

## Prehistory Section update 2011

A new late Neolithic/early Bronze Age site has been located adjacent to Mount Skip Golf Club, and a new Mesolithic site has been found below the normal water level at Withens Reservoir. See the Cairn at Widdop pdf below

A lot of time has been taken up with the Stanbury Hill Project on the southern side of Rombalds Moor. We have participated in the geophysics, the field walking and, latterly, the first season of excavation - of two cairns a linear feature and a possible dwelling site. Scheduled Monument consent arrived too late to allow excavation around the panels of rock art and this has been held over until next summer. We expect to be involved in the post-excavation work at Bradford University this autumn.

The growing need to centre our activities on a local base and to work from a more established and 'official' footing led to the creation of the HBLHS Prehistoric Section. Whilst we have been described, misleadingly and somewhat ungenerously, by one member's partner as 'Last of the Summer Flint' our very real intention is to explore, describe, record and disseminate with sufficient accuracy and rigour for other archaeologists to be able to use our findings with confidence.

It must be stressed that there is no exclusivity or possessiveness here, anyone is welcome to join the Prehistoric Section, and the sites, features and artefacts located belong to everyone - they represent the past of us all.

Until recently the South Pennines were regarded as something of an archaeological desert. Although some fieldwork had been carried out, notably on Midgley Moor, few features were known, access was difficult and the moors were remote; there was an assumption amongst prehistorians based elsewhere that very few traces of prehistoric activity existed. Brian Howcroft's tireless field-walking, producing a museum-quality assemblage of flint artefacts, from mesolithic through to bronze age, has shown this assumption to be false. Work to identify features in the landscape has complemented Brian's work with the location and description of over fifty standing stones, around a dozen burial areas, a variety of circular and linear features, and some eighty examples of rock art.

We have sought to publicise our interim findings by giving talks, writing articles and conducting field visits. Aspects of our work have been seen and endorsed by John Barnatt, senior archaeologist with the Peak District National Park, Dave Weldrake of West Yorkshire Sites and Monuments Record, and Keith Boughey and Edward Vickerman, the authors of the definitive work on rock art in West Yorkshire. We have consulted and been advised by academic archaeologists and geologists and by personnel involved in the English Heritage rock art recording project. We also have useful associations with a number of bodies listed below under *Links*.

At present we are mainly occupied in identifying and describing the carved rocks of the South Pennines. There seem to be significant differences from those found in other areas both in terms of style and complexity.

We intend (hope) to eventually produce a coherent account of the first people who lived here  
- simply because there should be one.