

Guildford Power Station (GUF113)

Site summary

Excavations carried out prior to the construction of a new fire station and housing in Guildford, Surrey, revealed a well preserved, *in situ* Late Upper Palaeolithic flint scatter. Both typological analysis of the flint and OSL dates suggest that the scatter dates from the first half of the Late Glacial (Windermere) interstadial (*c* 14-15KBP). The assemblage is generally comparable to that from Wey Manor Farm, Surrey, and raises the question of the relationship between the Cresswellian and Federmesser traditions. The lithic assemblage at Guildford Fire Station has some features in common with the Cresswellian but contained few of the backed tools typical of that industry. It did, however, contain a curve-backed bi-point and broken backed points which are more characteristic of Federmesser industries. Comparison with Continental sites suggests that it is likely to have been contemporary with the early phase of the Federmesser.

Geoarchaeological analyses suggest that the site lay on cold climate fluvial sandy gravels deposited in braided stream systems prior to the onset of the Late Glacial (Windermere) Interstadial. The flint scatter itself lay within the upper part of a deposit of fine-grained sands, probably deposited by seasonal floods. Deposition of the upper sands appears to have been contemporaneous with the period of occupation of the site. During drier periods, weathering and ephemeral soil formation occurred on the surface of the sands.

Analysis of the lithic assemblage shows that it is homogeneous and that apart from initial extraction and nodule testing all stages of flint manufacture are represented. A suite of analyses examining the taphonomy of the artefacts, including size class analysis, artefact fabric analysis, centroid analysis and hot spot analysis, all suggest that the flint has not suffered from significant post-depositional disturbance and was largely *in situ*. Two main concentrations of knapping are represented, 3-4m apart. The main focus of the knapping was the production of blade blanks some of which were removed from the site. The retouched tool assemblage shows that other activities took place on the site. Functional analysis of the tools suggests relatively short occupation during which hunting, animal processing, and small-scale craft activities took place. The craft activities are linked with the retooling of the hunting weapons, the manufacture of hide items, and limited processing of animal and plant materials.

Report

Barton, N, Roberts, A, Donnelly, M, Tomasso, S, Rots, V, Stafford, E, and Thacker, G, forthcoming *Guildford Fire Station: excavation of a Later Upper Palaeolithic campsite in the valley of the River Wey, Surrey*, Oxford Archaeology Monograph Oxford

Museum

Guildford Museum, accession no. GUIHS.2015.008