

A Tale of Two Collectors



A Tale of Two Collectors:

The Lithic Collections of
Geoffrey Taylor and David Heys
(with particular reference to
the county of Yorkshire)

Keith Boughey
with contributions by
Alison Sheridan and Fraser Hunter

ARCHAEOPRESS ARCHAEOLOGY



ARCHAEOPRESS PUBLISHING LTD
Summertown Pavilion
18-24 Middle Way
Summertown
Oxford OX2 7LG
www.archaeopress.com

ISBN 978-1-80327-642-7
ISBN 978-1-80327-643-4 (e-Pdf)

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“He does not die that can bequeath
Some influence to the land he knows”
Hilaire Belloc (1870-1953) Duncton Hill, Stanza 1

“The archaeologist is not digging up things, he is digging up people”
Mortimer Wheeler (1890-1976) *Archaeology from the Earth* (1954)

Dedicated to the memory of
Geoffrey Vivian Taylor (1924-1997)

Acknowledgements

I am indebted to many people for their help without which the current work would have been impossible. First and foremost must be Alan Taylor, older son of the late Geoffrey Taylor, who kindly provided me with as much of his father's collection as he could and, since he accompanied his father on many of his trips, was able to provide a considerable amount of useful information, often in the form of his own personal recollections. Secondly, huge thanks to David Heys for allowing me full access to his entire collection and for his memories of his days spent up on the moors with Geoffrey Taylor. Next, I am thankful to Mags Waughman (former Head of Historic Environment, North York Moors National Park Authority), who provided valuable information on Taylor's work with the late Roger Jacobi excavating the Early Mesolithic sites of 'Pointed Stone' and Money Howe; for her many helpful comments and corrections on earlier drafts of this paper; and along with Robin Daniels (Archaeology Officer, Tees Archaeology) for arranging for the entire Taylor Collection to be safely housed at the Tees Archaeology HQ at Sir William Gray House in Hartlepool. Thanks must go to Kim Devereux-West, Dawn Haida and Diane Prest who, on behalf of the North York Moors National Park Authority, carried out the extensive boxing and labelling of material prior to its being sent to Hartlepool. Thanks too to Miles Johnson (Head of Historic Environment, North York Moors National Park Authority) for acting as a much-needed 'conduit' for communications, in particular of earlier drafts of the book.

Moving on to more specialised help, I am hugely grateful to Alison Sheridan (former Principal Archaeological Research Curator of Early Prehistory) and her colleagues at National Museums Scotland, for their help with the jet and jet-like objects in the collections: to Alison Sheridan herself for orchestrating their identification, assessment, photography and illustration, for writing virtually the entire section on jet, and for invaluable comments and corrections of errors elsewhere in earlier drafts of the text; to Marion O'Neil, for her fine illustrations; to Fraser Hunter (Principal Curator of Prehistoric and Roman Archaeology) for information on Iron Age glass bangles; and to Lore Troalen for undertaking X-Ray Fluorescence Analysis (XRF). Thanks too to John and Bob Richardson for checking the identifications of the 400+ lithics, particularly the Mesolithic material, illustrated and discussed in the book. Special thanks also go to Rebecca Tucker (Curator of the W. Hamond Museum of Whitby Jet in Whitby) for being kind enough to examine and evaluate the Late Victorian jet and jet-like pieces, for granting permission to use the map showing the award of jet mining contracts across the North York Moors during the 19th century; to the late Helen Muller who first drew the map up, and to Martyn Wright at the Museum, for tracking down its origins; to Elizabeth Blanning, Hon. Curator, Kent Archaeological Society, for information on the whereabouts of the jet bracer (wristguard) from Cliffe; to Torben Ballin, for information on Arran pitchstone and permission to reproduce the map of its UK dispersal; to Rosie Banens, working on behalf of Tees Archaeology, for tracking down and photographing a number of items in the Taylor collection after their transfer to Hartlepool; to Claire Cockrill of the Council for British Archaeology for permission to reproduce the figures illustrating the distribution of battle axeheads across the UK and the North York Moors; and to Terry Manby and John Gilks for additional information on Yorkshire battle axeheads. I am also grateful to Richard Watts (Senior Historic Environment Officer (Records), Lincolnshire County Council) for permission to reproduce and multi-

annotate the maps covering sites worked on by Taylor in the Salmonby area of Lincolnshire, as outlined in Appendix 6. Thanks are also due to the following staff at the Archaeology Date Service (ADS) at the University of York for their work in making the Heys collection accessible on-line: Katie Green (who oversaw the entire project), Ray Moore (who oversaw all the digital work), and Catie Teoderescu (University of York student) and Olivia Foster (digital archivist). The work was made possible thanks to a grant from the Open Archaeology Access Fund (OAAF) and the generosity of John Cruse (Secretary) and the rest of the Committee of the Prehistory Research Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society, who generously provided financial assistance with the ADS archiving and with the cost of the jet item illustrations. Any errors which remain, of fact or of interpretation, are entirely my own.

Finally, a special and personal thank you needs to go to my patient and long-suffering wife, Susan, who put up with the obsessive hours I spent on cataloguing, research and writing and my all too frequent frustration, as well as vast numbers of boxes scattered about the house, not to mention the dust!

In addition, I must not forget to give special thanks above all to Mike Schurer, Ben Heaney and Danko Josić at Archaeopress, who did an excellent job getting this book through to publication.

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Preface

The present book does not aim to depict or to describe the collections of Taylor and Heys in full, even as far as the county of Yorkshire is concerned. To cover the entire collections and in appropriate detail would take a work of several volumes. Nor does it aim to establish the complete impact of their contents, collected over a lifetime, on UK prehistory, as this would require further programmes of research which could now well be undertaken, involving the use of 'modern' yet what are by now standard techniques of the analysis of material such as X-ray fluorescence (XRF) analysis, radiocarbon dating of charcoal or bone, and the osteological and isotopic examination of human remains such as bones and teeth. What the present book does set out to do, however, is to introduce the collections to the archaeological world and give the reader a clear impression of their contents.

The book begins with brief biographies of the two collectors, outlines the main areas in which they collected, principally the North York Moors, and their method of working, before attempting to set their work into its wider prehistoric context. It then explains how the over 18,000 worked pieces in the combined collections are each individually identified, and presents illustrations of selected groups of pieces, such as arrowheads, knives, axeheads, scrapers and so on. This is followed up with a more detailed look at some of the more notable classes of artefacts, such as discoidal knives, Iron Age glass bangles, and jet pieces including a superb undamaged Early Bronze Age wristguard (bracer), of which only one other example is known in Britain. But to correct the impression that Taylor and Heys only ever collected finds off the surface of the moors and farmland, details of several excavations, most of them never before published, are given. These include pioneering work on the Early Mesolithic of the North York Moors, and the discovery of an Early Bronze Age grave complete with cremated human remains, a decorated Collared Urn and a perforated battle axehead. At long last, the hitherto unheralded work of these two remarkable individuals has been given the long overdue credit it undoubtedly deserves.

K. Boughey
Baildon
December 2022

The Author



A former member of the Prehistoric Society and the Royal Archaeological Institute, the author is an active member of the Prehistoric Research Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological and Historical Society and Hon. Editor of their annual journal *Prehistoric Yorkshire*. His research passion is the prehistory of northern England, particularly the Bronze Age, and especially its rock art. He was a founder member of the Ilkley Archaeology Group and one of the chief contributors to *The Carved Rocks on Rombalds Moor: Gazetteer of the Prehistoric Rock Carvings on Rombalds Moor, West Yorkshire* (1986) and co-author, along with the late Edward Vickerman, of *Prehistoric Rock Art of the West Riding: Cup-and-Ring-Marked Rocks of the Valleys of the Aire, Wharfe, Washburn and Nidd* (2003). From 2008–13, he was Director of the Stanbury Hill Project, an HLF-funded community archaeology project that investigated an Early Bronze Age landscape on Bingley Moor, West Yorkshire, culminating in two publications: *Stanbury Hill Project: Archaeological Investigation of a Rock Art Site* (2013) and *Discovering Prehistoric Bingley: The Stanbury Hill Project* (2013). He has also been instrumental in locating, cataloguing, securing and publishing information on several private collections of prehistoric material, including the complete Lamplough-Lidster excavation archive of around forty Early Bronze Age barrows, excavated in advance of forestation on the North York Moors in the years after World War 2. His more recent publications include (as Editor) *Going Underground: An anthropological and taphonomic study of human skeletal remains from caves and rock shelters in Yorkshire* (2015) and *Life and Death in Prehistoric Craven: Welbury Wilkinson Holgate and the Excavation of the Hare Hill Ring Cairn* (2016).