

distribution, skeletal proportions, bone breakage and digestion, post depositional modification is presented. Finally the predator most likely to have been responsible for the assemblage is given where possible. The stratigraphic and taphonomic evidence is then used to give a palaeocological interpretation for each of the units of the Westbury sequence.

The book is well written and illustrated. The chapters are summarised in point form for easy reference and the data presented in a series of tables, some of which are particularly comprehensive e.g. those on predator habitats and prey selection, on predator modification and on the taphonomic modifications of the Westbury faunas. The various types of modification described in the book are extremely well documented in the abundant, well produced SEM photographs taken by Jill Cook. An extensive appendix supplies information on the predators discussed in the book, giving details of appearance, size, activity patterns, distribution and diet of each predator.

*Owls, Caves and Fossils* demonstrates the use of a methodological approach to the problem of understanding the formation of small mammal fossil assemblages which is organized, thoughtful and meticulous. It is an excellent reference book on small mammal taphonomy, suitable not only to small mammal specialists but to all archaeologists irrespective of their area and period of interest.

Norah Moloney

**Brooks, I and Phillips, P. (eds).** *Papers from the Sheffield Conference 1988.* Oxford: British Archaeological Reports 213. 1989.

"The conference was conceived of and designed by the organisers . . . to elucidate the current nature of Lithic Studies in an area of Britain other than the 'flint-rich' reaches of south-eastern England". The majority of the papers contained in the volume were given at a conference entitled 'Lithic Studies in the North-East Midlands in England

After a brief introduction by Kirk, Henson's paper 'Away from the core? A northerner's view of flint exploitation' examines changes in the nature of individual/group interaction through the Neolithic and E.B.A. using as examples possible control of raw material sources, changes from communal to individual burials and the introduction of more 'social' (as opposed to utilitarian) tool kits into burials.

Phillips et al. in 'Flint procurement in prehistoric quarry ditches' suggest that fortuitous acquisition of flint nodules from the quarry ditches of earthen mounds may have been followed by recurrent reuse of those ditches to procure raw material through the Neolithic and Bronze Age. The evidence of frequent recutting and irregular ditch and bank profiles are used to support the argument.

The next two papers deal with the early results of laboratory based scientific methods in the examination of flint. Brooks in 'Debugging the system: the characterisation of flint by micropalaeontology discusses the viability of micropalaeontology as a technique for sourcing flint using thin sections. Richards provides the preliminary results of analysis of blood residues on Mesolithic artefacts in his paper 'Initial results of blood residue analysis of lithic artefacts from Thorpe Common rockshelter, south Yorkshire'.

Both papers are very well presented with the objectives and study methods clearly detailed.

In 'Flint work distributions: the excavation record', Garton makes a plea for greater levels detailed recording within contexts of flint artefacts on Neolithic and Bronze Age excavations as is common on Mesolithic sites. He argues that this would allow more attempts at assemblage interpretation than at present.

Guirr et al. present an analysis of flint artefacts from a series of excavated sites in 'Flint work from Neolithic structures and contexts at Dragonby, south Humberside'.

Myers' paper, 'Lithics, risk and change in the Mesolithic, suggests that alterations in Mesolithic technology and changing settlement patterns might be responses to changes in the climate of subsistence risk in two periods centred on or around 6700 BC and 5000 BC. In a stimulating and well argued paper he uses flint assemblages from a number of Pennine sites to illustrate the hypothesis.

The last paper is by Young - 'Mesolithic-Neolithic transition in north-east England and mixed lithic scatters: a speculation. This must have generated much discussion at the conference when it was presented. Mixed assemblages containing Mesolithic material with small numbers of later arrowheads are common in the study area and the support for various explanations was canvassed. The author's conclusion was that co-existent groups of farmers and hunter gatherers might explain the assemblages.

Frances Healy's concluding paper entitled 'Afterthoughts' provides a valuable perspective in discussion of each paper. She cites comparative studies and material from both within and without the study area, so placing each contribution in the wider context of lithic studies in Britain as a whole.

The volume is a welcome addition to published sources of information on Lithic studies and will hopefully provoke wider discussion and stimulate further research both in the north-east Midlands and elsewhere.

Margaret Maher

Gräslund, B., Knutsson, K., Knutsson, H., Taffinder, J. & Stina, E. (eds). *The Interpretative Possibilities of Microwear Studies*. Uppsala: Societas Archaeologica Upsaliensis, 1990. 184 pp. £14

The eighteen papers published here represent the product of the 7th international conference of lithic use-wear analysis held in Uppsala in February 1989. I applaud the organisers' adoption of a particular theme to be addressed and the authors for complying rather than simply presenting accounts of recent research.

The book is not intended as an introduction to this particular field. Nor do the papers deal extensively with current methodologies or the controversies surrounding them (see however, Millán, Sievert and Borrás), something many will be pleased to hear.

Roger Grace neatly, in readable prose, cuts through the rather old and simplistic argument of 'high-power' (laborious and limiting) versus 'low-power' (not thorough enough) microscopy, by stepping back and redefining the questions to be asked. The concept of the greater the input, the greater the derived inference, does not have to be the case. He presents a study of sixteen