

Palaeolithic Archaeology Teaching Resource Box

Introduction

Introductory Comments:

The goal of this resource box is to provide introductory materials that can support the teaching and learning of aspects of the British Palaeolithic. These materials can be divided as follows:

- 13 replica Palaeolithic stone tools. These resin reproductions are cast from genuine archaeological artefacts (for which background details are given on the artefact bags and in the enclosed contents list).
- Examples of flint and chert (two commonly used raw materials for the production of stone tools in Britain during the Palaeolithic). These samples have sharp edges and it is recommended that they are handled carefully and with **protective gloves**.
- 12 resource cards. These are divided into six topics (Palaeolithic stone tools; Palaeolithic hominins; Palaeolithic chronology; Pleistocene climate, flora and fauna; Pleistocene landscapes; and Palaeolithic lifestyles and behaviour), with a 'Basic' and 'Advanced' card for each topic. The cards have been written so that the 'Advanced' cards expand upon the issues and themes introduced in the 'Basic' cards. Each card includes a range of information, key terminology (including definitions of scientific terms, and short descriptions of key archaeological sites¹), three short quiz questions (there is also an answers card enclosed), further website resources, and related images and/or tables as appropriate (all images are copyrighted to Dr R Hosfield (University of Reading), and/or Dr J Chambers (Birmingham University): a wider range of images are also available through the listed website resources). There is no set system for using the cards: teachers and/or students can use as much or as little of the material from as few or as many of the cards as they choose, although it is generally recommended that users at least review the 'Basic' card before moving onto the 'Advanced'. There is also no set order for using the cards, although the order given above is recommended as one possible approach. The cards have not been written with a specific audience in mind: it is hoped that the materials, used partially or in their entirety, can be tailored by teachers for students ranging from grade 7 to adult learners.

It is not the intention of this resource box to provide comprehensive information about the British Palaeolithic (such a task is far beyond this resource box's remit). Those seeking further details and information are recommended to follow the recommended books (see below) and the website links (see the individual resource cards) as a first step.

If you have any further queries about the resource box, its contents, or its use, please contact Dr Robert Hosfield at the University of Reading (e-mail: r.hosfield@rdg.ac.uk).

Books:

There are a large number of books concerning Palaeolithic archaeology (for a good sample of these try searching under 'Palaeolithic Archaeology' in the Books section of the Amazon.co.uk website), but for those looking for a general introduction or overview the following are recommended:

Barton, N. 1997. *Stone Age Britain*. English Heritage & Batsford: London [A very good overview of the entire British Palaeolithic].

¹ Terms with definitions are highlighted in *italics* within the main text.

Pitts, M. & Roberts, M. 1997. *Fairweather Eden*. Century: London [An excellent summary of the Boxgrove site, along with a wider overview of Palaeolithic archaeology and the Pleistocene world].

Stringer, C. & Gamble, C. 1993. *In Search of the Neanderthals*. Thames & Hudson: London [A very good introduction to the archaeology of the Neanderthals].

Stuart, A.J. 1988. *Life in the Ice Age*. Shire Publications Ltd: Princes Risborough [A good general introduction to the British Palaeolithic, although inevitably some of the facts and the terminology used has been overtaken by more recent research].

Wymer, J.J. 1999. *The Lower and Middle Palaeolithic Occupation of Britain*. Wessex Archaeology & English Heritage: Salisbury [An excellent, if rather detailed, review of the earlier Palaeolithic archaeology of Britain].

Activities:

Although these resources are clearly best suited to a classroom environment, one outdoor activity that you could try is a Palaeolithic timeline rope: we (The Palaeolithic Rivers of South-West Britain project) have found this a very effective way of explaining to children's groups about the huge timescales involved (most of the history/archaeology that they probably know, such as the Romans, gets covered within the first 30cm or so on a 100m rope!).

Websites:

One of the difficulties of listing website resources is the potential for websites to become unavailable at some point in the future. However, all of the websites listed on the individual resource cards are valid at the time of going to press.

More serious is the problem of assessing whether a website is publishing reliable information (especially in light of the very large number of archaeology websites which now exist). There is no easy answer to this, but as a guideline the most reliable websites tend to be those published by University departments (in Britain these will be [universityname.ac.uk](#)), by government organisations (e.g. [heritagedepartment.gov.uk](#)), or by museums (e.g. [nationalmuseum.org.uk](#)).