Lithic artefact terminology consultation October – end November 2019

The need to review the terminologies used for the recording and indexing of lithic artefacts has been highlighted in recent years. In particular, the recent HER enhancement projects for early prehistory have found that ‘the current thesauri terms (national archaeological object thesaurus) are not fit for purpose’ and have recommended that ‘a new list of lithic terminology should be developed and agreed by a panel of specialists and deployed ahead of further early prehistoric HER enhancement work’ (Catermole, A. 2018. A Review of Historic Environment Records Enhancement Projects for the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic).

We are also as a sector moving towards recognising the FAIR PRINCIPLES as an important driver to making archaeological data more findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable. One aspect of this is to have a consistent approach to the way we record, index and archive data – and agreeing the terminologies to be used to describe artefacts is an important step towards this.

This consultation is aimed at lithic specialists across the sector – freelance, in house unit, academic, museum etc… to develop terminologies that can be used consistently throughout the archaeological process, from the analysis of excavation collections to the reporting and deposition in museum archives.

The list below represents a first attempt to bring together the existing FISH (the national archaeological object thesaurus) terms, those used in the HER enhancement work (especially the Norfolk HER *Worked Flint Indexing Guide*) and other candidate terms. The objective is to ensure that lithic data on HERs is recorded in a way that is useful for researchers. The list below only concerns artefact types but it is important to ensure relevant details of the **event** (excavation, fieldwalking, test-pitting, stray find, etc) and the **assemblage** (size, raw materials, date range, etc) are recorded as well.

Broad consultation questions:

* Is this an appropriate structure of terms?
* How essential are the more detailed levels for an HER record?
* What terms are missing?
* What terms should not be included or are in the wrong place?

Specific questions:

* Are the terms in brackets alternative names or different artefacts?
* Roughouts – should these be considered as debitage or as modified objects – (see axehead roughout and roughouts in the list)
* Chopper has been suggested as being discontinued as a term – do you agree?
* Hoe – rare for lithic implements to be described as a hoe – should this term be included?
* Should the terms two platform flake/blade cores be used? Or should we just use multi-platform?
* Should there be a specific term for opposed platform cores (at 180 degrees to each other)?

Additional comments on this are also very welcome.

Please send your comments back to Dan Miles ([Daniel.miles@historicengland.org.uk](mailto:Daniel.miles@historicengland.org.uk)) by November 30th 2019.

Provisional list of lithic artefact types

**DEBITAGE**

**BLADE**

**BLADELET**

**CRESTED BLADE**

**CHIP**

**CORE**

**BLADE CORE**

**CONICAL BLADE CORE**

**CONICAL MICROBLADE CORE**

**CYLINDRICAL BLADE CORE**

**OPPOSED PLATFORM BLADE CORE**

**PYRAMID CORE**

**SINGLE PLATFORM BLADE CORE**

**MULTI PLATFORM BLADE CORE**

**TWO PLATFORM BLADE CORE**

**FLAKE CORE**

**DISCOIDAL CORE**

**HANDLE CORE**

**IRREGULAR CORE**

**KEELED CORE**

**LEVALLOIS CORE**

**MULTIPLE PLATFORM CORE**

**SINGLE PLATFORM FLAKE CORE**

**TWO PLATFORM FLAKE CORE**

**FLAKE**

**AXE TRIMMING FLAKE (THINNING FLAKE)**

**BURIN SPALL**

**CORE REJUVENATION FLAKE (CORE TABLET)**

**CRESTED FLAKE**

**LEVALLOIS FLAKE**

**RETOUCHED LEVALLOIS FLAKE**

**POLISHED IMPLEMENT FLAKE**

**TRANCHET FLAKE**

**MICRODEBITAGE**

**ROUGHOUT**

**AXEHEAD ROUGHOUT**

**TRIAL PIECE**

**LITHIC IMPLEMENT**

**ARROWHEAD**

**BARBED AND TANGED ARROWHEAD**

**TANGED ARROWHEAD**

**HOLLOW BASED ARROWHEAD**

**LEAF ARROWHEAD**

**TRANSVERSE ARROWHEAD**

**CHISEL ARROWHEAD**

**OBLIQUE ARROWHEAD**

**PETIT TRANCHET ARROWHEAD**

**TRIANGULAR ARROWHEAD**

**COMBINATION TOOL**

**CORE TOOL**

**ADZEHEAD**

**ANVIL**

**AXEHEAD**

**FLAKED AXEHEAD**

**POLISHED AXEHEAD**

**ROUGHOUT AXEHEAD**

**TRANCHET AXEHEAD**

**CHISEL**

**CHOPPER**

**HAMMERSTONE**

**HANDAXE**

**BOUT COUPE HANDAXE**

**CLEAVER (CLEAVER HANDAXE)**

**FICRON**

**HOE**

**PICK**

**THAMES PICK**

**DAGGER**

**FABRICATOR (STRIKE A LIGHT)**

**GOUGE**

**GUNFLINT**

**KNIFE**

**DISCOIDAL KNIFE**

**PLANO-CONVEX KNIFE**

**POLISHED KNIFE**

**MICROLITH**

**BROAD-BLADE MICROLITH**

**CRESCENT MICROLITH**

**HORSHAM POINT**

**LANCEOLATE MICROLITH**

**LUNATE MICROLITH**

**MICROBURIN**

**NARROW-BLADE MICROLITH**

**RECTANGLE MICROLITH**

**RHOMBOID MICROLITH**

**ROD MICROLITH**

**TRAPEZE MICROLITH**

**TRIANGULAR MICROLITH**

**ISOSCELES TRIANGLE**

**SCALENE TRIANGLE**

**NOTCHED IMPLEMENT**

**NOTCH**

**NOTCHED BLADE**

**NOTCHED FLAKE**

**SPOKESHAVE**

**SERRATED IMPLEMENT**

**DENTICULATE**

**MICRODENTICULATE**

**SAW**

**SERRATED BLADE**

**SERRATED FLAKE**

**PERFORATION TOOL**

**AWL**

**BORER (PIERCER OR PERFORATOR)**

**BURIN**

**DRILL BIT**

**GRAVER**

**POINT**

**ANGLE-BACKED POINT**

**CHEDDAR POINT**

**CRESWELL POINT**

**CURVE-BACKED POINT**

**LAUREL LEAF**

**LEAF POINT**

**OBLIQUELY BLUNTED POINT**

**SHOULDERED POINT**

**SPEARHEAD**

**TANGED SPEARHEAD**

**TANGED POINT**

**RETOUCHED BLADE**

**BACKED BLADE**

**BACKED BLADELET**

**BRUISED BLADE**

**TRUNCATION**

**RETOUCHED FLAKE**

**SCRAPER (TOOL)**

**END SCRAPER**

**CONCAVE END SCRAPER**

**CONVEX END SCRAPER**

**STRAIGHT END SCRAPER**

**TRANSVERSE END SCRAPER**

**HOLLOW SCRAPER**

**SIDE SCRAPER**

**SIDE AND END SCRAPER**

**THUMB NAIL SCRAPER**

**SICKLE**