A Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales
East and Northeast Wales – Earlier Prehistoric
23/11/03

1 COMMENTS ON THE RESOURCE AUDIT

1.1 General

This is a very useful document presenting the data clearly, succinctly and impartially. The maps are useful, particularly when set against contours however it would have been more useful to have had different symbols for different site types. The maps probably also reflect more the amount of archaeological interest within the area rather than 'real' distributions. The list of 14C dates in Vol II is particularly useful though the integrity of some dates needs to be questioned (perhaps as part of the research agenda implementation).

There seems to be a great deal of duplication within the various databases presented. This is to be expected and it is good that the different database curators seem to be talking but it does throw up the question of the usefulness of END. Might resources not be better used in concentrating efforts on the regional SMR's, which are, after all, the first port of call for researchers and planning authorities?

1.2 Neolithic

The maps reflect the raw data and are not particularly 'interpretable'. It might, perhaps, be useful to combine monument type maps and also to refine the artefact maps to reflect true 'findspots' as opposed to artefacts recovered from excavations. It would also have been useful to have differentiated the entry types under each broad heading: for example instead of a general 'domestic' map the 6 site types in the SMR listings under domestic might have been identified.

There may be some duplication. For example in the list of key sites, the Sarn-y-bryn-caled ring ditch and the Sarn-y-bryn-caled hengiform appear one and the same. The reference 'Thomas 1998' for the Sarn-y-bryn-caled hengiform does not feature in the bibliography.

Period boundary dates need to be ratified. The Sarn-y-bryn-caled timber circle, for example, is listed under Neolithic but it may be argued that it has Bronze Age 14C dates and certainly the Barbed and Tanged arrowheads and Food Vessel from the primary and secondary burials respectively are Bronze Age in character. Indeed there are no timber circles listed for the Bronze Age but Pont-ar-daf and Moel-y-gaer both produced Bronze Age 14C dates.

Some monument types may need clarifying. For example what is the difference between 'house' and 'hut' and what is 'structure'? What distinguishes a 'cemetery'? 'Multiple site' needs elucidation and 'henge' and 'hengiform' may be combined. The presence of ring ditches in both the Neolithic and Bronze Age is well attested and we must be clear to distinguish those that have been securely dated from those that are 'assumed'.

There are some well known very large ring ditches in the region (Walton, Vyrnwy confluence, Sarn-y-bryn-caled etc). Plotting these sites by diameter might be

useful to see whether there is a continuum or whether these large sites represent a distinct and separate monument class.

1.3 Bronze Age

Much of the chronological issues mentioned above are also relevant to this section (timber circles, ring ditches, 14C dates). Similarly the differentiation on the maps of SMR site types within each broad category.

Again site types may need to be rationalised in any synthesis. 'Cairnfield' and 'clearance cairn' for example given that the former is composed of the latter. What distinguishes 'hut' from 'hut circle' and are they not components of 'hut circle settlement'. I realise that these are necessary divisions for digital recording, but they can confuse synthetic reports if due care is not exercised.

For comments on ring ditches above, read 'round barrow' here.

The presence of two pits is surprising given the excavated complexes at New Radnor and Pennant Melangell.

2 RESEARCH ASSESSMENT: NEOLITHIC & EARLY BRONZE AGE, NE WALES

2.1 Introduction

The present writer has been asked to provide a discussion document for NE Wales to help in the formulation of a pan-Wales research strategy. A draft of this document was circulated prior to the NE Wales seminar held at Welshpool on 26th October 2002. Little comment was returned on this draft, which was then presented at the seminar. Once again, little comment was offered at or subsequent to the meeting though some discussion did take place afterwards regarding my initial comments on the value of geophysical survey on some soil types in the region.

Accordingly, the survey and observations made below must be regarded as a personal view. It must be stated at the outset that the writer's own experience has principally been in Powys and this must necessarily bias his comments and opinions.

Guidelines for this exercise state that each period should be divided into sections discussing Domestic Sites, Industrial Sites, Burial and Ritual Sites, and Artefacts. These sections should assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the archaeology of the period and region. These divisions clearly work better in some periods than in others. The writer has already argued that there should be an holistic approach to the study of Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement (Gibson forthcoming) and therefore he finds some of the divisions difficult to make. There is some obvious repetition when threats and opportunities are concerned and it is hoped that these will not be too galling.

14C dates have not been quoted in this section as the list is available in the Research Audit subject to the provisos mentioned above. These generally confirm national patterns and trends with few surprises though the database is comparatively poor. Once again this is an attempt to avoid repetition and duplication.

Finally, there is an acknowledged continuum from the Neolithic starting at *c.*4000BC and the early Bronze Age ending at *c.*1000BC. There are clearly breaks

and developments within this period, the 'middle Neolithic hiatus' for example, the development of the classic ritual monuments in the later Neolithic, the introduction of Beakers and metalwork and the emergence of nucleated settlements. However the degree of continuity in, for example the artefact and main monumental records has prompted the writer to deal with the period as one. Once again, this is an attempt to avoid repetition and it is hoped that it will be acceptable to the organising committee of this exercise.

2.1 Domestic sites

2.1.1 Strengths

The distinction between domestic and ritual (religious) is often difficult to make and contains many interpretative pitfalls. Indeed, the distinction may not be valid in a Neolithic or Early Bronze Age context. However, from the point of view of this exercise, domestic is interpreted as potentially settlement data or structural data capable of being interpreted in a secular environment. In this context, NE Wales is comparatively rich in domestic data for this period. House sites such as Trelystan (Britnell 1982), Walton (Gibson 1999) and Gwernvale (Britnell & Savory 1984) clearly show the potential for discovering well-preserved structural and associated artefactual and ecofactual domestic data. Each of these 'house' sites is represented by a more or less complete floor plan plus associated cultural and environmental data as well as strictly associated radiocarbon dates. Gwernvale belongs to the fourth millennium while Walton and Trelystan, generally similar in overall plan, belong to the third millennium.

In the Early Bronze Age, house sites such as Glanfeinion (Britnell et al. 1997) clearly show the potential for discovering well-preserved structural and associated artefactual and ecofactual domestic data though the data is far poorer for this period. The pit sites at New Radnor (Jones 1999) and Pennant Melangell (Britnell 1994) also indicate that Bronze Age domestic material may be found in unexpected contexts within the excavations of later sites.

The irregular conglomerated field systems and hut circles of the Brecon Beacons and Denbigh Moors may present evidence for Bronze Age enclosures and settlements commensurate with other upland areas nationwide such as Dartmoor, Northumberland and Scotland (e.g. Cwm Cadlan, Brecknock – RCAHMW 1997). While dating for these settlements is imprecise, palynological data does suggest increased settlement in the uplands at this time and some at least of the unenclosed or partially enclosed stone-built hut clusters and associated field boundaries may well form part of the national trend towards nucleated settlement that becomes visible in the archaeological record c.1200BC.

Less substantial but more prolific settlement data comes from flint scatters of Neolithic and Bronze Age date and which are well attested on the SMR. Flint does not occur naturally in the region, therefore scatters identify areas of high potential, possibly not from the areas of scatters themselves but from the 'blank' areas between (Gibson forthcoming). Other areas such as Cloddiau on the Kerry Ridgeway (SMR Data) where field walking has recovered numerous large, raw nodules in a non-flint bearing environment, suggest the possibility of regional distribution centres.

The acid upland soils of the region and their areas of bog produce palynological data that can identify areas of high potential for Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement. The data from Carneddau (Walker 1992) and Buckbean Pond on the Breiddin (Musson1991) illustrate this with Neolithic impact horizons coinciding with the dates for the major contemporary monument complexes in the Severn

Valley. In the North of the region, the shell middens of the N coast have the potential to provide data of both a cultural and palaeoenvironmental nature for the Mesolithic/Neolithic transition.

The structural data already mentioned above, in keeping with the national (British) trend at this period of time, comes from protected contexts below later monuments; therefore the good preservation of later monuments (e.g. barrows) contributes to the potential preservation of earlier domestic data. Sites such as Trelystan have produced comparatively flimsy structural evidence below later round mounds while at Upper Ninepence, Walton, the structures were more substantial and the cultural data more prolific. While the final context of the Upper Ninepence material is most probably structured in its deposition, nevertheless, the derivation of the artefacts and ecofacts is probably ultimately domestic (Gibson 1999 & forthcoming). It is fortunate for the archaeology of the region that these excavated settlements have generally been recently explored, excavated to a high standard and the excavations have been well funded. They have good searchable archives, are securely and reliably dated and remain as an active research resource.

Waterlogged sites may well exist in upland bogs and lakes and lithic scatters around the reservoir at Llyn Aled further hint at the potential of riverside and lakeside sites. However, Neolithic lake or crannog sites have not generally been recognised and in this respect the initial potential of the worked wood from the bog at Abercynafon proved disappointing

A further strength in the Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement record has been the application of new scientific techniques to the excavated material. Residue analysis from Upper Ninepence, Walton, has produced economic data that otherwise would not have survived in an upland (acid) environment. Similarly microwear analysis of the lithic artefacts has shed new light on aspects of Neolithic economy. Lipid residues may not be preserved in all ceramics, however, and the results of this analysis at Glanfeinion proved negative.

2.1.2 Weaknesses

The above personal view highlights the strengths of the region with respect to Neolithic settlement, however there are also weaknesses in the datasets. For example, fieldwork identification of Neolithic settlement is difficult given the general flimsiness of the structures so far recovered. These insubstantial structures are unlikely to leave detectable surface traces and it is extremely doubtful whether they could be detected by conventional physical or geophysical survey. Site prediction, therefore, is difficult and discoveries will usually be accidental. This need not be pessimistic as the recent discoveries of over 30 Neolithic houses in Ireland demonstrate (Grogan 1996), however the majority of the Irish finds result from large-scale development-led topsoil stripping in long-term pasture environments. It is exactly in this way that the discovery of the house at Glanfeinion was made (Britnell et al. 1997) and this must be regarded as encouraging. Such environments should be identified in Wales as areas of high potential. Given the accidental discovery of the main structural data, and the ephemeral nature of much of the other data, research funding in this aspect of archaeology can be difficult to obtain given the unpredictability of the results.

While the acid soils of the region may preserve palynological data, they are generally not conducive to the preservation of faunal and/or human skeletal data. As a result, there is an incomplete dataset for the study of Neolithic and Bronze Age economies or population studies. Many cremation deposits from Antiquarian researches on sites of this period have been poorly studied and may now have

been discarded or have lost their integrity through long-term unsympathetic storage. Similarly, the poor preservation of bone has led to a reliance on charcoal for 14C dates. Some earlier dates may have been on oak charcoal and may therefore unreliable.

With regard to a practical approach, domestic data may be difficult to observe in a rescue environment. They may be discovered by archaeological supervisors who are specialists in other periods and, if unexpected, specialist advice may not have been solicited in advance. PPG procedures are unlikely to contribute significantly towards our understanding of the settlement of the period given the emphasis of preservation in situ written in to such Guidance. Nevertheless, the high potential of developments in long-term pasture might now be highlighted by regional curators given the Irish (and Glanfeinion) model mentioned above.

2.1.3 Opportunities

Despite the negativity of the above section, there are nevertheless some excellent opportunities in the region for the study of Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement. For example, the good preservation of later monuments such as round barrows may preserve important Neolithic domestic data. Such has been the case at Trelystan, Gwernvale and Upper Ninepence as already mentioned. However, such discoveries may be somewhat *ad hoc* since domestic evidence has generally been discovered accidentally as a result of the rescue excavation of later monuments. Nevertheless, the identification of significant areas of artefact scatters offers the opportunity for targeted and close interval remote sensing techniques to be used to identify potential settlement areas.

The preservation of monumentality in some upland areas also provide important opportunities for the investigation of Bronze Age settlement and regional economy, particularly if combined with a programme of palynological research. These nucleated settlements are poorly dated in the region (RCAHMW 1997) and a major research project of survey and targeted excavation following the Dartmoor and Northumberland models is long overdue.

The richness of the palynological and palaeobotanical resource as preserved in upland peats (Walker 1992: Chambers & Lageard in Gibson 1997; Dorling & Chambers 1990), lowland palaeochanels (Taylor & Lewin 1993) and, to a lesser extent, soils (Crowther in Gibson 1999) also provides opportunities for identifying areas of potential settlement particularly when dramatic local anthropogenic episodes can be recognised.

There are also some research opportunities amongst the known resource. There are, for example, some idiosyncratic sites and enclosures that have been noted on aerial photographs and many of these may benefit from trial excavation and/or field walking survey to recover cultural and absolute dating material. The context of many of these sites is currently assumed to be later Prehistoric [ref to Whimster) but remains to be positively proven. Indeed the recently obtained middle Neolithic date from the sub-rectangular enclosure at Lower Luggy have identified a major ‘new’ type of Neolithic monument at least in the Upper Severn Valley if not more widely (Gibson in prep). The resources involved in such small-scale targeted excavation need not be great.

As mentioned above, the development and application of new scientific techniques such as lipid analysis offers an opportunity to fill in some blanks in our understanding of Neolithic and Bronze Age economy. A potential dataset survives

in museum collections and other archives and may be exploited with minimal damage. Also in these archives are ecofactual data worthy of re-examination. This material, together with the recent breakthrough in the 14C dating of cremated remains and absorbed lipid residues, presents an opportunity for the development of a tight internal chronology for the Welsh Neolithic and Bronze Age.

2.1.4 Threats

The resource for this period cannot be regarded as stable. The fragility of the remains suggests that data are unlikely to survive except in exceptional conditions and/or protected contexts. Unsympathetic agricultural regimes, improvements and developments must pose a substantial threat to the resource. Furthermore, the accidental nature of many major discoveries means that excavators may not always expect Neolithic or Bronze Age domestic data and may therefore be unprepared and/or under- resourced for its proper retrieval and for the optimising of the potential of the data recovered. This may be particularly true in developer-funded projects where non-negotiable contracts have been agreed in advance. The general flimsiness and rarity of the evidence may further weigh against its identification in pre-planning processes.

2.2 Industrial

2.2.1 Strengths

In a Neolithic and Bronze Age context, industrial sites are generally considered to comprise flint, stone and ore extraction sites. Other industries such as skin preparation, weaving or potting frequently leave little trace and are more conventionally classed as domestic activities. Clay extraction sites, may be ranked alongside stone or flint quarries but so far none have been recognised in Wales and such evidence has rarely been sought. Stone extraction sites have not been recognised in the region though the Penmaenmawr and Cwm Mawr ‘factories’ lie just outside. The coastal flint of the N Wales coast may also have been exploited and it also appears that flint was being imported into the area from the chalklands (Bradley in Gibson 1999). The finding of large, raw chalk-flint nodules at Cloddiau on the Kerry Ridgeway suggests the import of substantial quantities. Flint and stone *working* sites may also be regarded as industrial and the region is fortunate in that, given the lack of naturally occurring flint in the area, any flint recovered from field walking is likely to be archaeologically significant.

The extraction of copper ores is also well attested on the peripheries of the area and in particular at Cwmystwyth in Dyfed and more spectacularly at the Great Orme in Gwynedd. However the potential of the later copper mines at Llanymynech to produce firm evidence of Bronze Age activity is high (Moore, 1992).

Metalworking sites such as at Four Crosses, Sarn-y-bryn-caled and, more spectacularly, the Breiddin and Llwyn-bryn-dinas belong to a later period.

2.2.2 Weaknesses

It is unfortunate that artefact scatters have generally received little attention in this area and, unlike in other parts of the country, there is not a tradition of systematic field walking in NE Wales. Flints have been picked up by local farmers

and walkers but have generally gone unreported. Even some areas where there has been a long tradition of flint collecting (for example the Walton Basin) have not been walked systematically nor published adequately. The Dunn collection, for example, collected in the 1960's was not studied or published until 1999 (Bradley in Gibson 1997).

2.2.3 Opportunities

The SMR provides a starting point for the identification of areas of rich flint scatter. Local societies and individuals have also demonstrated an interest in field walking and flint collection and this hobby seems to be increasing particularly along the Kerry Ridgeway on the Montgomeryshire/Shropshire border (SMR data). With correct encouragement and guidance, perhaps from the Portable Antiquities Scheme, this resource could be usefully tapped to identify discrete scatters and undertake systematic survey. Public interest in archaeology has never been greater thanks to increased media coverage and this may be regarded as a perfect opportunity to recruit active participation from within local societies. This would be mutually beneficial to these local societies by, perhaps, increasing their membership. Archaeologically 'blank' areas between scatters may be as or more important than the scatters themselves and might warrant research excavation and/or close interval and high-resolution geophysical prospection (Gibson forthcoming).

2.2.4 Threats

Once again the fragility of the resource is the major threat in this area. Continued ploughing of scatters and their environs may be damaging any associated structural or ecofactual evidence. The resource must also be a finite one and important artefacts may continue to be collected and remain unreported.

Growth of leisure activities such as caving may be a double-edged sword in that it may locate areas of Neolithic or Bronze Age mineral extraction, however, it may also damage fragile telltale traces such as scorch or pick marks. Increased visitor numbers to easily accessible adits will undoubtedly cause erosion problems as well as possible microenvironmental changes through breath and body heat.

2.3 Burial & Ceremonial Sites

2.3.1 Strengths

Burial and ceremonial sites may be arguably the most archaeologically visible remains of this period. Long barrows (Lower Luggy) and cairns (Gwernvale) of the earlier Neolithic have been surveyed and excavated. Cursus monuments of the middle Neolithic have been identified as have henges and stone circles of the later Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age. Standing stones, stone rows, round barrows and cairns in particular litter the upland areas while ring-ditches frequently punctuate aerial photographs of lowland environments. Some sites (particularly megalithic monuments) have high visibility and good preservation: they have high 'amenity' value though this can, on occasion, be detrimental (see threats).

Upland cairns and barrows (the preservation of which tends to be better than the lowland sites) may also preserve a rich resource in terms of palaeoenvironmental data from or below the old ground surface (Britnell 1982: Gibson 1999).

Furthermore, even robbed sites may still cover important sepulchral, palaeopathological and artefactual data as satellite (or stratigraphically secondary) burials may still be intact.

In the last 30 years a number of sites have been well excavated to a high standard and have produced detailed searchable archives and important archaeological data including palaeoecological data, palaeoeconomic data and secure absolute dating. The region also has a great variety of monument types and sizes as the recent audits of burial and ritual sites have shown (Gibson 2002). In Montgomeryshire alone, seventeen types of ritual monument have been identified and this does not include the different forms of round cairn.

Some 'new' site types, for example the palisade enclosure at Hindwell, have been identified and investigated.

2.3.2 Weaknesses

Given that a great deal of archaeological evidence for this period has been burial orientated, it is unfortunate that skeletal evidence generally does not survive in the acid soils of the region. The important Neolithic crouched inhumations at Four Crosses, for example, survived only as soil stains and therefore no palaeopathological opportunities were presented (Warrilow *et al.* 1986). Cremation burials recovered from earlier or antiquarian excavations have generally not been studied in detail and it is only comparatively recently that the full potential of the study of cremations has been realised.

There has also been little investigative work on some enigmatic monument types in the area. For example the large ring-ditches of the Severn-Vyrnwy confluence are undated as are the small stone circles or standing stones. Ground survey at some of the linear monuments such as stone rows is comparatively sparse.

These sites are also set within a poor regional absolute chronology. Much of our perceived chronology is derived from extensive excavations in Wessex and further afield which must mask any discrete regional trends within the data. Important lessons have been learned from Bradley's work at Scottish monuments with long-accepted chronological frameworks: the Clava Cairns and the Recumbant Stone Circles where the traditional dates and sequences have been overturned (Bradley 2000; Bradley *et al.* 2002) This lack of a regional chronology is partly because of the scarcity of skeletal material (both human and faunal) from which reliable radiocarbon dates can be obtained and a general reliance on charcoal for our absolute dates. Consequently the integrity of some of the early dates may be open to question and re-assessment may be opportune.

Earthen (rather than megalithic) sites in the region are also poorly understood. Cursus monuments and henges are poorly dated and some have been tentatively identified. The full extent of many possible cursus sites is not known and the validity of many site identifications needs testing.

2.3.3 Opportunities

As mentioned above, many sites have searchable archives. These need to be subjected to assessments for the older excavations so that the integrity of the data can be evaluated, however these collections, combined with the development of new techniques (dating of cremations) may allow a developed

absolute chronology to be constructed from archive material. Furthermore, the development of Bayesian statistics in the field of radiocarbon calculations may allow the refinement of dates when multiple determinations are obtained from multi-phased sites such as Trelystan, Carneddau and cairns within the Brenig cemetery (Lynch 1993) where the sequences are considered secure.

Some earthen sites may be available for evaluation through small-scale excavation and/or geophysical prospection.

2.3.4 Threats

Unsympathetic landuse regimes have already been mentioned and these, in the writer's opinion, constitute the region's chief threat to the archaeological resource of this period. Earthen sites are particularly vulnerable and this has been demonstrated by some recent surveys and excavations (for example barrows in the Walton Basin (Gibson 1999) and the excavations at Four Crosses (Warrilow *et al.* 1986)).

The very visibility of megalithic and upland sites often results in their robbing or re-use. Any fills surviving in the chamber cannot be regarded as primary and thus any associated 14C dates may well date the final episodes at the site rather than the primary use and/or construction of the monument. Antiquarian explorations may well have removed important data.

Agricultural activities might also threaten upland monuments. Upland improvement has destroyed the stone setting at Esgair-y-groes for example without investigation of the monument (Gibson 2002). Cairns or stone rows may now lie within forestry plantations. Even if respected by the planting regime, many of these sites are now out of their natural environment and it has been demonstrated at the Mynydd Dyfnant stone row that these sites are still at risk from damage from machinery and visitor 'improvements' (Gibson 1992).

However threats do not only stem from agricultural directions but also from visitor pressures. The cairns on Pen-y-fan and Corn Du were both disappearing before their total excavation (Gibson 1997). The peat and turf coverings to the mounds had been eroded away and the stones were exposed and becoming loose. Visitors to the summit were re-arranging the stones of the cairn to make more comfortable seating, to create windbreaks and to create nearby walkers' cairns. Some stones were also disappearing over the precipitous northern escarpment. This damage is usually more out of ignorance than malice but is nevertheless catastrophic to the archaeology.

As mentioned with flint scatters above, the scale and degree of degradation of some sites may make detection difficult. This may be particularly true in arable areas, in areas of upland improvement and in forestry plantations.

2.4 Artefacts

2.4.1 Strengths

The region is poor in comparison to other areas of the country in terms of Neolithic and Bronze Age material culture though ceramic assemblages from sites such as Hendre (Gibson & Brassil 1997) Trelystan, Sarn-y-bryn-caled (Gibson

1994 & Blockley and Tavener 2002) and Walton clearly indicate that the potential exists within the area. Some recently well-excavated assemblages have been recovered and the opportunities now exist to apply new techniques to these assemblages. Absorbed Residue Analysis has been successfully undertaken at Walton and has shed important palaeoeconomic data on middle and late Neolithic assemblages.

Bronze Age ceramics are rather more plentiful for the region given the general emphasis on sepulchral monuments and the material from Pennant Melangell, New Radnor and Glanfeinion contribute to the domestic corpus. Once again the collections of material in the local and national museums is a valuable resource for future study.

With regard to lithic assemblages, once again the region is not rich but has an advantage in that there is no naturally occurring flint in the area therefore field walking is comparatively easy and all finds are likely to be archaeologically significant. Once again the use of new techniques such as microwear analysis has been successfully applied on the assemblage from Walton.

Stone axes studies are well advanced (Darvill 1989) and a thin section database exists for the region as part of a larger, national collection.

There have been numerous finds of metalwork of the early Bronze Age in the area and this has been well studied both as parts of national corpora and from a compositional pint of view.

2.4.2 Weaknesses

Ceramics remain poorly studied in terms of fabric series and provenance studies. Thin section databases have been set up in other regions but not within NE Wales. There are also few secure absolute dates directly associated with the earlier material.

The absolute chronologies for all artefacts of the Neolithic and Bronze Age are also based on few (and sometimes unreliable) radiocarbon dates.

2.4.3 Opportunities

Once more, artefactual material survives within site archives and museum collections and new techniques may be applied to this material particularly in the field of the residue analysis of ceramics and provenance studies. The 14C dating of cremated bone associated with these artefacts, or indeed AMS dating of the recovered lipids from ceramics will allow tighter chronologies to be formulated. This material may also be used for provenance studies and existing thin sections need to be evaluated.

2.4.4 Threats

Threats specific to artefacts are difficult to identify other than those threats that affect the archaeological record generally. However unrecorded field walking may be depleting finite scatters and the unsympathetic curation of early collections may have contaminated and/or destroyed chemical/microscopic data.

2.5 Conclusions

Neolithic and earlier Bronze Age

The region has seen a great deal of work, particularly, though not exclusively, in the last 30 years, on the archaeological remains of the Neolithic and Earlier Bronze Age. This has resulted in nationally significant contributions to the archaeological literature as well as the production of high quality researchable archives. These archives constitute an important resource for future research.

There has been an emphasis on the burial archaeology of the period. This is part of a national trend and is also a result of the high visibility of monuments of this type. Settlement archaeology, particularly of the earlier Bronze Age, has been comparatively poorly studied.

Artefacts types vary in the degree of attention paid to them. Ceramics and flint in particular may benefit from detailed reassessment and scientific analysis.

Prepared by Alex Gibson, University of Bradford

This document's copyright is held by contributors and sponsors of the Research Framework for the Archaeology of Wales.