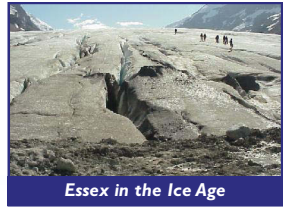


APPENDIX 9. MVPP LEAFLET

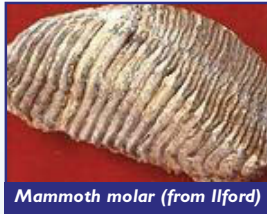
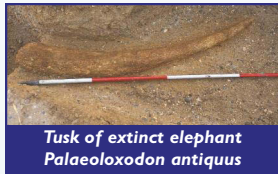
The Palaeolithic

The Palaeolithic - or Old Stone Age - covers the time-span from the initial colonisation of Britain 500,000 years ago to the end of the last Ice Age

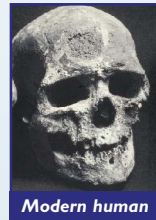
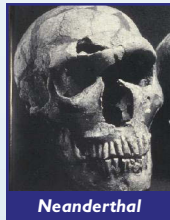
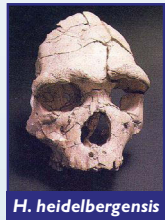


10,000 years ago. During this time there were several separate Ice Ages, each lasting thousands of years. Most of Britain was covered by ice sheets.

In between Ice Ages were warm periods - Interglacials - when the climate was often warmer than the present day. Tropical animals such as hippos, monkeys, lions and elephants were present, as well as early human ancestors.



The earliest inhabitants of Britain - *Homo heidelbergensis* - had a similar size and upright posture, but a smaller brain. By 150,000 years ago these had evolved into Neanderthals, who died out in the middle of the last Ice Age 30,000 years ago, when modern humans first appear.



The main archaeological evidence from the Palaeolithic is stone tools - mostly handaxes, although other types of tool are also found.

Handaxe from Medway River



Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund

The fund is raised by a levy on the aggregate extraction industry, and promotes environmentally friendly extraction and transport. One of the main objectives is to mitigate the impact of extraction activity on the historic environment, through projects such as this. English Heritage is a major distributor of the fund on behalf of the Dept. for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

Project team



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Portable Antiquities Scheme

Portable Antiquities Officers for Kent and Essex provide a point of contact for members of the public to report any possible finds, of any period, not just the Palaeolithic.

Kent

Andrew Richardson, Heritage Conservation, Kent County Council, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX.
Tel: 01622-221 544

Essex

Caroline McDonald, Museum Resource Centre, Colchester Museums Service, Union House, 14 Ryegate Road, Colchester, Essex, CO1 1YG.
Tel: 01206-282 931/2

Medway Valley Palaeolithic Project



a project supported by the

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund



Aims of the project

- Geological mapping
- Dating of Palaeolithic sites
- Palaeolithic settlement history
- Protecting the Palaeolithic heritage
- Finding new sites

Can you help?

Many of the Palaeolithic sites studied for the project were discovered following chance finds by members of the public. Palaeolithic handaxes and fossil animal bones can be found anywhere where Pleistocene sediments have been eroded or disturbed by modern activities:

- ploughed field surfaces
- beaches
- roadworks
- building foundations
- stream beds and banks
- in your garden

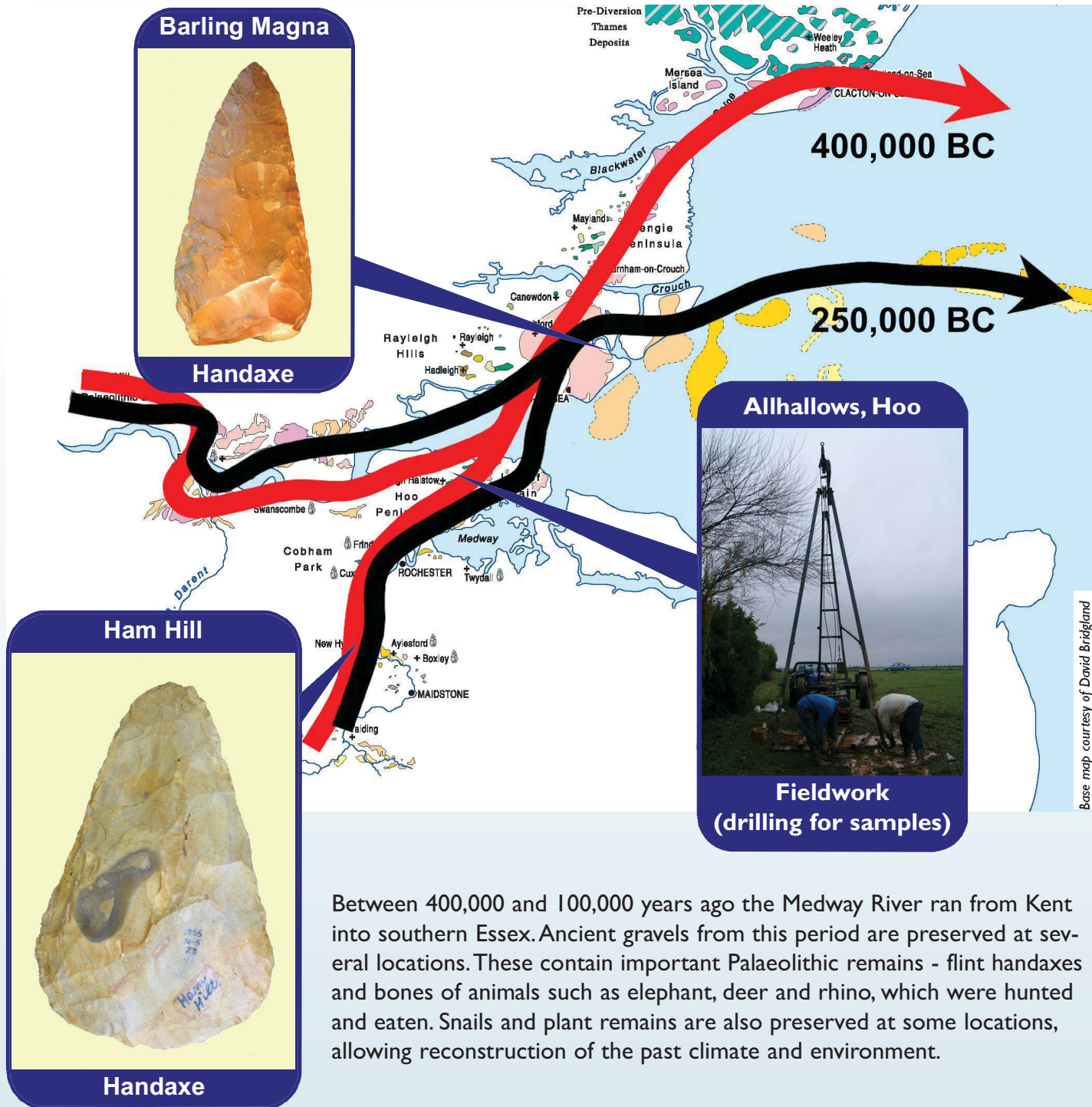
Please report any finds to your local museum or the Portable Antiquities Officers for Kent or Essex (contact details overleaf). Or contact the project team through our web-site.

Want to learn more?

There is more information on our web-site (link below, or search on: Medway Valley Palaeolithic), and that of the National Ice Age Network.

- <http://www.arch.soton.ac.uk/Research/MedwayValley/>
- <http://www.iceage.bham.ac.uk/network/>

Medway Valley - 400,000 BC to present



Between 400,000 and 100,000 years ago the Medway River ran from Kent into southern Essex. Ancient gravels from this period are preserved at several locations. These contain important Palaeolithic remains - flint handaxes and bones of animals such as elephant, deer and rhino, which were hunted and eaten. Snails and plant remains are also preserved at some locations, allowing reconstruction of the past climate and environment.