



NEOLITHIC STUDIES IN NO-MAN'S LAND

Papers on the Neolithic of Northern England
from the Trent to the Tweed

Edited by
Paul Frodsham



ISSN 0144-4999

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGY

Volume 13/14 (Special Edition) 1996

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**THE JOURNAL OF
THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP**

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THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP

THE NORTHUMBERLAND ARCHAEOLOGICAL GROUP (NAG) exists primarily to further the knowledge of the archaeology of Northumberland and surrounding areas. NAG undertakes its own fieldwork projects and occasionally supports other projects undertaken by members. A lecture programme, social events and a series of excursions are organised each year, and all members receive *Northern Archaeology* which is published annually. *Northern Archaeology* is also available by subscription to non-members.

MEMBERSHIP. All enquiries about membership should be addressed to the Membership Secretary at the address below. Single membership for 1995-96 costs £10.

NORTHERN ARCHAEOLOGY is the annual NAG journal and includes papers on the archaeology of Northumberland and elsewhere. Occasional special issues are published to cover particular themes. All communications regarding contributions to the journal should be addressed to the Editor at the address below or c/o Northumberland National Park, Eastburn, South Park, Hexham, NE46 1BS. All potential contributors are encouraged to consult the Editor as early as possible when considering the preparation of a paper (please note that *Northern Archaeology* is prepared for publication on a home computer, and all papers should be submitted on disk in a suitable wordprocessor format). Enquiries about back numbers should be addressed to the Secretary at the address below.

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Foreword

'The prehistoric archaeology of Britain has invariably been divided into two major regions, southern and northern, but there has tended to be a rather uncomfortable No Man's Land between the two, north of the Trent and south of the Scottish Border'.

Graeme Barker, 1981, 1.

Fifteen years have now passed since the above observation was made, and a decade since Nick Higham (1986, 338) noted that 'there is no general work available on the neolithic in Northern England'. Much important research has been done over this period, and a number of interesting discussions have appeared in various publications. However, it is regrettable that there is still no general synthesis available on the Neolithic of northern England: an area which simply by virtue of its geographical position should be regarded as critical to the study of Neolithic Britain as a whole. I should stress at the outset that this volume is not intended as such a synthesis. Rather, with no more than a couple of exceptions which were specifically invited, it presents a number of papers which were offered by their authors in response to my casual suggestion that a special edition of *Northern Archaeology* dedicated to the Neolithic might be a good idea. Needless to say, I am greatly indebted to all the contributors for their support.

From the outset my intention was to include papers from full-time academics, other professional archaeologists, current and recent students, and so-called 'amateurs'. All have important roles to play in archaeological research, and I am particularly glad that contributions have been drawn from such a wide field. There are probably others who would have liked to contribute had they been given the opportunity, but for logistical reasons it would not have been possible to produce a larger volume. Any such potential contributors are invited to offer papers for future volumes of *Northern Archaeology*.

Various problems are encountered when attempting to define 'northern England' or 'the Neolithic', and no attempt is made here to set rigid definitions for either. Several contributors refer to areas outside what is conventionally regarded as northern England, and some areas of northern England are not covered by any of the contributions. However, all the papers concentrate largely on areas north of the Trent and south of the Tweed, hence the subtitle of the volume. The question of what constitutes 'the Neolithic' is considered to some extent in the final paper.

No effort has been made to relate the various contributions to each other, and it has not been possible for contributors to examine each others' papers prior to publication. Consequently, some papers discuss similar ground, and in some cases the examination of this similar ground has led to somewhat different conclusions: a situation which will hopefully lead to further healthy discussion. Some contributions are more speculative than others, but I trust that all contributors have made a clear distinction between facts and speculation when presenting their cases. I am aware that some inconsistencies exist between papers (for example, in the presentation of dates) but these reflect the preferences of individual contributors and should not detract unduly from the overall value of the publication.

The twin aims of the volume are to help raise awareness of the Neolithic archaeology of the region, and through this to encourage further research. The pages which follow amply demonstrate that the Neolithic archaeology of 'No-Man's Land' is in many ways just as interesting as that of Scotland or Southern England, and this must now be recognised through the setting up of more research projects throughout the region. Some suggestions for future research, in addition to those offered by individual contributors, are presented in the final paper. This final paper also stresses the need to strike a healthy balance between research and conservation, something which may appear obvious in theory but which continues to pose serious problems in practice.

The volume has been longer in the production stage than had initially been expected as certain papers took longer to finish than had been hoped. I felt that the loss of these papers would have seriously affected the overall balance of the volume, so was forced to delay production rather than simply omit them. I must therefore apologise to those few contributors who submitted their papers by the original deadline, which will be over a year ago by the time the volume

is eventually published.

As with all volumes of *Northern Archaeology*, this one has been edited, designed and prepared for publication on a home computer. A few errors will, undoubtedly, have survived the editorial process and found their way into the final production. I hope that these will prove to be few in number and minor in nature, and apologise in advance to any contributors whose papers are thus affected.

Finally, a few thank-yous. In addition to all the contributors, special thanks are also due to Richard Bradley for enthusiastically supporting this project when I first dreamt it up, to Jim Cherry for help with computer facilities when mine proved inadequate, and to the entire Northumberland Archaeological Group (NAG) committee for approval to proceed with this volume as something of a departure from normal practice. I hope that all NAG members (including those without a particular interest in the Neolithic) will find it of some interest. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank Sarah and Katie for their patience, and to assure them that I will not be taking on another 'spare time' project of this magnitude for quite some time to come.

PF
Hexham
June 1996

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