

Prehistory Section Report 2013

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Members attended the Pennine Prospects conference at Marsden in October: Many of the speakers were concerned with 'supporting /facilitating a local infrastructure to engender the regeneration /development of nature'. Of particular interest was the speaker who remarked, 'You can't market your total asset register - but if you focus on brand icons, you can get somewhere at least'. Also there was much about 'shared visions'... We did not enjoy this conference but the buffet was very good.

We have a connection with Treesponsibility and have attended several meetings. Our presence helps to ensure that areas identified for tree planting, or other interventions, are field-walked to check that no existing archaeology is jeopardised.

National Character Areas were introduced by speakers from Natural England in January. Non-archaeological bodies rely a great deal on the Historic Environment Record and it is fortunate that we recently amended all the West Yorkshire upland records and provided additional data from our fieldwork.

We have had several contacts with Paul Preston, who recently completed a PhD devoted to the Mesolithic of the South Pennines, both at conferences and individual meetings. It is hoped that a further research project may emerge.

We have spent a lot of time trying to trace the assemblages of Harry Stansfield, active in the 1970s/80s. This is continuing, and serves to highlight the difficulty posed by the county boundary, such that collections from the same Calderdale site can appear in Rochdale, Barrowford or Huddersfield. Visits have been made to Bacup and Littleborough Historical Societies with this in mind. The effort to locate and record other private collections is continuing.

We attended the Dales National Park Archaeology Day at Grassington, and the Council for British Archaeology (NW) conference in Manchester. The latter reinforced our impression that the prehistory of Calderdale relates more properly to Lancashire and the Irish Sea, rather than to the dominant East Yorkshire paradigm.

Fieldwork has progressed, with the planning of upstanding features continuing - including a possible Late Palaeolithic shelter, and with the recovery of flint and chert from the fringes of local reservoirs reinforcing the evidence for a continuous prehistoric presence in this area from the end of the last ice age.