

the locality is a choice one in many respects, it must have taken many years for the thick mass of tufa to form. One would naturally expect to find some trace of a higher civilization if ordinary Neolithic man lived anywhere in the neighbourhood during those years.

I am about to communicate the results to the Dorset Field Club; but before doing so I would much like to hear your opinion on this point. Also, if there is anything that might be done to fix the date more definitely, I would go there again.

I hope that you will pardon me for troubling you about this; but I am particularly anxious not to publish an imperfect or inaccurate piece of work.

Believe me

Yours truly

Clement Reid.

Clement Reid  
Ansd. Dec. 7/95.

(L1417)

11 St. Helen's Rd.,  
Dorchester.

23 Oct. 1895.

Dear Sir,

While examining the geology of Dorset I have been much interested in the curious deposit at Blashenwell, near Corfe Castle. It is a mass of kitchen-midden material imbedded in calcareous tufa. I thought at first that the deposit might be Palaeolithic, & might throw some light on the physical changes of the district; but after careful examination & <sup>extensive</sup> ~~careful~~ collecting there seems no doubt that it is much newer. The character of the fauna, & also the style of flaking of the flints, is unmistakably Neolithic.

The interest is therefore mainly archaeological; but one point puzzles me so much that I would like to ask your opinion, for I can get no information from ordinary archaeologists.

Is anything known of an early Neolithic period with no polished implements, flakes never showing sign of secondary chipping, & no trace of pottery? I can find no record, & it seems generally to be considered that when Neolithic man entered this country he was fairly civilized.

The evidence at Blashenwell is this:

Tufa, deposited by an intermittent spring, covers several acres & is several feet thick; but, though the spring continues to flow, the deposition of tufa has entirely ceased, & had ceased before the Roman period. Fragments of Roman or Celtic pottery are abundant in the black soil above. Also, the deposition of tufa had ceased before a grave was dug in it. This grave, which was examined by Mr A. R. Wallace & myself last summer, was sunk about 4 feet into the tufa, lined with slabs of Purbeck

Stone, & contained a skeleton, apparently in a squatting position & facing the south. The interment was older than the Roman layer & newer than the tufa; but nothing was found besides the skeleton to fix the date more exactly.

Scattered throughout the tufa is much charcoal, bones of animals (pig & deer<sup>no fish</sup>) used for food, shells of limpets, periwinkles, Trochus, Scrobicularia (but strangely no cockles). The shells have usually been broken to extract the contents, but they show no sign of roasting. Mixed with these are flint-cores, a few hammer-stones, & hundreds of flint-flakes; but there is not a single implement, even a scraper, & not one of the flakes shows any sign of secondary work.

This race, living largely on shells obtained on the rocky Purbeck coast, without pottery or finished tools, may be merely a hoards of outcasts. But