

Frightful neighbourhood

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Abstrak

Hugo Anderson-Whymark, Duncan Garrow and Fraser Sturt are to be congratulated on an important find and a robust evaluation of its significance. As they point out, it was Roger Jacobi who first introduced the notion that Britain had been culturally isolated from the continent following the flooding of the English Channel; this was on the basis of stylistic differences between the microlithic assemblages found in the two areas in the later Mesolithic. Equally, although Villeneuve-Saint-Germain communities were established in Normandy early in the fifth millennium BC, and Chassey/Michelsberg groups in the Pas-de-Calais perhaps six hundred years later, the material evidence of their cross-Channel relations with British and Irish hunter-gatherers is limited. On this basis, the view has developed that indigenous people in Britain would have been unaware of the developing Neolithic in France and Belgium. Consequently, they would have had no familiarity with domesticated plants and animals, polished stone tools, ceramics, large timber buildings and mortuary monuments until such innovations were brought to these islands by migrating agriculturalists at the end of the millennium. If Mesolithic people played any part at all in the Neolithic transition, it would only have been after the arrival of settlers on these shores.