After Bond, 2006: DVD, ii.5).

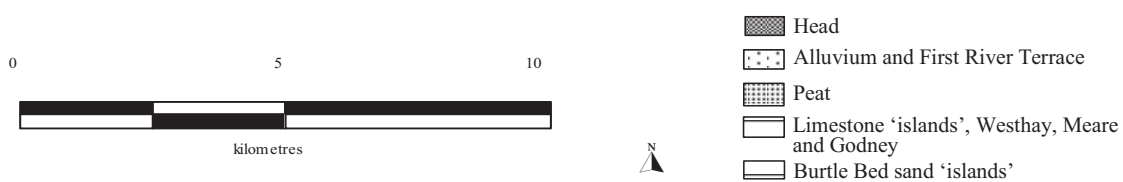
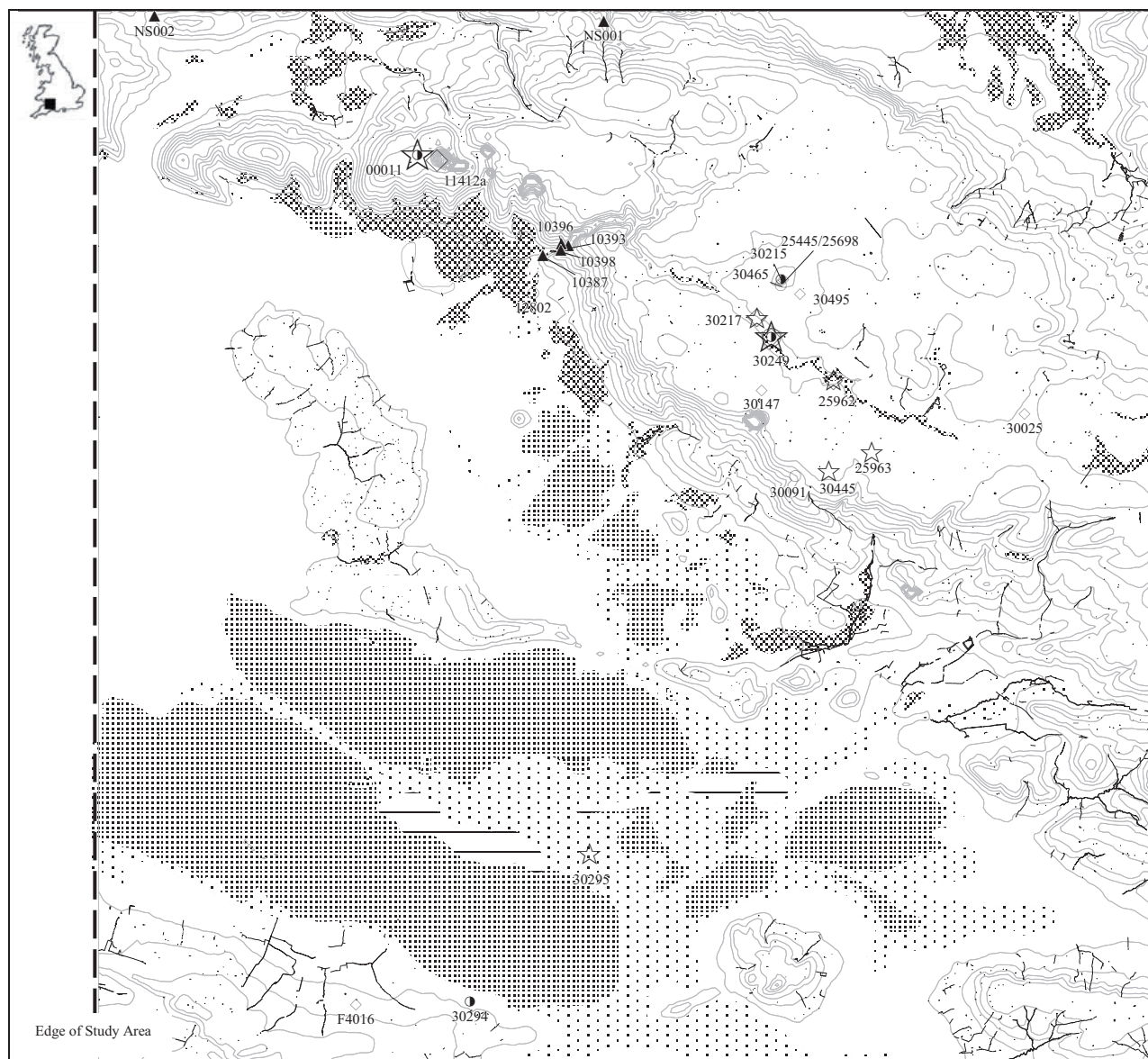
possible of the Congresbury Yeo River in the Chew valley, to the Severn estuary and the Glamorgan coastline. Much evidence is provided for the use, and re-use, of this plateau in prehistory with areas of dense lithic scatters recorded in the mid-nineteen sixties during the winter season when fields were ploughed (Everton 1970, 108). During this period, c.1964 this assemblage of three lithics were recorded by Mr. David Weare and the late Mrs. Anne Everton, amateur field-walkers and members of the Axbridge Local History and Archaeological Society (Everton, 1970: 108). Campbell recorded this site within his list (1977, vol. II, 113). Two penknife points and a single awl, all in flint, and all are illustrated by Campbell (1977, vol. II, 113). The site is attributed as a definite late Upper Palaeolithic locale (Campbell, 1977: 162).

*Callow Hill, Cheddar (PRN 11412a)*: this is a second site, material part of a larger lithic scatter recovered by the late Mrs. Anne Everton. The label with the small assemblage states ‘?LUP or Meso’ (Axbridge Museum) and is recovered nearby PRN 00011 (Fig. 1 & 3). Five blades, all ‘long-blade-like,’ in technology, all of flint (Green-black-grey, a Downland Nodular flint), mostly without cortex and patinated have been studied (Fig. 2). One piece blade is complete (L: 66 mm x B: 16 mm) with a simple punch platform, feathered termination, parallel-sided, with fine parallel-sided blade dorsal scars. The accompanying artefacts are snapped segments, or proximal end. There is not “*en éperon*” butt present on the blades (Barton, 1990: 33, fig. 1), but other platform forms, such as the simple plain form are common in late Upper Palaeolithic industries (Barton, 1990: 33). The maximum size of the single complete blade is in keeping with the Gough’s Cave samples and with metric values from other late Upper Palaeolithic lithics (Barton, 1992: fig. 4.4).

*Priddy Hill Farm, Priddy (PRN 30217)*: the location of this site is on the limestone plateau of Mendip on a shallow slope above the dry-river valley leading to Cheddar Head (Fig. 1-3). This small assemblage of lithics was recovered within a larger lithic scatter by Mr. B. Hack perhaps in 1977. A single Shouldered point, complete, flint (Green-black-grey, a Nodular Downland Flint), with no patina, together with two other flint blades, ‘long-blade-like’ in technology, are recorded (Fig. 2). This Shouldered point is comparable in size and technology to those recovered at Gough’s Cave. The ‘shoulder’ of the piece is on the right distal dorsal edge, meeting a blunted mesial-basal area. This conforms to the typological definition of a ‘Shouldered point’ (Campbell, 1977: vol. II, 4-5; Jacobi & Roberts, 1994: 36). A complete blade (L: 78 mm x B: 18 mm), of flint (Green-black-grey, a Nodular Downland Flint), with a plain platform, feathered termination, no patina is also recorded (Fig. 2). This in size and form is within the range of blades from Gough’s Cave and elsewhere. A second blade, flint, is also recorded from a brief survey of initial artefacts from Axbridge Museum and visually was identified as ‘long-blade-like’

*Glastonbury Tor, Glastonbury (PRN 23603)*: lithics of probable late Upper Palaeolithic dated were excavated by Rahtz’s at Glastonbury Tor (1971: 11, Fig. 2, 3 & 5; PRN 23603). Within a scatter of lithics, multi-period, but mostly attributed to the Neolithic and Bronze Age (Norman pers. comm., 2002), a single flint blade, patinated and snapped was recorded (1970, Fig. 18, no 1). From the illustration this may be assigned to a late Upper Palaeolithic industry. This artefact is not listed in Campbell’s synthesis (1977, vol. II, 112-117).

*East of Bradley Stream, Ashcott Heath, Ashcott (PRN 30294)*: the location of this site is on the northern slopes of the Polden Hills, adjacent the peat mores and the Nidons (Fig. 1). This artefact was recovered during the extensive field survey of the Somerset Levels Project, but not acknowledged as late Upper Palaeolithic (Brown, 1986: 20). Coles did however indicate a probable earlier date, as the ‘flake’ is listed as ‘early Meso/Up Pal’ (1989: 51). This is a single artefact, a retouched flake, flint (Green-Black-grey, a Nodular Downland Flint), patinated, with no cortex.



Later Upper Palaeolithic and probable later Upper Palaeolithic, mostly 'Creswellian' lithic industries derived from lithic scatters:

Points	Scrapers	Miscellaneous Retouched	Long Blades
☆ 2 to 2 (2)	○ 2 to 3 (1)	● 1 to 1 (4)	◇ 5 to 5 (1)
☆ 1 to 1 (5)	○ 1 to 1 (3)		◇ 2 to 4 (3)
			◇ 1 to 1 (5)

▲ Cave/Shelter sites with lithic assemblages of later Upper Palaeolithic date.

Fig. 1 – Caves, shelters and lithic scatter composition for the later Upper Palaeolithic. Map data from Ordnance Survey data, Licence Number LA07683X and British Geological data, Licence Number 2001/55.

*North of Waterleaze Farm, West Waste, Meare (PRN 30295)*: the location of this site is in the alluvium valley bottom of the Somerset Levels and Moors (Fig. 1). This artefact is a typologically diagnostic late Upper Palaeolithic Shouldered point (Brown, 1986: 20, fig. 9a, no 77.8), comparable to examples from the Mendip caves. The artefact was also recovered during the Somerset Levels Project field survey (Coles, 1989: 46). The lithic is of flint (Green-black-grey, a Nodular Downland Flint), medium to heavily patinated and small in size (Fig. 2).

*The Chapel Field (Field 4016), Shapwick (PRN F4016)*: the location of this site is on a mid-slope of the Polden Hills, on light calcareous soils, near a spring (Fig. 1 & 2). The artefact however does derive from a different context, compared to others listed, as it was excavated as part of the Shapwick Project (Bond, 2007: 728). The piece is a snapped flake with a smoothed rounded proximal, worn end on this chipped platform (Jacobi, 2000: fig. 8.3, nos 5 & 6) typologically diagnostic of the late Upper Palaeolithic (Jacobi, pers. comm., 1998). The artefact is snapped, proximal remains, flint (Green-black-grey, a Nodular Downland Flint), medium-heavily patinated, with secondary cortex.

*North of Priddy Hill Farm, Priddy (PRN 25445/25698)*: the location of this site is on the limestone plateau on a slight knoll above the dry-river valley leading to Cheddar Head (Fig. 1). This blade, flint, is recorded from a brief survey of the initial artefacts from Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collection). This piece was visually identified as 'long-blade-like'.

*North of Priddy Hill Farm, Priddy (PRN 30465)*: the location of this site also on the limestone plateau on the same slight knoll as PRN 22445/25698 (Fig. 1). A single long end scraper, flint, is recorded from a brief survey of the initial artefacts from Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collection). The scraper was typologically comparable to scrapers on long flake/blades, attributed to the late Upper Palaeolithic (Campbell, 1977: vol. II, 7).

*North of Barrow, Brimble Pool, Priddy (PRN 30147)*: the location of this site is on a plateau south of the main dry-river valley leading to Cheddar Head (Fig. 1). A single blade, flint, visually attributed as 'long-blade-like' was recorded during a brief survey of the initial artefacts of Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collections).

*North of Priddy Hill Farm, Priddy (PRN 30215)*: the location of this site is on the limestone plateau, on the same knoll as PRN 25445/25698 and PRN 30465 (Fig. 1). Visually the artefact was identified as 'long-blade-like, a blade, flint with a retouched edge. The piece was recorded during a brief survey of the initial artefacts of Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collection).

*North of Priddy Hill Farm, East of the Priddy Road, Priddy (PRN 30495)*: the location of this site is on the limestone plateau of Mendip, below the knoll and adjacent the dry-river valley (Fig. 1). The blade was visually identified as 'long-blade-like, flint, with a distinctive notch. The piece was recorded during a brief survey of the initial artefacts of Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collections).

*North-West of Deerleap, St Cuthbert Out (PRN 30091)*: the location of this site is on the upper slope edge of the southern flank of Mendip, adjacent the plateau (Fig. 1). A large flake is retouched to form a side scraper edge, flint. The piece was recorded during a brief survey of the initial artefacts of Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collection).

*North of Ebbor Wood, St Cuthbert Out (PRN 30445)*: the location of this site is on the edge of the plateau above Pelting Drove and the sharply descending slope to Ebbor Gorge (Fig. 1). A fine flake has been retouched to a point, flint and comparable to other 'points' Hack has recorded (1988). The piece was recorded during a brief survey of the initial artefacts of Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collection).

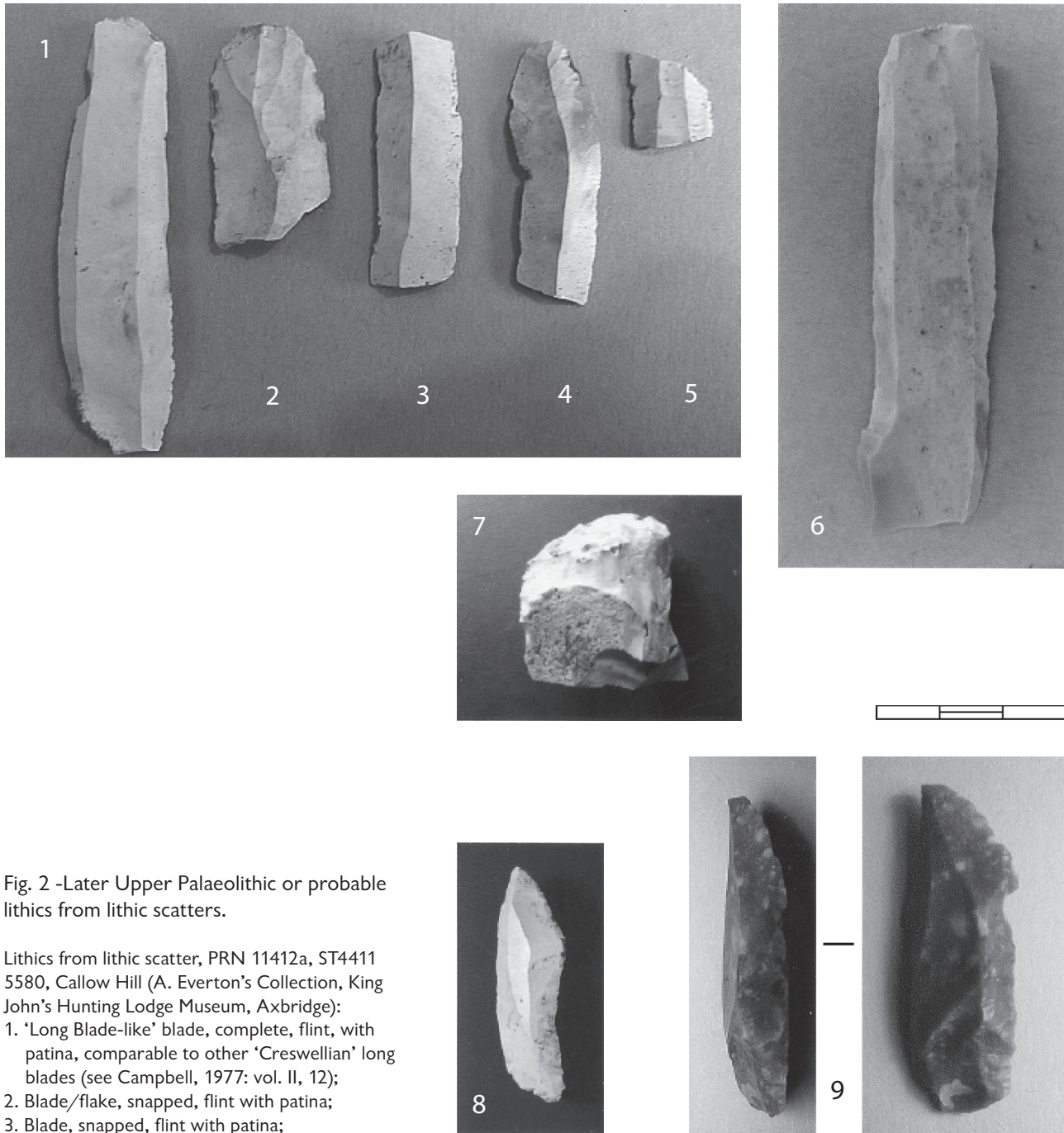


Fig. 2 -Later Upper Palaeolithic or probable lithics from lithic scatters.

Lithics from lithic scatter, PRN 11412a, ST4411 5580, Callow Hill (A. Everton's Collection, King John's Hunting Lodge Museum, Axbridge):

1. 'Long Blade-like' blade, complete, flint, with patina, comparable to other 'Creswellian' long blades (see Campbell, 1977: vol. II, 12);
2. Blade/flake, snapped, flint with patina;
3. Blade, snapped, flint with patina;
4. Blade, snapped, flint with patina with a fine chipped/worn proximal end, a 'worn end blade' (Campbell, 1977: vol. II, 13);
5. Blade, snapped truncation, flint with patina.

Lithics from lithic scatters on Mendip and the Somerset Levels:

6. PRN 30217, ST508 525, Priddy Hill Farm (B. Hack's Collection, King John's Hunting Lodge Museum, Axbridge): A 'Long Blade-Like' blade, flint recovered during field walking a multi-period lithic scatter;
7. PRN F4016, ST4241 3815, Chapel Field, Shapwick: Excavated from a plough soil context during The Shapwick Project, a snapped core rejuvenation flake/blade, with proximal worn end, flint with patina, an example of Campbell's 'worn end blades' (1977, vol. II, 13). Identified by the late Dr. R. M. Jacobi (pers. comm., 1998; Bond, 2007: 728, fig. 15.33, n° F1).

Lithics from lithic scatters on Mendip and the Somerset Levels:

8. PRN 30295, ST473 413, North of Waterleaze Farm, West Waste, Godney: A Shouldered point, with shoulder on right distal-mesial dorsal edge, flint with patina. The artefact was recovered by field walking peat exposures, during the Somerset Levels Project (Brown, 1986: 20, fig. 9a, n° 77.8);
9. PRN 30217, ST508 525, Priddy Hill Farm (B. Hack's Collection, King John's Hunting Lodge Museum, Axbridge): A Shouldered point, with shoulder on right distal-mesial dorsal, flint recovered during field walking a multi-period lithic scatter.

*Tower Hill, St Cuthbert Out (PRN 30025)*: the location for this site is on the plateau of Tower Hill, into the limestone plateau (Fig. 1). A single blade, flint was visually identified as 'long-blade-like'. The piece was recorded during a brief survey of the initial artefacts of Axbridge Museum (Hack's Collection).

*South of Priddy Hill, Priddy (PRN 30249)*: the site is located on a knoll, above a hollow (Hack, 1988), that is above the dry-river valley that leads to Cheddar Head (Fig. 1). A total of nine lithics were recorded by Hack and deposited in Axbridge Museum (1988). However, with a short survey of the artefacts in the museum these artefacts were not all located, the exception being Hack's 'Chatelperronian point' (Hack, 1988). The small assemblage consists of three blades, two snapped, all of flint. Three scrapers are present; one a round scraper, two with scraper edges on the distal dorsal end. Three retouched forms, as backed tools are illustrated. Firstly, a backed blade with convex continuous backing and a retouched blunted end, complete. Also Hack illustrated other artefacts; a backed blade with snapped ends and central segment; a double edge retouched blade, snapped but conjoined. With Hack's sketches, and the identification of the backed blade in the museum this is potentially a very important site. The landscape setting is also of interest, overlooking the dry-river valley leading to Cheddar Gorge and perhaps favourable for hunting.

*Roman settlement, Froglands Lane, Cheddar (PRN 12802)*: the location of this site is at the base of the southern flank of Mendip on head deposit, within the modern village of Cheddar (Fig. 1). Here an excavation recovered evidence of a Roman occupation, with a Neolithic pit, yielding lithics and un-worked flint (see HER, 2004). As part of the assemblage of lithics a long end scraper, attributed to the later Upper Palaeolithic was recorded.

*West of Priddy, Priddy (PRN 25962)*: the location of this site is on a slight slope above the dry-river valley leading to Cheddar Head on the limestone plateau (Fig. 1). As with PRN 30249, if confirmed, its position is perhaps related to hunting activity along the valley floor. Within a multi-period lithic scatter Hack recorded two long blades and a point (HER, 2004).

*North of Ebbor Gorge, Priddy (PRN 25963)*: the location of this site on the plateau near the swallet Sandpit Hole, north of the dry-valley river line that leads to Ebbor Rocks, and Ebbor Gorge (Fig. 1). A single Shouldered point is recorded as being recovered by Hack (HER, 2004).

### 3. Later Upper Palaeolithic Settlement Trajectories and Landscape Knowledge

The excavated fauna and lithics from Gough's Cave have been interpreted as suggesting a multi-task, orientated camp; red deer and wild horse in the cave mouth and inner chamber (Parkin *et al.*, 1986). This and other caves in Cheddar Gorge, such as Sun Hole and Soldier's Hole have been argued as key for processing carcasses for hides, meat and sinew (Barton, 1999: 20-21). However, the landscape beyond has not been discussed in detail. The lithic scatters beyond the caves, although a partial record, may arguably point to landscape 'knowledge' and 'learning' (cf. Riede, 2005: 30). A tentative discussion follows, exploring how these lithic scatters may well add to our understanding of movement, in and onto the Mendip Hills (Fig. 1).

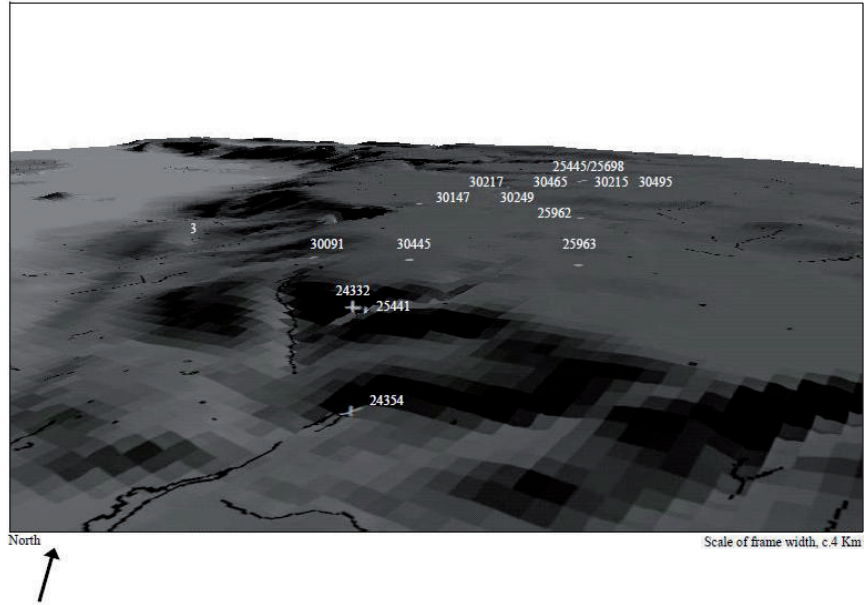
A single Shouldered point (30295) in the alluvium and peat lands of the Somerset Levels indicates activity well away from Cheddar Gorge (Fig. 1). This and locations with other points (PRN 30445 and 25963), on the edge of the Mendip plateau near the Vale of Wokey Hole indicate the importance of routes from the lowland onto the plateau (Fig. 3).

A view facing North-East across the southern flank of Mendip, above Wookey Hole and Ebbor Gorge and towards Cheddar Gorge in the foreground, at Milton Hill above the River Axe, c. ST530 470. To the East on the Mendip plateau the central dry-valley leading to Cheddar Head and Velvet Bottom, with a cluster of white solid circles showing the location of lithic scatters of late Upper Palaeolithic date.

Key:  
 White Circle (solid) = Lithic scatter with lithics of late Upper Palaeolithic date  
 White Cross = Cave/shelters with material of late Upper Palaeolithic date  
 White Circle (open) = Lithic scatter with lithics of probable late Upper Palaeolithic date  
 White 'X' = Cave/shelters with material of probable late Upper Palaeolithic date

Digital terrain model:  
 View point: Azimuth: 148°  
 Inclination: 8 m  
 Field Angle: 55°  
 Distance: 6750.15 m  
 Horizontal Exaggeration: 1 (True Scale)  
 Details: Hill shading on relief and drainage (black lines and spots)

Map data: Ordnance Survey contour at 20 m intervals, 0-321 m OD (Ordnance Survey Licence Number LA 07683X)  
 Software: Vertical Mapper v. 2; MapInfo Professional 6.0



A view facing North-West across the Mendip plateau, above Ebbor Ways Farm and Priddy Hill Farm, towards Cheddar head and Cheddar Gorge in the foreground, above the central dry-river valley at c.ST530 505. A cluster of white solid circles showing the location of lithic scatters of late Upper Palaeolithic date is shown distributed across the plateau, on the southern flank, in the central dry-river valley and on a knoll at Hill View.

Key:  
 White Circle (solid) = Lithic scatter with lithics of late Upper Palaeolithic date  
 White Cross = Cave/shelters with material of late Upper Palaeolithic date  
 White Circle (open) = Lithic scatter with lithics of probable late Upper Palaeolithic date  
 White 'X' = Cave/shelters with material of probable late Upper Palaeolithic date

Digital terrain model:  
 View point: Azimuth: 130°  
 Inclination: 15 m  
 Field Angle: 30°  
 Distance: 6430.15 m  
 Horizontal Exaggeration: 1 (True Scale)  
 Details: Hill shading on relief and drainage (black lines and spots)

Map data: Ordnance Survey contour at 20 m intervals, 0-321 m OD (Ordnance Survey Licence Number LA 07683X)  
 Software: Vertical Mapper v. 2; MapInfo Professional 6.0

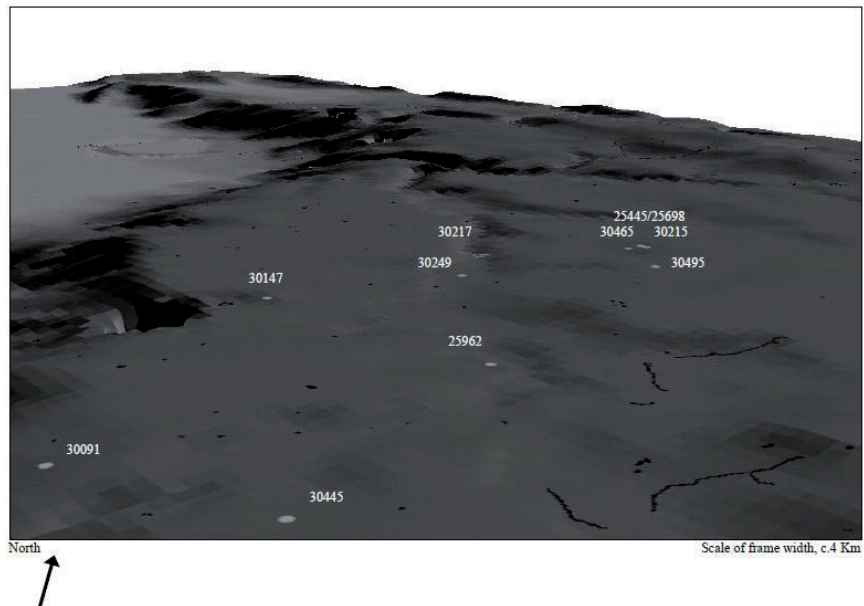


Fig. 3 – Digital Terrain Model of later Upper Palaeolithic lithic scatters in the Mendip Hills.



Scrapers at PRN 30091 and PRN 12802, once again emphasis activity, perhaps transient, such a hunting foray, at the edge and base of the plateau near key route-ways for human and perhaps seasonal movement of terrestrial game (Fig. 3). Further south, in the lowlands, a long blade excavated, but from plough soil during the Shapwick Project, F4016 is also of interest. This and a retouched flake (PRN 30294), demonstrate the use of the Polden Hills and spring lines, mirroring preferred locations on Mendip (Fig. 3).

'Points', such as Creswellian points and obliquely truncated blades (or points), have been interpreted as hafted 'side-blades', as spears (Jacobi & Roberts, 1992: 37). Relative close proximity to the kill would be required such as open ground. Interestingly, the points mapped across this landscape tend to be in open grounds, on a plateau, as at the crest of Callow Hill (PRN 00011, see Fig. 3), within a valley, or near routes for terrestrial game. With PRN 00011 and 300445 the location of the scatter offers panoramic views across the landscape, both within the Mendip plateau but beyond (Fig. 3).

Scrapers have may be viewed a task specific, such as for hide processing and heavily re-sharpened (Barton, 1992: 110). Scrapers are well represented in cave assemblages on Mendip (Campbell, 1977: col. II, 7), in combination with other tools and mapped across the landscape, sometimes as single find (see PRN 12802 and 30091, Fig. 3). At the knoll, just above the central dry-river valley (PRN 30249) scrapers with other lithics possibly indicate a more diverse range of tasks, or visits to this locale (Fig. 3). Miscellaneous retouched lithics as with waste that is 'Long Blade-like' can be associated with other lithics or single chance finds.

Although single finds are well recorded here, other lithic scatters demonstrate a combination of waste/retouched forms (PRN 00011, 30249, 30217 and 25962, see Fig. 3). Lithic scatters on the plateau are mixed with points and scrapers. The cluster of scatters PRN 30217, 30249 and 25962, on the head deposit in the dry-valley may suggest a distinctive function. If points are interpreted as evidence for hunting, perhaps close kills, then these lithics may represent a hunting stand (Fig. 3). These scatters are not evenly spaced instead they are either side a larger flat open part of the valley. Perhaps herds of game would cluster here seasonally before migrating down the gorge or further onto the plateau. This may be argued to form a hunting trap, either side the narrower neck of the valley and form the locale from which to butcher the kill (Smith, 1992: 31).

The scatter at PRN 00011 is a key location (Fig. 3) on a high plateau with views down the Axe Valley and views to the Severn Plain and the southern Welsh coastline locations of other later Upper Palaeolithic communities (Aldhouse-Green, 2000: 16-17, fig. 1.4). Two Penknife points and an awl, suggest later Final Upper Palaeolithic activity, in contrast to mostly Creswellian material from the lithic scatters.

At the knoll, above the main dry-river valley and on the plateau ad cluster of sites occur (PRN 30465, 30215, 2445/25698, see Fig. 3), with a south-east outlier, a single long blade (PRN 30495). The knoll may have been a feature used to view across the plateau, including into the dry-river valley. The cluster of tools may be viewed as evidence for tool maintenance, or preparing gear for hunting forays. The other lithic scatters in the dry-river valley lead to top of Cheddar Gorge, namely Cheddar Head (Fig. 3). This location cuts off the gorge and also leads to the plateau. The head deposits would be free draining, seasonal and would attract game. Interestingly, beyond this area onto the Mendip plateau. Lithic scatter PRN 30025 can be viewed as an extension of the valley related concentration leading north. Scatter PRN 30147 is located on the edge of the Mendip plateau, giving views into the Axe Valley or onto Mendip (Fig. 3).

Previously only two lithic scatters have been mentioned by Jacobi (2004, 83). Other

later Upper Palaeolithic material had been noted to the north, from Chew Park Farm, Bishop Sutton and Herriot's Bridge, West Harptree (Campbell, 1977: vol. II, 113,116). But, activity on Mendip and to the south had not been considered. Indeed, only the presence of saiga antelope (*Saiga tartarica*) at Gough's Cave raised the potential distinctive links between the upland and lowland habitats (Current, 1991: 48-49). The lithic scatter evidence presented above starts to map the location and type of linkages, people, game, perhaps seasonal on Mendip and its surroundings. A further important aspect is that both Creswellian later Upper Palaeolithic and penknife point, Final Upper Palaeolithic industries have been mapped across the landscape. It has long been suggested both lithic industries/groups occur in selected Cheddar cave assemblages (Campbell, 1977; Garrod, 1926; Jacobi, 2004). More recently, through the application of ultrafiltered radiocarbon dating, the occupation at Gough's Cave has been reviewed (Jacobi & Higham, 2011). A tighter dating for occupation is argued for the Creswellian activity, covering two or three generations only, dating to 12,600±80 BP (OxA-18035). But, there is also a later occupation phase dating to 12,245±55 BP (OxA-18067). This is interpreted as later activity which would fit an evolving 'Federmessergruppen' complex. This is evidenced by bi-truncated trapezoidal backed blades and bi-points (curve-backed points) excavated by Parry at Gough's Cave (Jacobi & Higham, 2011: 230). Thus, it is with little surprise that both Creswellian and penknife points-related lithic scatters are also mapped across Mendip.

In the Mendip area there is contraction in the settlement pattern from Creswellian, to Final Upper Palaeolithic penknife point lithic industries (Jacobi, 1991: 136; 2000: 51). Nationally these later sites are viewed as more geographically dispersed and more common as 'open sites' (Barton, 1999: 27, fig. 2.3 & 2.10). Yet, in Mendip, the prevalence of Creswellian dominated cave sites, the much more limited evidence for penknife points in these assemblages emphasises a reduced use of Cheddar Gorge. This may well have been the result of different hunting strategies being adopted with the onset of more wooded conditions, birch woodland after c.12,000 BP (Barton, 1999: 28).

#### 4. A Research Agenda: detecting later Upper Palaeolithic lithic scatters?

At a national level it has been recognised there is a gap in understanding the relationship between cave and lithic scatters (Gamble, 1999: 4-5). At a regional level such sites are acknowledged (Hosfield *et al.*, 2008: 39; Webster, 2008: 285), but no way forward is suggested to better identify them. The lithic scatter data presented above may indicate a few lessons learnt:

- *Museum and Private Collections*: Revisiting old lithic collections, may well help isolate previously undiscovered lithic technologies, including later Upper Palaeolithic industries
- *Landscape Perspective*: Whilst many late Pleistocene deposits may be deeply buried by Holocene valley infilling, in this case peat in the Brue Valley, some surface scatters have provided later Upper Palaeolithic lithics (single finds recovered by the Somerset Levels Project and The Shapwick Project, see above). Such artefacts may be by chance, but may also be worthy of further investigation
- *Lithic Scatters as Palimpsests*: Later Upper Palaeolithic artefacts may be found as single chance finds, among later lithics in the plough soil. Thus, remarkably, some lithic scatters may have been revisited, extending back into the late Pleistocene. The lithic composition and landscape location may hold clues, to better understanding the way settlement patterns changed from the late Pleistocene into the Holocene.

## 5. Conclusions

'...the end-scraper from Froglands Lane... it would hint at the possibility of local Late Upper Palaeolithic activity well away from the Gorge.' (Jacobi, 2004: 83).

Open sites, as stated above concerning Froglands Lane and caves are viewed as part of one settlement pattern for later Upper Palaeolithic Mendip. In the Late Glacial, Mendip, specifically Cheddar Gorge became a centre for human habitation and exploitation. Exploitation, as characterised by Gough's Cave was perhaps intensified on set resources, on red deer, but particularly the migratory herds of wild horse (Current, 1991; Jacobi, 1991; Parkin *et al.*, 1986). The technology used was Creswellian, classically represented by obliquely truncated backed blades and the associated long blade assemblage; blades/flakes with *talon en éperon*, abraded ends, flakes with rounded ends, piercers/*becs*, burins and composite tools (Barton, 1990; Jacobi, 1991, 2004). However, although Gough's Cave, Sun Hole and other localities have been the focus of research, the relationship of such places with other extended histories of re-use, such as lithic scatters, have been overlooked.

With the study of the lithic scatters across the study area later Upper Palaeolithic material has been recovered. With the recent analysis of the Gough's Cave lithic industry Jacobi has referred to the excavation at Froglands Lane, Cheddar giving a snapped end-scraper (2004, 82-83). However, this find is just one of a number of generally single finds, or other lithics part of multi-period lithic scatters, including penknife points known in this landscape.

Therefore, there are now two types of distinctive Late Glacial lithic industries and thus perhaps two different cultural groups of hunter-gatherers evidenced in the Mendip landscape. Firstly, the Creswellian industry, recorded at caves/rock shelters, mapped across the Mendip plateau and in the Levels. Then, secondly these people were followed by the later penknife point dominated industries of the Final Upper Palaeolithic. Barton suggested that may have occurred after c.12,500-11,700 BP, timed with climatic cooling and the establishment of birch woodland (Barton, 1999: 24). This phase of activity has been evidenced at Gough's Cave (12,245±55 BP OxA-18067, Jacobi & Higham, 2011: 231-233, tab. 12.6). Lithic scatters and cave assemblages both document these different trajectories of settlement, helping us to glimpse at the landscape-scale evidence of seasonal activity in the later Upper Palaeolithic of South-West Britain.

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### Summary

It has long been known that Later Upper Palaeolithic (Creswellian) and Final Upper Palaeolithic (penknife point and 'long blade') lithic technologies and occupation debris occur in the Mendip Hills caves/rock shelters, characterised by Gough's Cave and Sun Hole in Cheddar Gorge. However, understanding the landscape context of these sites has not been so well explored. No definite fieldwork has taken place to locate open sites on Mendip of this period. Amateur collections from lithic scatters from ploughed fields on Mendip in the 1970s and 1980s did recover quantities of mostly Holocene lithics. As part of recent doctoral research these assemblages from Axbridge and Wells Museums were analysed for the first time, discovering what appeared to be a small, but very different 'Palaeolithic' component to these collections (based on: lithic technology; flint type; patina). This paper will review these assemblages/sites and discuss their potential for better understanding the total Later Upper Palaeolithic and Final Upper Palaeolithic settlement of Mendip and South-West Britain. This paper will conclude with a new model of how this landscape may have been exploited over repeated cycles of seasonal occupation in the Late Glacial and point towards a new research agenda.

*Keywords:* Cheddar, Somerset (UK), Cheddar Gorge, "Gough's Cave", "Sun Hole", Creswellian, Later Upper Palaeolithic, Final Upper Palaeolithic, Mendip Hills, Lithic scatters

### Résumé

Les occupations en grotte ou en abri-sous-roche et le matériel lithique datant du Paléolithique supérieur avancé (Creswellien) et final (penknife point et long blade) sont connus depuis longtemps pour la région des collines de Mendip, notamment par Gough's Cave et Sun Hole dans les gorges du Cheddar. Cependant, le contexte paysager de ces sites n'a pas encore été bien exploré. Aucun travail de terrain n'a permis de localiser des sites de plein air pour cette période dans la région et les collections récoltées par les archéologues amateurs dans les labours de Mendip, dans les années 1970 et 1980, comptent essentiellement du lithique d'origine holocène. Les assemblages des musées de Axbridge et de Wells ont été étudiés pour la première fois dans le cadre d'une recherche doctorale récente. Cette étude a permis d'isoler une petite composante paléolithique très marquée dans ces collections (technologie lithique, type de silex et patines caractéristiques). Cet article passe en revue ces assemblages et ces sites et discute de leur rôle dans la compréhension du Paléolithique supérieur tardif et final du district de Mendip et du Sud-Ouest de la Grande-Bretagne. Pour finir, cet article propose un nouveau modèle de l'exploitation du paysage lors des cycles d'occupation saisonnière au Tardiglaciaire et ouvre de nouvelles voies de recherche.

*Mots-clés :* Cheddar, Somerset (UK), Cheddar Gorge, "Gough's Cave", "Sun Hole", Creswellien, Paléolithique supérieur avancé, Paléolithique supérieur final, collines de Mendip, dispersion de l'industrie lithique.

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